

Women's Participation in Union Parishad: changing status in private and public space

A thesis submitted to the Dhaka University in partial fulfillment of the
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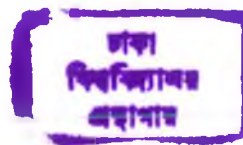


**Master of Philosophy
of
The University of Dhaka**

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September 2005

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Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**Women’s Participation in Union Parishad: changing status in private and public space**” in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in Political Science prepared under my direct supervision.

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

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Dedicated to

My father Md. Imam Sharif

My mother Afroz Sharif and

My lovely daughter Aribah Chowdhury

402471



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List of Table, Graph, Map and Figure

List of tables

Table 1: Name of working area and name of respondent

Table 2: Name of working union under Shagatta thana

Table 3: Name of working union under Kalihata thana

Table 4: Number and percentage of Women Minister in different regime

Table 5: Women member in parliament (Elected and reserved seat)

Table 6: Women in parliament Election in the last decade (1991-2001)

Table 7: Number of Women in different committee of main political parties

Table 8: Political Party's nominated and elected women member in different election (1979-1991)

Table 9: Division wise Women chairman and Women in General seat (2003)

Table 10: Women Ward Commissioner in City Corporation

Table 11: Women's Participation in Election of Union Parishad

Table 12: Women in Union Parishad (1997-2003) in the Open seats

Table 13: Women members in the reserved seats of Union Parishad (1997-2003)

Table 14: Voters, Candidate and Representation in UP Election 2003

Table 15: Age distribution of UP member

Table 16: Education level of UP leaders

Table 17: Family background

Table 18 : Participation of women in politics before election

Table 19: Whom support to participate in the election & whom were Election campaign associate

Table 20: Provider of election cost/ Main sources of campaign fund

Table 21: Election Expenses of Women's elected member

Table 22 : Number of contestant, and number of vote

Table 23: Obstacle in election period

Table 24: Name of activities doing for women after won in election

Table 25: Name of activities doing for your own area

Table 26: Reason of less participation of women in UP

Table 27: Steps needs to be taken for increase their participation

Table 28: Perception of responsibility of UP member

Table 29: List of achievement as a UP member

Table 30: Family obstacles in performing of UP duties

Table 31: Scope created in private space

Table 32: Scope created in public space

Table 33: Difficulties in private life

Table 34: Problems in Public life

Table 35: Difficulties in UP/ Operational activities in UP

List of Graphs

Graph 1: House holds status at shagata Thana

Graph 2: Population status at shagata thana

Graph 3: Geographic unit of shagata thana

Graph 4: Population status at Kalihaiti Thana

Graph 5: House holds status at Kalihaiti Thana

Graph 6: Geographic unit of Kalihaiti Thana

Graph 7: Occupation of women elected members

Graph 8: Occupation of Husband

Map

Tangail Area

Gaibandah Area

Figure

Figure 1: Local Government in Bangladesh

Figure 2: Union Parishad Organogram

List of acronyms and Glossary

Acronyms

ADB: Asian Development Bank

CEDAW: Convention on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination
Against Women

DC: Deputy Commissioner

FYP: Five year plan

MP: Member of Parliament

MOWCA: Ministry Of Women and Children Affairs

NGO: Non-Government Organization

NAP: National Action Plan

PFA: Platform For Action

UP: Union Parishad

SNA: Sectoral Needs Assessments

TNO: Thana Nirbahi Officer

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

VGD: Vulnerable Rural Development

VGF: Vulnerable Group Feeding

WAC: Women Action Committee

WID: Women in Development

WEM: Women Elected Member

Glossary

Chowkidar: Rural Police

Dafader: Messenger

Palli Parishad: A local body of the village level

Panchayet: A village council usually consisting of five members who manage the affairs of the village

Pouroshova: Municipality

Swanirvar Gram Sarker: Self sustaining local government at the village level

Upozila: Sub-district

Union: Smallest local administrative (local govt unit) unit of rural area which is comprised of mauzas and viallages is known as Union. A Union has a Union Parishad

Zila: Diatrict

Zaminder: Landlord

Upozila Nirbahi Officer: A Civil Servant deputed by the government to the Upozila parishad as Chief Executive Officer

Ward:Smallest local administrative (local govt unit) unit of urban area is called a ward. Ward has a Ward parishad (council).

Executive summary

This thesis looks on women's involvement in union parishod, the first tier of local government system in Bangladesh. Where the female population of Bangladesh has been estimated at 130 million representing 49% of the total population in every strata of existing society they are downgraded and male are blessed with an authoritative positions and till now women are subordinate part of the society. Women status in the society and their participation in socio-economic and political fields are very low. Therefore, in most cases, women are passive beneficiary but not active participants in development process.

According to Bangladesh constitution, article 10, 11, 19, 27, 28 focused on the equal rights for all citizens. Then article 9, 59, 60 especially mentioned about the equal participation in local government. To implement this constitutional position, the government has already undertaken several noteworthy efforts towards integrating the women's agenda in to the broader policy. These include (i) in the fifth year plan (1997-2001) adopted the mainstreaming of women's development approach; (ii) declaration of the National Policy for Advancement of Women; and (iii) adoption of the National Action Plan (NAP) for Advancement of Women (iv) Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA).

Recently, women's political participation is an ever-increasing rate. In national level politics, since independence Bangladesh has had a total of five heads of the state through direct election. Amongst them, two are women. They had not had a political career before both of them inherited the top position in their political party due to a tragic

incident. Despite the unique experience of having two women exist both in prime minister and leader of opposition position, women's participation in decision-making level is in minimum level. Only six women came into the position of cabinet minister since independence (Chowdhury 2003). Parliament is the place of representation of women in formal political participation. According to article 65 in constitution fifteen seats reserved for women for 15 years who will be elected indirectly by the elected 300 legislators. This step was taken considering women as in backward position and ensuring their participation in government (Chowdhury 2003). This number increased to 30 later on and finally this arrangement is done for 45 (14th amendment of constitution in 8th parliament, 2004) of seats.

This research paper investigates about empowerment of women in grassroots level in Bangladesh and their changing status in both private and public spaces.

Union Parishad

The basic structure of the local government institutions at the Union parishad" level, keeping the villages as the focal point of all development activities. Such a structure could be free from undue pressure from the center, at the same time accountable to the people at the local level, through the establishment of a 'mini house' in each union comprising elected representatives from each of the villages in that Union. There are about 4440 union Parishad in Bangladesh. These union parishad are from 460 thanas, where each thana may have only nine to ten union parishad on an average (Rahman, 1997:5). The nomination system has been replaced in 1997 at the union Parishad level. Now three women members in each Union would be elected by direct election. Beside, the number of three wards were replaced by

Nine wards. Each of the three wards are made into a reserved ward by women. The Election Commission for the first time in 1997 has made the provision for electing three women members for in the reserve seats in each union through direct election.

The union Parishad election held in 1997 is a milestone in the history of women in Bangladesh. Government has made a law of direct election in reserved seats, which was a major initiative by the government for ensuring women's participation in the union Parishad. It was held in 4276 unions, 103 women contested for the chairmanship and among them won 20 women. For the general membership, women candidates were 456 and out of them 110 won. Before, the three reserve seats for women were filled through nomination. For 12,828 reserved sets for women, 44134 women contested and 12,828 won. It is also worthwhile to mention that in the 1997 election the member of female voters increased to 85% (Ittefak, 2000). In the 2003 election, which were held in 4228 unions, 232 women contested for the chairmanship and among them won 22. For the general membership women candidates were 617(out of them) and 85 won.

Women UP members' basic profile

It has been found that most of the women members came from rural peasant class. They have less educational attainment. About two-third of their husbands are involved in farming or small business. Most of them do not have independent income source and 71% were not involved with politics before and just only 28% were involve with politics from earlier.

Getting involvement in UP

Regarding the encouragement or influence on participating in the UP election, 42% told about many sources. Following that, 35% got mental support from their husband, 28% participated from their own interests, 14% encouraged by local people to participate in the election, 7% got encouragement from their family.

In election campaign, 42% got support from different sources, 28% got support from their husband, 21% got help from local people as a campaign associate, 14% got help from relatives, 7% said their father's family also worked in election campaign and 7% mentioned about other source.

Regarding election expenses, 42.8% respondent said they got that money from many sources. The other sources are 21.5% got support from their husband, 14.2% collect money from natal family, 14.2% got loan from their relatives and only 7.14 % expend money from their own sources.

About obstacles had to face in election, most of the women member said financial support was main obstacle in election period. As they had no own income source so they were dependent on their husband or other sources. Another problem was religious obstacle. Moreover due to social custom they did not move freely for campaign, and their family also did not support them always.

About their interest of getting involved in UP, all of them said they came in politics for doing some development work in their local area.

Activities as women UP member

Especially for women

The major concern area considered by the women members are working for reduce dowry, polygamy and early marriage. They also work for (86%) resolve conflict between couples. Following that 42.86% response came for trying to provide VGD card, VGF card, relief, and old age allowance to vulnerable poor women. They (28.5%) arrange schooling for poor girls. They work for reducing (21.4%) violence against women. They also focus on girls' education and hence try to ensure ensuring girls stipend (21.4%). They (14.9%) also try to give all kind of government facilities to women.

In general for their area

In general for there local area, most of the respondent said (57.14) that they have worked for road construction of their local area. They (35.71) are working for sanitation and schooling for poor children. They helped to the flood affected people (21.4%). They (14.29%) distributed latrine, tube-well to the local people. They also organize workshop/meeting with elite person for discussing and aware them about polygamy.

Reason of less participation

According to women members (57.14 %), financial crisis is one of the major reasons of less participation of women in UP because they do not have self-earning source. Hence they have to depend on their earning family members to contest in the election. Lack of political awareness of women considered (50%) as another main reason. As most of the women are housewife hence always engage with household work and they feel this is their main duty as women. Less courage, less education, unawareness is another mentionable reason of

women's less participation in UP. Other opinions are women are weak, less confident (42.86%), low honorarium (28.5%), discrimination and non-cooperation of male members in UP (28.5%), disagreement from Family (21.4%), lack of women organization (14.29%).

Perception of Steps need to be taken to increase their participation

To increase women participation in Union Parishad 64.2% women members think that first priority should be increase the political awareness. According to 50% women member women members should be valued perfectly in Union Parishad, which is almost absent in present situation. A large number women members (50%) feel that increase of honorarium for all members specially for women can enhance their interest in attending UP activities. Some women member (35.71%) feel, government facilities should disseminate equally to all members. Another steps in considered by them to increases their awareness through different trainings or workshops.

Perception of responsibility of UP member

About perception of responsibility of a UP member, highest number of women member responded (85.71%) major responsibility is to resolve the problem of local people. Then 71.42% respondent focused on the responsibility of distribute government relief to local people adequately. Furthermore, 50% mentioned about their responsibility to help to the poor women. After that 42.85% said as women member their responsibility is to aware all women about polygamy, dowry. Then 42.85% wants to assure the birth and death registration. The other noticeable responses are to aware women about early marriage and family planing, work for progressing the sanitation programme, to ensure to education for the poor.

Achievement as a UP member

While asked them what kind of achievement they have got as a UP member, 85.71% respondents said that after elected as an UP member it increased their status in both and family and society. Then they (50%) prioritized as their achievement to get scope of build up good relation with different organizations. They also (42.85 %) said that they are now able to help the people. It's also considered as a great achievement to get different training and additionally getting honor from GO and NGOs.

Family obstacles in performing of UP duties

Though the family members support their candidature during the election, but after the election their engagements in outside is not very much appreciated or encouraged by family members. Family does not prefer women member's returns at home in late. Often it has been seen that they cannot give enough time for household work or childcare. Especially as they cannot give any financial support to the family from UP activities so family members feel there is no value in this kind of work.

Scope created in private space

A large number of respondents (71.43%) said that their family members consider them as an important person after they had started work for people through UP. Moreover, 50% respondents feel that they are now able to take decision about the marriage of their children. Following that 42.86% respondent feel they are get more help for any kind of work from their husband. Then 35.71% Women elected member said that they can make there on decisions. Furthermore, 28.57% women members respond that not only their own family

member but also other family member/relatives come to them for taking advice from them such as about their children's marriage, property, family problem. They try to advise them appropriately. 21.4% respondent said that for their busyness they can not give enough time to household work but their family members are very much cooperative to complete the household work. 14.29% women spend their money by themselves. All women member fills as an elected member their salary is insufficient. Most of them said Government should increase it. Three women elected member out of twelve reported that they are now able to go anywhere for work. Another one respondent said that she did not give any kind of dowry for her daughter's marriage.

Scope created in Public space

A large number of respondent (71.43%) feel after elected as a UP member they have got own identity. Villagers known them as a UP member. 57.14% women members feel that their personal status in the society in general have been uplifted. 64.29% respondent feel that people honor them, which was unexpected before. 57.14% respondent said that, not only their own area but other places their social status increased very quickly after elected as a UP member. 50% said that they are now getting invitation for any local programme. 42.86% said they can give own opinion in the shalish which was unthinkable before. 35.71% said vulnerable people want their presence in the Shalish for fair judgement. 21.43% said that they are now known as a UP member to other UP chairman and members. 35.71% respondent reported that their children also get extra favor for their membership. 14.29% said that after selected of UP member they feel their knowledge is more increased and they can smoothly give any decision which was not possible before. 7.14% said it's increased their status at

Upazila level after elected as a UP member. Upazila officers also honor them. 7.14% said that people give more respect to them than the chairman for their good job.

Difficulties in Private and Public life

Difficulties in private life

Almost 64.29% women elected member reported that after elected as a UP member they can not give enough time to their household work. 50% respondent said that at present they don't give enough time to their children. 28.57% women member said that they had to spend money often to perform their leadership role and function. Because they themselves do not earn money, it is an additional burden on their family. 7.14% said If they don't get any project from UP husband will get angry with them because they feel this position has no value.

Difficulties in Public life

Most of the respondent said that UP chairman do not allocate resources and responsibilities to the women members equally like as male members. In addition women members reported that the lack of knowledge about their duties, make hindrances performing their duties properly. 64.29% said that honorarium is very little amount. They also said that sometimes people do not care to listen to their status: they want help from them through employment, money, wheat, etc. Beside this there is no extra provision of TA for attended at different meeting salish. 42.86% feel that transportation problem is one of the main problem for attend to all programmes. 35.71% women elected members said that they have no clear concept about their rights and responsibilities. Especially 28.71% respondent said that in the rural

area the “*Salish*” is normally held at night. As a result in spite of their willingness they cannot take part because of the insecurity. Conservative social norms in rural areas prevent their free movement as well. 14.29% respondent said that religion obstacle also one kind of problem of their public life work.

Difficulties in UP/ Operational activities in UP

78.57% respondent said that most of the project activities done by chairman and male members. Because of good relationship and same mentality, chairman give them all responsibilities of Union Parishad. 78.57% respondent feel that in most of the cases Chairman prefer decision of male members. Almost 50% reported that UP chairman do not allocate resources and responsibilities to the women members equally with the male members. 50% women members reported that when chairman formed lot of committees where they are not invited. Some of them are involved but they cannot play vital role in the committees. 42% respondent said that their chairman are corrupted. For getting any project they want money from women members. 35.71% said that in most cases chairman group take decision about the activities of the parishad. Though women members are given responsibilities to distribute VGF card among the effected people in the flood affected area, their decision making power are obstructed in different ways in the work of VGD. Adult allowance, relief etc. The women members are deprived from receiving any important information from their chairman. Women members can get only that information which is also available for general people. 42% said that most of the male member cannot accept their leadership. Most of the activity plans are made on the ward basis in a union parishad. Most of the wards are directed and controlled by the male members of the parishad. Women members who are elected on the basis of reserved

seat, they have no particular ward to do their activity as a result they are helpless against their male colleagues. Though WM get specific responsibility but at field level these are not implemented. 14.29% women elected members feel that they do not get any help from their local MP. It has been seen that women members are usually given assignments relating to family planning, cottage crafts, education, sanitation and women and children welfare related issues. They are also expected to deal with the women in the community but not with the men.

Analysis of women lower position

Generally women members have to face multifaceted obstacles, which includes broadly political, economical, and socio-cultural. Current political system is dominated by the patriarchy. The first and foremost constraint on women's participation in the political process is "patriarchy" which give women subordinate position than men. Domestic work and the responsibilities of bearing and rearing of children keep women tied to home. Economic dependence is a one of the key factor that limits the political participation of women. Religious practice and interpretation doctrines have veneered the social negative attitudes towards women's participation in politics.

Way out to overcome the limitations

Constitutional and legal reforms

The constitution has given equal rights for women but unfortunately these aims are hindered by a lack of clarity in the constitution on the role of local government. Constitutional and legal reforms should ensure that all elected members have significant responsibilities, rather than all authority being held by the chairman; the roles, duties and

authorities of all local government elected officials should be given in grater details; Modify the reserved seats system currently practiced. It needs to be revised either through allocation of equal number of women in each ward or through reservation of three general seats for women.

Education and training and financial solvency

Women need to be educated, so they easily understand all discrimination against them, realize their equal rights. Additionally training should be mandatory for the newly elected representatives to enhance their knowledge and skills in mobilizing local resources and management of development projects. In addition to this it needs to concentrate on their financial solvency, which can create their self confidence getting free from economic dependency to others.

Attitudinal changes of male counterparts, society and family members

Women elected members report that their participation in local government suffer due to social patriarchal attitude. As a consequence of that most of the time male elected members harbor negative attitude towards women elected members. Therefore education and training campaign should be directed toward men in local government, so that they understand the principles of the constitution that guarantees all people equal political rights. Moreover, all concerned actors, including NGOs, donors and the government should strive through education and public campaigns to foster values and attitudes of society that support woman's participation. Moreover, after marriage women feel this is the main place for them and their family members also want they will do only household work and husband is dominant to them.

So its also important to increase awareness of family member. Media can also play a vital role on awareness programme.

Some other recommendations are such as all political parties increase women candidate; GO-NGO coordination to emphasized in development planning and resource mobilization; Increase development allocation to UP; Steps must be taken to ensure women's equal access to local government facilities; Recognizing the special needs of women;

Specific Recommendations in UP level

There must be a clear conception and indication about the rights and responsibilities of the women members in the manual of the UP; In the distribution of all kind of cards the women members must be given priority; Increase the ability of the women members so that they can represent the demand of their locality logically and taking part in it to ensure the proper management; The govt. circular and information about direction have to be sent to the women members directly; In every meeting of Thana Development one women member from each union must be sent circularly; Male members can be sympathized towards the problems of the women member by organizing training, workshop, seminar and discussion meeting; provision should be made for secure transportation; Government allowance needs to be increased.

CONTENT

Certificate	i
Dedication	ii
Acknowledgement	iii
List of tables, graphs	v
Acronyms	vii
Glossary	viii
Executive summery	ix

CHAPTER- 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Justification of the study.....	1
1.2 Objective of the Research.....	2
1.3 Research question.....	3
1.4 Methodology.....	3
1.5 Limitations of the research.....	16
1.6 Literature Review.....	17
1.7 Chapter planning.....	21

CHAPTER 2

STATUS OF WOMEN IN BANGLADESH

2.1 Women status in Bangladesh-a basic feature.....	25
2.2 Women status: in Constitution.....	26
2.3 Women in Government Development plan and Policy....	30
2.4 Women in the Election Manifestos of Mainstream Political Parties....	35

CHAPTER 3

UNDERSTANDING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

3.1 Local government.....	40
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3.2 History of Local government.....	41
3.3 Union parishad feature.....	53

CHAPTER 4

WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

4.1 Introduction.....	55
4.2 Women's political participation in National level.....	56
4.3 Women's political participation in Local level.....	60
4.4 Towards Equality of Men and Women in UP: Trend Analysis..	65

CHAPTER 5

A REVIEW OF UNION PARISHAD ELECTION 2003

5.1 Background.....	70
5.2 Feature of UP Election 2003.....	71
5.3 Positive and negative aspects of UP Election 2003.....	73

CHAPTER 6

WOMEN'S CHANGING POSITION IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC LIFE: DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS FROM FIELD STUDY

6.1 Demographic feature of women UP members.....	88
6.2 Getting involved in Union Parishad.....	92
6.3 Post- election phase.....	96
6.4 Reason of less participation of women in UP.....	101
6.5 Steps need to be taken to increase women's participation	104
6.6 Perception of responsibilities of UP member.....	107
6.7 Perception of Achievement as UP member.....	109
6.8 Family's role in performing UP duties.....	111

6.9 Scope created in private and public space.....	112
6.10 Difficulties in Private and Public life	122
6.11 Reflection from Focus Group discussion.....	132

CHAPTER 7

WAY OUT FOR MOVE FORWARD

7.1 Analysis of the reasons behind the obstacles of women's political participation.....	143
7.2 way out to overcome the constraints: Recommendations from the research.....	147

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION.....	157
Appendix One.....	160
Appendix Two.....	162
Appendix Three.....	166
Reference	178

Chapter- 1

Introduction

1.1 Justification of the study

1.2 Objective of the Research

1.3 Research question

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 Primary field research

1.4.1.1 Site selection and rationale

1.4.1.2 Feature of Sampling areas

1.4.1.3 Sampling, Methods and techniques for data collection

1.4.1.4 Data documentation and analysis

1.4.1.5 Unit of analysis

1.4.1.6 Ethical dimensions relevant to study

1.4.1.7 Validity and reliability

1.4.2 Secondary Information

1.5 Limitations of the research

1.6 Literature Review

1.7 Chapter planning

This chapter is the introductory chapter of the research. In This chapter I will explain the justification of the study. Then I will make the objectives and based on that I will set out the research questions. After that I will discuss the detail methodology of the research including sampling area selection, data collection methods and instruments, ethical statement. Then it will cover the limitation of the research and finally it will give an idea of the chapter planning for the whole research paper.

1.1 Justification of the study

Bangladesh have a big size of population, where 49 percent are women. Empowerment for women is a fundamental claim for gender equality. But women participation in politics is lower in our country. Recently their political participation is increasing at the local level but that is not satisfactory. Hence to understand the actual feature of women's participation and status is very important. ✓

Women's participation in local government system remained very minimal in Bangladesh. Women were first elected to local bodies in 1973. The number of women in elective positions of chairman and members in the union and upazila parishads and in municipalities is abysmally low. Union parishad is the main lair for rural women to participate in the local government institution. In 1997 through an Act, the Government reserved three seats for women in the Union Parishad where women members are elected from each of the three respective wards. Apart from the reserve seats women can also contest for any of

the general seats. Previously the process of selection of representative was on the basis of nomination and / or indirect election.

To get a holistic picture of any issue, it is important to identify the relevant factors involved in creating it, as well as the dynamics of the relationships between those relevant factors. Therefore this research paper investigates women's involvement in Union Parishad covering all relevant aspects. This research paper investigates about empowerment of women in grassroots level in Bangladesh and their changing status in both private and public space.

1.2 Objective of the Research

The **objectives** of the research are:

- To identify the women status in grass roots politics
- To review of Local government system in Bangladesh
- To evaluate the present structure and functions of Union parishad as the focal point of the Local government institution and analyze the role of women as elected member
- To know the basic profile of women members in Union Parishad
- To identify women members' involvement in different kinds of activities in Union Parishad

- To identify the scopes and constraints women members face in Union Parishad
- To get a holistic picture of women's changing status in both private and public space.

1.3 Research question

Therefore, the **Research questions** are:

First research question is:

- What kinds of changes came in women's private and public life through participation in Union Parishad?

Second research question is:

- Is a legislative action adequate enough and sufficient to empower women in grassroots level politics or changes in social attitude is more important?

1.4 Methodology

The research is based on information collection on from primary sources and secondary sources.

1.4.1 Primary field research

This section explains the detail of the research methodology which covers research area, sampling procedure and research methods and tools.

1.4.1.1 Site selection and rationale

The benchmark of any research depends upon the right selection of research site. Study site should be selected considering the objective and the nature of a given study. I have selected my research sites based on my research topic and research methods. As in all districts of Bangladesh Union parishad exist, considering time and process of field work I have chosen two districts and one thana from each districts. Firstly, two districts have been selected based on their different distance from capital city Dhaka. The first district i.e. Tangail is close to Dhaka, the capital city while the second district i.e. Gaibandha is quite distant from the capital and the communication is much restricted. Another important reason to choice these two districts to get easy access as For my Office work these two districts are my field area where I have regular and good contact, which is very important to make trust in the site, build rapport with the respondents and through that collect quality data. The total research area covered to 8 Union Parishad under Gaibandha and Tangail district. Out of three Union Parishad of Shagata Upozila under Gaibandha district and other five were selected from Tangail sadar and kalihatiupazila under Tangail district.

1.4.1.2 Feature of Sampling areas

Researcher has worked eight union under shagatta thana and Kalihati thana.

Saghatta Thana: One sample area

Background

Saghatta, the second smallest thana of Gaibandha zila in respect of area, came in to existence in 1905. Three unions have covered under

Shagatta thana of Gaibandha district for this research. Nothing is definitely known about the origin of the thana name. It is said that in the past some Hindu Shah family settled in the present place of the thana adjacent to a ghat of the river Jamuna . The place got prominent as a business center due to great contribution of that shah family. Consequently, in combination with the words Shah and Ghat the place was named as Saghatta.

Area and Location

The thana occupies an area of 225.67 sq.km.including 7.54 sq.km. river area . It is located between 25°02'' and 25°14' north latitudes and between 89°29'and 89°40' east longitudes. The thana is bounded on the north by Gaibandha sadar thana., on the east by Islampur thana of Jamalpur zila and Fulehhari thana, on the south by Sonatala thana of Bogra zila and on the west by Gobindagonj, the Palashbari thanas (Bangladesh Population Census 1991, Gaibandha 1994).

Union, Mauza and Village characteristics

The thana consists of 10 unions, 117 mauzas and 132 villages. The average population of each union ,mauza and village are 23,212, 1,984 and 1,758 respectively (Bangladesh Population Census 1991, Gaibandha 1994).

Housing and household characteristics

Housing condition of rural area dominates the housing pattern of the whole thana although the housing condition differs in urban area. The percentage distribution of construction materials of roof of the main house of the dwelling households. In the thana there are 43,474

households. In all 84 of them are tribal households. Distribution of households there are 99.42% dwelling units, 0.07% institutional units and 0.51% other units. In the thana 73.28% of the dwelling households depend on agriculture as the main source of household income with 43.96% on cultivation /share cropping, .034% on livestock, 0.01%forestry and 1.30% fishery, 0.06% pisciculture and 27.61% as agricultural labor. Other sources of household income are non-agricultural labour (1.58%), business(9.37%)and employment (6.05%).

In urban area main sources of household income are business(23.38%), employment (23.06%), non agricultural labor (1.78%) and agriculture(17.56%).

Population Characteristics

The thana has a population of 232,118 of which 117,764 are males and 114,354 are females. The sex ratio of the thana is 106 males per 100 females as against 100 males per 100 females as against 100 males per 100 females in 1981. The decadal population growth rate is 36.95% and annual compounded growth rate is 3.19%.

