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**The System of Rural Local Self-Government in Bangladesh:  
A Study of Structure and Functions of Union Parishads**

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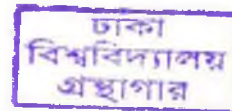
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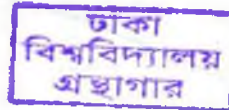
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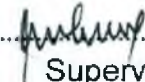
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This is to inform that the M. Phil dissertation on "*The System of Rural Local Self-Government in Bangladesh: A Study of Structure and Functions of Union Parishads*" is an original field-based research work. This research piece has been accomplished through my direct supervision. To my knowledge, this work or its any part has not been submitted to any university or institution in order to get any degree or publication.

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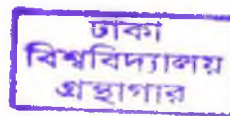
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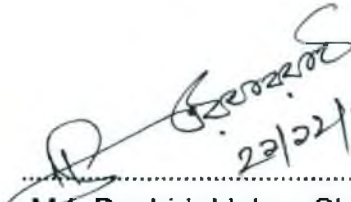
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## Declaration

This is the declaration that the M. Phil dissertation on “*The System of Rural Local Self-Government in Bangladesh: A Study of Structure and Functions of Union Parishads*” is an original field-based research work. As a researcher I have done my field works by following all the requirements (both theoretical and methodological framework) what an empirical research always suggests. This work or its any part has not been submitted to any university or institution in order to get any degree or publication.

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22/02/20

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## **Abstract**

The study focuses on the system of rural local self-government in Bangladesh relating to the structure and functions of Union Parishads considering the heterogeneity of the respondents selected by quantitative (Survey method) and qualitative (indepth-interview) methodological techniques. The data of this study come from seven Union Parshads under seven Divisions in Bangladesh. The selected unions are Chiknagoul from Jointapur district, Bisnupur from Satkhira district, Vodroghat from Sirajgonj district, Golapgonj from Dinajpur district, Amtoli from Borguna district, Bijaypur from Comilla district and Pubail from Gazipur district.

The objectives, of course predominantly and astutely, of this study are to - (1) to investigate the existing problems of rural self-government system of Bangladesh, particularly regarding to its structure and structural-functional problems (2) to explore the historical background of colonial administrative pattern and its impact on existing local government system (3) to know the existing pattern of problems, functions and its dysfunction in local self-government system (4) to find out the relationship among the central government, local government and the mass people (5) to know the power structure in local government and politico-administrative contradictions (6) to make some viable recommendations on the basis of research experiences. This study use the very discerning and also pertinent theoretical perspectives like- (1) Marxist Theory (2) Decentralization Theory (3) Administrative Approach (4) Political Approach and (5) Public Choice Approach

I have studied two types of people like- administrative people and mass people. Among these administrative persons I have taken 6 respondents like 1 Chairman/Chairperson, 1 secretary, 3 Members (2 male member and 1 female member), 1 Village Police (total 42 respondents from administration). But I also further interviewed 383 respondents (general population) from these Union Parishads. From these two types of respondents the total number of sample was 425.

This study is comprised of the seven chapters. The first chapter is about the introduction which constituted by the statement of the problem, objective of the study, the operational definition of local government system, significance of the study and background history of local government system. The second chapter incorporates the literature review on global and Bangladesh perspective and the third chapter is about the theoretical framework. The number of theories in

this chapter is - Liberal Democratic theory, Radical Elite theory, E-Government perspective, Marxist theory, Decentralization theory, Economic Analytical theory. The fourth chapter has the discussion about the methodology which involved the following issues- the general view of the research area, research design and sampling, area selection and population size, sample size, questionnaire content, time schedule and interviewing, data collection procedures, techniques of data analysis and limitations of the study.

The fifth chapter of this paper deals with the problem and functions of local government I addressed the structure and functions of local government, the role of local government in social change and development, local government and women empowerment. The sixth chapter shows the findings of this paper which is based on direct field experience. Lastly, in chapter seven, I draw a conclusion and some recommendations.

I asked the respondents (42 UP administrators and 383 UP people) 47 questions to know, and to explore as well as to examine the real experience of different background people in the question of ascertain objectives and assumptions. The findings of this study are bellow-

I interviewed 42 respondents as administrative body of this Union Parishad who gave the following answers. Their main duties to the local government are - among the respondents (multiple responses in table 6.8; chapter 6) 98 percent are involve in VGD card distribution and 93 percent are engaged to make consciousness about education. 95 percent are involved with VGF card distribution, 64 percent are involved in sanitation improvements, 83 percent in illiteracy eradication, 95 percent in health consciousness, 69 percent work on awareness against dowry as well as in agriculture improvements 62 percent respondents. The main problems of local government system they found like- pressure of local MP and insufficient amount of budget are equally responsible to create a problem to do the work in their locality.

Other striking feature of the findings shows that the general people also found some functions and problems like the UP administrators, for example- the highest percent of the respondents go to UP chairman for solving their legal problem (81 percent) and 59 percent go to local MP, 19 percent go to UP member, 55 percent go to court and 38 percent go to Upazila chairman for solving their legal problem.



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Dissertation, from the standpoint of its nature, is as like as a baby to a student. Each and every step it requires a nurturing with great care from research design to report writing. First of all, I avail the opportunity of tranquilizing my soul by rendering my deepest gratitude to my honorable M. Phil supervisor Professor Mahbubur Rahman, who created zeal in me for much a long way to traverse. Being my mentor with his versatile knowledge and dynamic attitude he assisted, guided and instructed me in every step of this research work, even sparing his valuable time. I feel proud of being his student.

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Lastly, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the respondents who were the main part of this study. Without their cooperation and participation this study would not be possible.

Md. Rashidul Islam Sheikh

## **Acronyms**

LG	:	Local Government
UP	:	Union Parishad
GO	:	Government Organization
NGO	:	Non-government Organization
VGf	:	Vulnerable Group Feeding
SPSS	:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
VGd	:	Vulnerable Group Development

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Bangladesh, as an independent nation, emerged in 1971 after a nine month bloody fight costing the 3 million peoples' death and 0.3 million women's status destruction. As a new state, Bangladesh has an elongated landscape with a long recorded history of several thousand years. Of course, in its recent past it was part of Pakistan (1947-1971) and was known as East Pakistan. From the very rudimentary period, different parts of the present Bangladesh territory were under the British India (1765-1947), the Mughals and other Muslim rulers and before them under Buddhist and Hindu rulers<sup>1</sup>.

Due to the provisions and enforcement of the Constitution of Bangladesh now we see a central government system along with the local administrative governmental structure in order to ensure better governance and fair representation of the people at the grassroots levels. Generally speaking, local government institutions are treated to be sub-ordinate government bodies within the national political and governmental framework of a country. This kind of local government is seen almost universally in all forms of state and national government, whether they are centralized socialist countries of east Europe or democratic countries of the West.

By being a politico-governmental institution the pattern of local government is often set by the provisions of the constitution, particularly in a unitary government, under a federal constitution. The state functions are distributed constitutionally into federal subjects, state subjects and concurrent subjects. Often nothing is stated in a federal constitution about the local government and their structure or functions. The prime

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<sup>1</sup> Howard Schuman, A Note on the Rapid Rise of Mass Bengali Nationalism in East Pakistan; *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 78, No. 2 (Sep., 1972), pp. 290-298

reason is obviously that for its support and legitimacy, the central government in a federal system needs to depend only on the state government. It cannot afford to bother for the local government. Even in this respect, the pattern is not uniform. At times of despotic regimes in developing countries transcend the usual pattern and intervene in the local government as may be seen in the basic democracies system of local government introduced by the military regime of general Ayub Khan under a federal Pakistan (1958-1969)<sup>2</sup>.

In a unitary state, the legitimacy and the political base of central leadership rest more clearly on the local government bodies and their leadership. The political parties also set their base in the localities, thereby heightening the political role of local government. However, whenever the political process gets disrupted by factors like military intervention, pre-occupation of the central government with the local government increases further<sup>3</sup>. In Bangladesh, General Zia's Gram Sarkar and General Ershad's Upazila organizations are instances to the point.