Literacy (7years and over)

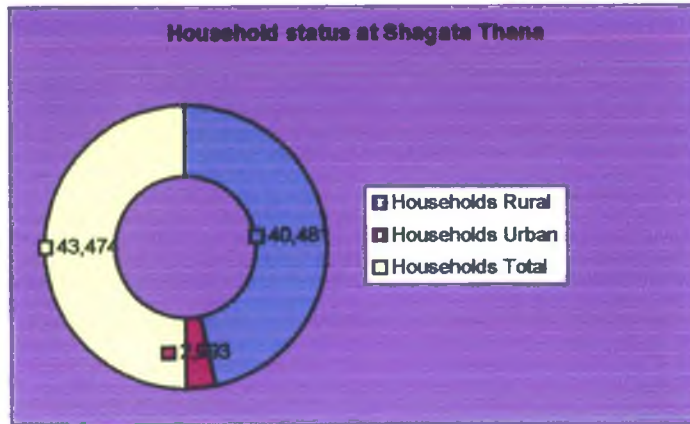
22.1% for sexes, 29.8% for male and 14.3% for female. In case of urban area it is 34.7%for both sexes, 43.5% for male and 24.9%for female which are higher as compared to the corresponding rates in rural area of 21.2% for both sexes, 28.7% for male and 13.5%for female. In the thana the literacy is the highest i.e. 28.3% in Bonarpara union and the lowest i.e 14.7% in Haldia union.

The child -women ratio (child0-4/women 15-49)

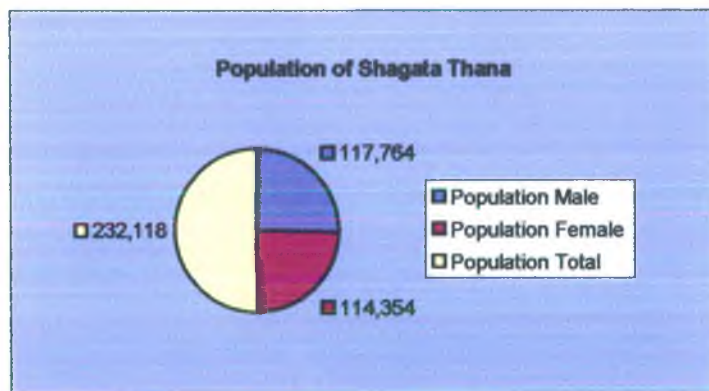
Per thousand for the thana, rural and urban areas are 1,111, 1,134 and 807 respectively.

Census Result of Shagata Thana at a glance

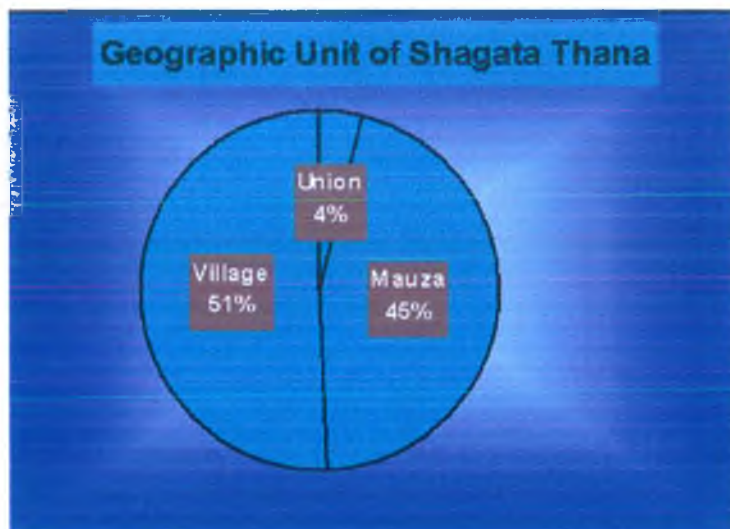
Graph 1:



Graph 2:



Graph 3:



Kalihati Thana: another sampling area

Background

Kalihati the third largest thana of Tangail zila in respect of population, came in to existence in 1893. Five unions have covered under Kalihati thana of Tangail district for this research. Nothing is definitely known about the origin of the thana name. It is learnt that in the past the people of hindu community used to celebrate their religious festival Kali puza with great pomp and grandeur. People from far and near gathered here to celebrate the puja. The rich people used to carry their belongings with elephants. As a result many elephants meaning Hati were gathered here due to this puza. There is a general belief that the thana might have originated its name from the above two words Kali and Hati.

Area and Location

The thana occupies an area of 301.22sqkm.including 3.21 sq.km. river area . It is located between 24°17` and 24°26`north latitudes and between 89°45`and 90°11`east longitudes. The thana is bounded on the north by Ghatal and Bhuapur thanas. on the east by shakhipur thana .on the south bt Tangail Sadar Basail thanas on the west by shirajganj sadar and Belkuchi thanas of shirajganj zila.

Union, Mauza and Village characteristics

The thana consists of 12 unions, 264 mauzas and 314 villages. The average population of union, mauza and village are 29,580. 1,345 and 1,130 respectively.

Housing and household characteristics

Housing condition of rural area dominates the housing pattern of the whole thana although the housing condition differs in urban area. The percentage distribution of construction materials of roof of the main house of the dwelling households. In the thana there are 65,035 households. In all 8 of them are tribal households. Distribution of households there is 98.93% dwelling units, 0.18% institutional units and 0.89% other units. In the thana 59.16% of the dwelling households depend on agriculture as the main source of household income with 41.35% on cultivation /share cropping, 1.72% on livestock, forestry and fishery, 0.06% pisciculture and 16.03% as agricultural labor. Other sources of household income are non-agricultural labour (2.98%), business (10.93%) and employment (8.72%). In urban area main sources of household income are business (26.55%), employment (13.97%), non-agricultural labor (2.79%) and agriculture (24.96%).

Population Characteristics

The thana has a population of 354,959 of which 182,982 are males and 171,977 are female. The sex ratio of the thana is 106 males per 100 females as against 105 males per 100 females in 1981. The population growth rate is 24.03% and annual compounded growth rate is 2.18%.

Literacy (7 years and over)

is 27.5% for both sexes, 35.1% for male and 19.2% for female. In case of urban area it is 36.7% for both sexes, 49.5% for male and 26.9% for female which are higher as compared to the corresponding rates in rural area of 27.2% for both sexes, 34.8% for male and 19.0% for

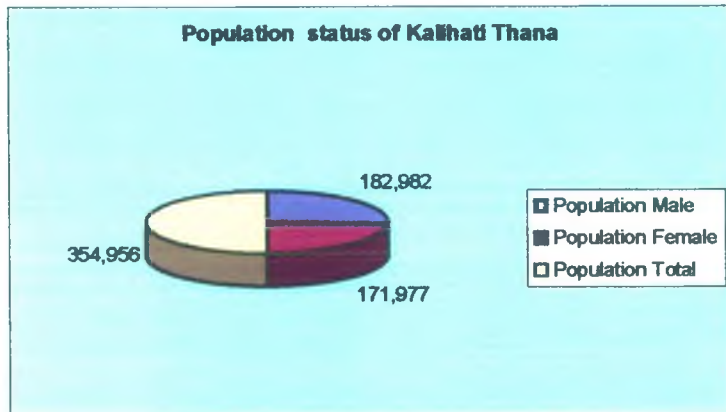
female. In the thana the literacy is the highest i.e. 33.8% in Kalihati union and the lowest i.e 22.7% in paikpara union.

The child -women ratio (child0-4/women 15-49)

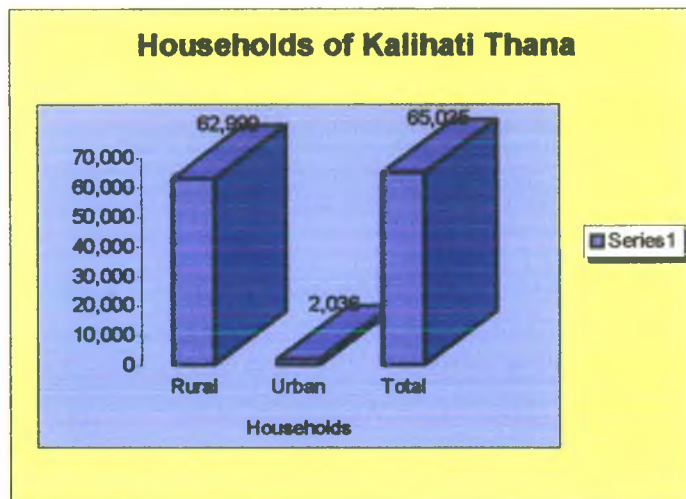
Per thousand for the thana, rural and urban areas are 809, 816 and 588 respectively.

Census Result At a Glance of Kalihata Thana

Graph 4:



Graph 5:



Graph 6:

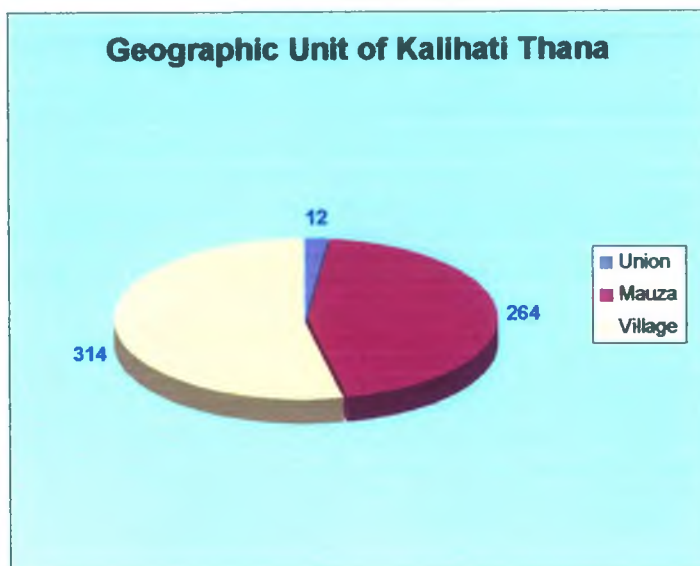


Table1: Name of working area and name of respondent

SL	Name of union	Name of Upazila	Name of District	Name of UP member
1.	Elenga	Kalihati	Tangail	Alea Begum & Maya Begum
2.	Shodebpur	Kalihati	Tangail	Kolpona Begum & Romecha Begum
3.	Mogra	Tangail Sadar	Tangail	Mono-ara Begum
4.	Gala	Tangail Sadar	Tangail	Majeda Begum , & Fulmoti Begum
5.	Paikara	Kalihati	Tangail	Muktirani chandra
6.	Muktinogor	Saghatta	Gaibandha	Nur Banu & Rekha Hamid & Rezia Begum
7.	Bharatkali	Saghatta	Gaibandha	Shahana Begum & Rezia Sultana
8.	Saghatta	Saghatta	Gaibandha	Shamsun Nahar

Table2: Name of working union under Saghatta thana

Name of union	Population Male	Population Female	Total	literacy Male	literacy female	Total
Muktinagar	9334	9403	18737	31.9	14.8	23.3
Bharatkali	9456	9390	18846	34.0	18.5	26.3
Saghatta	8822	8711	17533	29.9	14.0	21.9

Souce-Bangladesh Population Census 1991, Community Series
Zila- Gaibandha, June 1994

Table3: Name of working union under Kalihata thana

Name of union	Population Male	Population Female	Total population	Literacy Male	Female	Total
Elenga	15820	15136	30956	34.4	19.6	27.2
Sahadebpur	13208	12900	26108	38.7	21.0	30.2
Mogra	1397	1349	2746	40.2	22.4	31.5
Gala	11181	10862	22043	37.8	21.8	29.9
Paikara	14202	13425	27627	29.7	15.3	22.7

Source-Bangladesh Population Census 1991. Community Series
Zila- Tangail. March 1996

1.4.1.3 Sampling, Methods and techniques for data collection

A sample is a representative portion of population. There are many ways to draw a sample from the population such as probability and non-probability with their sub-categories. Selection of a sample for a given study depends on the nature and objectives of the study, population size in the study area, time, fund and staff availability of the study. Based on the research questions, mainly qualitative data collection methods have been employed for exploring the women UP members' life. These are case study and group discussion methods. As a data collection tool I have used survey questionnaire (quantitative tool) for the case study. Since this is basically a qualitative research, I have selected eighteen respondents from eight unions for in-depth interviews. But finally got fourteen respondents and I made three group discussions (women UP members, family members, male UP colleagues) in each site. A friendly atmosphere has been created with the respondents from the beginning, which has facilitated collecting their personal information. The main rationale of the information collection and analysis was to reflect the women UP members' views on strengths and weaknesses of the existing system of UP. Also the status of women empowerment in both sectors of **public** and **private**

and private life. Therefore, Highest attention gave to interviewing them following a open-ended questionnaire which was developed to cover socio-economic information of the elected women UP members, election related feature, understanding about the empowerment of their private and public life, and finally scopes and hindrances they face in both arena.

A debate exists whether case study is a method or an approach. Willing (2001) takes the latter view, and argues that case study embraces other data collection and analysis method, therefore it enables triangulation. Triangulation is an approach to analyze the same information by employing different analytical methods. (Hayes, 2000). Case study enables to holistically capture the experiences of UP members family members with great details. Furthermore, the use of case study has helped me in gathering tangible and intangible information including their empowerment, problems, scopes and mental stresses.

I have also made use of group discussion, which is one of the qualitative data collection methods. Group discussion is an important way of listening to people and learning from them. This method has enabled me to gain basic information concerning women UP members life from their male UP colleagues and their family members point of view.

1.4.1.4 Data documentation and analysis

With the aim of collecting accurate information, I have visited the study area different times. I have spent the first day with the villagers and introduced myself. Then, I have conducted case studies and group discussions. I have attempted to record information while talking with the respondents. As soon as returning from the field, I wrote down the more detail information in accordance with the questions (more detail they said during the interviews) and also wrote

down my observations. To present accurately and precisely what I want to unfold in this study, several data analysis strategies were applied so that the readers can easily understand what I intend to show in this thesis. Different types of data have been gathered but similar sorts of data have been categorized based on type. After categorization, data have been analyzed by referring to the relevant existing studies and literature on UP. The fictitious names of the respondents are used in the case studies for the ethical reason.

1.4.1.5 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis is the basic entity or object, which generalizations are to be made, based on an analysis, and for which data are collected. The unit of analysis of this study is a individual.

1.4.1.6 Ethical dimensions relevant to study

Social research is a dynamic process where researchers and respondents are related on the basis of mutual trust and corporation (Sarantokos, 1998). Also ensures well-accepted conventions and expectations. Based on these relationships, researchers enter research fields with relatively few limitations and a wide range of options for actions. After explaining the purposes of my study and procedures of data collection and developing good initial relationships with respondents, the collection of information has been started. I have introduced myself to the villagers as a student of the University of Dhaka. I have always been conscious about this and tried my best to make my intentions clear. It has been always in my mind that it would not be possible to conduct a good research without spontaneous responses from the respondents. Throughout the study, the respondents have been treated with respect. Without their consents it would have been impossible to collect information. My aim has been to collect latent or sensitive information without disclosing their names and data to the third party and harming them. I did not force them to discuss in

detail on those issues which would make them embarrassed or uncomfortable. I also allowed them to leave unanswered questions if they did not want to be open. Ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity, my major aim has been, at the time of collecting data and translating them into the report, to present actual data.

1.4.1.7 Validity and reliability

It has been my responsibility to protect validity and reliability of data and the methods used in this study. I have been always aware of validity because it has dealt with the appropriateness of the method to the research question and the interpretation of the data. With a view of protecting the quality of the qualitative study, some criteria, namely credibility, neutrality, consistency or dependability and applicability or transferability are essential (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The terms "trustworthiness" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and "rigor" (Morse et al, 2002) are crucial in order to ensure reliability, which has been always in my mind while conducting this study. The study gave emphasis to maximize validity and reliability in all of its procedures. In order to improve validity and reliability, I have employed different methods for collecting data and their analysis. Morse et al. (2002) argue for verification of data, the data should be checked, maintained, fitted, analysed, and their interpretations should be monitored and confirmed systematically and constantly.

Firstly, the whole methodology was designed based on the research question. As I want to explore women UP members private and public life, I took case study method, a way to explore experiences by story telling through semi structured open-ended questioner interview which is the best way to collect detail in a meaningful way.

Secondly, triangulation. I conducted group discussion to know the perception of the family members and UP male colleagues. This gave me a useful result on some topics or informants and chance to triangulation with individual informants' thoughts and experiences, which I got through in-depth interviews.

1.4.2 Secondary Information

As an appropriate tools of social research, secondary information were collected from relevant books, journals, magazine, publication and news papers to understand women empowerment through political participation in Union Parishad. To analysis and interpret the primary data accurately relevant literatures guided me a lot. Hence, the use of secondary literature helped me to give a perfect shape of study findings.

1.5 Limitations of the research

I have faced a number of difficulties while conducting this research, and the main limitations are the following five. Firstly, I had plan to visit each women member at her residence. But due to communication problem in char area I had to change the plan in some cases. Although in most cases I have visited women UP members houses for interviewing them and other members of the family. But a few interviews were done in the Union Parishad to where it was impossible to reach over their house in that time for remote and difficult road communication.

Secondly, time constraint made some hazard. The political unrest situation forced me to change my work plan several times and took more time than I thought.

Thirdly, sometimes it was difficult to make clear the questions to respondents might not be fully understood. Finally, it was difficult to get all chosen members. I had to change two women UP members, as I could not able to conduct interviews with two respondents.

1.6 Literature Review

This section explores the major literatures reviewed for the research as secondary sources.

Local Government in Bangladesh by Kamal Siddiqui, is a very helpful book for getting clear concept about governance and specially on local governance. This essay in this volume deal with all-important local-level institutions, covering local administration, elected local government bodies and both formal and informal civil society organizations. Their main objective has been to analyze the different problems of local governance and on this basis suggest practical remedial measures.

Local Government in South Asia is another important book on local government. Mainly it is a comparative study. Kamal Siddiqui has explained the whole status of local government structure of South Asia. In Bangladesh chapter I have got total history of local government from Ancient period to Bangladesh period. He gives us a clear concept on rural and urban local government by this book. Beside he analyze comparative relationship between local government of Bangladesh and local government of other

countries. At least he also recommends for formation a active local government in the country.

Administration of local government for rural areas in Bangladesh, written by Ali Ahmed. In this book he examines the problems of rural administration by local bodies and treats each problem with scholarly detachment.

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

Women in the Union Parishad: A Changing Trend: written by Mozammel Huq and A.K.M Mohi Uddin. The Union Parishad election of 1997 is a milestone in the history of the political empowerment of women in Bangladesh. This is definitely a positive move towards empowering women at the grass roots level. But it's true that they cannot get chance to play a active role in the Union Parishad. This research work also analyzes women's participation in the local government from British period to Bangladesh period. This book discusses the profile of 35-elected female member of Union Parishad with specific case study. Both researchers have identified at present

what's the role of women member in the Union Parishad. They also find out their (women members) problem, limitations and possibilities in the union Parishad. They also compare the women status in the election manifesto of all political parties.

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

The constitution has been in effect from 16 December 1972. The constitution recognize the basic and fundamental rights. The constitution also made help special provisions for establishing and promoting governance at the local level by promoting democratically elected local government institutions. The constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh help to know me equal rights of women and provision of local government.

Election manifesto reflects the priority of the political parties as well as their political commitment towards the demands of different groups. So the contribution of political parties is a vital thing for defining the political contribution of women. The constitution & election manifesto of some of the chief political parties what are discussed in order to know their political ideology. Of them Bangladesh Awami League constitution & proclaimed in 2001, Bangladesh National Party, Jatiyo party, Eleven Party.

As fifth year plan is the summation of government principles, so it should be discussed in details. In order to collect detail information regarding various accepted initiative on the 5th years plan of the country it's taken various clue from first, second, third & fourth years plan. Besides, the book on **Development planning & women:**

women development and planning Bangladesh Perspective by Tahmina Akter published by Bangla academy is very mentionable in this respect. The book conveys necessary information of 5th years plans of the country.

At the same time to know women's participation & position in politics, it's essential for women to take part in different related sector.

Statistical yearbook of different years published by Bangladesh Bureau of statistics helps especially for this purpose.

Of women development association one publication entitled as "**The position of womanhood in Bangladesh**" is an informative publication. It is found distinct idea concerning the position of women in several stages of politics in such publication.

The position & role of state is very significant in respect of international document. In this connection an essay belongs to Maleka Begum entitled as '**UNO & Bangladesh according to women equity and national committee on Beijing plus five review**, the report on the **Review of Beijing plus five discussion –June 2000 Bangladesh** is worth mentioning. Both this two essay discussed about the inception of women movement, the consent of Bangladesh about the document of UNO & disapproval on some article & gave a complete view about the advancement of the state to implement the document.

The journals of **Social Science Review** are very helpful publication for getting different kind of information about women in politics in Bangladesh. Women's representation in national parliament and local bodies. There are lots of article published about women's status according to Bangladesh perspective.

Beside this publication, several reports acted as most important document. UNDP and ADB report played a vital role to develop women's political position, possibility to increase political representation.

Though it is taken help from different relevant compositions for the sake of research. Yet, it is mentioned about most significant publication in this discourse.

1.7 Chapter planning

Chapter One: Clarifies the major thrust areas of the paper with its objectives. It discusses the methodology of the research and finally the key concepts which are important to theorize the topic.

Chapter Two: This chapter explained women status in Bangladesh. Such as Women in constitution, women in government plans, women in the election manifestos of mainstream political parties.

Chapter Three: Introduces the background information of the local government , its organogram .Structure of Union Parishad and organogram of union parishad shown in this chapter.

Chapter four: This chapter explained women's political participation in Bangladesh at national level and local level.

Chapter five: Women's involvement in Union Parishad from 1997 to 2003 is elaborately described in this chapter.

Chapter six: Discussion on field findings from field study is presented in this chapter.

Chapter seven: Way out for move forward has explained in this chapter. This chapter hopes to point a way out to resolve the existing problems by ensuring entitlement option through ensuring application of laws for the poorest women and also help to bring changes in the applicable approach for both government and non-government agencies.

Chapter eight: Finally, the whole discussion is summarized in concluding chapter.

-  Working Area (Upazila)
-  Working Area (Union)



-  Working Area (Upazila)
-  Working Area (Union)



Chapter 2

Status of women in Bangladesh

2.1 Women status in Bangladesh-a basic feature

2.2 Women status: in Constitution

2.3 Women in Government Development plan and Policy

2.3.1 Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)

2.3.2 Beijing 95: Preparation and follow up

2.3.3 National Policy for Advancement of Women

2.3.4 National Action Plan for Advancement of Women

2.4 Women in the Election Manifestos of Mainstream Political Parties

2.4.1 Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)

2.4.2 Bangladesh Awami League

2.4.3 Jatyo Party (Earshad)

2.4.4 Left Front (11 Party alliance)

This chapter explains the women status in Bangladesh. To explore the actual feature, it first gives a basic feature of women status and then it explained in detail what are the position of women in the constitution, in government planning, and political parties position about women.

2.1 Women status in Bangladesh-a basic feature

Where the female population of Bangladesh has been estimated at 53.3 million during representing 49% of the total population (Task force 1990) in every strata of existing society they are downgraded and male are blessed with an authoritative positions.¹ By traditional socio-institutional and cultural norms, custom and beliefs women have a much lower status compared to men. Historically Bangladeshi women were confined to the household. Throughout their life they spend their time as unpaid labor force and are considered as economically inactive as well. An overwhelming majority of women are illiterate, malnourished, poor and deprived. They are generally not involve in the decision making process of the family and do not represent in the central Government and local Government institution as well. In fact gender inequality is established through socio economic inequality, distribution of at authority and assets between sexes as determined by the family organization and social stratification. In Bangladesh here neither strong infrastructure support nor institutionalized women demand exists to develop the psychological condition of women folk.

Bangladeshi women contribute substantially to their households and to the country's economy, the majority of women workers are primarily involved in the informal sector of the economy. Within the formal

¹ At present the total population of Bangladeshis 122.7million (1997) Source *Human Development Report 1999 UNDP*.

sector, a large number of women work in export-oriented industries (e.g garments) the source of 70% of Bangladesh's foreign exchange. A significant number of women also work as teachers, lawyer, journalists, government employees, and for non-government organizations (NGO's) (ADB Report August 2001). Their activities, in turn, contribute to the transformation of traditional values and gender roles of Bangladesh women (ADB report 2001). But undeniably it's true that till now women are most vulnerable part of the society. Women status in the society and their participation in socio-economic and political fields are very low. So women are passive beneficiary not active participants in every revolution, change and even in development process.

In Bangladesh, in terms of status, women get only specific welfare and family planning projects as their share in total development planning. In fact on the basis of indicators related to health, marriage and children education, employment, politics and social equality the status of women in Bangladesh has been rank lowest.²

2.2 Women status: in Constitution

Bangladesh adopted a liberal and democratic Constitution after its independence in 1971. The constitution has been in effect from 16 December 1972. The constitution recognizes basic and fundamental rights of the citizens irrespective of the Gender, creed, cast, religion and race. It also makes provision for promoting causes of the backward sections of the population. The Constitution also made special provisions for establishing and promoting participatory governance at the local levels by promoting democratically elected local government institutions. The related articles of the constitution

² ADB Report "Country Briefing paper Women in Bangladesh" August 2001.

may be seen in the following few passages, which indicate its popular democratic intent.

Article 10: Steps shall be taken to ensure participating of women in all spheres of national life.

Article 11: The republic shall be a democracy in which fundamental human rights and freedom and respect for the dignity and worth of human person shall be guaranteed and in which effective participation by the people through their elected representatives in administration at all levels shall be ensured.

Article 19: (1) The state shall endeavor to ensure equality of opportunity to all citizens.

(2) The state shall adopt effective measures to remove social and economic inequality between men and women and to ensure the equitable distribution of wealth among citizens, and of opportunities in order to attain a uniform level of economic development throughout the republic.

Article 27: All citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of the law.

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

(2) Women shall have equal rights with men in all spheres of the state and of public life.

(3) No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth be subjected to any disability, liability,

restriction or condition with regard to access to any place of public entertainment or resort, or admission to any educational institution.

(4) Nothing in this article shall prevent the state from making special provision in favor of women or children or for the advancement of any backward section of citizens.

Article 29 (1) There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in respect of employment or office in the service of the republic.

(2) No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, castes or place of birth, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect of any employment or office in the service of the Republic.

(3) Nothing in this article shall prevent the state from:

- Making special provision in favor of any backward section of citizens for the purpose of securing their adequate representation in the service of the republic;
- Giving effect to any law that makes provision for reserving appointments relating to any religious or denominational institution to persons of that religion or denomination;
- Reserving for members of one sex any class of employment or office on the ground that it is considered by its nature to be unsuited to members of the opposite sex (Sultana 2004.).

Specifically for local government

Article 9: The state shall encourage local government Institutions composed of representatives of the areas concerned and

in such institutions special representation shall be given, as far as possible, to peasants, workers and women.

Article 59:(1) Local government in every administrative unit of the republic shall be entrusted to bodies, composed of persons elected in accordance with law.

(2) Everybody such as is referred to in clause (1) shall, subject to this constitution and any other law, perform within the appropriate administrative unit such functions as shall be prescribed by Act of parliament, which may include functions relating to:

- Administration and work of public officers;
- The maintenance of public order;
- The preparation and implementation of plans relating to public services and economic development.

Article 60: For the purpose of giving full effect to the provisions of article 59, the parliament shall, by law, confer powers on the local government bodies referred to in that article, including power to impose taxes for local purposes, to prepare their budgets and to maintain funds.

The constitution makes particular reference to women in democratic and local government. Bangladesh, although economically one of the least developed countries, puts no legislative barrier in the way of promoting gender equality in the sphere of social, political, and economic activities. The constitution does not leave any ambiguity in respect of equal rights regarding political participation, association, voting and other civil liberties.

2.3 Women in Government Development plan and Policy

The integration of women's concerns and needs in to development planning has both socioeconomic and political considerations. The government has already undertaken several noteworthy efforts towards integrating the women's agenda in to the broader policy and plan framework. These include (i) formulation of the fifth year plan (1997-2001) adopting the mainstreaming of a women's development approach; 9ii) declaration of the National Policy for Advancement of Women; and (iii) adoption of the National Action Plan (NAP) for Advancement of Women: Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA).

2.3.1 Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)

The Macro Chapter on Women's Development in the Fifth Five Year plan has endorsed mainstreaming as the strategy for women's development. The plan recognized the roles of all sectors in mainstreaming women's development and emphasized the policy and advocacy roles of MOWCA. The Macro and Micro chapters on women's development of the plan stressed the importance of implementing the national policy and the NAP for Advancement of Women. The following are the broad objectives of women's development as mentioned in the Micro Chapter on Women's Development of the Fifth Five –Year Plan:

1. Incorporation of National Policy on Women's Advancement to empower women economically, politically and legally.
2. Introduce a provision of direct election in the reserved seats for women in the Local Government to ensure women's participation in politics.

3. Develop an action plan to mainstreams women's agenda in development
4. Removal of reservation from some clauses i.e., 13(c) and 16 (f)
5. Include women in the high level policy and decision making process
6. Undertaking necessary steps for implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW);
7. Promoting of all sorts of rights for women –human, socioeconomic, legal, and political
8. Reducing the increasing burden of poverty on Women;
9. Increasing women's participation / representation in every stage of development;
10. Promoting capacity development;
11. Strengthening institutional development to increase women's development accountability;
12. Changing negative cultural values against women; and
13. Eliminating violence against women and girl children (ADB report 2001.)

For implementation, monitoring, and evaluation the Plan mainly emphasized the role of the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Department (MED), reviewed its strengths and weaknesses, and recommended mechanisms to improve its performance. However it did

not discuss the role of WID (Women in Development) focal points in the existing ministries or review their capabilities, or suggest any mechanism to improve the performance of and coordination between WID focal points. Thus the macro-sectoral WID policies remained rhetoric. Except for the core group sector, where 0.24 percent of the total sectoral allocation is set aside for women in agricultural development, no other multi sectoral program set aside allocation for WID activities. Even social sectors like education and health do not provide gender-desegregated allocation (ADB report 2001).

2.3.2 Beijing 95: Preparation and follow up

The Fourth World Conference on women at Beijing in 1995 mobilized the women of Bangladesh including the government and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA). As a preparatory activity, the government organized local level meetings with NGO's, women's organizations, and other members of civil society, and prepared a status report and PFA on women. The government adopted the Beijing PFA (Platform of Action) with out any reservation and took initiatives for preparing a follow –up action plan for its implementation. MOWCA was designation as the nodal ministry in behalf of the Government. It took the following actions:

(I) The entire PFA and its summary were translated in to Bengali and were made available to relevant persons and organizations. MOWCA also held a national level debriefing of the secretaries of all government ministries where the participants reviewed its relevance to their sectors. The ministries also reviewed the current planned budget allocation to identify existing policies, programs and projects that modification based on gender perspectives. This review facilitated the incorporation of the strategic objectives and suggested action in the PFA, recommended measures to minimize the gaps in

existing measures, and identified the revisions in terms of resource, personnel, and time frame for implementation. The sectoral ministries also recommended required changes in the existing mandate and structure of the institutions, and a review of the monitoring mechanisms for establishing inter-ministerial linkage and coordination for implementing the PFA.

- (ii) A high power inter-ministerial task force was set up in the MOWCA for the preparation of a participatory and representative action plan.

- (iii) A core established in January 1996 by the December of women Affairs (DWA) to assist the Task Force. The core Group consisted of women and Gender specialists who helped in the preparation of the action plan based on the directives given by the Beijing PFA.

- (iv) For the preparation of the Bangladesh Action Plan, a needs assessment of different sectors was undertaken in August 1996. The 14 sectoral ministries were Women and Children Affairs, Planning; Social welfare; Education; Home; Justice; Law and Parliamentary Affairs; Industry; Agriculture; Environment and Forestry Fishries and Livestock; Labor and Employment; Local Government; Rural Development and Cooperatives; Health and Family Planning; and information.

The objective of the (SNA) was to determine the present status of WID gaps and the interventions needed to incorporate the PFA in the NAP (ADB report 2001.P-32).

2.3.3 National Policy for Advancement of Women

The National Policy for Advancement of women and the NAP were formulated by MOWCA, based on SNA and other reports. Its main goals are to eradicate gender disparities from the society and to provide better options to women to ensure their participation in private and public life. However, the major challenges still remain in formulating sector-specific operational strategies with program interventions in the light of the National Policy³

2.3.4 National Action Plan for Advancement of Women

Following the Beijing PFA, the NAP was prepared and approved by the Government in 1997. A mainstreaming approach was adopted in formulating the NAP. The NAP includes the recommendations of 15 line ministries/divisions specifying objectives, indicators, resources, time limit, and activities to be undertaken. There is also one general matrix applicable for all other ministries in the NAP. The NAP emphasizes the strategy of mainstreaming women's development in all government policies and programs by sectoral ministries and agencies. The responsibilities for the implementation of the NAP was envisaged as coordination efforts of all 15 ministries/divisions. The goals of the NAP are given below:

- (i) to make women's development an integral part of the national development program;
- (ii) to establish women as equal partners in development with equal roles in policy and decision making in the family, community, and the nation at large;

³ For details see ADB report 2001 *Gender Dimensions of Policies and Programs*, P-33.

- (iii) to remove legal, economic, political, or cultural barriers that prevent the exercise of equal rights by undertaking policy reforms and strong affirmative actions; and
- (iv) to raise/create public awareness about women's different needs, interests, and priorities and increase commitment to bring about in women's position and condition (ADB report 2001).

2.4 Women in the Election Manifestos of Mainstream Political Parties

Election manifesto reflects the priority of the political parties as well as their political commitment towards the demands of different groups. Political parties used to attract voters and the media through the manifesto, and also defend the opponent in any democratic countries. Analysis of election manifestos of the mainstream political parties would provide a wider picture to see their stand and commitment towards women although there is a wide range critique that the manifestos are only lip service. Following are the commitment of different political parties.

2.4.1 Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)

- Increase number of seats for women in the parliament and introduce direct election (number of seats would be 64 for 64 district)
- Preference will be given to women's easy access to bank credit, employment, and in holding different positions

- Free education for women up to graduation level
- Combat violence against women and trafficking
- Women entrepreneurs will be given preference in running small and cottage industries⁴

Above-mentioned commitments have direct and indirect links with the advancement of women in the public arena. BNP has shown respect to the women's movement and also to the CEDAW and BPFA through its clear commitment towards increasing the number of seats for women in the parliament. Attention has given to women's mobility and participation in economic activities which eventually widen the opportunity of women in the decision making process. Easy access to bank credit and providing support to the women entrepreneurs in running small and cottage industries will widen the horizon of self-employment as well as innovative linkages with financial institutions. Free education for women is encouraging but huge allocation to the religious based Madrasha education is contradictory to women's empowerment. Nevertheless, BNP's election manifesto did not say any thing regarding the National Policy on Advancement of Women (Jatiyo Nari Unnayan Nitee) as well as ratification of CEDAW (Mainstreaming Women in Politics; 2003.P).

2.4.2 Bangladesh Awami League

- Sixty seats for women in the parliament and introduce direct election

⁴ Election Manifesto 2001, *Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)*.

- Social mobilization against crime committed against women
- Implementation of the National Policy on Advancement of Women (Jatiyo Nari Unnayan Nity)
- Preference to women's education
- Strengthen legal measures to protect the rights of women⁵

Bangladesh Awami League's commitment on increasing number of seats for women in the parliament and implementation of the National Policy on Advancement of Women (*Jatiyo Nari Unnayan Nity*) is recognition to women's movement in Bangladesh and BPFA as well. However, it did not clearly mention the nature of preference to women's education. The statement of scientific and people oriented education and patronizing *Madrasha* education is contradictory. Women's equal right to inheritance was the prior demand of women groups over the years but it is not clear how "protect the right of women" will be interpreted.

2.4.3 Jatyo Party (Earshad)

- Increased women's reserve seats from 30 to 60 in the parliament through amendment of the constitution
- Strengthen the family court to protect the rights of women
- Increase the number of school and college and introduce free education for all up to higher secondary level

⁵ Election Manifesto 2001, *Bangladesh Awami League*.

- Compulsory religious education at all levels⁶

Jatiyo party's commitment to increase the numbers of seats for women in the parliament through constitutional amendment is good but how they will be in place i.e., either through direct election or party nomination is not clear. From critical views it could be interpreted in such a way that Jatiyo party was indirectly pressurized to follow the mainstream political parties regarding this issues. On the other hand Jatiyo party's alliance with the *Islami Oikya Joot* had a pressure to incorporate compulsory religious education at all levels as well as special law to punish the persons against *shariah* is contradictory to women's development. Nevertheless, during the election campaign both the top leaders made gender insensitive comments against the women leadership, which is also incompatible with commitment (Mozammel Huq2003).

2.4.4 Left Front (11 Party alliance)

- Increase number of reserve seats for women in the parliament and introduce direct election
- Ensure women's participation and uphold women's dignity and rights to economic –social –political spheres
- Execute of CEDAW
- Elimination of discriminatory practices of the Family Law and the Law of Inheritance and integrate Universal Family Code
- Removal of patriarchal elements from the existing law

⁶ Election Manifesto2001, *Jatiyo Party(Earshad)*.

- Protect rural women from *Fatwa*
- Take appropriate measures to stop dowry, rape, acid throwing, abduction and trafficking
- Special provisions for women's advancement and elimination of wage discrimination between men and women⁷

Left Front's commitment found friendlier to women's issues. It is more relevant to the demand of women's movement in Bangladesh and to the International Convention, Covenant, and Declaration as well. Although they have positive attitude towards women yet it had limited pressure to others due to no representation in the parliament and also scanty support from the mass (Mozammel Huq2003).

It has found that the entire mainstream political parties were promised bound through the election manifestos regarding increase number of seats for women in the parliament although there was a distinction of opinion. However, still participation of women in the parliament is not discussed in the parliament even after eight session of the parliament. Now it becomes the question of willingness of the political parties. BNP clearly committed in their election manifesto regarding women representation through direct election in the reserved seats but finally they did not implement it and again selected women members by party nomination instead of direct election (Mainstreaming Women in Politics, P-12).

⁷ Election Manifesto2001(11 Party alliance)

Chapter-3

Understanding Local government

3.1 Local government

3.1.1 Local government Restructuring : Theoretical Analysis

3.2 History of Local government

3.3 Union Parishad Feature

3.3.1 Structure of Union Parishad

This chapter presents the definition of local government, history of Local Government, Structure of UP and its organogram, most of the information were collected from secondary sources.

3.1 Local Government

Duane Lockard defines local government as a 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. Local Govt. is at the bottom of a pyramid of governmental institutions, with the national government at the top and intermediate governments (states, regions, provinces) occupying the middle rung. Normally, local government has general jurisdiction and is not confined to the performance of one specific or service (Siddiqui, 1995:3&4).

In South Asia, local government is widely known as local self – government. In the U.N definition: ‘the term local self government refers to a political subdivision of a nation or state which is constituted by law and has sustainable control of local affairs, including the power to impose taxes or exact labor for prescribed purposes. The governing body of such an entity is elected or otherwise locally selected’ (Alderfer, 1964: 178). Local government as an efficient institution is a means to economic development (Hicks, 1964:6).

3.1.1 Local Government Restructuring: Theoretical Analysis

The dynamics of local government restructuring efforts are likely to be different in various countries due to the reflections of separate

ideology of ruling elite, the goal values of policy and the prevailing socio-economic and administrative situation (Morshed, 1997:115). Restructuring is meant to be an effort to apply new ideas and combination of ideas to administrative system with a conscious view improving the system for positive goals development (Lee, 1970:7).¹ According to Dror, restructuring is directed change of the main features of an system (Dror, 1977:177). Caiden defined administrative restructuring as ‘the artificial inducement of administrative transformation, against resistance’ (Caiden, 1965:65).

3.2 History of Local Government

Local politics is a much wider term and it covers a host of other areas beside local government. On the other hand Local administration means implementation of decision 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 and self-government either at central or provincial /status 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 Pakistan rule, which lasted for several centuries. It emerged as an independent and sovereign state on 16 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(Siddiqui; 1994:94).

¹ Rahman Mahbubur, *Local Government in Bangladesh: A study on institutional restructuring*, Social Science Review, vol-18, P-127.

To gain advantage from the discussion of historical background of local government the researcher has divided it in to 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.

The chapter reviews the experiences of past decentralization efforts and for this; the chapter is divided in to four sections along chronological lines. Section one represent an overview of the ancient period, section two reviews the British colonial experiences, section three examines the obstacles of decentralization programme initiated during the Pakistan period and section four analyses the programme, which have been introduced during the six successive regimes of Bangladesh.

3.2.1 The Ancient Period

The term local government is not a new idea in the history of Indian sub-continent village self-government in the Indo-Pakistan sub continent is as also old as the village themselves. Village people had to pay their taxes, and then they had to come in content 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 justification. 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. Each village was independent and self-governing unit, which was quite effective. These units were known as village *Panchayets*. Those *Panchayet* 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 *panchayat* remained largely unchanged in terms of their power, functions and status (Siddiqui; 1994:95). The system of Gram *Panchayat* may be identified as the unique pattern of Indian society (Hailey;1995:xii). In general it seems to be that five responsible person from the village formed ancient Gram *Panchayets* (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. (Siddiqui:17). The Mughals had developed an urban local government system and village local government system.

3.2.2 British Period (1765-1947)

The Bengal Village Chowkidari Act of 1870 was the British attempt to revive the traditional Panchayet system. It authorised the District Magistrate to appoint a *panchayet* at the village level, consisting of five members. The *panchayet* was given authority to appoint the village watchman, called the chowkidars, and to assess and collect taxes from the villagers to pay the salaries of the chowkidars. However it was a fully nominated body, refusal to be its member meant a fine of taka fifty. The district Magistrate could dismiss Panchayet members at will. The Panchayet could not remove the chowkidars. Also the sole purpose behind the creation of this body was to maintain law and order and serve British interests and, therefore, no real welfare functions were assigned to it. Under the 1885 Act three tiers of local bodies came in to operation –a) the District board in the District b) the Local

Board in a Sub-division and c) the union committee for a group of villages. The District Board consisted of nine members of whom two-thirds were elected and one-third nominated by the government for a period of five years. The district Board was headed by a Chairman who could either be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor or elected by members of the Board, subject to the approval of the Lieutenant Governor. The local board set up at the Sub-division level, consisted of not less than six members of whom two-thirds were to be elected and one-third was to be nominated by the government. Local Boards had no specific functions or responsibilities, nor their own sources of income. Their main function was to supervise the activities of the Union committees including disbursing grants to, and receiving reports from, the union committees.

Under the act a Union consisted of a number of villages covering an area about 12 square miles. Each Union committee had 9 members elected by the villagers. The Act of 1885 didn't provide for any chairman for the union committee. The function of the union committee included the management of local ponds, primary schools and roads. But the maintenance of law and order (watch and ward) rested with the *Chowkidari Panchayet*. These two bodies (union committee and panchayet) were to work side by side in the same areas. Local Boards and Union Committees had to discharge functions delegated by their superior bodies, upon whom they also depended for funds. Extensive bureaucratic control coupled with limited financial powers hampered the growth and operations of local self-government bodies and thus the general principles laid down by Ripon in the famous Resolution on Local Self-government of 1882 remained largely unrealized. Under this system Union Committees and Local Boards with very restricted powers became mere agents of the District board, which was for all practical purposes a unit of government

administration. The practice of appointing officials as Chairman of local bodies continued for years together although the Act of 1885 had also provisions for an elected chairman. Reform efforts in local self-government from 1885 onwards were conceived for administrative convenience and improvement rather than for meeting either national or local political aspirations. The next landmark in the development of local government during the British era was the Bengal Village Self – Government Act, 1919, which brought important changes in the structure of local bodies. A two replaced the three-tier system – tire system comprising Union Boards and District Boards. Under the Act, existing *Chowkidari Panchayet* and Union Committees were replaced by union Boards. A union Board usually consisted of 6 to 9 members of whom two-thirds were elected and one third nominated. The system of nomination was finally abolished in 1946. The members from amongst themselves elected the president and Vice president. In all matters, the Union Boards were to work under the supervisions of the Circle Officers who acted as representatives of District Magistrates. The Act did not replace the District Board, but modified the old system. The government determined the number of District Board but it was not to be less than nine. Normally the number varied from 18 to 34 according to size and population of the district. Two- thirds of the members were elected and one third nominated. A voter for electing the members had to be a resident of the district at least 21 years old. He was required to pay a certain amount of either *Chowkidari* tax or cess. Women did not have voting rights. From 1885 to 1920, the District Magistrate acted as the Chairman of the Board. Since 1921 the Board was given the privilege of electing its own Chairman from among its member, subject to the approval of the provincial government. The Chairman was the executive head of the Board. The government could however, remove the Chairman on the grounds of corruption, inefficiency and criminal offence. Every major policy of

the Board was determined collectively. After policy formulation, the Chairman, with the help of permanent officers, was responsible for implementation. Every district Board had some committees; of these some were statutory while others were created at the discretion of the Board.

Although the municipal tradition in Bangladesh, as elsewhere in the sub – continent, can be traced back to ancient times, the municipal administration as we know it today, is clearly a colonial heritage. Municipal administration in the modern western tradition started with the setting up of Municipal Corporations in the Presidency towns of Madras (1688), Calcuta and Bombay (1726) by the English East India Company. Varied experiments were carried out during subsequent periods, but no clear pattern of municipal administration emerged till the 1840s. Act X of 1842 provided the first formal measure of municipal organization. It applied to the Bengal presidency. Further experiments were carried out through Act XXVI of 1850, Bengal Municipal Acts of 1864, 1876 and 1884. In the process, by the 1860s every town of importance became a municipality. The earliest Municipalities of Bangladesh were Nasirabad (1856), Sherpore (1861), Dhaka (1864), Chittagong (1864), Brahmanbaria (1868). The Munciple Act, 1884 introduced in the background of Lord Ripon's celebrated Resolution of 1882, is of considerable significance as it provided for the first time a popular representation in the municipalities, though on a limited scale. By the 1890s, administration by elected committees came to be regarded as the natural form of municipal government. Side by side, the scope of services by municipal governments and the pattern of their income also had undergone changes and widened. During subsequent periods, through (i) the Municipal Act 1898, (ii) the Decentralization Commission Report 1909, (iii) the Montagu- Chelmsford Report 1911 and (iv) the government of India Resolution 1918, the cause of municipal

administration was advanced gradually. Meanwhile in the aftermath of the first World War, new requirements of administration led to structural changes and provincial Councils were introduced under the government of India Act of 1919, and local self-government came to be treated as a “transferred” subject of provincial councils. In 1920, the Government of India set up yet another commission, namely the Simon Commission, which focused on efficiency in management and functioning of municipal bodies, rather than on popular participation and political training. By the Bengal Municipal Act of 1932 a comprehensive code for the municipal bodies was introduced. Against this background when the India Act of 1935 was enacted, introducing a federal structure and granting autonomy to the provinces, the local list of taxes earmarked by the Act of 1919 was abolished.

3.2.3 Pakistan Period

Even after the attainment of independence of Pakistan in 1947, the union boards were being administered through the previous rules for year up to 1956, the system of direct election was adopted. For the appointed of Chairman of the Union board. At that time there were 3581 union boards in East Pakistan (Khan; 1956:13). 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 (Siddiqui, 94: 107). 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 No.18 of 1959; Government of Pakistan, 1959). Elections were held twice under the basic democracies system, in 1960 and 1964. 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). The chairman (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).

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). It is complained that the unions often performed only at the Government direction. They did not do any works 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). The government incentives were distributed to union council by Circle Officers (Development) in such way that union council had to depend on government administration. In this system the chairman 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. 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 Basic Democracies system came under serious criticism by the political parties towards the end of Ayub regime. 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 points and eleven point movements and the mass upsurge of 1969. The system was abolished soon after the independence of Bangladesh (Barman; 1988:271).

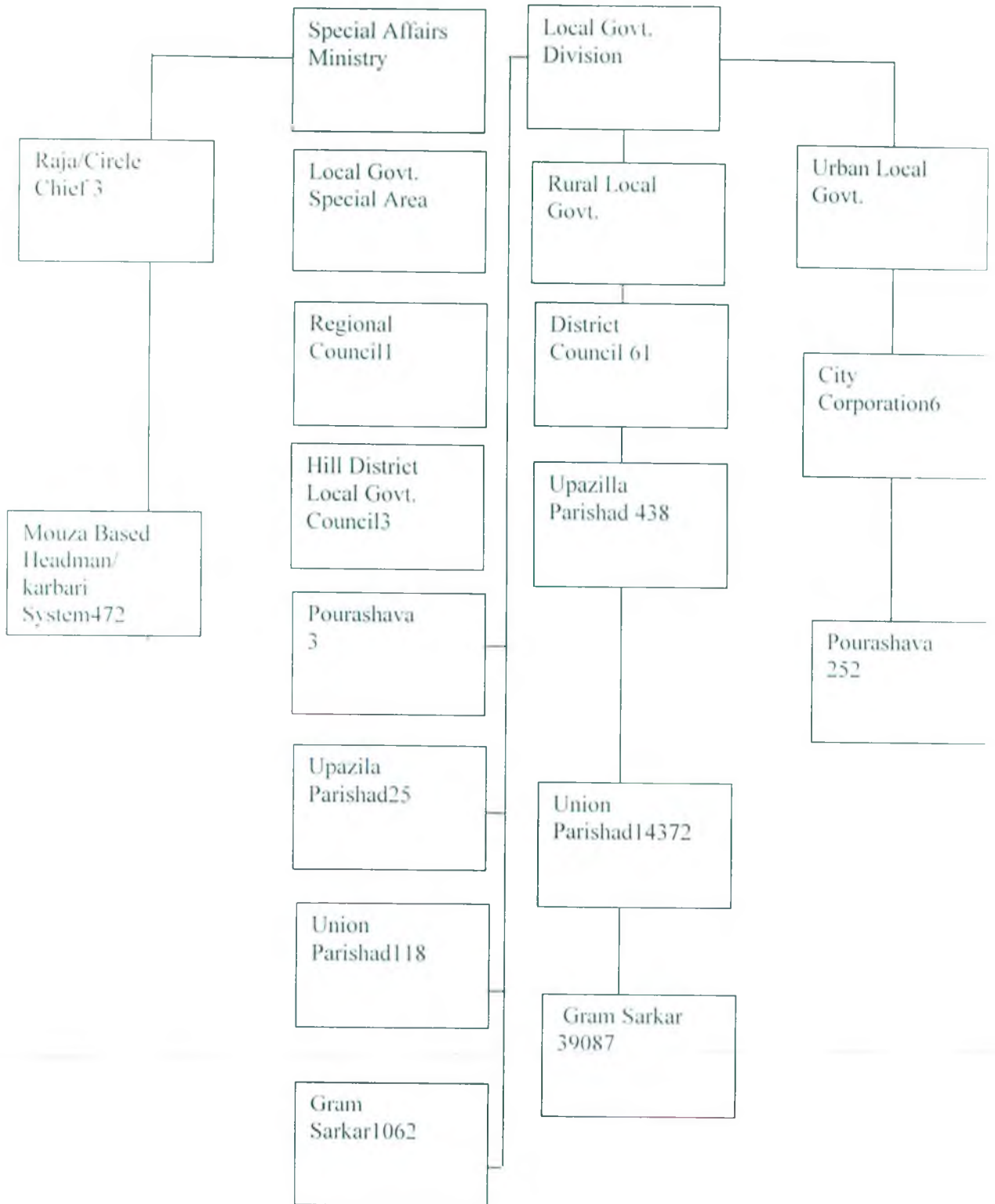
3.2.4 Bangladesh Period

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 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 union council was renamed Union Panchayet, the Thana council was changed to Thana Development Council and the district to zila board. The district council and Thana council were placed under the control of the deputy commissioner and sub divisional officer respectively. The union council selected authorities like relief committees. 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 ward, and each union parishad consisted of nine members three members directly elected from each ward. Voters of the entire union (Siddique; 1992:150) also directly elected one

chairman and a vice-chairman for each union parishad. In 1973 union Parishad election took place for the first time (First union Parishad Election -1973). After three years on 22nd November 1976 the local government 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 British Gazette: 1976). In the ordinance, it was a law that the chairman and members would be elected by direct vote of people. The ordinance of 1976 brought a three-tier system of local government in to existence in rural areas. These were (i) a union parishad for a union (ii) a Thana parishad for a Thana and (iii) Zila Parishad for a district. Under the ordinance, major changes occurred in respect of composition of a union parishad. It comprised one elected chairman and nine elected members and three nominated women members. It was entrusted with forty functions the main of them being public welfare, maintenance of law and order, revenue collection development and adjudication (Nazneen ; 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 parishad thus allowing the government to maintain its influence over the bodies. The function and sources of income of union parishads remained the same as under the Basic Democracy was (Siddiqui; 1994:115-116). In April 1980, by an amendment to the local government Ordinance, *Swanirvar Gram Sarker* was introduced at the village level. It consisted of a *Gram prodhan* (village chief) and 11 members including at least two women members (GOB, 1980). The scheme of Gram Sarker was introduced with four-fold function (i) increasing food production (ii) mass literacy (iii) population control and family planning and (iv) maintenance of law and order. But the system had a very short life and was abolished immediately after March 24,1982 when military took over. The military government of general Ershad

promulgated the local local government (Thana Parishad at Thana Administration reorganization) ordinance, 1982, which provided the local framework for a new local government institution at the Thana level. 460 Thana were upgraded and renamed upazila (sub-district) (Rahman, 1989; 270). 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 upazila level and union parishad at the union level. (Gob; 1982). It is noted that the BNP government in 1991 has abolished the upazila system. On the other hand, Awami League Government reformed this system in 1996. 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 in to 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 a Nirbahio officers (TNO) (The Bangladesh Gazette: 22 July 1993).