However, it is a fact that the existence of a strong local government system is an essential precondition for ensuring good governance. It is also generally agreed that democracy is a key foundation on which the edifice of devolved local government has to be built. A sound local government system can initiate and strengthen local democratic process by constituting locally elected representative bodies for upholding democratic values, norms and practicing democratic processes and procedures and carrying out development activities.<sup>4</sup> Again, economic progress and development require good governance with accountable delivery mechanisms as well as it needs sound and pragmatic development policies. Adequately empowered and accountable local government institutions are essential vehicles for ensuring formulation and implementation of such policies.

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<sup>2</sup> A Tofail and A Quader (2000) *Local Government at the Crossroads: Some Recommendations for Structure Reorganization*

<sup>3</sup> Ali, Shaikh Maqsood et al. (1983) *Decentralisation and Participation in Bangladesh*. Dhaka: National Institute of Public Administration.

<sup>4</sup> Kamal Siddiqui (2005) (Edited) *Local Government in Bangladesh*, University Press Limited, Dhaka.

Alderfer, H.F. (1982.) in his book said "...it is meant for management of *local affairs* by *locally elected persons*. If Government's officers or their henchmen are brought to run the local bodies, there is no sense in retaining them as Local Government Bodies."<sup>5</sup> Saxena, A.P. (ed.). (1980) defined as- local governments are administrative offices of an area smaller than a state. The term is used to contrast with offices at nation-state level, which are referred to as central government, national governments or (where appropriate) federal governments.<sup>6</sup>

Linked to the concept of local governance is of course the idea of decentralization. Conceptually, decentralization relates to the role of, and the relationship between, central and sub-national institutions, whether they are public, private or civic. The concept and definition of decentralization has evolved over time and has acquired several shades of meaning. The "Classic" Decentralization, as Mawhood and Davey described it, has rarely taken place.

These description clearly reveal some common features of local government such as; political and administrative local unit, service provider, autonomous body with decision making authority etc. United Nation (UN) incorporated these all features in a single definition: "the concept of local self-government refers to a political sub-division of a nation or state which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs, including the power to impose taxes or exact labor for prescribe purposes. The governing body of such an entity is elected or otherwise locally selected" (in Siddiqui, 2005:4).

## **1.2 Objective of the Study**

It seems that the problems of local government in Bangladesh are primarily structural in as much as they are product of the structural anomalies in the body

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<sup>5</sup> Alderfer, H.F. (1982.), *Local Government in Developing Countries*. New York: McGraw Hill, Dhaka: Centre for Social Studies.

<sup>6</sup> Saxena, A.P. (ed.). (1980), *Administrative Reforms for Decentralized Development*. Kualalampur: Asia and Pacific Development Administration.

politics arising out of past federal heritage as against a unitary present. Accordingly, the objective of this study are delineating the bellow

1. To investigate the existing problems of rural self-government system of Bangladesh, particularly regarding to its structure and structural-functional problems.
2. To explore the historical background of colonial administrative pattern and its impact on existing local government system.
3. To know the existing pattern of problems, functions and its dysfunction in local self-government system.
4. To find out the relationship among the central government, local government and the mass people.
5. To know the power structure in local government and politico-administrative contradictions.
6. To make some viable recommendations on the basis of research experiences.

### **1.3 Operational Definition of Some Key Concepts**

1. **Local Government:** A lowest level Government administrative body constituted by One Chairman, 9 Members including 3 female Members, 1 Secretary, 9 Mahalladar, and 1 Dafadar.
2. **Decentralization:** Power practice and decision making not by the single body- all level participation is a must.
3. **Chairman:** Chief administrative person in Union Parishad
4. **Member:** A constituted body with 12 Members whereas 9 male members and 3 female Members (this 3 members are in reserved ward).
5. **Functions:** What they actually do in their locality.
6. **Problems:** the existing problems in the respective Union Parishad
7. **Prospects:** Prospects of local government body and the general people
10. **Theoretical Framework:** This study followed five remarkable theories to understand the functions and problems of the respective Union Parishad.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The local self-government has a long history of its existence in this subcontinent. But, unfortunately, far from being a partner in the process of development and administration, rural local self-government bodies developed as adjuncts to central government. They never tried to grow as autonomous institutions empowered with resources and power. In the context of present socio-economic status and condition of Bangladesh, the effectiveness and functionality of local government units are very much important which will be the effective change agents in the development of a country by being elected, committed, and action oriented popular representatives.

As a matter of fact, the authority and responsibility of local self-government bodies are now going to hand in hand where control of local bodies by central government certainly be limited, and their day to day function must be free from official direction if they must have power to initiate any development project without any complexity of central recommendation will be the prime features of local self-government. The local people involved in the decision making process and share responsibilities where people should not be viewed as being beneficiary merely for the program of building rural infrastructure but as the change agents. The local government bodies seem to allow spending a part of the grant received for starting on income generating project.

Additionally, the local government bodies should be encouraged to borrow funds from the existing financial institutions. And for these specific policies and directions have to be triggered for actual decentralization or devolution of local government as well as delimitation of areas are needed. The local government functionaries can play significant role to develop the local affairs by taking intensive training and provide their practical and theoretical knowledge. The BARD of Comilla and RDA of Bogra should be involved in training up local government functionaries on a regional basis. For speedy, easy, inexpensive, substantial and effective justice to the common people, local self- government can be a better platform for achieving that targeted and desired goal by establishing a Grameen court which will be run by judge for speedy judgment to ensure peace and harmony in rural areas.

The present study has an important significance to comprehend the existing nature of functions in and out side the local government and its impact and consequences on the mass people and explore the present pattern of development. It gives us the extensive idea about the local-self government; because this study is based on seven Union Parishads.

## 1.5 Background History of Local Government System

### 1.5.a History of the Structure of Local Government

The present local government has a long past history in various period and different regions. According to the Vedic Literature, for example, there was a village council in India from the period of 1500 BCE. Then it was introduced as the name of *Sabha* or *Moha Sabha* which had control on some regions or villages. But according to the historian the present South Asian local government started its journey from the period of 300 BCE. The present pattern of Division, District, Thana and Village were similar to then *Vukti*, *Mondal Bithi*, and Village. The historical nature of that government was-

#### Unit and Pattern of local government in the period of British, Pakistan and Bangladesh

Buddhist/Hindu Period (312-16 BCE to 650-1206 BCE)		Musalman Period (Sultana) (1206-1538 AdE)		Musalman Period (Mughal/Nababi) (1576-1880 ADE)		British Period (1780-1947)	
Institution	Administrator	Institution	Administrator	Institution	Administrator	Institution	Administrator
Vukti	Uparik	Eklik	Ojir	Sura	Subedar/Najim		Governor/ Commissioner
Bisay	Bishapati/ Kumaratya	Arsha	Shar-e- Laskaë	Sarkar/ Chakal	Fouzadar/ Chakladar	District/ Collector	DC/ DEM
Mandal	Adhikoranik	Shahar	Do	Porgana	Shikdar	Mohakuma	ODC
-	-	Kosba/Thrita	Do	Thana	Tanadar	Circle	CO/OC
Village	Grampati/ Gramik/ Mahattar	-	-	Mahalladar	Mohalik/ village	Union	-

Source: Md. Aminuzzaman (1982) *Bangladesher Lokproshashan*: Tatta o Tatha, (in *English-Public Administration of Bnagladesh: Information and Theory*) Center for Social Studies, University of Dhaka

Bangladesh has a unitary form of government. For the convenience of administration, the country is divided into six Administrative Divisions: Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Barisal and Sylhet. Each Division is placed under a Divisional Commissioner and is further subdivided into Districts with a District Commissioner (DC) as the Chief Administrator. After the administrative reorganization carried out in 1982, the country was divided into 64 Districts. 20 of



these Districts existed for a very long period while the rest are the ones upgraded from former Sub-Divisions. The 20 old Districts are now popularly known as Greater Districts. Below the district level there are the Thanas which number 490 in the country. During 1982-1990, 460 of the Thanas were upgraded to Upazilas or Sub-Districts. With the abolition of the Upazila system in 1991, the Upazila Regional Administrative System reverted to the earlier Thana structure. All Divisions and district headquarters and most of the Thana headquarters are urban centres. Below the level of Thana, there are rural micro areas known as Unions (4,451 in number) and Grams or Villages (more or less 80,000).<sup>7</sup>