Figure 1 : Local Government in Bangladesh



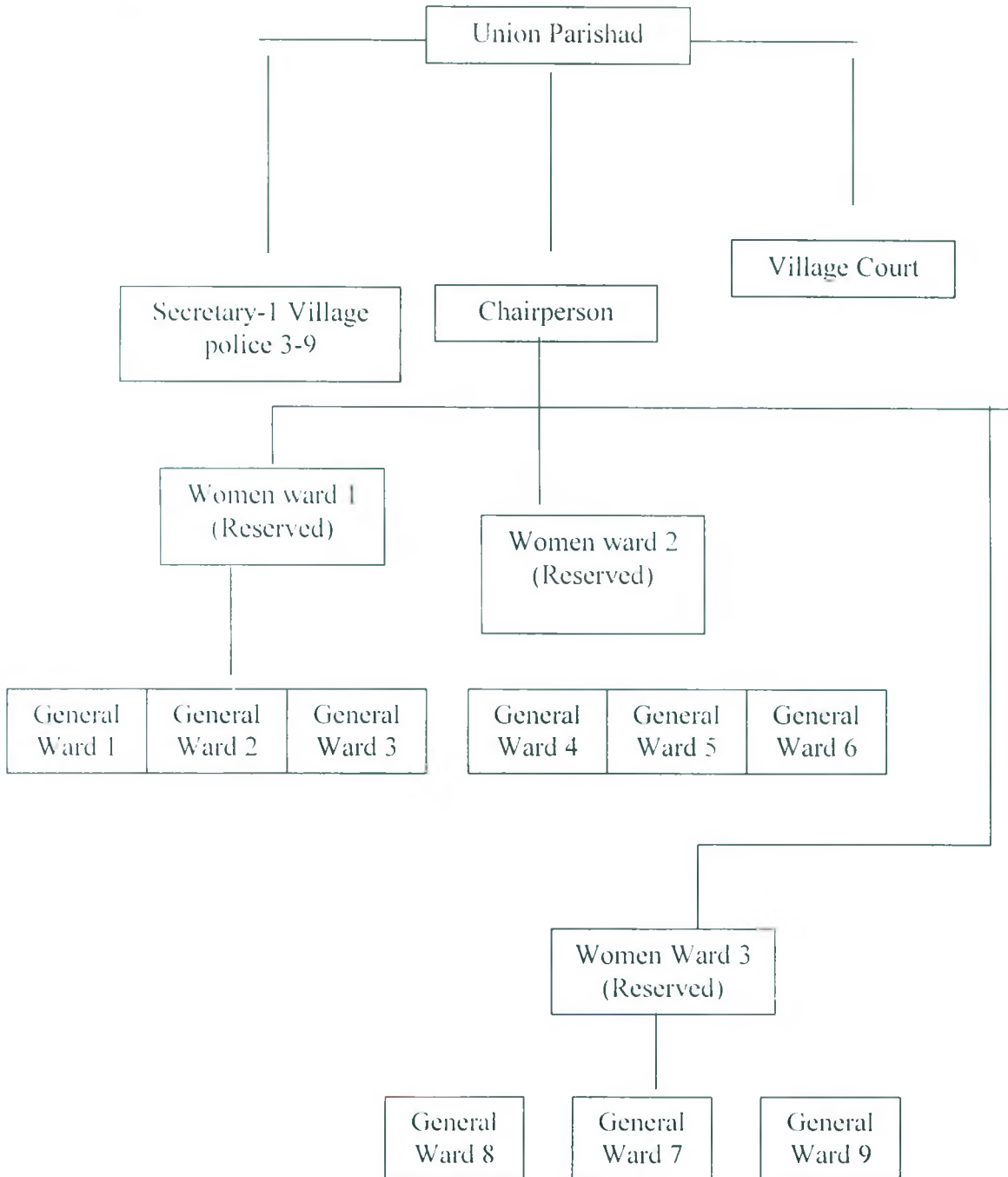
3.3 Union parishad feature

The basic structure of the local government institutions at the Union parishad level, keeping the villages as the focal point of all development activities. Such a structure could be free from undue pressure from the center, at the same time accountable to the people at the local level, through the establishment of a 'mini house' in each union comprising elected representatives from each of the villages in that Union. There are about 4440 union Parishad in Bangladesh. These union parishad are from 460 thanas, where each thana may have only nine to ten union parishad on an average (Rahman:2001). As yet, the Union Parishad remains the basic structure of local government. It is composed of Chairman/ Members who are directly by the rural voters. Each Union Parishad is an organization having a structure a set of predetermined goals, a team of personnel and mechanisms of coordination. Survival, growth and development of the UPs depend on the effective leadership performance of elected chairman and their team members (Muslin, 1996:5). Unions may now be considered the focal units of development activities. It is generally believed that with the reinforcement of the capacity of the union Parishads, developmental goals will be speedily achieve at the local level. Development goals, however, may vary from thana to thana depending on the socio-economic and cultural conditions prevailing there. In our context, development of the union should mean fulfillment of the basic needs of the poor majority living in a union. With a weak resource base and in adequacy of cash money, the Basic Needs Approach (BNA) to development as jointly developed by Mahbulul Haque and S.J Burki of the World Bank seems fit for adaptation and practice in the Union of Bangladesh for local level development. According to the approach, men and women must be placed at the center of development and that the development of human potential can be ensured through satisfaction of needs (Muslim, 1996).

3.3.1 Structure of Union Parishad

Following diagram shows the structure of union parishad.

Figure 2: Union Parishad Organogram



Chapter 4

Women's political participation

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Women's political participation in National level

4.2.1 Head of the government

4.2.2 Ministerial position: (Cabinet)

4.2.3 Parliamentary level

4.2.4 Women's participation in political party

4.3 Women's political participation in Local level

4.4 Towards Equality of Men and Women in UP: Trend Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discuss on political status of women. Participation of women in politics and the decision making process is an essential component of women's empowerment. Economic and social empowerment of women can not be sustained unless women are brought in to and made a part of the political decision making process. (Rahman & Rahim:2001,p-124).

“Political empowerment of women can not be attained unless mass participation of women is ensured. If women are not in process, the majority participation can not be meaningful. This is strongly related with educational participation as well. So in Bangladesh, it is recognized that women's participation is of central rather than marginal importance in the total process of political development” (Rahman & Rahim:2001).

Throughout the history of political relationships, women have always been involved in politics, although their participation has been obscured. Analysis of women's political participation in Bangladesh needs to consider their three roles: as voter, decision-makers and political activities.

Now a days, women's political participation is an ever-increasing rate. Most of what is widely known about the political attitude and behavior of women was, until very recently, phased in terms of political characteristics of men. Consequently women have been depicted as politically inadequate, unmotivated, naïve, dependent upon the knowledge of men, and rightfully invisible(Baxter & Lansing:1983,p-6). Citizens participate in their political system in many ways than just voting; by electoral activities try to influence the votes of others;

attend political meeting or rallies; work for a party or candidate. On the other hand, by non electoral activities they can write letters to public officials; write political letter to editors; all Registered to vote; and can also vote in the election(Baxter.*Ibid*.p-113).

4.2 Women's political participation in National level

This section will discuss the women's political participation in national level politics.

4.2.1 Head of the government

Since independence Bangladesh has had a total of five heads of the government through direct election. Amongst them, two are women. They had not had a political career before both of them inherited the top position in their political party due to a tragic incident. In 1981, Sheikh Hasina was elected the President of the Bangladesh Awami League, one of the largest political parties of Bangladesh and she is the daughter of Shiekh Mujibur Rahman, the main leader in liberation of the country and the first prime minister who killed in a military coup in 1975. She had some experience of student politics before. In 1981, Begum Khaleda Zia took part in the politics after the assassination of late President Ziaur Rahman, as his widow and became chairperson of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), another largest political party in Bangladesh. She had no political involvement and was housewife before. In 1991 parliament election she was elected as the first woman Prime Minister in Bangladesh and she was re-elected in the 2001 parliamentary election and now she is the Prime Minister of the country for second term. In 1991, Sheikh Hasina was the leader of opposition in the parliament and in next election in 1996 parliamentary election she elected as prime minister. In the present parliament she

again holds the position of the leader of opposition in the parliament. Although two women Prime Ministers have headed the Government during the last six years and the leaders of the opposition in Parliament were also women, this does not reflect the gender composition of participation and decision-making at the highest policy level (Sultana, forthcoming).

4.2.2 Ministerial position: (Cabinet)

Despite the unique experience of having two women exist both in Prime Minister and leader of opposition position, women's participation in decision-making level is in minimum level. Only six women came into the position of cabinet minister since independence (Sultana, forthcoming, cited from Chowdhury 2003). In 1996 cabinet, there were three women cabinet ministers and for the first time women were given full responsibility over any important ministry i.e. one is in Ministry of Agriculture and another is in Ministry of Forest and Environment rather the traditional one. These two women had long political career with Awami league. In general, apart from being Prime Minister, others were state or deputy ministers responsible for insignificant ministries such as Culture, Social Welfare, and Women.

Table 4: Number and percentage of Women Minister in different regime

Administration	Total minister	Total women minister	Percentage
Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (1972-1975)	50	2	4
Ziaur Rahman (1979-1982)	101	6	6
Hussain Mohammed	133	4	3

Ershad (1982-1990)			
Khaleda Zia (1991-1996)	39	3	5
Sheikh Hasina (1996-2001)	46	4	8.69
Khaleda Zia (2001-)	60	2	3.5

(Source: Chowdhury 1994, Rahman and Rahim 2001, Chowdhury 2003)

4.2.3 Parliamentary level

Parliament is the place of representation of women in formal political participation. The national parliament named *Jatiya Sangsad* consists of three hundred general seats filled by direct election from single member territorial. Beside this, according to article 65 in constitution fifteen seats reserved for women for 15 years who will be elected indirectly by the elected 300 legislators. This step was taken considering women as in backward position and ensuring their participation in government (Chowdhury 2003). This number increased to 30 later on and finally this arrangement is done for 45 (14th amendment of constitution in 8th parliament, 2004) (Sultana, 2005). After independence, there was a gradual increase in the number of women members in the parliament, but as is clear from the figures given in the table below, representation of women remains very low.

Table 5: Women member in parliament (Elected and reserved seat)

Year	Percentage of women candidate	Percentage of Elected women	Reserved seat for women	% of women as based on total seat
1973	0.3	0	15	4.8
1979	0.9	0.7	30	9.0
1986	1.3	1.7	30	10.6

1988	0.7	1.3	-	-
1991	1.5	1.7	30	10.6
1996	1.36	2.33	30	11.2
2001	2.0	2.33	*45	2.33

*note: 45 new women members (reserve seats) joined in Present parliament by party nomination.

(Source: Chowdhury (1994), Rahman and Rahim (2001), Khatun *et al* eds.(1995), Chowdhury D. and Hasanuzzaman (1993)).

Table 6: Women in parliament Election in the last decade (1991-2001)

Year	Candidate		Women's nomination by Mainstream Political parties			
	Total	Female	AI	BNP	JP	Jamat
1991	2774	47(1.69%)				
1996	1663	24(1.44%)	4(1.33%)	3(1%)	3(1%)	0
2001	1935	37(1.91%)	10(3.33%)	3(1.19%)	10(3)	0

Source: Mainstreaming Women in Politics 2003

4.2.4 Women's participation in political party

Women's participation in political party is insignificant from both in number and holding position. They are more deprived in getting nomination during election. The following tables show the number of women's associations in political parties.

Table 7: Number of Women in different committee of main political parties

Political party	Committee	Total member	Women member
BNP	national permanent committee	15	1
	national working executive committee	75	11
Awami league	presidium and secretariat	13	3
	working executive committee	65	6

Jatio party	national permanent committee	30	1
	national working executive committee	151	4
Jammat-E-Islami	Majlish-e-sura	141	-
	national working executive committee, Majlish-e-amela	24	-

source: Khatun *et al* eds.(1995), Chowdhury D. and Hasanuzzaman. (1993)

Table 8: Political Party's nominated and elected women member in different election (1979-1991)

Year	No of candidate			No of participant party	no of party's who nominated women candidate	No of women candidate	Individual candidate	
	Total	F	M				F	M
1979	2125	17	2108	29	9	13	4	418
1986	1429	20	1409	28	5	15	5	448
1988	978	7	971	10	3	7	0	-
1991	2774	47	2727	75	16	40	7	417
1996	1663	*34			*14	*31	*4	
2001	1935							

Source: Khatun *et al* eds.(1995), Chowdhury D. and Hasanuzzaman (1993), Rahman and Rahim (2001)

4.3 Women's political participation in Local level

Entry in to the political areas by women leaders should be supported by local level participation. It is seen that women constitute half of the voters among all adult members. The scene that only women from elite group and financially well off families can enter in to politics is not different in local government scenario.

Local bodies being a subsystem of National Government Women's involvement and representation is essentially vital from political point of view. Local Government generally provides services and facilities to the people of a specific area. Women being half of human resources should also be the contributors to and beneficiaries from such services. Women were not eligible to cast vote in election to rural local bodies till 1956, when for the first time election was held on the basis of universal adult franchise.

According to Union Parishad Ordinance of 1983 Union was to have one Chairman, nine elected members and three nominated members. Women voice was ensured through three nominated members. Because of the mode of election, women members were from the rural elite and, as such, were ineffective in dealing with local issues and their roles in Parishad were viewed as stereotyped. Four elections- 1973, 1977, 1984, and 1992 were held with women's muted voice at local government (Chowdhury Dilara:2003). It's true that women's representation in the local Govt was not visible before 1973. In 1973 elections, out of 4352 Unions Parishad only one women elected as a chairperson of UP (Chowdhury Dilara 2000). In 1973 election only one women from Rangpur was elected as the chairman of Union Parishad among 4352 Unions and was killed long before the completion of her term. In 1977 election four women were elected as chairman of Union Parishad. In 1984 four women were elected among 4401 Union Parishads (one from Dhaka division, 2 from Khulna Division and one from Rajshahi division. Two more women were elected in by election as chairman. It is found that between 1973 and 1984 only eleven women out of over 4000 could be elected as chairpersons (Sayeda:1995). In 1988 candidates for chairman was 79, for members candidate was 863. Only one female member was elected. This number increased in 1992 election. In the UP election of 1992

number of candidate for chairmanship was 115 number of won 8 and 1135 was contested for membership, 11 women candidates won. In 1992, 115 women contested for chairmanship and 1135 member were contested for members. The Act of 1993 brought some changes in the composition of Union Parishad. Union Parishad was divided into nine Wards and nine members, one from each Ward elected by the voters concerned and female members, instead of nomination, were to indirectly elected by the Chairman and elected members of the concerned Union Parishad. However, indirect election of female members from nomination did not bring any qualitative change as far as women's effective roles were concerned (Chowdhury Dilara 2000). The nomination system in local government has been replaced in 1997 at the union Parishad. Now three women members in each Union would be elected by direct election. Beside, Nine wards replaced the number of three wards. Each of the three wards are made into a reserved ward by women. It may be mentioned that it was or the first in the history of the land that statutory representation of women was provided in the local Government at the lower tier, the union parishad (Sayeda: 1995:p-32)The Election Commission for the first time in 1997 has made the provision for electing three women members in the reserve seats in each union through direct voting (The Daily Independent, Dhaka:2003). The month long Union Parishad election began on 1st December 1997. The Local Government Commission of 1997 recommended four-tier local government system: Gram Sarker, Union Parishad, Thana Parishad and Zila Parishad. Union Parishad is the second tier of local government consisting of 4,472 Union Parishad with each Union comprising 10-15 villages and a population of 15-20 thousand (Chowdhury Dilara: 2000). Election was held in 4,298 Unions throughout the month of December 481,122,559 voters voted in 39,728 centers. So 19,805 candidates were competing for the post of chairman while 44,134 women were in the competition for the reserve

and 139,826 were for the post of general members (The Election Commission, 1997). The total of 4,298 Unions in Bangladesh elected 4,298 chairman directly, 38,862 members and another 12,894 female members of course as women can also complete in the wards along with their male counterparts (*The Independent*, Dhaka, December, 1997). Chairmen were elected unopposed in 37 Unions while 592 women for the reserved seats and 1,096 candidates for general members were elected without contest (Rahman & Rahim: 2001). In order to ensure women's effective role direct election of women representative from one-third women's reserved seats was recommended by the Study on the Institutional Review of the WID capability of GOB., 1996, and the Local Government Commission Report, 1997. No doubt this has been a major breakthrough in the political participation of women at the grass root level. The next Union Parishad elections were held in 2003. During the 2003 election candidates for reserved seats declined from 3.6% in 1997 to 3.1% in 2003. However, much greater interests have been shown for open seats of Chairman and general seats though number of Chairman remained same while elected members from open seat declined from 110 to 85. There is also a change in female rural leadership consisting of women with NGO background and activities (PPRC: 2003).

Similarly in the Pouroshova would follow the same system. The Cabinet already approved the system. The local Government Commission has proposed that the third tier of the local government should be at the Thana level and named Upazila Parishad. There would be provision for indirect election to elect three members in each Upazila Parishad (Social Science Review, 2001, p-127). Female members of all the Union Parishad under a Upazila would elect three female members for respective Upazila Parishad. In 1986 was two women elected as chairman. In pouroshova elections, only one woman

elected as commissioner and none as Chairperson. In upazila election 1985, 9 women were candidates for upazila chairman but non-could win (Sayeda Rowshan:1995). On the other hand in the 1994 City Corporation elections, no women contested for the four Mayoral Positions, 17 women contested for 192 Ward Commissioner seats, however no one was elected(UNDP,*Ibid*,p-31). The participation of women in politics of Bangladesh is not wholly satisfactory, through the participation trend is increasing.

Women's representation all the six elections held before and after 1997 may be observed in the Table.

Table 9: Women's Participation in Election of Union Parishad

Electio ns	Year & Date	Women Candidates	Elected Chairman and Members		
		Chairman	Member	Chairma n	Member
1 st Electio n	19-30Dec 1973	-	-	1	-
2 nd electio n	13-31 Jan 1977	19	19	2	7
3 rd Electio n	27 Dec 82- 10 Jan 83	79	863	6	Informatio n nit available
4 th Electio n	1988	Information nit available	-	-	-
5 th Electio n	1992	115	1135	8	Informatio n nit available
6 th Electio n	1-30 Dec 1997	103	43969/456 *	20	110*/1282 8
7 th Electio n	Jan-Feb- March 2003	232	43764/617 *	22	85*/12684

*Women contested and elected to the general seats.

Table 10: Division wise Women chairman and Women in General seat (2003) (UP)

S L	Division	Women in chairman seat		Women in general seat	
		Number of conteste d	Number of winner contested	Number of conteste d	Number of winner contested
1	Rajshahi	50	4	339	51
2	Khulna	29	3	34	0
3	Barishal	18	6	70	12
4	Dhaka	103	7	144	21
5	Sylhet	2	0	0	0
6	Chittago ng	30	2	30	1
Total		232	22	617	85

Table 11: Women Ward Commissioner in City Corporation (2003)

City Corporation	Women in the Open Seats		Women in the Reserved Seats	
	# Women Contested	# Women Elected	# Women Contested	# Wome n Elected
Dhaka	7	3	103	30
Chittagong				13
Khulna	1	0	61	10
Rajshahi	3	1	101	10
Barisal			50	
Sylhet			71	5

Source: Election Commission/ Respective City Corporation

4.4 Towards Equality of Men and Women in UP: Trend Analysis

Alarmingly, more than 47% of female representatives elected to reserved seats in 1997 chose not to compete in 2003 election.

Interviews and investigations with ex-UP reserved seat members

revealed they felt they experienced sexism and institutional bias when trying to perform their duties from 97 to 03. In addition they see huge flaws in a system that requires female reserved seats members to cover three times the ward area of those in open seats. Factors given by female UP members 1997-2003 who chose not to stand for re-election:

- Women in reserved seats reported feeling a lack of institutional status and support
- Ups were often not able to accommodate reserve seats members with their mainstreams activities
- UP members elected through reserved seats reported that humiliation and non –cooperation by male counterparts disheartened them
- Reserve seats members felt their responsibilities were not clarified properly
- Women in reserve seats often could not manage to fulfill their election promises
- Finally, many reserved seats members felt alienated by their colleagues

(A gender analysis of the Union Parishad Election, steps, volume I, p-8-9)

As noted according to the arrangement since 1997, every union Parishad of the country is divided into nine general constituencies or wards and one number currently known as general member represents each ward in the parishad. All the voters registered under a union, irrespective of sex, are eligible to cast their votes and are entitled to contest any one of the seats of either the chairperson or the general member. Though all elected women member came in UP with lot of

dreams but unfortunately after few days the newly elected women members of Union Parishad election of 1997, claim that they are not empowered with, defined authority and responsibility. They have no manual of work in most of the cases the male members and chairmen are cooperate with them. A recently conducted survey reveals that more than 60% women members face problems, work in with male members.61% state that they do not get equal rights. (Ittefak-2000). In the 2003 election, held in 4228 unions, 232 women contested for the chairmanship and from among them won 22.For the general membership women candidates were 617(out of them) 85 won (See table 13). More over recently the Government Bangladesh by its local government division ordered the TNO to implement projects of the amount of taka twenty five thousand under eight projects in a year and therefore eight projects implementation Committees also be considered. In 1998 some major steps have taken to protect huge power for the 13 thousand (approx.) elected women members above 4 thousand Union Parishad. The following are given preferences for women's empowerment in the power structure.

- To implement the Annual Development Projects in the eight-project implementation committees' women member will be the chairman of one-third projects.
- To implement the ADP projects, in the eight projects implementation committees women member will be the chairman of one third projects.
- Those women members who can not be the chairman of the project committee must be members of that committee.

- An UP chairman / member will never be project committee chairman in more than one time in each fiscal year.
- The women member will be the member in the place selection committee of Tube well installment and in selection of deprived people under VGF/VGD programme as well.
- In aged allowances committee, Union Parishad women members are responsible as co-chairperson.
- Under the primary and Mass Education department women members will be the Chairman of one third of compulsory primary education committee.
- In the monitoring system of rural Maintenance Programme, women members will be one out of three responsible person.
- In relief and disaster management project committee, women members are responsible as member for one forth project committee.
- With the three elected areas of the each women members Village Social Development Committee has been established where only the women members would get the responsibility as chairperson. So it could be clear that through political empowerment as well as participation in power structure women's empowerment in the family and the society might be enhanced.

Following tables show the feature of UP election 1997 and 2003.

Table 12: Women members in the reserved seats of Union Parishad (1997-2003)

Year	Election held in	# Women	# Women
	#UP	Contested	Elected
1997	4276	44134	12828
2003	4228	39419	12684

Source: Mainstreaming women in politics, page42

Table 13: Women in Union Parishad(1997-2003)in the Open seats

Year	Electi on held in #UP	# Women Contested		# Women Elected		% of women in UP	
		Chairm an	Mem ber	Chairm an	Member	Chairm an	Memb er
1997	4276	103	456	20	110	0.51%	0.28%
2003	4228	232	617	22	85	0.52%	0.22%

Source: Mainstreaming women in politics, page-41

This chapter gave the idea about local government system in Bangladesh. It also discussed in detail about the participation in union Parishad by women.

Chapter 5

A Review of Union Parishad Election 2003

5.1 Background

5.2 Feature of UP Election 2003

5.3 Positive and negative aspects of UP Election 2003

5.3.1 Positive aspects of the election

5.3.1.1 Election after regular tenure

5.3.1.2 Spontaneous participation of the voters

5.3.2.3 Continuous Participation of the Women

5.3.1.4 The importance of UP Election in the Media

5.3.1.5. Commitments of the Candidates

5.3.1.6 Emergence of the young and new candidates

5.3.2 Negative aspects of the Union Parishad Election

5.3.2.1 Conflict between the Chief Election Commissioner and the Government

5.3.2.2. Election Violence

5.3.2.3 Involvement of political Parties

5.3.2.4. Protesting minority from Voting

5.3.2.5. Durability of the Election

5.3.2.6. Indifferentness of the administration and the violation of the code of conduct

5.3.2.7. Reduced participation of Women

Local Government means the administration or self-rule at the stone hand of the people. People will elect their representative or leader through vote. These leader or representative will stand by the people at their rainy day and will work for the development of their locality. From this expectation people's participation is observed more in the Union Parishad Election (Islam; 2004, P.9). This chapter explores the detail feature of Union Parishad election in 2003 as the last held election.

5.1 Background

With the completion of the 7th Union Parishad Election the government has completed its first main steps towards establishing a powerful local government. It was an acid test of the political & administrative power of the newly elected BNP alias four parties alliance govt. This election has some special characteristic whose proper discussion will help to understand the significant of the other elections of the country and at the same time the overall nature of the politics. At the end of the tenure of Union Parishad after 97 elections, the election was held in a festive look environment with the participation of the mass people. In spite of the continuous participation of women and the emergence of the younger candidates, the natural atmosphere was hampered because of the conflict between the Chief Election Commission and the government. At the same time massive terrorist activities, occupying polling center, ballot box hijackings, protest the minority to cast their voting right, indifferent ness of administrations and political domination has set the electoral process before question. On the other hand the consciousness of the participants and the winners about their roles and responsibilities in the Parishad and their commitment have ushered expectation in the mind of the general people (Islam: 2004).

5.2 Feature of UP Election 2003

Generally Union Parishad Election holds in every five years. In 2003, the election was started on 25 January and ended on 16 March. Though the number of the Union Parishad is 4495 all the Union Parishad was not possible to bring under election at the same time because of legal procedures and the tenure of some Union Parishad was not expired. The election was held at the total of 4428 Union Parishad. The number of total voter in the election was 61515806. Among them the number of male voter was 31344108 and female voter was 30,171,698. Total of 198704 contestants were fighting for the 54964 posts. Among them the post for the Chairman was 21376 and members post was 137909. Women member candidate were 39419. Without voting elected candidate were 777 and among the 18 were Chairman. Total of 81% voters casted their vote (Islam; 2004, P.10). The following tables show the 2003 UP election at a glance:

Table 12: Women members in the reserved seats of Union Parishad 2003

Year	Election held in #UP	# Women Contested	# Women Elected
2003	4228	39419	12684

Source: Mainstreaming women in politics, page 42

Table 13: Women in Union Parishad 2003 in the Open seats

Year	Electi on held in #UP	# Contested	Women		% of women in UP		
			Chair man	Membe r	Chair man	Mem ber	
2003	4228	232	617	22	85	0.52%	0.2 2%

Source: Mainstreaming women in politics, page-41

Table 14: Voters, Candidate and Representation in UP Election 2003

Voter ratio			Candidacy Ratio(Chairman)			Representatio n	
Voters	M	Fem	Candidates	M	F	M	F
61515866	31344168 (50.95%)	30171698 (49.05)	21376	21144 (98.91%)	232 (1.09%)	4206 (99.48%)	22 (0.52%)

Source: The Election Commission

5.3 Positive and negative aspects of UP Election 2003

After the completion of the 51 days of enormous election, it gave the scope to discuss the different aspects of the election. Following discussion will give a detail scenario of the UP election 2003 covering both positive and negative side of the election. the following table gives a quick view of both sides:

Positive and negative sides of Union Parishad Election 2003 at a glance:

Positive Sides	Negative Sides
Election after a regular the tenure	Conflict between the Chief Election Commissioner and the Government
Spontaneous participation of the people	Terrorism in the election
Spontaneous participation of women	Political Involvement
Importance in the media	Depriving the minority people from casting their voting right.
Commitments made by the Candidates	Lengthy electoral process.
Emergence of the new and young candidates	Indifferent ness of the government official towards the law and order situation and violation of the code of conduct by the candidates and their supporter.
	Increased expenses and qualification of the candidate.
	Reduction of women's participation.