The divisional level is the highest tier of administration, after the national level. The Divisional Commissioner (popularly known as the Commissioner) is the head of the divisional administration. He only plays a supervisory role over all the departments and agencies in the Division because the divisional office of each department is directly linked to its national office. He also coordinates the functions of the district administration in the Division. The Divisional Commissioner became involved in development functions only since the establishment of the Regional (Divisional) Development Boards in 1976. The Regional Development Boards is responsible for those projects of the District Boards which the latter cannot finance or does not have expertise to look after. The Regional Development Boards are somewhat less active at present. The District has been the focal point in the administrative system of Bangladesh. The head of the district administration is known as the Deputy Commissioner (or more popularly the DC). In addition to the administrative offices at district level which (linked to their respective higher echelon) the office of the Deputy Commissioner is divided into a number of Divisions and sections. Within its planning and implementation section the Annual and Midterm Plans are prepared. The physical infrastructure section is responsible for the construction of physical infrastructure throughout the district unless it is of very small nature. In that case it falls under the jurisdiction of the Thana administration. The rural development section administers the rural development programmes. The administrative head of the Thana is known the Thana Nirbahi Officer.

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<sup>7</sup> Md. Aminuzzaman (1982)

The world and all of its institutions are changing rapidly rather than the all previous time. The local government institutions - in order to cope with the changing situation- have been receiving immense importance from both the domestic and international forces in the developing countries during the last three decades and more. Cheema (1996) states that there were three worldwide institutional transitions in the last decade which are having and will continue to have significant impact and change on governmental and economic systems. To him, one of the transitions is a rapidly growing interest in decentralization of previously highly centralized governments and a broadening and strengthening of local governance through networking and partnership to ensure the features of good governance of the aid receiving countries (in Rahman, 2000a).<sup>8</sup>

In the current discourse of governance and development, therefore, the local government has been recognized as the best ground in which the people can learn the art of government, values of democracy and their responsibility through direct and indirect participation and experiences around them (Rahman, 2000b, Siddiqui 2005, Stoker 1996, Stewart 1983, Hye 2000, Blair 1981). As Jackson (1967) said in sixties that the "local government is the vital ground to create sense of patriotism among the people" (in Rahman, 2000b:3) absolutely influenced by the British colonial-model (Samaratunge, Alam and Teicher, 2008:28, Siddiquee, 1996:333). The history of Bangladesh shows that each regime change was accompanied by a change in its local government structure.

Although Bangladesh gained government's stated objective was to independence in 1971, the land is still best known as a poorest country in the world with the features of massive poverty, over-population and corruption (Sarker and Rahman, 2007, Khan, 2003, Kochanek, 2000). According to the US

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<sup>8</sup> Noor, A. (1996), Local Government in Bangladesh: Problems and Issues, *Journal of Local Government* NILG, Volume 15 No. 1, pp. 15-28, Dhaka

Congressional Research Report 2008, Bangladesh is placed at the 12th position among 177 countries in the index of "failed and ineffective" nations, considering the factors such as weak political leadership, the armed forces, police, judiciary and public administration (*The Daily Prothom-Alo*, July 20, 2008) Despite some progress in terms of per capita income, education, life expectancy and communication, it is claimed that the poverty dimension in Bangladesh is manifold and is still widespread in the country (Sobhan, 1998, in Sarker and Rahman, 2007:100).

Poor governance system, categorically the weak local governance, is identified as one of the major reasons for such sub-human condition of Bangladesh. Transparency International of Bangladesh (TIB) states that lack of powerful local government, is one of the major causes of increasing corruption in the country (1999:4 and 2009:6). The Chairman of the Anti-corruption Commission accuses that abusing power is the main problem of governance in Bangladesh. Bangladesh as a former British colony, inherited a local government system establish decentralized local governance and ensure people's participation in the local development. Nevertheless, it has been seen that the two crucial elements of self-governance, that is, devolution of power and the expansion of financial boundaries of local institutions, have not been initiated in the locally elected bodies. Therefore, the issue of people's participation remained limited to theory only (Khan, 2000).

**Table- 1 Local government structure of Bangladesh in different regimes**

Mujib Regime 1971-1975 (Three Tiers)	Zia Regime 1975-1980 (Four Tiers)	Ershad Regime 1981-1990 (Three Tiers)	Khaleda Regime 1991-1996 (Two Tiers)	Hasina Regime 1996-2001 (Four Tiers Proposed)	Khaleda Regime 2001-2006 (Four Tiers)
District Board at District Level (dominated by the bureaucrats)	Zila Parishad (dominated by the bureaucrats)	Zila Parishad (dominated by the bureaucrats)	Zila Parishad (dominated by the bureaucrats)	Zila Parishad (dominated by the bureaucrats)	Zila Parishad (dominated by the bureaucrats)
Thana Development	Thana Parishad	Upazila Parishad	-----	Upazila Parishad	Upazila Parishad

Committee at Thana Level (dominated by the bureaucrats)	(dominated by the bureaucrats)	Election held in 1985 and 1990 (elected chairman)		(dominated by the bureaucrats, election was not held)	(dominated by the bureaucrats, election was not held)
Union Parishad First election held in 1973 (elected body)	Union Parishad Second election held in 1977 (elected body) Gram Sarker (selected body)	Union Parishad Election held in 1983-84, 1988 (Elected body)	Union Parishad Election held in 1992 (Elected body)	Union Parishad Election held in 1997 (Elected body)	Union Parishad Election held in 2003 (Elected body)
	Gram Sarker (selected body)			Village Parishad (Proposed not implemented)	Gram Sarker (selected body)

**Source:** Mohammed Asaduzzaman, Development Role of the Local Governance Institutions in Bangladesh: Empirical Overview; *Nepalese Journal of Public Policy and Governance*, Vol. xxiv, No.1, July, 2009

As a result, local government institutions have failed to become representative democratic units for in the landscape of public administration in Bangladesh. However, at the same time and with the same contextual people's participation and sustainable reality, the Non-Governmental development in one hand, the performance of local government institutions in Bangladesh is not satisfactory on the other. The features of poor local governance are quite visible Organizations (NGOs) and private sectors have emerged as the important sectors in the development discourse of Bangladesh. It has been claimed that the poor performance of public institutions have paved the way of NGOs and private institutions to play an important role in the rural society (Sarker, 2003).

### **1.5.b Historical Viewpoint of the Evolution of Local Government**

The story of the evolution of the local government system in Bangladesh is in many ways similar to that of India and Pakistan as all three countries share a common history. Local governments in one form or another have been in existence in the Indian subcontinent for centuries. Two varieties of self-government institutions, i.e. the headman and *Panchayats* appear to be operational in rural areas since early

times. The headman was not an elected official but came from the most dominant family in the village. His importance was due to two factors: all contacts, be it political or administrative, between the villager and authorities had to be routed through him and he was involved in collection of taxes from the village. The *Panchayat* was an elected body with executive and judicial functions. But often the headman controlled the *Panchayat* (Siddiqui 1992:15). During the Mughal rule of India, the *Panchayat* system disappeared altogether<sup>9</sup>.

Mughal contribution to the development of urban local government was remarkable as Mughals gave considerable importance to towns. Each town included a number of wards or Mohallas. A Mir Mahalla was appointed to act as a spokesman for each Mahalla. The Kotwal, or Chief Executive Officer of the town, wielded wide-ranging powers including magisterial, police, fiscal and municipal power. He was assisted in performing his duties by two officials: a Kazi who was a judicial officer and a Mahatasib who was assigned to prevent illegal practices, (Siddiqui 1992: 17-18).