Source: A review of Union Parishad Election 2003

5.3.1 Positive aspects of the election

The positive aspects are as follows:

5.3.1.1 Election after regular tenure

Though the Union Parishad Election is to be held in every five years but it was not seen in the past. The first election after liberation was held in 1973. But it failed to complete its tenure of five years. After the change of political situation in 1975, Union Parishad Election held for the second time in the year 1976. Third and fourth election took place in 1983 and 1988. Fifth Union Parishad election took place in 1992 and the next election was held in 1997. Following the election of 1997 the last Union Parishad election took place this year (Islam; 2004).

5.3.1.2 Spontaneous participation of the voters

Union Parishad is the lowest grass-root level unit of the local government of the country. The election of the hundreds of years old structure of Union Parishad brings festive-like atmosphere among the people of the rural area. This was not different in this year also. Based on the Union Parishad election the local rural area has adorned a festive look. Besides the poster, banner and the sounds of mike the processions and congregation of the mass people has added new dimension to it. With the spontaneous participation of the people all the characteristics of the Union Parishad election were lively.

5.3.1.3 Continuous Participation of the Women

Like past elections of the Union Parishad in the history of the country the spontaneous participation of the women as candidate and voter was continued this time also. Despite the low rate of women participation in the election, the women candidates were seen more

efficient in this year also. It was found to be proved in their campaign. In many places they started working with the full knowledge of the function of Union Parishad and its rules and responsibilities. Ignoring all “*fatua*” and superstitions of religious leaders, women caste their voting right in many places. The women of Berubari union under the upazila of Nageswari Upazilla of Kurigram District had been deprived of their voting rights for the Fatua baz and religious superstition. This year for the first time they caste their votes. The women of “Mogar” union of Nolchiti upazila under Jhalokhathi district become able to caste their vote after thirty-four years. The women of “Charbaghdanga” union under Chapainowabgonj have caste their vote for the first time. In past the women of the village of matabbar, Morol and Fatuabaz were deprived from their voting rights. The women of Rajakhali Union under Pakua of Cox’s bazaar were able to caste their vote for the first time after 30 years. In the same way the women of Natai South Union of Brahmanbaria district were able to caste their vote for the first time after the liberation war. In fact the women were able to overcome their obstacle only through their opportunities for being candidate in the Union Parishad and their being successful in the election. But still the situation remains more or less unchanged. The important achievement in the election was the winning of the five disable women. No doubt this achievement will broaden the way for women to empowerment.

5.3.1.4. The importance of UP Election in the Media

Before and during the election almost all the newspaper of the country brought out the news of Union Parishad with great importance. Introduction, activities and the picture of the candidates published in the media especially in the newspaper added the new dimension to increase the importance of the election. The TV

channel “Channel I” put UP special program named “Shusasan Sanglap” before election regularly.¹

5.3.1.5. Commitments of the Candidates

Even in the local government level election the Commitments of the candidates were much appreciable. In spite of limitation the possible role and arena of work were expressed clearly through their commitment. Many candidates expressed their commitment to make a violence free society. Others vowed to ensure health, education and communication for the people of their respective area. In the same way some promised to ensure justice through “Salish” and to build community development hospital.

5.3.1.6 Emergence of the young and new candidates

Unlike past a huge number of well-educated young male and female competed this election and in most cases they become successful. In many Unions it was seen that the voters were interested to vote the new contestants. The reason they show behind voting the new candidates was that the chairman, holding the chair for many years, are involved in politics in spite of developing their locality. As a result the condition of their locality remains unchanged and undeveloped. This time they wanted to see what changes happen by voting the young one. Young and new candidates were seen more in 17 Unions of Jacaranda, Faridpur, 22 unions of Muradnagar, 12 unions of Ulipur, 11 unions of Kushtia sadar, 83 unions of Rangpur district. This new polarization in the Union Parishad Election bears a positive sign towards the establishment of the people’s rights. Next time the defeated candidates can play a significant role to meet the generation gap.

¹ For details see *A review of Union Parishad Election 2003 in Newspaper, P.11-12.*

5.3.2 Negative aspects of the Union Parishad Election

The negative aspects are as follows:

5.3.2.1 Conflict between the Chief Election Commissioner and the Government

It was a negative aspect that there was a conflict between the Government and the Chief Election Commissioner M.A Saeed which disturbed the normal election process in this election. The CEC took stand demanding the deployment of Army in the UP election while Election Commission Secretariat, Home ministry and Local Govt. Ministry took the opposite stand.

During the election of 2003, the normal procedure of being the supreme authority of the Election Commission to hold election was disrupted. To ensure the electoral process transparent all efforts and requests of CSE to the govt. seemed to be futile. In fact the conflict began from the day of declaring the circular of the UP Election. After that in the mid January in a meeting the Deputy Commissioner (DC) at Dhaka demanding the deployment of Army made the matter complex. After that in a four day meeting of field level officer the issue of Army Deployment got the priority. The demand was accelerated when many candidates sent their letter to the CEC demanding their security. At this stage the CEC declared that in the absence of army it was not possible for Election Commission to hold a fair election but the govt. paid no heed to the demand (Islam: 2004).

The CEC made some comments, which made the situation more conflictive with government. The main allegation from the govt.

part was that during Union Parishad election the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) has indirectly caused harm to the image of the govt. by criticizing the Union Parishad election process. They also added that the CEC has raised question whether it's possible to hold a fair election under this govt. Mentioning terrorism, violence and the violation of the code of conduct the CEC declared the current electoral process as "Love's labor". He also commented on some news sent by the election commission secretariat to be "Fake".² He commented some officers of the Election Commission as the parasite of the govt. and in this way he incurred himself with a greater conflict with the govt. The members of the govt. party became furious at his comment and two MPs of the ruling party demanded his resignation to the speaker. Even one of the parts of the ruling party planned to change the constitution so that the CEC can be impeached. This was reported in some newspaper. The conflict between the govt. and the CEC affected the field level officers involved in the election process. This may be a reason of the political influence at grass-root level especially by the ruling party. And may be this is the reason for highest terrorism rate in the election.³

5.3.2.2. Election Violence

Another negative side was violence. Though violence is not unseen in the local level election, never the less the rate of violence in election this year was highest than ever before. Report in the different newspaper and sources say that basically all the terrorist remained disguised during the "operation clean heart" but after the withdrawn of the Army from the field they started their activities again and become active as election was coming nearer.

² *A review of Union Parishad Election 2003 in Newspaper, P.12*

³ *Union Parishad Election 2003, A review of Union Parishad Election 2003 in Newspaper, P. 13*

As a result the election ended with a huge violence. At the end of the first days election the headlines of the news papers reports was like that. "Election starts with the center occupation and ballot box hijackings, 2 killed and 128 wounded at Munshigonj" After that different news paper brought out news regularly on center occupation, Ballot box hijackings, firing, murder of constable, clash, bombing, applying of article 144, deploying BDR, sickness of presiding officer, arresting of presiding officer including JCD leader, the death of Chairman and member, newsman was shot , the death of the father and uncle of defeated candidates, chairman was trying to be slaughtered, torturing on the minority, threatens etc. From newspaper sources it was known that almost fifty percent of the total of 39,372 polling center of the country was risky. Especially 90% polling center of the southern part, boarder area and hiltract regions were most vulnerable. In fact election violence was centred in these regions. Among the area where conflict and death toll rate were high were Pirojpur, Brahmanbaria, Ulipur, Ukhia, Gouronadi, Avoyanagar, Jhenaidaha, Bhola, Keranigonj, Ullahpara, Kishoregonj, Mirzapur, Fatikchori, Patuakhali, Borguna, Khulna, Norshingdi, Satkania, Jamalpur, Islampur, Madaripur, Rupgonj, Narail, Bogra, Kanchpur, Borhanuddin, Rupgonj, Birgonj of Dinajpur district, Munshigonj, Nagarkanda, Kustia, Pabna and Noakhali are mentionable.

Some terrorist activities of these areas are given below:

- The terrorist cut off the vein of the hands and legs of a Chairman candidate at Kalia area under Khulna on 14 January.
- In Pabna out of 371 candidates 30 candidates of 67 unions are enlisted as terrorist. These people were threatening their opponent constantly.

- The supporters of BNP candidate Kazi Shahjan of Khowazpur Union under Madaripur district attacked the house of Awami league candidate Sekander Ali. They tortured the family members and threw a three-year girl, Roksana, in a burning herd after snatching from her mothers lap.

This was the over all picture of the Union Parishad Election 2003 which was published in the report of “Bangladesh Manabadhikar Commission” at the beginning of the election. The report prepared after completing survey at 752 unions of the country confirmed huge false vote, unfair meaning and terrorism (Islam: 2004).

5.3.2.3 Involvement of political Parties

According to the Constitution, the involvement of political party in the local govt. election is totally prohibited. Never the less the local govt. election is more or less influenced by the national politics. The significant event in the 1997 Union Parishad was the close relation of the local leader with the national politics. In the past five elections the candidate gave priority to their personality, society, education and relation with the people instead of political identity. But in 1997 Union Parishad Election the candidate used the political identity as a means of their getting favour of the people. This trend has been increased in the UP election 2003.

From candidate selection to vote casting everywhere political attitudes had been manifested. After last parliament election because of many inconveniences Awami league was in disfavourable position from candidate selection and support while four parties alliance did the job openly. Because of reality Awami league couldn't select their candidate in many places. Though in some field they had candidates but they couldn't stand still. On the contrary four party alliances had to under go internal conflict

because of their several candidates for a single area. In that case the candidates favored by the local MP got privileges. Most of the MPs of four party alliances were active to make his supporter candidate winner. In this way a distance has been created between the parts of the MP influenced people and the local level leaders. In many areas the MP's has been criticized by their own party people. Ignoring the code of conduct and the constitution many national political personality took part in campaign. Especially BNP MP and Minister's were active in the election campaigning. Whip of Jatiya Songshad Mujibur Rahman Sarwar actively participated in the election campaign for winning all the UP candidates of Barisal. In some cases he used the govt. protocol. In the same way state minister for law and parliamentary affairs Barrister Shahajan Omar launched a huge campaign for the alliance candidates at Jhalakhathi. Declaring him as the supporter of the candidate, MP A E M Khalilur Rahman beg vote from the voter at Khetlal Upazila in Joypurhat district. Another MP Mojibur Rahman Monju didn't hesitate even to make an open fire with his own pistol after his meeting to make the opponent scared. Besides hahidul Islam MP of Jhenaidaha and Nurul Islam Moni of Barguna worked for their respective candidate in the election. They urged the people to vote for the BNP alliance to make Khaleda Zia's hand strong and ensure development at the grass-root level. In fact their this kind of statements is the clear violation of the electoral code of conduct (Islam: 2004, P-14).

People of the country were so much interested in the result of the election as the UP election of this time was flavored with national political images. Many daily published report with political identity of many candidates. After election the daily Manab Zamin published a survey report with the political identity of the chairman and their result on 09 April 2003. The survey reported 1993 of

BNP, 1606 of Awami league, 162 of Jatya party (Monju) and 133 candidates of Jamaat-e- Islami were elected to be chairman.

5.3.2.4. Protesting minority from Voting

After last parliamentary election the torture on the minority people of the country also contaminated in the UP election. The minority excluded their thought of going to the poling center to cast their vote let alone became the candidate in the election. In the last UP election the few minority candidates contested, their news of victory published little in the newspaper. The newspaper reported that in many places in one hand the minority people were deprived from their voting rights on the other hand they were compelled to vote to some chosen candidates. For exception cases they had to pay. Based on the election the Bhattacharya family of Bagerhat paid, is never recoverable. In some poling center the presence of the minority voter were satisfactory but they couldn't vote for the chosen candidates. Out of fear and for the sake of existence they went to the poling center to show their presence. In many cases they voted for the terrorist to remain safe from torture in future. Newspapers reported that based on the election three minority housewife were become the victim of the mass rape at Kaligonj under Jhenaidaha district. In a minority village at Jessore people faced open fire that killed a women and wonded 31. Thousands of minority voters at sworopkathi couldn't cast their vote. 15 houses of minorities were ravaged at Moheshkhali. Four thousands voters were deprived from their voting rights at Kishoregonj, Rangpur. Plundering happened at Saturia Manikgonj and at Patuakhali fire was set on the houses of the minorities people (Prothom Alo 2003).

5.3.2.5. Durability of the Election

In the history of Bangladesh no election took place as long as the election 2003 UP election was. In 1997 the UP election continued for a month. The past UP election used to take place in the same day. But this time election took place from 25 January to 16 March and it took total of 51 days. If we calculate the total electoral process then we have to add more 24 days with the 51 days of election. It took total 75 days to complete the total electoral process. Though the election began to take place from 25 January basically election began from the day of submitting nomination paper on 1st January. For this long-term election process the election expenses of many candidates have been increased remarkably. For example the election expenses were much less for the area where election was held on 25 January while the expenses for the candidate was more where the election was held on 16 March. In this way in one hand the candidates had to spend huge amount of money on the other hand the people of those areas had to live in a great concern. This long process election has brought great opportunity for the terrorist to run their activities at different places on the other hand it had affected on the economy of the country.

5.3.2.6. Indifferentness of the administration and the violation of the code of conduct

Besides the occupation of the polling center, enforced seal on the ballot and terrorism in the last election allegations were brought from many corner to use unfair way to make pro candidate win while counting vote. In spite of thousands of petitions for recounting vote, lack of legal basis election commission could do nothing in this regard. In many polling center candidates by

influencing presiding officer make bound to sign on the result sheet and confirmed their victory. Allegation had been brought that by changing center wise result from the Upazila Parishad Complex in the dead of the night the result was declared in favor of the four-party alliance candidates.

A report published in the daily Prothom Alo titled, "Unlimited allegation from the candidates of the 13 unions of Sandwip" says that Jatiya Party candidate of Harishpur M A Salam was leading by seven votes. But in the dead of the night from the Upazila Parishad Complex BNP candidate Khairul Mostafa was declared winner by two votes. Mr. Salam informed the Prothom Alo that the result of the election was changed by the influence of a powerful person of the ruling party.⁴

Besides this, huge unfair means were taken to make the four-party alliance candidates overcome, the newspaper reported. These reports say that opposition's candidates were threatened to withdraw from the election. Even they faced threat from the administration to take away themselves from the election.

From eye witness many journalist reported that in many polling center a clear idea was given from the outside the election to being fair but in the contrary the situation was totally reverse in the inside of the center. The report "Unfair means to make the alliance candidates winner" says in Bagerhat unprecedented interference was taken to make the alliance candidate winner. In many unions pressure was created upon the candidates of the oppositions

⁴ A report published in the daily Prothom Alo, 2003.

candidates. Besides minority people were kept under pressure to cast their votes for the alliance candidates.⁵

A report of Prothom Alo on 13 March named “ The Center of Bhola: Baire fitfat, bhitoro sadar ghat” says that the voters are in a queue, police, administration all are alert. This out side scenery of a poling center indicates the election to be free and fair without any disturbance. But situation is totally different inside the poling center. Instead of going behind the curtain with the ballot the voters go openly to seal for the BNP candidates. Poling agents become satisfy only by knowing the voter number. On the other hand many people were seen to come to vote with the same number. In that case the poling agents allocated number among the persons for voting. Those allegations were brought to the book of the administrations and the personnel of election commissions but they denied every allegation repeatedly. Besides the election being fair, they received no objection from both inside and out side of the poling center, they informed.

About the outside atmosphere of the poling center, it was informed that though no camp or sitting arrangement is allowed within the 200 yards of the poling center, entertainment was arranged by slaughtering cow under a huge canopy only 30 yards away from the poling center. Local people objected that for several days some outsider terrorists have been gathered. And every day they have been entertained in the same way. All are arranged by the BNP Chairman candidate Mufti Abu Noman Md. Safiullah himself.

⁵ The daily Janokhantho published on the second February 2004.

Besides many reports on the violation of Electoral Code of Conduct have been published in the newspaper. Besides the candidates allegations were brought against the local MP also. Bringing allegation against the MP of Chatkhil, the Ajker Kagoz reported that he influenced the administration to make his nine declared Chairman candidates win. At the same time he harassed the candidates of the oppositions by police.⁶

5.3.2.7. Reduced participation of Women

When the donor countries, agencies and different development agencies are emphasizing the empowerment of women at that time the picture of the empowerment of women in the country is not up to the mark. It was highlighted at least in the UP election this year. Total of 39,419 women contested in the election this year. But only five years ago the number was 43,969.⁷ This equation proves that women are losing their interest in the Union Parishad Election. The Reports in the newspaper says that about 47.39% of the women who were elected last tenure, this year they keep aloof themselves from contesting in the Union Parishad Election. Most of the other contestants in the election failed to overcome. In the Kolapara upazila under Patuakhali district out of 27 women, who elected last year, 24 of them fail to overcome this year. Showing the cause of their failure, in an interview they mentioned that in fact even a small portion of their commitment they failed to implement. The reason they show for not been able to keep their commitment, is, in the Union Parishad provision the women member have no particular roles and responsibilities. As result the women member had to face embarrassment when they proceeded for working. The

⁶ The Daily Ajker Kagoz, 2003.

⁷ Edited by Islam Naimul, *A review of Union Parishad Election 2003 in Newspaper*, P-14

women member of Audrishan Union Rina begum was out of contesting this year because she didn't want to speak lie to the people of her locality. She will never contest in Union Parishad Election (Islam: 2004).

Considering the above discussion, it can be said that during UP election 2003, it has both positive and negative sides. The mentionable positive sides were the spontaneous participation of the women and the indigenous people. Not only that, in many cases disable women were seen to contestant and they won. Besides this many contestants promulgated their specific manifestos in the election. On the other hand massive terrorism, fake voting and reversing election result like incidents were also frequent in the election.

Chapter 6

Women's changing position in private and public life: Discussion on findings from field study

6.1 Demographic feature of women UP members

6.2 Getting involved in Union Parishad

6.2.1 Pre-election phase

6.2.2: During election phase

6.3 Post- election phase

6.3.1 Activities as women UP member

6.3.1.1 Especially for women

6.3.1.2 Activities for area

6.4 Reason of less participation of women in UP

6.5 Steps need to be taken to increase women's participation

6.6 Perception of responsibilities of UP member

6.7 Perception of Achievement as UP member

6.8 Family's role in performing UP duties

6.9 Scope created in private and public space

6.9.1 Scope created in private space

6.9.2 Scope created in Public space

6.10 Difficulties in Private and Public life

6.10.1 Difficulties in private life

6.10.2 Difficulties in Public life

6.10.2.1 Difficulties in Public life in general

6.10.2.2 Difficulties in UP/ Operational activities in UP

6.11 Reflection from Focus Group discussion

6.11.1 Women member's role in the decision making process in Union Parishad

6.11.2 The Participation of Elected Female members in the Village Judicial court

6.11.3 The role of Women Members in the Committee System of Union Parishad

6.11.4 Relationship between the male and female member of the Union Parishad

6.11.5 Family members views on women in Union Parishad

6.11.6 Views of UP chairman and male members about Women members in Union Parishad

This chapter is based on the findings of fieldwork. First it will give a basic demographic feature of the women UP members and their election participation process. Then it will discuss the general and specific activities for women they perform. Further it will explain their perception of less participation, their achievement as women UP member. Further it will discuss the scopes created in their private and public life. Then it will discuss the problems they face in their private and public life.

6.1. Demographic feature of women UP members

In this section, data are presented on women members' family type, age distribution, land ownership, educational qualification, occupation, husband's occupation, income, and sources of income, religious identification. The data came from survey at field level. The major findings are as follows:

- Most women members are in middle age
- Less educational attainment
- Most of them have no income source
- About two-third of husband were in farming or small business
- Most of them from joint family
- Most of them had before male UP members in the family
- Have good conjugal life

- *Average Age of women UP member*

Table 15: Age distribution of UP member

25-30	30-35	35-40	Total
4	6	4	14
28.5%	42.8%	28.5%	100

About 43% of Women members were from thirty to thirty-five years of age. The second largest category was twenty-five to thirty years. And 28.5 % of Women members were thirty-five to forty years.

- *Education level of women UP members*

Table 16: Education level of women UP members

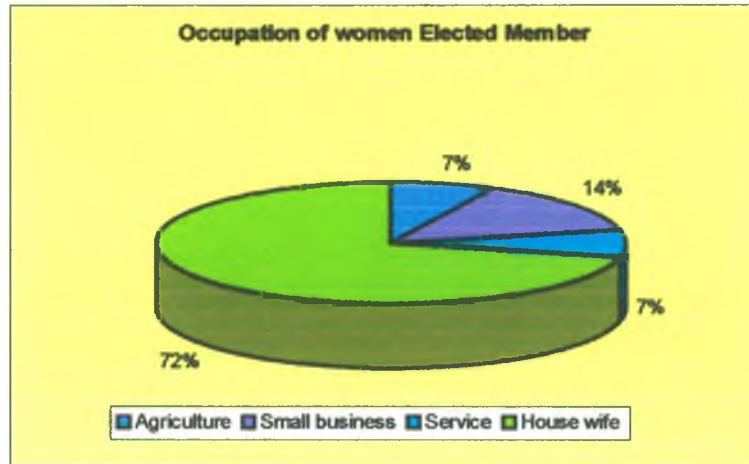
Education status	Percentage
Class 5-6	14
Class 7- 10	50
SSC	21
HSC	7
No comments	7
Total	100

Source: Field survey

Largest proportion of women member (50%) reported high school attendance. Only 21% reported that they have passed SSC. Following that 14% reported that they have passed class five to six and only one person was HSC passed.

- *Occupation of women elected members*

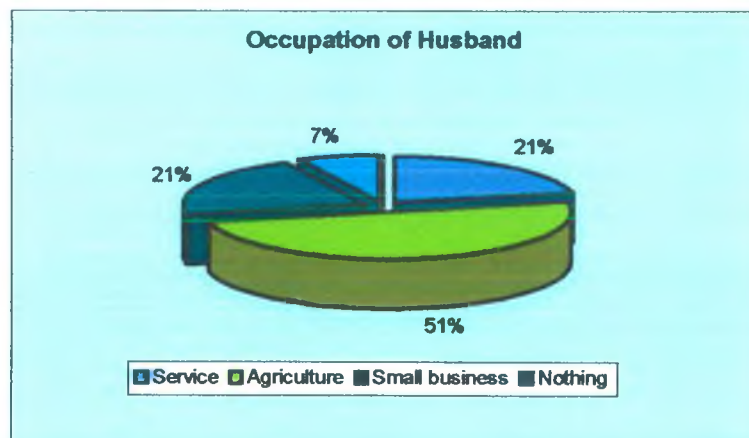
Graph 7: Occupation of women elected members



While asked about their occupation most of the women (72%) are replied that they are housewife. Only 14% said that they are doing small business such as vegetable garden, poultry farming etc. There are 7% women members who are involved in agriculture and private service. They feel if they have minimum higher educational qualification they can do private or government service (graph 8). Most of the respondent said that income less than TK 20,000 per year.

- *Husband's occupation*

Graph 8: Occupation of Husband



While sharing their husband occupation, 51% said that agriculture is the main occupation for them. Other service is not available especially at char area. Some of them (21%) are related with small business such as cloth store, fishing business etc. 21% women member said that their husband are service holder and they stay out of their area.

- *Family type*

Table 17: Family background

Types of family	Percentage
Nuclear	42
Joint	57
Total	100

Table 15 shows that the large numbers of women elected members (57%) live in joint family. Rest of the members (42%) live in nuclear family. Traditionally joint family has been prevalent in rural Bangladesh. It has been seen that most of the women elected members are not extreme poor and most of the cases poor family have to choose nuclear family for reduce to burden. Most of the respondent said for joint family they could give lot of time in Union Parishad. They feel for security of children they prefer joint family. And most of the cases it has been also seen that their father in law did not divided land so some times if they choose nuclear family but for property they can't live in nuclear family.

- *Family involvement in politics*

A significant number of women elected members had relatedness with politics through their family members who were in politics. Almost

28.5% reported that their father, uncle or husband’s family had previously been elected in UP.

- *Family relationship*

Almost all women member were married and have good conjugal relationship with husband. Only one women member who said her husband has another wife but 2nd wife respect to her.

These are the basic characteristics of women UP members. The other demographic features are as follows:

- Most were in the rural peasant class, relying on agriculture domestic animal production.
- They experience poverty and conservative social life.
- Most had not worked outside the home before running the office.

6.2 Getting involved in Union Parishad

6.2.1 Pre-election phase

- *Earlier Experience of politics*

Table 18: Participation of women in politics before election

Types of Answer	Percentage
Yes	28.5
No	71.5
Total	100

Source-field survey

About participation in the politics they shared that before participate in election they were not involve with politics. Table 18 shows that 71.5% respondent were not involve with politics, only 28% were involve with politics.

Table 19: support to participate in the election & whom were Election campaign associate

whom got support to participate in the election					Election campaign associate					
Own	Husband	family	Lot of sources	Local people	Lot of sources	Relatives	Local people	Husband	Fathers family	Others
28%	35%	7%	42%	14.2%	42%	14.2%	21.5%	28.5%	7%	7%

Source-field survey

In response to whom they got main support to participate in the election, 42% mentioned about number of sources. Then 35% said their husband encourages participating in the election, 28% said they participate in the election from their own interest. 14% said local people encourage them to participate in the election, 7% said that family encouraged them for participate in the election.

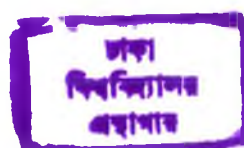
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In election campaign, 42% got support from different sources, 28% got support from their husband, 21% got help from local people as a campaign associate, 14% got help from relatives, 7% said their father's family also worked in election campaign and 7% mentioned about other source.

- *Provider of election coast/ Main sources of campaign fund*

Table 20: Provider of election coast/ Main sources of campaign fund

Provider of Finance	Percentage
Lot of sources	42.8
Husband	21.5



Father's family	14.2
Relatives	14.2
Own	7.14
Total	100

Source-field survey

Regarding election expenses, 42.8% respondent said they got that money from many sources. The other sources are 21.5% got support from their husband, 14.2% collect money from natal family, 14.2% got loan from their relatives and only 7.14 % expend money from their own sources.

6.2.2: During election phase

- *Election Expenses*

Table 21: Election Expenses of Women elected members

Amount of taka	Percentage
20001-30000	50
30001-40000	21.5
No comments	14.2
15000-20000	7.14
40001-50000	7.14
Total	100

Source-field survey

Regarding election expenditure, 50% expended 20001-30000 taka, 21.5% said they have expended 30001-40000 taka, 7.14% replied they expend more than 40001-50000 taka. But all women members said that they know male members expended lot of money for election purpose.

- *Number of contestant, and number of vote*

Table 22: Number of contestant, and number of vote

No of uncontested member		Number of contestant		Casting vote	
yes	No	1-3	4-6	Expressed	Can not
0	100%	78.5%	21.4%	57%	42%

Source-field survey

Regarding candidature, 78.5% respondents said that they won against 1-3 women contestant. 21.4% said they won against 4-5 women contestant. 57% respondent answered about their vote casting and 42% have forgotten their casting vote and some of them don not know how much vote they have got.

- *Obstacles in election period*

Table 23: Obstacles in election period

Obstacle	Percentage
Financial	78
Religious	50
Social	42
Familiar	28

Source- field survey

About obstacles had to face in election, most of the women members (78%) said financial support was main obstacle in election period. As they had no own income source so they were dependent on their husband or other sources. Another problem was religious obstacle (50%). Moreover due to social custom (42%) they did not move freely for campaign, and their family also did not support (28%) them always.

6.3 Post- election phase

About their interest of getting involved in UP, all of them said they came in politics for doing some development work in their local area.

6.3.1 Activities as women UP member

The activities are discussed below in two-sub sections. First I will discuss the issues relevant with women and then I will discuss the general activities for their area.

6.3.1.1 Especially for women

Table 24: List of women members' activities doing for women after won in election

Sl	Name of activities	Percentage
1.	Trying to reduce dowry, polygamy and early marriage	57.14
2.	Resolved conflict between couples	42.86
3.	Women are getting VGD card, Relief, adult allowance	42.86
4.	Arrange to poor girls for going to school	28.5
5.	Trying to reduce women violence	21.4
6.	Arranged <i>Upo bretti</i> (stipend) for girls	21.4
7.	Allocate more government facilities to women	
8.	Arranged treatment sick woman	7.14
9.	Announced a dowry free village	7.14
10.	Manage to buried mentally ill women	7.14

	patient without sending thana by taking government permission	
11.	Arranged financial support for marriage of poor girl's through Union Parishad	7.14
12.	Bury of accidental death body without postmortem by the permission of UNO	7.14
13.	Give advantage to the women for getting sanitary latrine from NGO and Govt.	7.14
14.	Making arrangement for sending the sick women to the health complex	7.14

- *Working for reduce dowry, polygamy and early marriage*

The major concern area considered by the women members are working for reduce dowry, polygamy and early marriage. They explained that they feel not only their district but also its true that in whole country dowry and early marriage speeded very frequently. So it should be reduce as early as possible. But this is really very tough to reduce polygamy, dowry, and early marriage. They have perception that for these three reasons women are suffering mostly. Hence they are giving first priority for reducing polygamy, dowry, and early marriage. One respondent said that in her working period she has announced a dowry free village. After her motivation now people of Baluchar village are not getting dowry from bridal house.

- *Work for resolve conflict between couples*

They also work for (42.86%) resolve conflict between couples. Most of the time vulnerable women and their family member come to them for resolved their conflict between couples and some times family problem.

- *Trying to provide VGD card, VGF card, relief, and old age allowance to vulnerable poor women*

Following that 42.86% response came for trying to provide VGD card, VGF card, relief, and old age allowance to vulnerable poor women.

- *Arrange schooling for poor girls*

They (28.5%) arrange schooling for poor girls. In their area lot of poor girl did not go to school for lot of causes. After their motivation now girls are going to school.

- *Work for reducing violence against women*

They work for reducing (21.4%) violence against women. They said that, they have seen most of the women have been suffering in this male dominated society. They always face lot of violence in home or out side. So women member are working to protect violence against women. As women they fell it should be foremost priority to reduce women violence in their area.

- *Focus on girls' education*

They also focus on girls' education and hence try to ensure ensuring girls stipend (21.4%). They have been trying to ensure the *upobretti* (Government scholarship for girls) for poor girls who have quality and keen for education but do not have the ability to maintain their educational expenditure.

- *Try to give all kind of government facilities to women*

They (14.9%) also try to give all kind of government facilities to women. Though they are not getting as much as facilities as per their requirement but they try to give first priority for women.

Such as they try to arrange treatment for sick woman. Another respondent said that, she has arranged some marriage of poor girl where all UP member has given financial support. She said after discussed with her all colleague she collected money from all member and arranged the marriage. Another elected member said she gave advantage to the women for getting sanitary latrine from NGO and Govt. Another respondent said that she had arranged for sending the sick women to the health complex.

6.3.1.2 Activities for area

The activities women members do for their area is as follows:

Table 25:List of activities doing for own area

Sl	Activities	Percentage
1)	Road construction work through UP	57.14
2)	Arrange create to poor children for going to school	35.71
3)	Try to increase awareness about sanitation	35.71
4)	Helped in the flood situation	21.4
5)	Distributed latrine tube well for local people	14.29
6)	Organized meeting with local elite people for reduce polygamy	7.14
7)	Resolve all <i>salish</i> by herself	7.14
8)	Create drainage system beside the road	7.14
9)	Help to crate birth registrar through <i>Sishu Parishad</i>	7.14
10)	Fill up the bridge's by soil	7.14

- *Worked for road construction*

In general for there local area, most of the respondent said (57.14%) that they have worked for road construction of their local area. They know good communication is one of the major demands of people. So all members try to improver or build up new road in their own areas.

- *Working for sanitation*

They (35.71%) are working for sanitation. They know government declared Bangladesh will get access 100% sanitation facilities by 2010. For this reason they have already started work for 100% sanitation union achievement. At present Union Parishad will play a vital role for sanitation coverage so they are working for sanitation coverage of their own areas.

- *Working for schooling for poor children*

They (35.71%) are working schooling for poor children. They know that for poor economic condition, most of the families can not send their children to school because they have to give time for earn money. But women member are satisfied that after their motivation they are now sending their children to the school. Women member arrange scholarship or other sources for ensuring attending school.

- *Help to the flood affected people*

They helped to the flood affected people (21.4%). They visited village to village and as much as possible they helped to the people through Union Parishad. Though it was not enough but they tried to do some thing for the people.

These are the main activates they do for their areas. The other activities are as follows:

- They distribute latrine, tube-well to the local people.
- They also organize workshop/meeting with elite person for discussing and aware them about polygamy.
- They work resolving conflict through participating in *shalish*
- They help to crate birth registrar through *Sishu Parishad*
- Development work such as filled up the bridge's by soil, create drainage system beside the road
- Arranged to bury of accidental death body without postmortem by the permission of UNO.

6.4 Reason of less participation of women in UP

In this section, it is discussed the reasons of less participation of women in UP.

Table 26: Reason of less participation of women in UP

SL	Reason of less participation	Percentage
1.	Financial crisis	57.14
2.	Lack of political awareness of women	50.00
3.	Less courage, less education, unawareness	42.86
4.	Women are weak, lack of confidence	42.86

5.	Getting low honorarium	28.5
6.	Not getting proper honor and right from UP male members	28.5
7.	Family problem	21.4
8.	In fear people's criticism	21.4
9.	Lack of women organization	14.29

- *Financial crisis*

According to women members (57.14 %), financial crisis is one of the major reasons of less participation of women in UP because they do not have self-earning source. Hence they have to depend on their earning family members to contest in the election.

- *Lack of political awareness of women*

Lack of political awareness of women considered (50%) is another main reason. As most of the women are housewife hence always engage with household work and they feel this is their main duty as women. Generally in family life, nobody talk with them about politics and therefore they have no clear idea about local government. They generally just give their vote during election and most of the time they vote convinced by their husband or relatives.

- *Less courage, less education, unawareness*

Less courage, less education, unawareness (42.86%) is another mentionable reason of women's less participation in UP. They feel in

our society women are always vulnerable. In the family they are get less priority in education or other facilities. So they don't get chance to be equally educated and less aware than men.

- *Women are weak, lack of confidence*

Another opinion is women are weak, less confident (42.86%). They think they have no ability to do other outside work, they born for doing only household work. Their self-confidence is so poor.

- *Getting low honorarium*

Next opinion is low honorarium (28.5%). They are now getting fewer honorariums that is not sufficient for a women member. They have to take over three areas and to movement in all areas this money is not sufficient. So they have to do lot of work by own money.

- *Not getting proper honor and right from UP male members*

Then, 28.5% women elected member said they are not getting proper honor and rights from Union Parishad. For discrimination and non-cooperation from male members at present, elected women members are frustrated and some of them are thinking to not attend in election in future again.

- *Disagreement from Family*

Another reason is disagreement from Family (21.4%). Till now lot of families do not like women's involvement in politics. Their family members feel politics is only for men not for women.

- *Fear of people's criticism*

Similarly 21.4% said that there is fear of people's criticism to participate in UP. Lot of women members has faced people's criticism so other women do not feel interest to attend in Union Parishad.

- *Lack of women organization*

Another reason is lack of women organization (14.29%). Respondents said if there is some women based organization establish in their area to work on capacity building for women then more women could understand their importance in politics. Therefore, they feel interest to attend in the politics and when they elected as UP member they could do their duties smoothly.

6.5 Steps need to be taken to increase women's participation

These are the following steps need to be taken for increasing women's participation in Union Parishad.

Table 27: Steps needs to be taken for increase their participation

SL	Steps need to be taken	Percentage
1	Increase political awareness	64.28
2	Present UP women member's adequate evaluation	50.00
3	Increase honorarium	50.00
4	Disseminate govt. facilities equally to women members	35.71
5	Political awareness have to increases through different trainings	14.29
6	To increase their position in different UP committees	14.29
7	Family members' awareness have to increase	7.14

- *Increase the political awareness*

To increase women participation in Union Parishad 64.2% women members think that first priority should be increase the political awareness. Women are not aware about politics so they do not feel interest in politics. Home get the highest priority to them. They feel they needs to do only household work and take care of their children, husband and relatives. But this mentality should be change for women's empowerment.

- *Women members should be valued perfectly in Union Parishad*

According to 50% respondents, women members should be valued perfectly in Union Parishad, which is almost absent in present situation.

- *Increase of honorarium*

A large number women members (50%) feel that increase of honorarium for all members specially for women can enhance their interest in attending UP activities. if honorarium will increase for all members specially for women, then they can interest feel for attend in Union Parishad. If they get standard honorarium their family member also appreciate them for financial improvement.

- *Government facilities should disseminate equally to all members*

Some women member (35.71%) feel, government facilities should disseminate equally to all members. It has been seen that people want lot of help from them but they cannot give lot of facilities to the people. So people feel male is better for them.

- *Increases their awareness through different trainings*

Another steps (14.9%) in considered by them to increases their awareness through different trainings or workshops. Then women can understood their importance in politics. Most of the women members have no clear concept about their duties and responsibilities. For this reason chairman and male member take this chance to distribute any government facilities.

- *Increase present UP member's position in different UP committees*

Some of them (14.9%) said that for increasing their participation, needs to increase present women UP member's position in different UP committees. At present women cannot play role in the committee for minority. If women members give top positions in the committees and increase their involvement in the committee they will feel interest to work in the Parishad.

- *Family member's awareness have to increase*

Family members' awareness (7.14%) has to be increased. Because it has been seen that some times women cannot attend in UP election for their family obstacles. So if it is possible to increase family awareness, women's participation will increase more in politics.

6.6 Perception of responsibilities of UP member

Women members have perceptions on their responsibilities, which are as follows:

Table 28: Perception of responsibility of UP member

Responsibility	Percentage
Resolve problem of local people	85.71
Distribute government relief to local people adequately	71.42
To help poor women's	50.00
Aware women about polygamy, dowry marriage	42.85
Assured birth and death registration	42.85
Aware women about early marriage and family planing	42.85
Progress to sanitation activities	35.71
To ensure education for the poor	28.57

- *Resolve problem of local people*

While sharing with them about perception of responsibility of a UP member, 85.71% women member said that, to resolve problem of local people. They feel most of the time local people elect them in hope of getting more help from them after election. So women member feel their main responsibility to resolve the problems of local people.

- *Distribute government relief to local people adequately*

Most of the respondents (71.42%) respondents feels one of the main responsibilities of a UP member to distribute government relief to local people adequately. Poor people are totally dependent on them for getting any kind of government relief. So UP member should properly do this job.

- *Help to the poor women*

Some (50%) women members believe that help to the poor women is one of the main responsibilities of a UP member. Because Women members were aware from before about women's problems and could do something for them.

- *Aware to women about polygamy, dowry marriage*

A large number (42.85%) feel that aware to women about polygamy, dowry, early marriages are very important responsibilities of women member.

- *To assure birth and death registration*

Many women members (42.85%) feel that to assure birth and death registration is one of the major responsibilities of UP member.

- *Aware women about early marriage and family planning*

Some respondent (42.85%) feel to aware women about early marriage and family planing is one of the major responsibilities of a UP member. Women members feel that motivation on family planning is very important topic in our society .A women member can work on family planning more smoothly then male member.

- *Progress to sanitation activities*

Some respondent (35.71%) said as government declared Bangladesh have to get access by 2010 so as UP member to progress to sanitation activities is one of the major responsibilities of UP member.

- *To ensure education for the poor*

Some respondent (28.5%) feel that ensure to education for the poor is one of the major responsibility of UP member.

6.7 Perception of Achievement as UP member

This section will give some ideas about women members' perception of what they achieve as Union Parishad member.

Table 29: List of achievement as a UP member

Achievement	Percentage (%)
Increase family and social status	85.71
Good relation build up between different organization	50.00
Being able to help people	42.85
Getting different training and honor from NGO and GO	28.57
Increase more knowledge	21.43
Involvement with development work	21.43

Ability to work for people	14.29
Achieve membership of Union Parishad being a poor women	7.14
Networking increase up to upazila level	7.14

- ***Increase family and social status***

While asked them what kind of achievement they have got as a UP member, 85.71% respondent

Said that after elected as a UP member increases their family and social status. They feel this is the main achievement of their life.

- ***Good relation build up between different organization***

A large number (50%) of respondents responded that, as UP member their achievement at present they have built up good relation between different organizations. Though few days ago when they were not UP member, nobody feels build up a good relation with them but now the scenario is totally changed. Different organizations come to them for different causes.

- ***Being able to help people***

Many women members (42.85%) said, they are now able to help the people. They know they cannot give proper support to the people for lot of causes but at least some thing can do for the people, which was not possible for them few months ago before being UP member.

- ***Getting different training and honor from NGO and GO***

Some respondent (28.5%) feel that as a UP member it's a great achievement that they are now getting different trainings and get honor from NGO and GO and get invitation in any kind of programmes from

them. Especially at present all NGOs are trying to include them with their activities, which was unthinkable before.

- *Achieve membership of Union Parishad being a poor women*

Another response (7.14%) feel that achieve membership of Union Parishad being a poor women is the main achievement in life.

- *Networking increase up to upazila level*

Another response (7.14%) is that UP membership increased the network to upazila level, which is big achievement in life.

6.8 Family’s role in performing UP duties

In this section it will explain the family’s role about women member’s UP involvement and activities.

Table 30: Family obstacles and support in performing of UP duties

Family problem		Family support	
Yes	No	Yes	No
21%	78.57	78.57%	21.4%

While asked them about their experience in family about their involvement in UP, most of the respondents said that they do not face any kind of family obstacle in their life. Only few respondents said they have to face family problem but most of the respondents said that they always get family support for performing their duties.

In some cases, though the family members support their candidature during the election, but after the election their engagements in outside the house is not very much appreciated or encouraged by family members. Their family members want as they back home as early as possible. Why their family members do not support to them, regarding this question they explained for their business sometimes their children cannot do good result in the exam. Often it has been seen that they cannot give enough time for household work so family members cannot accept it easily. Especially as they cannot give any financial support to the family from UP activities, so family members feel there is no value of this kind of work.

6.9 Scope created in private and public space

This section will discuss the scope created in private and public life for women through the new role of 'women UP member'. One of the main objectives of the study was to find out the different changes in the private and public places of women's activities from the past to the present. I shall try to explain the evolution of the women at Gaibandah and Tangail, amongst whom mostly housewives before. But now have a public life and the main focus of this research is to reveal their private and public life after elected as an UP member.

6.9.1 Scope created in private space

In this sub-section we will see the scopes in private life. 80% women said, after elected as an UP member now they are getting some opportunity in personal life. They feel they are empowered in house some sector has increased where they can play vital role. Based on fieldwork findings, major scopes they mentioned are described below.

Table 31: Scope created in private space

	Name of scope	Percentage (%)
1.	Respect in the family	71.43
2.	Able to take decision about the marriage of son and daughter	50
3.	Get more help from husband	42.86
4.	Influence on making decision	35.71
5.	Doing her own work by her self	28.57
6.	Relatives come to me for taking wise decision	28.57
7.	Good marriage proposal come for their son/daughter	28.57
8.	Working out side like male	21.4
9.	Family member help me for complete the household work when I engage with my outside work	21.4
10.	Changes in own behavior	21.4
11.	Increase economic status at home	14.29
12.	Right to spend money	14.29
13.	I tried to full fill all demand of my doughtier	7.14

14.	Dowry free marriage can arrange for own doughtier	7.14
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- *Respect in the family*

Elected women members fill that their honor has been increased more after elected as a UP member. 71.43% respondents said that their family members feel them as an important person after they had started work for people. Most of the members said that their children feel more proud for their present position because they are now known as a member's children and children enjoy this. As they are holding more power after elected as a UP member of the society so their children and others of the family talk with them with a different tone than past. Now they got new responsibility to work with different kinds of social programs by which they try to improve the position of vulnerable women. Good works for the society by the UP members bring more proud for the family members, which increased her honor simultaneously. When they have done any good thing in her village her family feel very proud for it and day-by-day increased more honor to her. They now can give good advice in different circumstances to their kin because they have much knowledge and intelligence than before.

- *Able to take decision about the marriage of son and daughter*

It has been seen that 50% respondent feel that they are now able to take decision about the marriage of son and daughter. Not only their own children they also give good decision about their relative's children marriage. Some reported that for their membership they have

got good marriage proposal for their son/ daughter and they feel for that their new position they are getting it.

- *Increased husband's sharing attitude*

Most women reported that after elected as UP member they have been getting more help from their husband. 42.86% respondent feel they are get more help for any kind of work from their husband. Respondent gave positive response about their husband's behavior. They said their husband try to help them as much as possible of their all kind of activities. Their husband do not try to complain about their outside work. Moreover they encourage them to make success of their work. But some reported that if their husband will be more cooperative they will able to do their daily duties more efficiently. But its true that most of the respondent reported that they do not have any major complain about their husband behavior or non-cooperation.

- *Increase position on making their own decision*

At present the women of UP member are able to take their own decisions. However they are still dependent on others for some social and cultural reasons. Many of them are not able to take decision freely. In many cases the influence of the husband, son or father –in- law is still active. Most women said, "Though I take my own decision but also I have to think about other's advice." It has been found that women are trying to come out from the bindings of the mail influence and their journey is going well. 35.71% Women elected member can make their on decision. Their husband also share with them when take any decision about family.

- *Increased status to relatives*

From findings it has been seen that 28.57% respond that not only their own family member but also other family member/relatives come to

them for taking wise decision from them. They are giving their decision about children marriage, property related, family problem etc. They try to give them their best suggestion.

- *Cooperation from household members*

Some respondent (21.4%) said that for their busyness they can not give enough time to household work but their family members are very much cooperative to complete household work. But some respondents said they can not give enough time to union Parishad for their household work. As a mother, house wife they have to do lot of household work.

- *Changes in own behavior*

Some respondent (21.4%) shared that after elected UP member their behavior changes then past. They feel at present they are more matured. Now they can give their opinion very carefully. Because their popularity also depend on their transparent opinion. They have seen people listen their speech sincerely. Some one said good behavior is a important part for a member specially in the election period.

- *Got right to spend money*

In our country it is seen that men who earn money spend in whatever way they like. Now, the women specially elected women member getting a little bit honorarium from UP. Though it is very small amount but established their right to spend the money according to their own interest. But in many cases the most important decisions in economic matters are still taken by men. Most of the time they spend their own money in entertaining guest, fulfill the small demands of children, buy poultry and plants etc. It is evident from research that 14.29% women spend their money by themselves. All women member

fills as an elected member their salary is insufficient considering present circumstances. Most of them said Govt should increase it. For money crisis most of the time they cannot move adequately in their working area.

- ***Increased Mobility***

It was (21.4%) reported that they are now able to go any where for their outside work. They informed that their family not makes hindrances as any more. But before women member not go anywhere alone. They had to get permission from their husband or father in law / mother in law. Though some member told that at first their family member did not like their out side work but after few days when they realized about their activities then family member start to support their mobility.

- ***Dowry free marriage can arrange for own daughter***

Another response was (7.14%) that it decreases pressure to give dowry on daughter`s marriage.

- ***Little bit capable to fulfill their daughter demand***

Another response was (7.14%) that this position of UP member created opportunity to fulfill their daughters` demand. Though this is difficult to fulfill all demand but she try to as much as possible.

6.9.2 Scope created in Public space

I can play vital role for vulnerable women and children

Maya Begum, 40 years old, member of Elenga union, ward 2. When she was not a UP member she can't play any role for vulnerable women and child. She also

wants to do some thing for them but she has no rights to take any decision about this people. She thought if she can play any role in Shalish she can support to women. And now her dreams come true. After elected as a UP member now she can play strong role in Shalish for vulnerable people specially for women. At present village people specially poor women wants her presence in Shalish for better and fair judgement. She feels this is her great achievement as a union parishad member. She believed if she was not elected as a UP member she could never get this change in her life.

This is only one example of a UP member but there are lots of these kinds of examples in their life. There are many scope created in public life which are given below.

Table 32:Scope created in public space

SL	Scope created in public space	Percentage
1.	All people now know us as a UP member	71.43
	People give more respect	64.29
3.	Increase social status	57.14
4.	Increase respect to the neighbors	57.14
5.	Can give own opinion in the shalish	42.86
6.	Vulnerable people wanted their presence in Shalish	35.71
7.	Get invitation from any local programme	50.00
8.	NGO & other organization give respect	42.86

9.	Children also get honor from outside	35.71
10	Known as a UP member to other UP chairman and members	21.43
11	After selected of UP member knowledge increased	14.29
12	Increase networking with others	07.14
13	People give more respect than chairman	07.14

- *Created self identity*

While sharing their experience about scope created in their public life they reported that all people now know them as UP member. 71.43% respondents feel after elected as a UP member they have got own identity. Villagers known them as a UP member.

- *Increase social status*

A large number (57.14%) women members feel that their personal status in the society in general have been uplifted. They receive lot of invitation to attend various social gathering. Political parties also approach them, which was unthinkable before. Most of the invitations come directly in their own name and not in the name of their husbands. Some times they have to attend in these programmes as special guest. They give speech freely in any social gathering. Table 32 shown that other institution also invite them to know their activities and some times they are invited for visit their working area.

- *Increased honor to local people*

A large number (64.29%) respondents felt that people do honor them very much which was unexpected before. Their relatives proud fill for their activities. When their neighbors have any problem they share with them and most of the time take their decision. Some respondents said that they have to go with their neighbors when they go to thana to give any written complain. And before going to thana they always take suggestion from them. Most of the respondents feel that for their activities people feel proud for them. When they face any family problem at first they come to their women member. Because they also try to give better suggestion about their family problem.

- *Increased social status*

A large number (57.14%) respondents said that, not only their own area their social status increase very quickly after elected as a UP member in other areas as well. Everybody knows which one her house. If any newcomer tries to meet with them, anybody can locate their home easily.

- *Get invitation from local people*

A large number (50%) said that they are now getting invitation for any local programmes. There are many institutions in their union. Most of the institution invite them for attend in the programmes.

- *NGO & other organization give respect*

Women member (42.86%) said that NGOs and other organizations are giving more respect for their present position. Some reported that at present NGOs have been showing more interest to increase involvement their activities.

- *Can give own opinion in the shalish*

They (42.86%) can confidently give any decision, which was unthinkable before in the *shalish*. Women especially demand their presence in the *shalish*.

- *Household members get honor from outsiders*

Some (35.71%) respondents reported that their children also get extra favor for their membership. Local people know them as children of women member. School, other organization, other institutions know them.

- *Knowledge increased more*

Some respondents (14.29%) said that after selected as UP member they feel their knowledge increased more and they can smartly give any decision, which was not possible before.

- *People give more respect than chairman*

Some respondents (14%) said that people give more respect than the chairman for their good job. People feel in most cases they are less corrupted and therefore villagers like them .

- *Increasing network with others*

One opinion (7.14%) is that their network is increasing day by day. They have good network from union level to Upazila level. At present Upazila officer also honor them.

6.10 Difficulties in Private and Public life

In this section I will discuss the findings about the difficulties they have been facing in their life.

6.10.1 Difficulties in private life

Rezia Begum 25 years old, member of Muktinogor Union. She came to the Union Parishad with lot of dream. But after few month she gave birth a girl and now she can not give enough time to union parishad. Because her husband not stay in home. He is a service holder for this he stays out of this union. And her father in low and mother in low are aged person who are not capable to take of her child. So now most of the time she have to detached from Union Parishad. Because no one who will take care of her child. So she has to do everything by herself. Even at present she can not attend the monthly meeting of union parishad.

This is one of the examples of a woman elected member. But there are lots of everyday problem they have to face and not be able to perform appropriately. This table shows the major difficulties they face to make their balance between private life and public life. Hence women elected members who are capable to do well but many kinds of difficulties close their all creativity.

Table33: Difficulties in private life

Difficulties in private life	Percentage
A WEM cannot give enough time to household work	64.29
Women cannot take care of their children	50.00
Some time they have to expend their own money	28.57
They do not get enough support from family	21.43
Vehicle Problem	14.28
If don't get project from UP husband angry with me	7.14

- *Can not give enough time to family members*

Almost 64.29% women elected members reported that after elected as a UP member they can not give enough time to their household work. They have passed their time for outside work. So they can not properly take care their family members. And for this reason some times their family members' looks frustrated. But still they feel that with out their family members support they could not able to reach and stay at present position.