The Mughal system with all its novelties lacked mechanisms for participation by the citizens. It was nothing more than a top-down hierarchical administrative system that was intended to be an extension of the central authority into the local areas. During almost two hundred years of British rule (1765-1947) over the Indian subcontinent, a number of experiments were made with the local government system. All the experiments were intended to devise a system that would serve their imperial interest. The major objective of the British in India was twofold: maximization of land revenue collection and maintenance of law and order. Naturally, the British as an imperial power had little understanding of and interest in indigenous local self-governing institutions. Though in 1870 the Village Chowkidari Act in Bengal established union Panchayats to collect tax to maintain Chowkidars (village police), Lord Ripon's Resolution on local self-government laid the foundation of local self-government in rural India. This resolution of May 18 1882 was important for two reasons: it set out general principles for development of local institutions in the future

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<sup>9</sup> K. Siddiqui (2005)

and provided the rationale behind functions of local bodies. The Rippon resolution was passed in 1885 as the Bengal Local Self-Government Act III of 1885.

In the arena of urban local government, British policy resulted in setting-up a municipal administration in the Presidencies and giving responsibilities to municipal committees for a number of civic amenities. But until the 1870s, officials or their designated representatives ran urban local government bodies. Gradually Municipalities became representative bodies with the promulgation of a number of acts between 1870 and 1947. These acts, among other things, introduced election as a mode of choosing one's representative and subsequently extended its coverage. But Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of the Municipalities continued to be elected indirectly by the popularly elected commissioners. One of the acts, the Bengal Municipal Act of 1932, strengthened the powers of Municipalities in levying rates and taxes and in the utilization of funds (Siddiqui 1994:47). But the same act provided considerable powers, to the government and local officials to inspect supervise and control Municipalities and negated the powers of taxation of local level bodies to a large degree<sup>10</sup>.

Union boards consisted of two-thirds elected members while the rest were nominated. The Chairman was elected among members of the union boards. The boards were given a number of specific responsibilities including the authority to levy taxes. By the end of the 1920s district boards were functioning under the stewardship of non-official chairmen. During the formative years of Pakistan's existence as an independent nation until 1971, the provincial government of East Pakistan initiated some important changes. General Ayub Khan, who seized power in 1958, introduced a system of local government known as Basic Democracy. But the concept of Basic Democracy, a four-tier system, lacked novelty and innovation. It bore a clear resemblance of two layers, the union councils and municipal committees of the British days (Khan 1997). Since Independence in 1971, a number of attempts have been made to tinker with the local government system in Bangladesh. Changes have been made from time to time in terms of the

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<sup>10</sup> Siddiqui (1994:47)

nomenclature of tiers of local government, but almost nothing was done to strengthen local governments. Therefore, the structure of the local government system has remained more or less unchanged.

The name of the Union Council, immediately after Independence in 1971, was changed to Union Panchayat and an administrator was appointed to manage the affairs of the Panchayat. The name of Thana Council was changed to Thana Development Committee while the District Council was named Zila Board or District Board. Again in 1973, Union *Panchayat's* name reverted to Union Parishad. A more significant change in the local government system was brought about in 1976 through the Local Government Ordinance. This ordinance provided for a Union Parishad for a union, a Thana Parishad for a Thana and a Zila Parishad for a district. The Union Parishad comprised one elected Chairman and 9 elected members, two nominated women members and two peasant representative members. The Thana Parishad consisted of the Sub-Divisional Officer being the ex-officio Chairman, the Circle Officer and a Union Parishad Chairman. The Zila (District) Parishad was to consist of elected members, official members and women members whose numbers were determined by the government. Its term of office was five years. However, no elections were held and government officials ran the Parishad<sup>11</sup>.

In 1980, as a result of an amendment of the Local Government Ordinance, the Swanirvar Gram Sarker (self-reliant village government) was introduced at the village level, but was abolished by a Martial Law Order in July 1982. A major change was initiated in the local government system through the introduction of the Local Government (Upazila Parishad and Upazila Administration Reorganization) Ordinance in 1982. This Ordinance was followed by the Local Government (Union Parishad) Ordinance in 1983, the Local Government (Zila Parishad) Act in 1988 and the three Hill Districts Acts and Palli Act in 1989. The Upazila Parishad Ordinance (1982) was particularly significant as this was supposed to help implementation of the decentralization programme of the government. In

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<sup>11</sup> Noor, A. (1996)

the Upazila System (as it came to be known), the (directly) elected Chairman would have the principal authority in running the affairs of the Upazila, his tenure being five years. The Upazila Nirbahi Officer would be subservient to the Chairman. After nine years of reasonably effective implementation, the Government of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, who came to power through a fair election, abolished the Upazila system in 1991.

During its five-year tenure, the government could not provide an alternative democratic form of local government. When after another free and fair election in 1996 the Bangladesh Awami League came to power, they constituted a Local Government Commission and came up with a Report on Local Government Institutions Strengthening in May 1997. The Commission has recommended a four-tier local government structure including Gram/Palli (village) Parishad, Union Parishad, Thana/Upazila Parishad and Zila (district) parishad.

All these tiers are concerned with rural/regional administration, while urban local governments remain outside the Commission's purview. The two major tiers of urban local government's, Pourashava (for smaller Municipalities) and City Corporation (for four of the largest cities) are in order.



## The Evolution of Local Government System

Village Police Act, 1870
Bengal Local Autonomous Act, 1885
Bengal Village Autonomous Act, 1919
Basic Democracy Order, 1959 (Pakistan Period)
Local Government System of After Liberation
Presidential Order no. 7, 1972
Presidential Order no. 22, 1972
Local Government Ordinance , 1976
Local Government Amendment Ordinance, 1980
Local Government (Upazila Parisod and Upazila Administration Restructured) Ordinance 1982
Local Government (Upazila Parisod) Ordinance, 1983
Local Government (Zella Parisod) Act, 1988
Local Government (Upazila Parisod) (Amendmend) Act, 1993
Local Government (Union Parisod) Act, 1993
Local Government (Union Parisod) (Amendmend) Act, 1997

Furthermore, we found the following timeline of the evolution of the local government system as-

### **Pre-colonial period**

- **Panchayat system:** Self-governing village communities characterized by agrarian economies had existed in India from the earliest times. Not only are they mentioned in *Rig Veda*, which dates from approximately 1200 BC, there is also definite evidence available of the existence of village "sabahas" (councils or assemblies) and "gramins" (senior person of the village) until about 600 BC. These village bodies, which were called "the little republics" by Sir Charles Metcalfe (Governor General 1835-36), were the lines of contact with higher authorities on matter affecting the villages. They were caste-ridden feudal structures.

### **Colonial Period**

- The Bengal Village Chowkidari Act of 1870 established *panchayats* with individuals nominated by district collectors with the sole purpose of levying and collecting chowkidari tax for the maintenance of village watchmen. Four year terms.
- The Bengal Municipal Act, 1884 for urban local government of Bengal, Orissa and Assam.
- The Bengal Self-Government Act, 1885 provided for three-tier structure for rural Bengal - the district board, the local board (for sub-division) and the union committee. Members of the union committee and local board were elected by a restricted electorate and the district board members were indirectly elected.
- The Bengal Village Self-Government Act, 1919 provided for the creation of elected union boards with restricted electorates. Women were allowed to vote in 1950.