- *Inadequate time for children*

A large number (50%) of respondents said that at present they do not give enough time to their children. As a mother they cannot take care of their children. Women members feel that some times their children missing them very much. Especially when they busy for any kind of relief distribution or any special emergency activities they can not allocate time for children.

- *Shortage of money*

Some (28.57%) women members said that they have to spend family money often to perform their leadership role and function. Because they themselves do not earn money, it is an additional burden on their family. The honoraria paid by the union Parishad are grossly inadequate to meet the social expenses associated with the membership. A few of the women members earn some income from petty farming and also save some money from family expense. But they have to spend that money for attending regular Parishad duty as well social functions. Some respondent said that election purpose they have expended lot of money and they collected this money from their husband and relatives but till now they could not repay.

- *Face hindrances in mobility*

Some respondents feel that they do not get enough support from their family regarding mobility. They can not go anywhere as per requirement of their duties. They experience limitations on their freedom of movement compare than men members. 14.28% said that transportation is one of the main problem for free movement. Because in Char area transportation is not available As they have no any personal vehicle so they ca not move in any time, 7.14% said that if they don't get any project from UP husband angry with them because they feel this position has no value.

6.10.2 Difficulties in Public life

6.10.2.1 Difficulties in Public life in general

Table 34: Problems in Public life

Sl	Problems	Percentage
1.	Do not get proper allocation for their 3 ward	85.71
2.	Honorarium is not sufficient(350) and timely we don't get it	64.29
3.	Transportation problem	42.86
4.	Lack of knowledge about their rights and responsibilities	35.71
5.	Often meeting fixed up in long distance	28.57
6.	Social obstacle	21.43
7.	Male members do not see in good sense	21.43
8.	Religion obstacle	14.29
9.	Chairman do not call meeting	07.14
10.	Chairman does not work by himself, manage work by secretary at his home	07.14
11.	Can not move at night for people criticism	07.14

- *Less allocation of work and less experience to perform duty*

Most of the respondent (85.71%) said that UP chairman do not allocate resources and responsibilities to the women members equally with that of male members. In addition women members reported that the lack

of knowledge about their duties, prevented them from performing their duties properly. They also reported lack of understanding of external and legal matters pertaining of UP functions. In part, these problems arise due to lack of specific legal delineation of the function and duties of women holding the reserve seats. They also said that are totally dependent on the discretion of the chairman for getting a project or any other work that involve government resources. As a result public do not wanted elected them in future.

- *Little amount of honorarium*

While sharing their experience about honorarium, 64.29% said if they have no any extra income so this honorarium is so little amount for them. They have to expend money for different purposes. They also said that sometimes people do not care to listen to their condition: they want help from them through employment, money, wheat, etc. Beside this there is no extra provision of TA for attended at different meeting/ salish, which have a long distance from UP. As most of the WM have no personal earning source so that they can't attend at different activities of UP.

- *Transport problem*

Because of bad communication and long distance many women members cannot reach at Union porishad timely due to transportation problem. A male member can travel by cycle, boat, troller or walk but in our society a WM cannot easily travel like man member. 42.86% feel that transportation problem is one of the main problem for attend to all programmes.

- *Lack of knowledge about their rights and responsibilities*

Some (35.71%) women elected member said that they have no clear concept about their rights and responsibilities. So they can not get work from Union Parishad for lack of knowledge. Male member and chairmen try to convince them this is not necessary to involve with all kinds of work. And some times they do not inform to women member about any important activities.

- *Problem with meeting venue and time*

Though there is a provision to hold a monthly meeting but it is rarely find to be held. Some times meeting is held at night and sometimes out of the office which make difficult for the women member to attend the meeting. Especially 28.71% respondents said that in the rural area the “*Salish*” is normally held at night. As a result in spite of their willingness the women members cannot take part because of the insecurity. Women are gradually become discouraged as Union Parishad do not take necessary step or to provide help to them.

- *Social obstacle*

In our society especially in the rural area the women (21.45%) can not move freely for the social obstruction despite their willingness. Conservative social norms in rural areas prevented free movement.

- *Religion obstacle*

Some respondents (14.29%) respondents said that religion obstacle also one kind of problem of their public life. They had to rely on husbands or other family members to accompany them especially in the evening pogramme. Otherwise they have to hear lot of talk.

It is said that Chairman does not work by himself. manage work by secretary at his home. So they can not inform update information about

their activities. One of them said that can not move at night for people criticism. Another respondent said their chairman most of the time do not call any meeting in the Union Parishad.

These are the major difficulties women members face in public life in general.

6.10.2.2 Difficulties in UP/ Operational activities in UP

This sub-section will discuss the difficulties inside the UP. Many of them said that male members get more resources from the parishad in respect of project grants and they have their own income as well. This put the women in a very different and difficult situation.

Table 35: Difficulties in UP/ Operational activities in UP

Sl	Difficulties	Percentage
1.	Member & chairmen always help to own people	78.57
2.	Chairman & Male member's decision are preferable in any decision	78.57
3.	UP chairmen and member don't call them in the time of resource allocation	50.00
4.	Lack of involvement in any committee of UP	50.00
5.	Corruption of UP chairman	42.86
6.	Male Member cannot accept their leadership	42.86
7.	Often they have taken all most decision before our coming	35.71
8.	Big electoral area	21
9.	Women MP also don't help to us	14.29
10.	Allocate only women related and soft areas of work	14.29

- *Member & chairmen always help to own people*

Some of them regarded that as women they were not that effective in doing arduous physical work, such as road construction. 78.57% respondent said that most of the project activities done by chairman and his own male member. Because of good relationship and same mentality, chairman all the time give them all responsibilities for doing the activities of Union Parishad.

- *Preference of male UP member*

Large number (78.57%) of respondents feel that in most of the cases Chairman prefer decision of male members. As they are minority group in the Parishad, so women members can't establish their own opinion. Most of the time Chairman and male member take all kinds of decision about their activities. So in the meeting, women members just sign on the decision already taken. Women members cannot protest the illogical activities and decision, which are taken by the male members. Maximum time their opinion are regretted by the male members because they are women and minor in UP. They reported male member believe women member are not capable of working on their own. But few of them could able to cultivate good relations with male members and chairman, and thus has some share in UP activities.

- *UP chairmen and member don't call them in the time of resource allocation*

About resource allocation, almost 50% reported that UP chairman do not allocate resources and responsibilities to the women members equally with that of male members. UP chairmen and member don't call them in the time of resource allocation. Women members do not

get equal treatment in getting project under Food for Work and Annual Development Plans. They also said that most of the time in distribution of VGD card, VGF card, women are getting one third of that of men; although they are elected from three wards (Men represent one ward) and committed to provide service to the people.

- *Lack of involvement in the UP Committee*

Most of the time it has been seen that women's involvement is very low in most of the committees. 50% women members reported that when chairman formed the committees, they are not invited. Some of them are involve but they can not play vital role in the committees.

- *Corruption of UP chairmen*

Some (42%) respondents said that their chairman is corrupted. For getting any project they want money from women members. But they have to totally depend on the chairman for getting a project or any other work that involve government resources.

- *Can not accept female member's leadership*

Some (42%) said that most of the male members can not accept their leadership. Women members reported that they perceive men to have a negative or bad attitude towards them. They feel they are not given an equal share or opportunity in the work, and noted that men disrespect or humiliate them.

- *Chairman and male member's full control in taking decision*

Some respondents (35.71%) said that in most cases chairman group of the parishad take decision about the activities of the parishad in pre-

planned way and meeting call to implement the decision taken by them previously. So women members are deprived from discussing their agenda.

- *Electoral Area*

Some respondents (21%) said that most of the activity plans are made on the ward basis in a union parishad. Most of the ward are directed and controlled by the male members of the parishad. The women members who are elected on the basis of reserved seat, they have no particular ward to do their activity as a result they are helpless against their male colleague. Though WM get specific responsibility but at field level these haven't implemented.

- *Non cooperation of MP*

Some women members (14.29%) feel that they do not get any help from their local MP. Even Women MP also did not help to them for getting any project activities. When Mp come to his own area chairman and his male always surrounded to him. Women member can not share with him/ her about their problem.

- *Allocate only women related and soft areas of work*

It have been seen that women members (14.29%) are usually given assignments relating to family planning, cottage crafts, education, sanitation and women and children welfare. They are also expected to deal with the women in the community and not the men. Most women had no committee assignment at all.

6.11 Reflection from Focus Group discussion

In this section, it is discussed the findings of the focus group discussions held with different groups. These three groups are:

1. Women UP members
2. Women member's family members
3. UP chairman and male members

The findings are summarized below.

6.11.1 Women member's role in the decision making process in Union Parishad

The way through which decisions are taken is meeting of the Parishad, Prokalpo Committee and Committee Management. There is a provision to held a monthly meeting in the Union Parishad with all the members where the chairman chair the meeting. In the absent of the chairman the meeting can be held by a member in the chair. Decisions are taken on the Budget preparation and allocation of roles & responsibilities etc. The members are enlightened about the agenda and date from the Parishad Office before the meeting start. The decisions taken in the meeting are note down in the form of resolution and are sent to the Deputy Commissioner by the Secretary of the Parishad

The monthly meetings are hardly seen to be held even though there is a provision. The office opens irregularly. In many cases the Chairman and male Members give some direction to the Secretary to write down as a resolution and instruct him to send it to the Deputy Commissioner

though there was no meeting. After discussing with the female members of the Parishd it was known that in report writing the intention of the Chairman and male members are reflected instead of the decisions taken in the meeting. In that case the points put up by the female members and their decisions taken by the house are often ignored or ascribed the preplanned decisions. The meeting's decisions remain unchanged even the female members denial to sign the resolution paper. Their signatures are copied. Though the female members present the monthly meeting, their opinion on problem identification, need assessment and decision making process are often ignored

As female members have no specific duty, the Chairman and the male Members get the opportunities of taking all the decisions. As a result the enthusiasm and promising with which the female member elected, becomes meager and vague. Even not getting specific duties & responsibilities and failing to play the effective role they become abased to their voters. They promised to their voter to solve problems and still they have positive intention towards their promises but for various reason they are facing obstacle to perform their promises, which make their ways narrow toward political empowerment

6.11.2 The Participation of Elected Female members in the Village Judicial court

The Village Act 1919 gives the Union Board the power of Judiciary to settle different kinds of dispute among the people of the locality. According to the Act, the Board is entrusted with the power of justice of both Civil and Criminal cases. But in the perspect of Criminal cases the Government could make a bench comprises of two or more

members from the Board if it was needed. The Act. remained unchanged until 1976. 1976 “The Village Court Ordinance-1976” was promulgated. According to the law keeping two people from each side along with the Chairman in the Chair consisted the judicial board. Among the two of the each side one must be female member. The provision for the village court still exists. Beside the village court still now there is “*Salish*” in the village consisting of elders, *sarder* and *matabbor*. To meet the rivalry and clash in the non-formal structure of the court still the access of the women is limited because of the Patriarchy values of our society. When both parities nominate their representative only then the court can work. Recently the participation rate of the women in the village court or “*Salish*” are evident remarkably because of the NGO activities in the rural area. Women are more interested to express their family problems regarding exploitation, divorce or dowry with the female members of the parishad instead of the male member or the Chairman. One elected women member informed that she was a selected member in the previous term and did not go to the “*Salish*” but now she go there regularly. To her only women can feel the problems of the women and can provide better solution then their male counterpart. On the other hand most of the women don’t want go to the Village court because of family and social obstacles and the negative impressions of the male members and Chairman. In the village “*Salish*” male members and the Chairman play the key role. Except the women related affairs the women members usually don’t show their interest to opine. Social and religious ethics and in the out side world because of male domination the participation of women in the “*Salish*” or “*Judiciary system*” still remain in the name and paper.

6.11.3 The role of Women Members in the Committee System of Union Parishad

In the system of Union Parishad there is a provision to form different committees on decentralization, decision making, planning, project implementation and solve of the unexpected problem for ensuring more participation of the members in the parishad. Union Parishad is one of the important level of the Local government and to perform the 10 obligatory works and 39 elective works more intensively there was provision to form 7 Standing Committee in the article 38(1) of the Union Parishad Ordinance 1983. To ensure the effective role and dignity of the female member including 5 new Standing Committees a provision total of 12 Standing Committee was preserved by the Local Government Ministry on 19 May in 1998. These are (i) Economic and Establishment, (ii) Education (iii) Audit & Accounts (iv) Agriculture & other development works. (v) Social Welfare & Community Centre (vi) Cottage Industries (vii) Cooperative Society (viii) Women & Child Welfare (ix) Fishery & Livestock (x) Plantation (xi) Union Structural Program and (xii) overall literacy. Local government Ministry has instructed to appoint each member of the Parishad as Chairman of the each committee. But want of proper guidance most of the standing committee are now remain inactive.

Besides forming the Standing to perform the duties ascribed on Union Parishad. 8 Project under the head of Thana Sohayata Unnayan program, Selecting vulnerable women to distribute VGD card for wheat under the VGD program, prepare list for Adult allowance, Selecting women worker for the maintenance of village infrastructure etc committees are working. Local Government Committee has already decided that at least one third of the Chairperson of the 8 Standing Committee will have to be from women.

Though Women members are the Chairperson of the Committees in fact the mentality to violate the opinion of the Women members by the Chairman and the male members are still exist. In some cases the husband of the women members coordinate work with the Chairman and the other male members. Incorporating women member in the Union Project Committee though from the grass-root level to nation level everywhere there are male domination it is very difficult to ensure the right of the women members. Like Thana Sahayata Prokolpa Committee male influence and atrocity also visible in the VGF card also. Most of the VGD cards are captured by the male members and they distribute the cards among those who are in their favor. On the other hand the women members receive a few cards and they have to face the questions of the people while going for the distribution. Like VGD card the same problem is evident in the Adult Allowance also. The poor and vulnerable women of the respective ward is enlisted before go for the decision of which five women among them will receive adult allowance. Though there is a clear instruction from the government to make the list jointly my male and female members of the parishad in fact in many cases it is seen that male members prepare the list without in forming their female counterpart. There is a provision for the women members to be the Chairperson of the committee but in reality this instruction seems to be valueless.

6.11.4 Relationship between the male and female member of the Union Parishad

The participation of women in the whole society activities makes the male scared, which is applicable in the Local government also. The Chairman & members of the UP are reluctant to incorporate their

female colleagues in the decision-making, planning and implementing process. The aspiration & demand of the female participants to involve them into all activities of Union Parishad in one hand and the dominating tendency of the Chairman & male members of the UP has created a conflict among them. Generally for the following reason the dominating tendency are not subsiding but on the increase. Firstly, the Chairman and male members get the opportunities to ignore the opinion of the female members by taking the advantage of the majority which is the structural problem of the UP. Secondly, as in the manual of the UP there is no specific job outline for the female members who are elected from the reserved seat and this lack provide the others to dominate. Thirdly, as the female members are elected from the reserved for the first time in Bangladesh most of the female members have no clear idea about the roles and responsibilities of Union Parishad. So they have to depend upon their male Chairman & member colleagues. This kind of dependency helps the male members of the Parishad to dominate over them. Many women members failed to come out from the traditional hierarchy and superstitions and as a result they remain depressed.

Women's direct election in the Union Parishad is a laudable initiative of the government. Nevertheless the woman elected from every three words can't play their leadership role significantly. In spite of electing directly they have to depend on the patron of the Chairman. In one hand the procrastination in implementation of the government policy on Women members' role and on the other hand the domination and the negative aptitude of the male members, create a internal conflict in the Parishad.

A statistic of the women members opinion show that when they try to raise their voices or even try to object, they become the target of their

male colleagues. They attack them with passing bad comment on their personal & family life. The women members even said that the Chairman also possesses the tendency to retain all the power in his own hand. Though male members sometimes get some assignment, the women are totally deprived. They think that the role of the Chairman in the UP is very important and if he possesses a good intention he can uphold the justice of the people and play an important role in the development of the community.

But 100% women members said that male member normally show respected behavior with them but in the case of decision making , project activities, power decentralization their behavior in that moment not cooperative. They are totally changed with them in that moment.

The end of the continuous conflict between the male and female member may flourish the democracy and pave the way towards the political empowerment in the country.

6.11.5 Family members views on women in Union Parishad

Regarding the views of family members of women members it has been seen that most of the family members were very interested to talk about their mother, wives or bride. They feel proud for her position. They only mentioned some of the general limitations about them. But most of the members hopes it will be also change in future if government will give more facilities for women members. What kind of change happen in their life they explained-

- most of the villagers known to them relatives of Women member.

- they get respect from local people which was unthinkable before her membership
- villagers come to them for lobbying
- husband and children are most known face in the village for their membership.
- people invite them of any occasion
- other institution also respect to husband
- villager call to them mother in law/father in law of member
- villagers try to continue build up good relationship with them
- they get extra honor/ facilities in any programme
- social status increase

In the focus group discussion most of the family members said that, they feel proud when people call to them or known to them relatives of a UP member. They feel their social status more increase before past. Their house is known to everyone as member's house. Their children said that they are very known face in the school for their mother's position. Everybody give extra priority to them for their mother. Their family members said when any development work done by her (women member) in the village then people appreciated them and they feel very proud. Their husbands said that often they have to go with their wives in the union parishad and other programme so most of the people know them. Their family members said that often villager come to them for lobbying. When any villagers face any problem for better solution they come to them, as women member can help to them properly. Especially in the time of relief, villagers continuously come to them for getting more relief. Because they feel if they convince their husband or mother in law/ brother in law, they will get more relief from the women member.

Their family members also shared some limitations for this position. They explained when villagers do not get proper help as per their requirement from women member, then villagers feel she did not help to them willingly. Sometimes they spread nonsense talk about women member in that moment their family members fell frustration about this position. Often women member have to pass their time outside of house and back to home at night then some people spread bad comments about her to their family members. In that moment their relatives especially children get upset. Sometimes children also miss their mother for her business. Some family members said at present their daughter-in law can not give enough time for household work. They also said that sometimes she (women member have to take financial support from them. But they feel this is not big problem for them. They can manage this kind of problem. They hope in future women member can do lot of things for local people especially for women if they get lot of support from Government.

- **Suggestion of family members for women elected members**

They have given some suggestion for women members, which are given below:

- Can be increased salary
- As they have take over three wards, so government allocation should increase than male member
- Meeting can held up before night
- Allocation can fixed up for women by government
- They can be involved in more development work
- Government can arrange training for capacity building.

6.11.6 Views of UP chairman and male members about Women members in Union Parishad

Focus group findings are presented views of male members about women members. At first they did not give any major comments about their colleague. They only mentioned some of the general limitations of the women members. When they were asked to specify with example those limitations the following areas were mentioned:

- lack experience of Union Parishad activities
- can not give enough time to public affairs
- can not spend money from a personal account for getting many tasks done; such as entertainment of officials occasionally when they visit or by visiting them in their offices;
- lack skill, time and experiences in conflict and crisis management as and when necessary
- can not stay outside their house for long hours and attend to people
- often can not complete their projects on time
- Some women members promoted by their husband
- Do not have to respond to many of the problems which normally come to the male members and chairman

Some of the male counterparts also praised the role of women by saying that they are sincere, very much contribute and participate, but due to the prevailing social system they can not perform as they accept expect to. It may take some more time, education, training and also change in general cultural condition to make effective and efficient.

This chapter was based on the findings from the primary research done in the field.

Chapter 7

Way out for move forward

7.1 Analysis of the reasons behind the obstacles of women's political participation

7.1.1 Patriarchal social system

7.1.2 Domestic responsibilities

7.1.3 Economic Dependence

7.1.4 Social and cultural Barrier

7.1.5 Religious Constraints

7.2 way out to overcome the constraints: Recommendations from the research

7.2.1 Constitutional and legal reforms

7.2.2 Education and training

7.2.3 Attitudinal change in the community

7.2.4 Changes of male counterparts attitude

7.2.5 Increase involvement in the political party

7.2.6 Build up Go-NGO coordination

7.2.7 Build up self confidence

7.2.8 Increase family member awareness

7.2.9 Increase husbands' awareness

7.2.10 Increase allocation for UP

7.2.11 Resource for participation and effectiveness

7.2.12 Increase honorarium for UP

7.2.13 Specific responsibility for Women member

7.2.14 Recommendations especially for elected members of UP

This chapter analysis the reasons behind of the obstacles of women's political participation and then make some recommendations. It is because, it is seen that women started their journey in political area and changes started in their private and public life. But still they have to face many kinds of constraints to accumulate themselves with their new journey. Therefore, this chapter will give an analysis of different kinds of hindrances and then will recommend some actions to ensure improvement in both private and public life of women. The recommendations will cover in legal aspect, socio-cultural aspects and financial aspect. Then it will especially focus on Union Parishad members to make advancement in women member's performance in UP. It is hoped that after taking the actions, there will be a positive change in women member's private and public life and finally it will make progress in society in general.

7.1 Analysis of the reasons behind the obstacles of women's political participation

Women have to face multifaceted obstacles in participating in politics and political structure. These are includes broadly political, economical, and socio-cultural. Current political system is male biased and dominated by the patriarchy. Women's insufficient participation in politics is attributable to some constraints such as the following:

7.1.1 Patriarchal social system

The first and foremost constraint on women's participation in the political process is the patriarchal social system. Kate Millett argues that patriarchy is a "universal mode of power relationship" and according to her, the omnipresent system of male domination and

female subjugation is achieved, through socializing perpetuated through ideological means and maintained by institutions (Barelt, 1973:65) It is observed that patriarchal discourse constitutes separate spheres of men and women. It determines inferior position for women and superior position for men; it declares men's knowledge as women's knowledge and replaces women's voice by men's voice. The patriarchal social system limits women to become active in politics. That is why they are tolerated but not included in the party positions. As a result, male political leaders do not want to help them in national and grassroots level but they want to use women at times of needs. Especially at grassroots level women are totally ignored by political leaders and community people.

7.1.2 Domestic responsibilities

At grassroots level women have to spend a lot of time inside the house in caring and reproductive activities and they are not getting equal opportunity in building networks and mobilizing resources. Domestic work and the responsibilities of bearing and rearing of children keep women tied to home. These responsibilities not only keep women out of the labor force, but also limit their interest and serious involvement in politics. They hardly have any time to discuss political affairs and freedom to gain politically relevant experience. So women's domestic work and responsibility keep them in a place where they have limited access to politics.

7.1.3 Economic Dependence

Economic dependence is one of the key factors that limit the political participation of women. It is observed that politics involves expenditure and the relatively affluent can generally concern

themselves with political activities. At grassroots level women's personal earning and sources of wealth are very limited in our society. Besides, women do not have access to the political or economic interest groups, which could have strengthened the financial resources or power of women. Even if a woman is the owner of property or wealth, she does not typically take responsibility for her own property or riches. This task is usually performed by her husband or other male members.

Women members explained that election expenses start from getting nomination from the mainstream parties. It continues through election campaign and providing donation to clubs, mosques and other social and religious institutions. The CCHRB monitor estimated the amount of election expenses of the two powerful candidates in the parliamentary election is taka 3,828,000 and TK.4, 772,100 respectively. The monitor did similar calculation for the other two main candidates too. Their total expenditure could be estimated at TK.3, 365,700 and TK. 4,299,700. These estimations do not include the costs of producing different souvenirs (The CCHRB Election Observation Report, 2001, p-124).

In other study on participation of women in local Government institutions found that 47% women faced financial problems to contest with the male counterpart. Most of the women members were dependent on their husbands or the household heads in respect of financial decisions or financial assistance (Mr. Abdul Quddus et.al, p-26). Razia Faiz, a former MP, Bangladesh stated, "The two most overwhelming obstacles for women in entering parliament are lack of constituents and lack of financial resources. Women move from their father's home to their husband's home to their in-laws home. They are refugees... they have no money of their own; the money belongs to their father's, their husbands or their in-laws. Given the rising cost of

running an effective campaign, this poses another serious hurdle for women in the developing world. (Women in Parliament Beyond Numbers. P-30)".

My research area was in char area. It has been seen that most of the women feel they have to need self-dependency in financial side. If they can build them self's financially strong more women can include in politics. Especially for char area it is very emergency to build them independent because generally people of char area are very poor so they have no any extra money for expense to other activities.

7.1.4 Social and cultural Barrier

Women live in a social system where socialization process embodying social norms and role expectation prescribe for women an inferior and subordinate position in society. Each human being is born and brought up in to an on-going social system and is en-cultured by the cultural patterns within which he/she is nurtured. His/her behavior is some how determined by the culture within which he/she lives. He or she will be rewarded in many ways for responding positively to expected behavior and he/she will be punished in many ways for responding positively to expected behavior and she/he will be punished in many ways for his/her attempts to deviate from the accepted behavioural patterns of the society (Khanam, 1996:23). Culture simply refers to what is generally done by an individual observing social rules or socially patterned behavior and what is thought about as such. In this country and involvement in politics and any other political activities are viewed as the "forbidden realm" for women by their male counterparts who maintain that special concern for women should encompass matters elated to home policy, motherhood house holding etc. This view of socialization negates the idea of women's participation in a

male dominated society. Consequently political efficacy cannot be achieved without political awareness, which initially emanated from central socializing agency like the family (Social Science Review, Vol-19, 2002).

7.1.5 Religious Constraints

Religious believes and doctrines have venerated the social negative attitudes towards women's participation in politics. The doctrines often stress the importance of women's role as wife and mother and may also place women in a secondary position in relation to men. (Kathleen, 1975:19) women in Bangladesh, being in a predominantly Muslim society, constantly confront with the real or perceived obstacles due to variant perspectives of women status in Islam. It have seen that often women member can't easily move for religious constants though they are want to came willingly and many women can't come to the politics for family and social religion.

7.2 way out to overcome the constraints: Recommendations from the research

Though the process of women's empowerment from political perspective has already started and it is indication positive changes for the coming future. For example, in public life, due to legal position, for the first time women are being involved in the Shalish to resolve the local conflicts in true sense, which was entirely impossible in previous time. They are now getting honor from any institution, which was not possible before. Another example of their private life that their family status increased compare to earlier days. They are getting good proposal for their children marriage etc. But its true that this is not sufficient for their empowerment. They are not getting proper support from Union Parishad because they are minority group in the Parishad.

Till now male members do feel women are not capable for development work. However, women members have already achieved something from the government rules and thereby the elected UP women members' power is increasing day by day. To keep up and increase the change, following recommendations are given below based on the previous analysis:

7.2.1 Constitutional and legal reforms

The constitution has given equal rights for women but unfortunately, these aims are hindered by a lack of clarity in the constitution on the role of local government. No provisions specify how many levels of sub- national government are to exist. Moreover, the steps spelled out in law to ensure constitutional guarantees of women's political rights are not well developed. A common complain regarding women reserved seats is that the law does not specify what their roles and responsibilities are to be. Therefore, constitutional and legal reforms should be as follows:

- Ensure that all elected members have significant responsibilities, rather than all authorities being held by the chairman, so that democratic participation is ensured;
- The roles, duties and authorities of all local government elected officials should be given in greater details;
- Women should have counter- signing authority on expenditures and project done in their constituencies;
- Modify the reserved seats system currently practiced. It needs to be revised either through allocation of equal number of women in

each ward or through reservation of three general seats for women. This modification will provide women with authority, institutional backup and help them to become effective in their work (Ahmed Tofail et.al; 2003,P-20).