**Pakistan Period**

- The Basic Democracies Order , 1959 covered both urban and rural local government. It provided for four tiers: Union Council, Thana Council, District Council and Divisional Council. Breakthrough. Abused for political purpose. Comilla Model - Thana Administration

**Bangladesh Period**

- Bangladesh President's Order No. 7 of 1972 changed the name of union parishad to union panchayat. President's Order No. 22 of 1973 renamed it as union Parishad.
- Paurashava Act, 1973. Amendment in 1977.
- The Local Government Ordinance, 1976 created Gram Sabha, later named Gram Sarkar.
- The Local Government (Thana Parishad and Thana Administration Reorganization) Ordinance, 1982 introduced Upazila system with elected chairman.
- The Local Government (Union Parishad) Ordinance, 1983 (First Amendment 1993; Second Amendment 1997 - UPs sub-divided into 9 wards)
- The Local Government (Upazila Parishad and Upazila Administration Reorganization (Repeal) Ordinance, 1991
- Creation of the Thana Development Coordination Committee, 1992 with MPs as advisors.
- The Gram Parishad Act, 1997. High Court embargo

Source: Adopted from Goutam Mondal (2003) *Rajnitir Dusta Chkra Bondi Bangladesher Sthaniyo Sarkar Babstha*, News Network, Dhaka. (in Bengali)

The Present Structure of local government is seen in the bellow-

**Local Government in Bangladesh**

<b>Rural System</b>	<b>Urban System</b>
Zila Parishad (None)	City Corporations (6)
Thana (469)	Paurashavas (286)
Union Parishads (4,486)	
Gram Sarkar (1,92,348)	

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **RELEVANT LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Literature Review from Global and Bangladesh Perspective**

As we know that to conduct any research on any social issues we need to review the pertinent literature from the global and local context. This is why I have presented here some literature review which has given me the particular guidelines for this study.

#### **Decentralization and development: Theory and evidence from Bangladesh, Barbara Ingham Senior Lecturer, A. K. M. Kalam, 2006**

There is a view that decentralization brings tangible benefits to the developing world, increasing material welfare and reducing the alienation of traditional societies when faced with centralized and modernizing bureaucracies. In theory, this is plausible, but in practice decentralization seldom lives up to its promises. Only strong states are in a position to cede a realistic range of powers. 'Successful' decentralization often takes place in conscious opposition to the state, and for that reason it is likely to be short-lived. This paper draws on the past history and more recent experience of decentralization in Bangladesh, to conclude that the reform of local government structures has not in practice been of benefit to rural areas, the villages and the rural poor. The delivery of basic needs has not improved, nor has there been any significant increase in popular participation. The conclusion emphasizes the need to view decentralization in its social and political context. Proper account needs to be taken of the interests that dominate the political process in a highly stratified society such as Bangladesh.

**Theories of Local Government Reorganization: An Empirical Evaluation,  
Marleen Brans, 2007**

Local government reorganization has been widespread throughout Europe in the postwar era. Three broad types of theory have set out to explain this phenomenon in a cross-national context; a welfare state perspective, a functional revolution perspective and a political perspective. The validity of these theories is assessed in the specific context of Belgium. The evidence suggests that none of the prevailing theories can make much headway in explaining the timing and form of reorganization. More promising explanations are to be found through examining broader values, and beliefs and more specific political constellations. The claim or implication that the major local government reorganizations of the postwar era were, in the different countries that experienced it, independent events produced by a common pattern of domestic social, economic or political development has the trappings of scientific theory without its true substance – the ability to explain.

**Governance from Below: A Theory of Local Government with Two  
Empirical Tests; Jean-Paul Faguet, 2005; LSE-STICERD Political  
Economy and Public Policy Working Paper No. 12**

I examine decentralization through the lens of the local dynamics that it unleashes. The national effects of decentralization are simply the sum of its local-level effects. Hence to understand decentralization we must first understand how local government works. This paper proposes a theory of local government as the confluence of two quasi-markets and one organizational dynamic. Good government results when these three elements - political, economic and civil - are in rough balance, and actors in one cannot distort the others. Specific types of imbalance map into specific forms of government failure. I use comparative analysis to test the theory's predictions with qualitative and quantitative evidence from Bolivia. The combined methodology provides a higher-order empirical rigor than either approach can alone. The theory proves robust.

Over the past few decades decentralization has become one of the most debated policy issues throughout both developing and developed worlds. It is seen as central to the development efforts of countries as far afield as Chile, China, Guatemala and Nepal. And in the multiple guises of subsidiarity, devolution and federalism it is also squarely in the foreground of policy discourse in the US, UK and EU. But surprisingly, there is little agreement concerning the effects of decentralization in the empirical literature. Optimists (e.g. Ostrom et al. 1993, Putnam 1993, World Bank 1994, UNDP 1993) argue that decentralization can make government more responsive to the governed by "tailoring levels of consumption to the preferences of smaller, more homogeneous groups" (Wallis and Oates 1988, 5). Pessimists (e.g. Crook and Sverrisson 1999, Samoff 1990, Smith 1985, Solnick 1996) dispute this, arguing that local governments are too susceptible to elite capture, and too lacking in technical, human and financial resources, to produce a heterogeneous range of public services that are both reasonably efficient and responsive to local demand. But neither side has been able to win over the other with convincing empirical evidence.

Consider the broadest surveys of decentralization experiences. In their wide-ranging 1983 survey, Rondinelli, Cheema and Nellis note that decentralization has seldom, if ever, lived up to expectations. Most developing countries implementing decentralization experienced serious administrative problems. Although few comprehensive evaluations of the benefits and costs of decentralization efforts have been conducted, those that were indicate limited success in some countries but not others. A decade and a half later, surveys by Piriou-Sall (1998), Manor (1999) and Smoke (2001) come to cautiously positive conclusions, but with caveats about the strength of the evidence in decentralization's favor. Manor ends his 1999 study noting that "while decentralization ... is no panacea, it has many virtues and is worth pursuing", though the evidence in favor is "incomplete". Smoke asks whether there is empirical justification for pursuing decentralization and finds the evidence mixed and anecdotal. The lack of progress is striking.

Under close examination this inconclusiveness is less surprising. Empirical work on decentralization can be divided into two broad groups: Qualitative (small sample)

work, and Quantitative (large sample) work. The former (e.g. Blanchard and Shleifer 2000, Eaton 2004, Parker 1995, Slater 1989, Treisman 1999, and Weingast 1995) focus usually on a single country, or develop comparisons between a small set of countries, relying primarily on descriptive and qualitative evidence. This analysis is often careful, deep and nuanced. But the methodology implies low levels of generality and an excess of variables over observations, making it difficult to control for exogenous factors. On the other hand, quantitative studies (e.g. de Mello 2000, Fisman and Gatti 2000, Huther and Shah 1998, Rodden and Wibbels 2002, and Zax 1989), benefit from the high degree of generality, consistency and empirical transparency those statistical approaches provide. But they necessarily suffer problems with the quantification of nuanced concepts, and data comparability across diverse countries (or regions). The combination of such methodological difficulties with the widely varying definitions of “decentralization” adopted by different countries, often followed by poor or incomplete implementation of whatever definition is chosen (Boone 2003), goes a long way toward explaining why empirical studies of both types have been unable to pin down its effects clearly.

I attempt to overcome these difficulties through a blend of qualitative and quantitative evidence that focuses on a single country, Bolivia, where decentralization was clearly defined and vigorously pursued. By combining deep insight into the causes of government quality in two extreme cases of municipal performance, with national results from all of the country's municipalities, we can approach the elusive goal of an explanation that has both generality and deep understanding. We can avoid problems of cross-country comparison (e.g. institutions, political regimes, idiosyncratic shocks) while still benefiting from the formal rigor of large-N studies. And we can retain a central focus on complex, nuanced explanatory factors – such as accountability, trust, and political entrepreneurialism – that are hard to treat with quantitative data alone. By bringing a large and varied amount of information to bear on a clearly defined problem, we hope to solve it.

I argue that the “outputs” of decentralization are simply the aggregate of local-level political and institutional dynamics. This is a significant departure from the bulk of the decentralization literature, which treats it as an essentially national phenomenon.



This paper argues the opposite. Decentralization is a single reform that sets into motion a large number of largely independent local processes. Its effects are simply the sum of the effects of these local dynamics, which – as Wibbels (2003) has pointed out – inevitably diverge as and in particular when it works well and when badly much as local conditions do. To understand decentralization we must first understand how local government works,

Hence this paper proposes a theory of local government that integrates a variety of well-established insights on the role of elections and lobbying in democratic politics with more recent ideas about civic organizations and social linkages. The model provides a structure in which economic interests, political actors, and civic organizations interact to make policy decisions. I derive predictions based on local characteristics, and then test them twice, first with qualitative, and then quantitative, evidence. Bolivia is particularly deserving of study because reform there consisted of a large change in policy at a discrete point in time. The data available are of surprising scope and quality for a country so poor, and include information on the political, social and civic, economic, institutional, and administrative characteristics of all of Bolivia's municipalities.