7.2.2 Education and training

Women's illiteracy is higher than men. Illiteracy is a major barrier to full political participation. Education is considered to be a helpful factor in acquiring or developing human qualities. So women need to be educated, as they easily understand all disorderliness and discrimination against them realize their equal rights and for that and make their empowering process regular and effective.

Training should be mandatory for the newly elected representatives to enhance their knowledge and skills in mobilizing local resources and management of development projects. Government institutions such as the National Institute of local government can give training women on various development related issues, legal aid, and organizational structure of local bodies and their roles and functions to enable them play their role effectively (Ahmed Tofail et.al; 2003,P-21).

7.2.3 Attitudinal change in the community

Women elected members report that their participation in local government suffers due to community attitude. Although a large number share of the community favors women's participation, significant resistance still exists. Traditional views that "women's place is in the house" often leads to hostility, and on occasion to violence. Generational change is likely to reduce the resistance of the community to women's political activities, but public education can also make a big difference. Therefore, all concerned actors, including

NGOs, donors and the government of Bangladesh should strive through education and public campaigns to foster values and attitudes that support women's participation.

7.2.4 Changes of male counterparts attitude

Most of the time male elected members harbor negative attitude towards women elected members of local government. They believe women should not run for general seats. They denigrate the value of the reserved seats. They feel that women should work on gender appropriate projects, such as family planning and they should work only with other women. Lack of cooperation by men in the local government and central government bodies is a significant barrier to women's effectiveness as elected leaders. Therefore education and training campaign should be directed toward men in local government, so that they understand the principles of the constitution that guarantees all people equal political rights. They must be made aware that these principles have the full support of the Government of Bangladesh.

7.2.5 Increase involvement in the political party

Every political party should be able to fill at least one female candidate for an exclusive women's seat in the bargain make the reserved seats truly representative. With this provision women aspirants could bypass the patriarchal prejudices that weigh against them in a straight fight with male contestants.

7.2.6 Build up Go-NGO coordination

Go- NGO coordination should be emphasized in development planning and resource mobilization. NGOs have the experience and skills in participatory planning, multi- year plan and budget

preparation as well as service delivery. Through better coordination UP could utilize NGO skills and services for the community. UP could also involve NGOs in awareness rising on different social issues and also in resource mobilization campaign.

7.2.7 Build up self confidence

As economic dependence is a key factor that the political participation of women's in Bangladesh so this is very important how to create financial dependency for the women. Income generating training and therefore the related projects should be undertaken and implement through this Parishad. It will reflect important role in women's empowerment. For financial support as they have to depend on their family members or husband when they can provide own money for election purpose women feel interest to attend in politics. So they must have to make aware about it and keep them in the process immediately.

7.2.8 Increase family member awareness

Women do not get proper support to attend in election from their family. In our society it has been seen that after marriage women feel this is the main place for them and their family members also want they will do only household work. So government and non-government organizations should undertaken some awareness programmes for their family member. Media can also play a vital role on awareness programme.

7.2.9 Increase husbands' awareness

In our society it has been seen that after marriage husbands are dominant to their wife. Their husbands take all decisions of their life. Hence, most of the times husbands are not keen of their wives

participation in the politics. So government, NGO can take some awareness programme for husbands so they can realize that if their wives attend in the politics it will one kind of achievement for their life.

7.2.10 Increase allocation for UP

It needs to increase development allocation to UP. At present allocation is very low for UP which is not sufficient. For poor allocation, women can not get enough support from UP. If Government can increase allocation for UP and declared that women will get more projects because of their big area it will easier for work for women.

7.2.11 Resource for participation and effectiveness

Women elected officials reported that they have lack of sufficient resources to perform their duties, which include transport, incidental costs, and costs required for community service delivery. Hence, steps must be taken to ensure that women have equal access to local government facilities. As women do not have outside income sources, they should be provided sufficient compensation so that service to public does not impose a financial burden on their families. Recognizing the special needs of women, provision should be made for secure transportation, and care for their small children in their absence.

7.2.12 Increase honorarium for UP

Government allowance is not also sufficient for the UP chairman and members. At present the allowance is from TK 250 to 350 per month. It is not sufficient. It should be increased to at least TK 500.

7.2.13 Specific responsibility for Women member

The roles and responsibility of the women should be transparent, as chairman and other male members cannot show disagree and create hindrance instead they do co-operate with the women members, which is almost absent in present system. So following steps should take:

- In spite of getting three times vote in compare to male word member, their salary is the same and they are also getting priority in any development activities. So, such kind of disparity needs to remove to make the system effective.
- Building confidence and giving them a forum in which they can learn the art of participation, because lack of sense of personal efficiency, they have no confidence in their ability to participate, and thus they fail to act politically.
- Appropriate power and authority should be given to Union Parishad representatives to ensure their accountability to perform their responsibility as defined.
- Beside the government level research, it is also important to conduct some participatory research by experts, and /or NGOs. Research from different levels will give a concrete assessment of the new system and women in it that will be useful to ensure

people's participation in the study findings and project the future problems and possibilities.

- It also needed research on their private life. After elected as a UP member what kind of changes coming in their private life and study can find out what kind of family obstacle they have to face for attend in election then GO-NGO can take initiative to resolve this problem.
- The quota system is needed because without a certain number of women representatives it is impossible to make an impact on politics. The government should provide for a quota system both at the local and national level election.
- In the Union Parishad the services need to be developed, monthly meetings should be regularly held, and records are to be kept. The participation of women Ward members should be endured. The UP should draw up a Five-year and an annual plan for development. Then women will be informed about their future plan and activities.
- Such an empowerment process for women should continue but it is simultaneously important to get more realistic and substantial power to the women members. For example, in case of internal *shalish* in the parishad it needs total votes to resolve, but as there is already nine male members in the Parishad, they fulfil the total number of essential votes. So, here women do not have any excess really. There fore, if we want to make it meaningful it needs to enclose provision of at least two of the women members vote to finalise any decision.

7.2.14 Recommendations especially for elected members of UP

- The allotment for the implementation of the development work must be increased by the govt.
- There must be a clear conception and indication about the rights and responsibilities of the women members in the manual of the UP. And an orientation have to be arranged to aware the members of the parishad.
- In the distribution of all kind of cards, the women members must be given priority;
- Setting up powerful women's organization at the grass root level;
- To increase the ability of the women member especial care must be taken. So that they can represent the demand of their locality logically and taking part in it they can ensure the proper management;

- The govt. circular and information about direction have to be sent to the women members directly;
- In the every meeting of Thana Development, one women member from each union must be sent circularly;
- Male members can be sympathized towards the problems of the women member by organizing training, workshop, seminar and discussion meeting;
- The environment must be insured to organized *Shalish*, Village court by women members;
- The women members have to know about their political rights and responsibilities;
- All members especially for the women member, the honorarium must be increased. Traveling bill can be provide for them;

In this chapter, it is analysed the actual reasons for what women members face the problems in political area and can not make adequate progress to make a balance between their private and public life. Then it made specific recommendations for improving the status. In doing so, it clearly pointed out the sectors needs to be improved.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

The whole research is basically focused on women's political participation. In doing so, this research stressed on local government level participation. In specific, it worked with the women members in the Union Parishad level to see the changes occurred in their private and public life. In this concluding chapter, I would like to summarise the whole discussion in following sub sections.

Firstly, I introduced my research topic. This chapter is the introductory chapter of the research. In This chapter I explained the justification of the study. Then I discussed the objectives and based on that I set out the research questions. After that I discussed the detail methodology of the research including sampling area selection, data collection methods and instruments, ethical statement. Then it talked about the limitations of the study, gave a idea about major literature review and finally it describe shortly the chapter planning for the whole research paper.

Secondly, next chapter explained the women status in Bangladesh. To explore he actual feature, it gave a basic feature of women status and then it explained in detail what are the position of women in the constitution, in government planning, and political parties position about women.

Thirdly, this research presented the idea of local government, history of Local Government, Structure of UP and its organogram. It is discussed on the local government system in Bangladesh. It also discussed in detail about the participation in union Parishad by women.

Fourthly, next chapter discussed on political status of women. Participation of women in politics and the decision making process is

an essential component of women's empowerment. Economic and social empowerment of women can not be sustained unless women are brought in to and made a part of the political decision making process.

Fifthly, local Government means the administration or self-rule at the stone hand of the people. People will elect their representative or leader through vote. These leader or representative will stand by the people at their rainy day and will work for the development of their locality. From this expectation people's participation is observed more in the Union Parishad Election. Therefore, it is focused on latest UP election and hence it explored the detail feature of Union Parishad election in 2003 as the last held election. It can be said that during UP election 2003, it has both positive and negative sides. The mentionable positive sides were the spontaneous participation of the women and the indigenous people. Not only that, in many cases disable women were seen to contestant and they won. Besides this many contestants promulgated their specific manifestos in the election. On the other hand massive terrorism, fake voting and reversing election result like incidents were also frequent in the election.

Further, it is focused on the primary research based discussion covering women's political participation in union parishad level. It gave a basic demographic feature of the women UP members and their election participation process. Then it discussed the general and specific activities for women they perform. Further it explained their perception of less participation, their achievement as women UP member. Further it discussed the scopes created in their private and public life. Then it discussed the problems they face in their private and public life. It is also discussed the findings of the focus group discussions held with different groups. These three groups are: Women

UP members, Women member's family members and UP chairman and male members.

In last discussion, it is analysed the reasons behind of the obstacles of women's political participation and then make some recommendations. It is because, it is seen that women started their journey in political area and changes started in their private and public life. But still they have to face many kinds of constraints to accumulate themselves with their new journey. Therefore, this chapter gave an analysis of different kinds of hindrances and then it recommends some actions to ensure improvement in both private and public life of women. The recommendations covered the legal aspect, socio-cultural aspects and financial aspect. Then it especially focused on Union Parishad members to make advancement in women member's performance in UP.

It is hoped that after taking the actions, there will be a positive change in women member's private and public life and finally it will make progress in society in general. In doing so, it clearly pointed out the sectors needs to be improved. This research is conclude with the plea that in Bangladesh, women will get equal share and partnership with men in political arena.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Survey questionnaire

Survey questionnaire

Title: Women's Participation in Union Parishad: Changing status in private and public space

Basic profile

Name:

Age:

Education:

Marital status:

Year of marriage

No of children:

Family size & occupation:

Name of union & ward:

Name of Upazila:

Name of District:

Required checklist based information covered in the questionnaire

1. Who provides the financial support for election purpose?
2. Is there any Family members have relationship with politics?
3. How many numbers of contents did you face?
4. How many votes did you got?
5. Support from any political party

6. What are the reasons of attending the UP election?
7. What is your Perception about the role of selected UP member?
8. What is your Perception of activities of UP member?
9. What is your Experience of specific changes in your life after elected as a UP member?
10. What is your Achievement as UP member?
11. What is your Perception of the reason less participation of women in politics?
12. What are the reasons for women's less participation in UP?
13. What steps can be taken to increase women's participation?
14. Do you attend in UP meeting regularly?
15. Do you involve in Shalish?
16. Do you involve with committees of UP?
17. What are the family obstacles in performing UP duties?
18. What are the scopes creates in intra household level?
19. What are the problems creates in inter household level?
20. What are the difficulties have to face in UP?
21. What are the scopes created in public space?
22. What are the difficulties creates in public life?

Appendix-2: Women in international treaties: Accepted by government

Women in Politics: Global perspective

Women's equal rights have been recognized by many international conventions, covenants and agreement. Among many of those following are significant.

- Universal Declaration of Human rights(UDHR)
- Convention of Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women(CEDAW)
- International convention on civil and political rights (ICCPR)
- International convention on the political rights of women
- Beijing platform of Action(BPFA)

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 1 of UDHR stated that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity rights. In Article 18 it is mentioned that all have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion . Article 19 reflects the right to freedom and expression of opinion and in Article in 20 mentioned that every human being should have right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. In Article 21 it is stated that everyone should have the right to social security and realization, through national effort and international cooperation and in accordance with the resources of each state, of the economic , social and cultural rights indispensable for one's dignity and free development of one`s personality.

CEDAW

CEDAW requires state parties to eliminate discrimination against women in the enjoyment of all civil, political, economic and cultural rights. The signatory states are obliged to take affirmative action to ensure women's equal participation in every aspect of social, political, economic and cultural arenas to reduce discrimination against women. Women are facing obstacles in participating in political activities all over the world and their participation is poor. CEDAW has addressed this issue, through a provision that aims at changing social and cultural traditions. State parties are, according to Article 5 of the CEDAW, required to take all appropriate measures:

- 1. To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or stereotyped roles of men and women.*
- 2. To ensure that the family education includes ---the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children.*

In Article 8 of CEDAW it has mentioned that " States parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations.

Internal Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

Article 1

1. All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

Article 25

Every citizen shall have the right and opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in Article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions :

- a) To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives ;
- b) To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors;

Beijing Platform of Action

Women's interest are overlooked due to less participation of women in the power structure. Equal participation of men and women in the political arena is a prerequisite to establish a democratic culture as well as for sustainable development. Beijing declaration stated, " In addressing the inequality between men and women in the sharing of the power and decision making at all levels, Government and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that before decision are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively. (191 Beijing Declaration)." Government should

take action to ensure women's equal access to and participation in power structures and decision – making.

“... setting specific targets and implementing measures to substantially increase the number of women with a view to achieving equal representation of women and men, if necessary through positive action , in all governmental and public administrative positions;(192 (a). Beijing Declaration)

“Review the different impact of electoral system on the political representation of women in elected bodies and consider, where appropriate, the adjustment or reform of those system; (192 (b), Beijing Declaration)

Political Parties role has considered pivotal regarding increase participation of women in politics in the declaration and therefore urged to take following actions:

“Consider examining party structures and procedures to remove all barriers that directly discriminate against the participation of women ; (193 (a), Beijing Declaration)

“Consider developing initiatives that allow women to participate fully in all internal policy making structure and appointive and electoral nominating process ; (193 (b), Beijing Declaration)

“ Consider incorporating gender issues in their political agenda taking measures to ensure that women can participate in the leadership of political parties on an equal basis with men; (193 (c), Beijing Declaration)

Appendix-3-Case study (10) of women UP members with major concerning issues

Case study 1

Ms.Nur Banu Akhter

Ward-4,5,6

Union – Muktinogor

District-Gaibandha

I came in the Union Parishad to help the poor people

Nur Banu Begum is 32 years old. She got married in 1987. Her husband is working in PRDP. She has two daughters. They belong to solvent family in this village. As her Father in law owns enough land they had never been in any economical crisis. They are in join family. Her education status SSC. This is her second time to contest in UP election but she won in 2003 in UP election against five contestants. She got altogether 1885 vote in this election. It cost her 50,000 on this purpose.. Her husband and father in law gave her this financial support. She admitted that her family supported her very cordially but she did not get enough favour from Union Parishad specially from Chairman. She has to offer money to the chairman in getting any project. For example for getting wheat she has to give 1000 taka to the chairman per ton. And most of the time Chairman tries to give all project to the male member who are in favour of him. She tries to join all meeting. Sometimes Chairman calls meeting at night then her husband accompanies her but chairman does not like it. She gets satisfied when she can play a strong role in *shalish* for poor people specially for women. She always tries to give neutral justice to vulnerable people. She keeps trying to reduce polygamy and divorce from her working area. And she takes this for her achievement that she

can do it very successfully in her working area. But she also admits she can't reduce dowry from her village with her sole trying. She thinks that dowry is spreading just like cancer not only in her village but also in whole Bangladesh. In future she will try with her whole heart to eliminate dowry from her village. At the same time she admits that it's very difficult task to get all the people satisfied in all respect. But she's trying to work for poor people. She told that villagers are proud of her. They always ask her advice in any crisis especially of their family problem. Most of the time she can not afford enough time in her Household work after selected UP member but her family member help her to finish this work. Now she is a familiar person as a UP member of her village. Everybody known her home. Villagers always invite her in any occasion and also all institution call her to attend in any special programme. After selected as a UP member she can now give any decision in her family and every body respects her more than past. She got three training from Legal Aid, VERC and BRAC on activities and responsibilities of UP member. Though people enough honor to her but some time they have to back home at night for meeting purpose then some people through bad comments but it also true that day by day it is now reducing because people now can understand they are working for poor people. In her duration period she played strong role to build up pacca(brick road) road in her village. For this purpose villagers are very happy for this activities. She want to do lot of work for her people.

Case study 2

Aleya Begum

Union –Elenga

Ward-3

District-Tangail

I have seen only rich people participate in the UP election but I believe poor people have, quality, right to participate in the election if she/he have confidence -and I am one of the example.

Aleya begum has marriage in 1979. Her economic condition is not good. She is the main earn person of her family. She has four daughters and two sons. She seen all the time rich people are participates in the election for chairmanship / membership. then she think why poor people do not participate in the election? They have also quality, rights to participate in the election, in this context she participate in the election and this election purpose she has sold her cow, got and taken some loan. She has got 5000 votes. At present she is supporting government party. But in the election period all party supported to her. After discussion with all colleagues arrange to financial support for marriage of poor women's daughter through Union Parishad. Create drainage system beside the road, this was a demand of my people. At present I am doing this kind of activities for my people, though I am a member of poor family so I feel this is my achievement in my life. Because of general women I did not do anything for my people but after elected as a UP member now I have some little bit power and getting some scope for them. I get invitation from Upazila office and they always give honor to me . At present I

have to also attend in the meeting of other organization. So I feel proud for my Union Parishad membership .

She seen women are getting less priority for getting any work than a male member. She tried to protest about their attitude but cannot do any thing for changing this culture. But in future she hopes it will be change.

Case study 3

Name -Romecha Begum

Union –Kalihati

Ward -3

District-Tangail

I have arranged dowry free marriage for my daughter and I feel this is my great achievement after elected as a UP member.

Romecha Begum 35 years old. She has marriage in 1985. She has two children. One daughter and another one son. They are in joint family. Her husband is a businessman. Before election she was a known person in her own area for helping attitude to poor people. Her *Jetha Shoshur*(elder brother of father in law) is a popular politician in the kalihati union. He also encourage her for participate in the Union Parishad election. As she was a popular person to the local people so her *Jetha Shoshur* also want to elected her a UP member. Though she personally like to BNP but she got more help from AL in her election period. She had face two contest in the election. She got 2400 vote.

She said that after elected as a UP member this kind of activities she has done for poor women such as most of the time she resolved conflict between couples. try to allocate more government facilities to

women, arranged treatment for sick woman, manage to buried mentally ill women patient without sending thana by taking government permission.

She feels proud that for her good reputation resolving all *salish* by herself of her own area. As her relative is a known politician so she get some facilities from Upazila level. She has done two road construction work. For getting this work she has collected approval through her party support from Upazial office. She has given VGD card and relief in flood situation. For own identity at Upozila level she can do many other thing for her people.

She said that help to solve the problem of local people, fair distribution of government allocation to the people, help to poor women is the main duty and responsibility of a UP member.

She feel unconsciousness, less education, money problem, social corruption, less honorarium, In fear people's criticism, less priority to women member is the main cause for a women to participate in Union Parishad. For change this situation her suggestion Governments should increase awareness programme, to give more priority of present women member, to increase honorarium of women member etc.

Case study 4

Ms. Mazeda Begum

Union –Gala

District- Tangail

I have got honor from other organization but not get from UP Chairman.

Ms. Mazeda Begum member of Gala Union Parishad, Ward 3, Tangail District. She said after elected as a UP member at present she getting more honor from her family but financial status not increase. In future she will not attend in the Union Parishad election because of financial support. She feel if they get some financial support from Union Parishad then women member can give more time to Union Parishad and they feel interest in politics. For continue her activities at present she has to expend money from her family. But she said its true that now she is a countable member of her union. If her neighbors face any kind of problem they call to her for solve the problem. And also other organization invite her for attend their programme. She also can give her opinion in the *Shalish*(village court) as like male member. She shared that her children and husband give more respect for this position. She said most of the time chairman and her male member call her only for signe in the Parishad. Till now they did not give her any project so she always try to protest about their activities but Chairman and male member are not changeable so she decide she will take initiative against of her chairman. Already she has prepared a complain letter against of UP chairman for submit to DC.

Case study 5

Monowara Begum

Union-Mogra

Ward-1

District-Tangail

We are not getting proper allocation for our three wards.

Monowara Begum 30 years old. She is married. She has two children. She is member of joint family. Her husband is a service holder. Her husband and father's family had fulfilled all expenditure in the election

period. She has got 2713 vote. Mainly I have attended in the election for my family support. I did not support any party before election but now I am support to government party. They invite me for attend their programme and I am try to present in the meeting.

As a UP member I have done three road construction work, try to encourage people for install safe latrine, arranged *UPO bretti* (Government scholarship for poor girls) for poor girl student and arranged school admission for 20 to 25 poor children. As a UP member most of the women's called me for attend women related *shalish* especially which cases are very sensitive. Because few months ago I have played very strong role in the *shalish* and all people were support on my judgment and after this judgment local people appreciated me for this fair judgment and my popularity more increase in the whole area. I will never forget this achievement in my life. But I feel we are not doing lot of work for our people. And less allocation is one of the main obstacles for our activities. As a women member I have to takeover three wards but a male member have to see only one ward but allocation is equal for both. And some times we do not get our allocation properly. If we get proper allocation for our three wards we can do lot of work for our people other wise in future they do not give us their vote in the election. I feel our honorarium also is not sufficient and unfortunately we are not get this less honorarium in timely. So this is very difficult to move three wards frequently. As I am not service holder so I have to depend on my husband for my conveyance that is not possible for all time. I feel government allocation should increase for women members. Government should take strong decision about us.

Case study 6

Majeda Begum

Union-Gala

District-Tangail

I have to face lot of problem in my family.

I have come in the Union Parishad with lot of dream. But at present I am so much frustrated about our position. Especially I have to face financial problem in my both arena. Election purpose I had expense lot of money but now I cannot refund that money. So my family member also tense how to refund this money. I cannot give any financial support to my family. But I thought as a UP member I will get some scope for earn. Our honorarium is not sufficient so I cannot expense for my children. I can not bear any coast for them. So my family member think as a UP member I do not give anything for them. So this kind of position is not necessary in future. Other side I cannot also give time for my voter. As I have no financial support so I cannot move frequently for meet with them. And unfortunately I do not get regular base salary. Financial problem is the major problem for a woman if she has no any own earning source.

But it's true that I have got lot of honour from non government institution more than Union Parishad. Chairman and other male members are not cooperative. They always neglect to women member. They feel we are not capable for development work. As they do not include me with any project so I have decided I will give a written complain about chairman to the UNO.

Case study 7

Fulmoti Begum

Union –Gala

Ward-4,5,6

Dis-Tangail

At present I am getting more honor from my husband from previous day.

After elected as a UP member my family status and social status more increase. As we are in the joint family so my family members specially children's are feel so proud for my present position. They said local people known to them children of UP member. Not only own village in the school they also known face for my position. My elder daughter gets more honors from her father in law and mother in low. And other relatives also respect to her. She said her relatives sometimes call to her daughter of UP member. My husband almost support to me. He never treats to me for my activities. I feel he respect to me more than previous day. I can play vital role of any family decision. Regarding about public life she said neighbors are always respect to me. As I am try to continue contact with my people so I have build up a strong relationship with them. Though I have taken over three ward but I always try to help them as much as possible. For Chairman and male member, as I do not get any project from Union Parishad for my people so I am try to do awareness programme for them. Especially on dowry, polygamy, sanitation facilities etc. Male member's can earn money from road contraction work but they are not interested to included us. So most of the time they are getting profitable project and we have to do only awareness programme.

Case study 8

Name-Muktibani Chandra

Union –Gala

District-Tangail

As I have elected by people, so my mother in law do more well behave with me.

From the beginning local people love to me very much. So when I have attend in the election they gave me their total support and now I am member of Union Parishad. My mother in law feel very proud for my activities. After elected as a UP member I have arranged my daughter marriage with well-known family. They respect to her and also love to her. My husband is busy with his work so most of the time I have to take all decision for my family. I will also get honor from other union. People call to me for attend in the *shalish*. When they go to thana for giving any complain they always request me to go with them. Local police also come to me for any investigation in my area. At first they talk with me then start their investigation. As a UP member my first priority reduce women violence in the area. I am always trying to work on dowry, divorce, polygamy etc. Especially I am working for vulnerable women because I know women are so helpless in our society. I have given some safe latrine to the poor people. My religion was not problem because people love me for my activities. Last few years I am engaged with Gram Unnayan Parishad (GUP) .It is a very strong network of poor women. We work for poor women through GUP so when I attend in the election local people specially women have given lot of vote to me. They thought if I elect member of UP, then I can do lot of work for them in this contest they supported me. And local administration also known to me for our

development activities. I feel if I will get proper scope from Union Parishad I can play stronger role for poor people but our chairmen do not want to included us with KABIKHA, Road development, ADP project. Few months ago I had submit a written complain to DC against our chairman but DC did not take any initiative against him.

Case study 9

Name- Kalpona Begum

Union-Shohodebpur

Dis- Tangail

We feel helpless against our male colleague.

Most of the activity plans are made on the ward basis in a union parishad. Most of the ward are directed and controlled by the male members of the parishad. The women members who are elected on the basis of reserved seat, they have no particular ward to do their activity as a result they are helpless against their male colleague. She said UP chairman do not allocate resources and responsibilities to the women elected members equally with that of male members. Though WM get specific responsibility but at field level these haven't implemented. Government should take initiative for increase women participation in the Union Parishad. Other wise women can never come in the front line. Regarding about less participation of women in the politics, she feel less education, family and social obstacle are major problem for women. Government and NGO should take initiative for remove this obstacle.

Case study 10

Ms.Rezia Sultana

Ward-2, 5,9

Union – Bharatkhal

Upozila- Saghata

District-Gaibandha

Lack of equal treatment in getting projects under food for work and Annual Development Plans.

Rezia Sultana 28 years old. She has marriage 1993. She has two daughter. For the first time she elected in the Union Parishad. She has got 1495 vote in the election. I want to do something for people in this context I had attend in the election. My uncle are also involve with politics. He is a member of Union Parishad of his district. My election expenditure beards my father in low and my husband. I have got some training on responsibility of UP member through CARE. So I know what's my duty and responsibility. But our male members feel we are not capable. She has seen lack of equal treatment in getting projects under food for work and Annual Development Plans in Union Parishad. My neighbors always come to me for resolve their any kind of problem. They feel proud for me. But in the Union parishad feels we are not capable to work with them or not capable to take any decision. In most cases pro-chairman group of the parishad take decision about the activities of the Union parishad . Preplanned and meeting are called to implement the decision taken by them previously. So women members are deprived from discussing the personal agenda.

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