I define decentralization as the devolution by central (i.e. national) government of specific functions, with all of the administrative, political and economic attributes that these entail, to democratic local (i.e. municipal) governments which are independent of the center within a legally delimited geographic and functional domain. The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 develops a theory of local government and derives predictions. Section 3 presents the qualitative methodology and discusses the quality of government in two extreme cases of local government performance. Section 4 tests the theory's predictions via close analysis of the economic, political and civic dynamics at work in each district. Section 5 tests whether the theory can explain the policy outputs of all Bolivian municipalities, using econometric models of public investment. Section 6 concludes.

**Humes, Samuel and Eileen Marten (1969) "The Structure of Local Government: A Comparative Study of 81 Countries"**

They discussed the local government pattern of the world briefly. They said local governments are administrative authorities over areas that are smaller than a state. The term is used to contrast with offices at nation-state level, which are referred to as the central government, national government, or (where appropriate) federal government. "Local government" only acts within powers delegated to it by legislation or directives of the higher level of government and each country some kind of local government which will differ from those of other countries. In primitive societies the lowest level of local government is the village headman or tribal chief.

In modern nations, local governments usually have some of the same kind of powers as national governments do. They usually have some power to raise taxes, though these may be limited by central legislation. In some countries local government is partly or wholly funded by subventions from central government taxation. The question of Municipal Autonomy—which powers the local government has, or should have, and why—is a key question of public administration and governance. The institutions of local government vary greatly between countries, and even where similar arrangements exist, the terminology often varies. Common names for local government entities include state, province, region, department, county, prefecture, district, city, township, town, borough, parish, municipality, shire and village. However all these names are often used informally in different countries & local government is the legal part of central Government.

Main articles on each country will usually contain some information about local government, or links to an article with fuller information. The rest of this article gives information or links for countries where a relatively full description is available.

**Asia**

**India:** In India the local government is the third level of government apart from the State and Central governments. There are two types of Local Government in operation: Panchayats in rural areas and Municipalities in urban areas. The

Panchayats are a linked-system of local bodies with village panchayats (average population about 5,000), panchayat samities at the intermediate level (average population about 100,000), and district panchayats (average population about 1,000,000).<sup>12</sup>

The rural panchayats created in around 1959 were based on the soviet model (Yugoslav variety) of tiring with hierarchical control to undertake mainly agency tasks of the states through earmarked funding, with limited civic tasks financed from assigned land revenue and local surcharge thereon. This resulted in overlapping functional jurisdiction and a mismatch of functions and taxes among the three tiers. The urban municipalities, created during the colonial days of mid-19th century, survived the 'socialist' experiment and retained their separate character as their English counterparts. In 1991, through two identical constitutional amendments, one for the Panchayats and the other for the Municipalities, a number of changes were introduced to strengthen local governments in India ensure regularity of their election every five years and limiting their period of supersession or dissolution to six months, three sets of local governments for the Panchayats and the Municipalities, reservation of seats and chairpersons for women and scheduled castes and tribes, creation of independent State Selection Commission (SEC), state finance commission (SFC) linked with the central finance commission, and planning committees at the districts (DPCs) and metropolitan areas (MPCs).

In addition, these amendments have indicated guidelines for the states to empower the local governments through increased devolution of functions and taxes to them—these are not been followed-up by the states. However, the CFCs have been allocating discretionary grants for local governments passed through the states. One lacuna in the existing arrangement is that the Panchayats do not have a statutorily delegated list of functions on which its revenues could be spent; this has created problems of financing their own activities room their one revenue or through general grants from the CFC-SFC arrangements. Panchayats act mostly as agencies for implementing the erstwhile soviet plan schemes and projects on cost reimbursement

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<sup>12</sup> Twelfth Finance Commission Report, 2005

(around 96% of their activities) that do not have any maintenance component for transferred completed works. The major national parties are committed to improve the effectiveness of the Panchayats through further central action to remedy the situation.

**Japan:** Since the Meiji restoration, Japan has had a local government system based on prefectures. The national government oversees much of the country. Municipal governments consist from historical villages. Now merger and restoration of those municipal governments are undergoing for cost effective administration. In between the 47 prefectures which are made up by area and population. They have two main responsibilities. One is mediation between national and municipal governments. The other area is wide administration.

**Malaysia:** Local government is the lowest level in the system of government in Malaysia—after federal and state. It has the power to collect taxes (in the form of assessment tax), to create laws and rules (in the form of by-laws) and to grant licenses and permits for any trade in its area of jurisdiction, in addition to providing basic amenities, collecting and managing waste and garbage as well as planning and developing the area under its jurisdiction.

**Philippines:** For a description of the arrangements in force, see the section on Regions and Provinces in the article on the Philippines.

**Israel:** The Israeli Ministry of Interior recognizes four types of local government in Israel. Cities: 71 single-level urban municipalities, usually with populations exceeding 20,000 residents. Local councils: 141 single-level urban or rural municipalities, usually with populations between 2,000 and 20,000. Regional Councils: 54 bi-level municipalities which govern multiple rural communities located in relative geographic vicinity. The number of residents in the individual communities usually does not exceed 2000. There are no clear limits to the population and land area size of Israeli regional councils. Industrial councils: Two single-level municipalities which govern large and complex industrial areas outside cities. The local industrial councils are

Tefen in Upper Galilee (north of Karmiel) and Ramat Hovav in the Negev (south of Beer Sheva).

**Egypt:** Local government traditionally enjoyed limited power in Egypt's highly centralized state. Under the central government were twenty-six governorates (sing., muhafazah; pl., muhafazat). These were subdivided into districts (sing., markaz; pl., marakaz) and villages (sing., qaryah; pl., qura) or towns. At each level, there was a governing structure that combined representative councils and government-appointed executive organs headed by governors, district officers, and mayors, respectively. Governors were appointed by the president, and they, in turn, appointed subordinate executive officers. The coercive backbone of the state apparatus ran downward from the Ministry of Interior through the governors' executive organs to the district police station and the village headman (sing., umdah; pl., umadah)<sup>13</sup>.

Before the revolution, state penetration of the rural areas was limited by the power of local notables, but under Nasser, land reform reduced their socioeconomic dominance, and the incorporation of peasants into cooperatives transferred mass dependence from landlords to government. The extension of officials into the countryside permitted the regime to bring development and services to the village. The local branches of the ruling party, the Arab Socialist Union (ASU), fostered a certain peasant political activism and co-opted the local notables—in particular the village headmen—and checked their independence from the regime<sup>14</sup>. Thus, officials in Upper Egypt often bowed to the powerful Islamic movement there, while those in the port cities struck alliances with importers<sup>15</sup>.

**Afghanistan:** Afghanistan was traditionally divided into provinces governed by centrally appointed governors with considerable autonomy in local affairs. There are currently 34 provinces. During the Soviet occupation and the development of

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<sup>13</sup> M. Clark and J. D. Stewart (1991)

<sup>14</sup> Joel Samoff, (1990 and 2007)

<sup>15</sup> Joel Samoff, (1990 and 2007)

country-wide resistance, local areas came increasingly under the control of mujaheddin groups that were largely independent of any higher authority; local commanders, in some instances, asserted a measure of independence also from the mujaheddin leadership in Pakistan, establishing their own systems of local government, collecting revenues, running educational and other facilities, and even engaging in local negotiations. Mujaheddin groups retained links with the Peshawar parties to ensure access to weapons that were doled out to the parties by the government of Pakistan for distribution to fighters inside Afghanistan.

The Taliban set up a shura (assembly), made up of senior Taliban members and important tribal figures from the area. Each shura made laws and collected taxes locally. The Taliban set up a provisional government for the whole of Afghanistan, but it did not exercise central control over the local shuras.

## **Europe**

**Ireland:** Local government in Ireland is mainly based on a structure of 29 county councils and five city councils. By far the main source of funding is national government. Other sources include rates on commercial and industrial property, housing rents, service charges and borrowing. The city and county councils suffer from a combination of a lack of power to raise their own taxes and a gradual and persistent erosion of their powers over time. Therefore, local policy decisions are sometimes heavily influenced by the TDs who represent the local constituency in Dáil Éireann (the main chamber of parliament), and may be dictated by national politics rather than local needs.

**Norway:** Norway's regional administration is organised in 19 counties (fylke), with 18 of them subdivided into 431 municipalities (kommune) per January 1, 2006. The municipal sector is a provider of vital services to the Norwegian public, accounting for about 20% of Norwegian GNP and 24% of total employment. Norway had 435 municipalities of varying size in 2003, each administered by an elected municipal council. They are grouped into 19 counties (fylker), each governed by an elected

county council. Each county is headed by a governor appointed by the king in council. Oslo is the only urban center that alone constitutes a county; the remaining 18 counties consist of both urban and rural areas. County and municipal councils are popularly elected every four years. The municipalities have wide powers over the local economy, with the state exercising strict supervision. They have the right to tax and to use their resources to support education, libraries, social security, and public works such as streetcar lines, gas and electricity works, roads, and town planning, but they are usually aided in these activities by state funds.

**Italy:** The Italian Constitution defines three levels of local government: Regions: At present 5 of them (Valle d'Aosta, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Trentino-Alto Adige, Sardinia and Sicily) have a special status and are given more power than the others. The constitutional reform of 2001 gave more power to regions. Provinces: They mostly care to roads, forests, and education. They had more power in the past. Communes: The Mayor and staff, caring for the needs of a single town or of a village and neighbouring minor towns or villages. Major cities also have an extra tier of local government named *Circoscrizione di Decentramento Comunale* or, in some cities (e.g. Rome) *Municipio*.

**Spain:** Spain is divided into 17 Autonomous Communities, which in turn are divided into 50 provinces. There are also two autonomous cities: those of Ceuta and Melilla. Finally, each province comprises a number of municipalities. Each administrative entity is given powers, structure, and boundaries by a law that was passed by the President of the Government (or Prime Minister).

Law 7/1985[2], passed by the former Spanish President Felipe González Márquez (socialist), lays down the procedure of the Local Government. Every city in Spain used this Law until 2003. This year, the former Spanish President José Maria Aznar López (conservative), passed a Law (57/2003[3]) to modernize organic rules of those cities which had more than 250,000 inhabitants, and other important cities (like capital cities of Provinces with at least 175,000 inhabitants). Also, it exists two other important Laws for specifically Madrid (Law 22/2006[4]) and Barcelona (Law 1/2006[5]). The main governing body in every city is called The Plenary (*el Pleno*).

The number of members that compose The Plenary varies depending on city's population (for example, since 2007 Valencia has 33 members and Pamplona has 27).

**Sweden:** Sweden is divided into counties which in turn are divided into municipalities.

### **United Kingdom**

The system of local government is different in each of the four countries of the United Kingdom. In total, there are 434 local authorities in the UK. 354 of these are in England, 26 in Northern Ireland, 32 in Scotland and 22 are in Wales.

**England:** The most complex system is in England, the result of numerous reforms and reorganization over the centuries. England is subdivided on different levels: The top level of local government within England is the nine regions. Each region has a government office and assorted other institutions. Only the London region has a directly elected administration. Only one other regional referendum has been held to date to seek consent for the introduction direct elections elsewhere—in the northeast of England—and this was soundly rejected by the electorate.

The layers of government below the regions are mixed. Historic counties still exist with adapted boundaries, although in the 1990s some of the districts within the counties became separate unitary authorities and a few counties have been disbanded completely. There are also metropolitan districts in some areas which are similar to unitary authorities. In Greater London there are 32 London boroughs which are a similar concept. Counties are further divided into districts (also known as boroughs in some areas). Districts are added into wards for electoral purposes. Districts may also contain parishes and town council areas with a small administration of their own. Other area classifications are also in use, such as health service and Lord-Lieutenant areas.

**Northern Ireland:** Northern Ireland is divided into 26 districts. Local government in Northern Ireland does not carry out the same range of functions as those in the rest



of the United Kingdom. The Northern Irish Department of the Environment has announced plans to decrease the number of councils to 11.

**Wales:** Wales has a uniform system of 22 unitary authorities, referred to as counties or county boroughs. There are also communities, equivalent to parishes.

**Scotland:** Local government in Scotland is arranged on the lines of unitary authorities, with the nation divided into 32 council areas.

**France:** According to its constitution, France has 3 levels of local government: 22 Régions and 4 Régions d'outre-mer (Réunion, Martinique, Guadeloupe and French Guiana). 96 departments and 4 departments d'outre-mer (Réunion, Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guiana). There are 36,679 municipalities (in French: Communes). However, intercommunalities are now a level of government between municipalities and departments. Paris (both a commune and a department) and Corsica are local government sui generis.

**Germany:** As a federal country, Germany is divided into a number of states (Länder in German), which used to have wide powers, but whose main remaining power today (2004) is their ability to veto federal laws through their Bundesrat representation. The system of local government is described in the article on States of Germany.

**The Netherlands:** The Netherlands has three tiers of government. There are two levels of local government in The Netherlands, the provinces and the municipalities. The water boards are also part of the local government.

The Netherlands is divided into twelve provinces. They form the tier of administration between the central government and the municipalities. Each province is governed by a provincial council (Provincial Staten). Its members are elected every four years. The day-to-day management of the province is in the hands of the provincial executive (Gedeputeerde Staten). Members of the executive are chosen by the provincial council from among its own members and like the members of the

provincial council serve for a period of four years. Members elected to the executive have to give up their membership of the provincial council. The size of the executive varies from one province to another.

Municipalities form the lowest tier of government in the Netherlands, after the central government and the provinces. There are 458 of them (1 January 2006). The municipal council (Gemeenteraad) is the highest authority in the municipality. Its members are elected every four years. The role of the municipal council is comparable to that of the board of an organization or institution. Its main job is to decide the municipality's broad policies and to oversee their implementation. The day-to-day administration of the municipality is in the hands of the municipal executive (college van burgemeester en wethouders, abbreviated to B&W), made up of the mayor (Burgemeester) and the aldermen. The executive implements national legislation on matters such as social assistance, unemployment benefits and environmental management. It also bears primary responsibility for the financial affairs of the municipality and for its personnel policies. Aldermen (Wethouders) are appointed by the council. Councilors can be chosen to act as aldermen. In that case, they lose their seats on the council and their places are taken by other representatives of the same political parties. Non-councilors can also be appointed. Unlike councilors and aldermen, mayors are not elected (not even indirectly), but are appointed by the Crown. Mayors chair both the municipal council and the executive. They have a number of statutory powers and responsibilities of their own. They are responsible for maintaining public order and safety within the municipality and frequently manage the municipality's public relations.

## **Africa**

**Mali:** In recent years, Mali has undertaken an ambitious decentralization program, which involves the capital district of Bamako, seven regions subdivided into 46 circles, and 682 rural community districts (communes). The state retains an advisory role in administrative and fiscal matters, and it provides technical support, coordination, and legal recourse to these levels. Opportunities for direct political participation and increased local responsibility for development have been improved.

In August-September 1998, elections were held for urban council members, who subsequently elected their mayors. In May/June 1999, citizens of the communes elected their communal council members for the first time. Female voter turnout was about 70% of the total, and observers considered the process open and transparent. With mayors, councils, and boards in place at the local level, newly elected officials, civil society organizations, decentralized technical services, private sector interests, other communes, and donor groups began partnering to further development.

## **America (North and South)**

**United States:** Local government in the United States refers to the general-purpose governments at the county, city, town, or township level and special-purpose governments, which include special districts and school districts.

Foreign observers from unitary states may view the states under the federal system of the United States as local governments. This is not, however, the case because the states possess sovereignty within the federal union, while local governments are not sovereign even within their respective states. Local governments are municipal corporations chartered by (and whose charters may be revoked by) the legislature of the creating state.

**Mexico:** Mexico is a Federal Republic made up by 31 states and a federal district. Each state is divided in municipios, while the federal district is divided in sixteen

delegations. Twenty-nine states of Mexico were created as administrative divisions by the constitution of 1917, which grants them those powers not expressly vested in the federal government; Mexico's two remaining territories, Baja California Sur and Quintana Roo, achieved statehood on 9 October 1974, raising the total to 31. Each state has a constitution, a governor elected for six years, and a unicameral legislature, with representatives elected by district vote in proportion to population. An ordinary session of the legislature is held annually, and extraordinary sessions may be called by the governor or the permanent committee. Bills may be introduced by legislators, by the governor, by the state supreme court, and by municipalities (a unit comparable to a US county). In addition to the 31 states, there is also one federal district comprising Mexico City, whose governor serves as a member of the cabinet. Many state services are supported by federal subsidies.

**Argentina:** Argentina is a federation of 23 provinces and the federal capital of Buenos Aires. During the 19th century there was a bitter struggle between Buenos Aires and the interior provinces, and there has long been an element of tension regarding the division of powers between the central government and provincial bodies. The federal government retains control over such matters as the regulation of commerce, customs collections, currency, civil or commercial codes, or the appointment of foreign agents. The provincial governors are elected every four years.

The constitutional "national intervention" and "state of siege" powers of the president have been invoked frequently. The first of these powers was designed to "guarantee the republican form of government in the provinces." Since the adoption of the 1853 constitution, the federal government has intervened over 200 times, mostly by presidential decree. Under this authority, provincial and municipal offices may be declared vacant, appointments annulled, and local elections supervised. Between 1966 and 1973, all local legislatures were dissolved and provincial governors were appointed by the new president. A restoration of provincial and municipal government followed the return to constitutional government in 1973. After the March 1976 coup, the federal government again intervened to remove all provincial

governors and impose direct military rule over all municipalities. Since 1983, representative local government has been in force again.

**Canada:** Canada has a federal system with three orders of government. The largest is the federal government, followed by the provincial and territorial governments. At the root level is the municipal (or local) government.[1] Municipal governments are controlled by the provincial (or territorial) order of government.

**Paraguay:** Paraguay is divided into 17 departments, which are subdivided into districts, which, in turn, comprise municipalities (the minimum requirement for a municipality is 3,000 persons) and rural districts (partidos). A governor, elected by popular vote, runs each department. Municipal government is exercised through a municipal board, chosen by direct election, and an executive department. In the principal cities and capitals, the executive department is headed by a mayor appointed by the minister of the interior; in other localities, the mayor is appointed by the presidents of the municipal boards. Police chiefs are appointed by the central government.

**Uruguay:** Uruguay's administrative subdivisions consisted of nineteen territories called departments and governed by intendancies, which were subordinate to the central government and responsible for local administration. They enforced national laws and administered the nation's social and educational policies and institutions within their territories. These territories had limited taxing powers, but they could borrow funds and acquire property. They also had the power to establish unpaid five-member local boards or town councils in municipalities other than the departmental capital if the population was large enough to warrant such a body.

Executive authority was vested in a governor (intendente), who administered the department, and in a thirty-one-member departmental board (junta departamental), which carried out legislative functions. These functions included approval of the departmental budget and judicial actions, such as impeachment proceedings against departmental officials, including the governor.

Like the governor, the members of the departmental board and the mayor were elected for five-year terms in direct, popular elections. A governor could be reelected only once, and candidates for the post had to meet the same requirements as those for a senator, in addition to being a native of the department or a resident therein for at least three years before assuming office. Departmental board members had to be at least twenty-three years of age, native born (or a legal citizen for at least three years), and a native of the department (or a resident for at least three years).

**Australia:** Local government is the 3rd type of government in Australia, after Federal and State.

**New Zealand:** New Zealand has a local government system comprises two complementary sets of local authorities—regional councils and territorial authorities. There are currently 86 local authorities consisting of: 12 regional councils which cover most of New Zealand's land area 74 territorial authorities (comprising 59 district councils and 15 city councils).

Five of the territorial authorities are unitary authorities; also have the powers of a regional council. They are the Nelson City Council, the Gisborne, Marlborough and Tasman District Councils, and the Chatham Islands Council.

**Md. Mostafizur Rahman Khan and Fardaus Ara (2006); Women, Participation and Employment in Local Government: Bangladesh Union Parishad Perspective; Asian Affairs, Vol. 29, No. 1 :73-00, January-March.**

Mainstreaming women through gender specific policies is an acknowledged precondition for achieving meaningful development in any developing country like Bangladesh. Yet it is only recently that this issue has been recognized as such in the context of policy reforms in both administrative and local government arenas. Recent local government reform in Bangladesh has led to creation of quota for women in

grassroots democratic institutions. In the context of local government, women's concerns had surfaced intermittently and were highlighted in the government reform agenda as evident in the last Local Government Reform of 1997. As a consequential effect Local Government (Union Parishad) Amendment Act 1997 was promulgated. It provides 3 directly elected women members in the Union Parishad from 3 reserved seats. However, there are serious lacunas in gender balancing both in terms of governance policy and reform agenda. Union Parishad is the most popular democratic institution at the grassroots level. Therefore, the state of women's participation at this level is crucial and deserves special attention to empower them as participation and empowerment are closely related.

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

Women's equal participation in political life plays a pivotal role in the general process of the advancement of women. It is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved (FWCW, 1995:1). Systematic integration of women augments the democratic basis, the efficiency and the quality of the activities of local government. If local government is to meet the needs of both women and men, it must build on the experiences of both women and men, through an equal representation at all levels and in all fields of decision-making, covering the wide range of responsibilities of local governments. Women's role in decision-making is one of the most important questions for consideration in the movement for their empowerment. Keeping in mind, the importance of women's participation in decision-making, like the other government in the world, the government of

Bangladesh has initiated efforts to widen the scope of women for participation in the development process. The Local Government (Union Parishad) Second Amendment Act 1997 of Bangladesh is a mile stone towards ensuring women's equal access and increased participation in political power structures.

This amendment provided for direct elections to reserved seats for women in local level elections. As a strategy of affirmative action for providing the structural framework for women's participation in political decision-making and provided an opportunity to bring women to the center of local development and develop new grass-roots level leadership.

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

Elections	Year	Women Candidates		Elected Chairmen and Members	
		Chairman	Member	Chairman	Member
1 <sup>st</sup>	1973	-	-	1	-
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1977	19	19	4	7
3 <sup>rd</sup>	1984	-	-	6	-
4 <sup>th</sup>	1988	79	863	1	-
5 <sup>th</sup>	1992	115	1135	8	20
6 <sup>th</sup>	1997	102	43969/456*	20+3	12882/110*
7 <sup>th</sup>	2003	232	43764/617*	22	12684/79*

\* Women contested and elected to the general seats.

Source: compiled by the authors from various sources



## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL APPROACH

#### 3.1 Theoretical Framework for Analysis

Why we need theory to understand the local government system? The simple answer of this question is- to find out the underlying causal relationship and their consequences. Here in this study, I use some theories to comprehend why the problems and function in local government are? Since the issue of local government is an ancient institution with modern concept, it has been defined from different perspectives at various times by the scholars. Simply speaking, local government can be defined as the lowest tiers of governance which are responsible for managing local affairs by the locally elected people<sup>16</sup>.

In the existing writings of governance and public administration, four different local government theories can be found. They are: liberal democratic, public choice, radical elitist and Marxist (Siddiqui, 2005:9-21). Among these theories, liberal democratic theory has been considering as an effective theory for national democracy which provides benefits of democracy to the local people irrespective of class, sex, race and religion (Smith, 1985, Mawhood, 1983, Maddick, 1963, Cheema and Rondinelli, 1990, Dahl, 1956, Laski, 1931, Yivisaker, 1959, Uphoff and Cohen, 1980).<sup>17</sup> However, this approach has relatively failed to clearly identify the NGOs and the private sectors as important partners of local governance for the sustainable development of the

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<sup>16</sup> Humes, Samuel and Eileen Marten (1969) *The Structure of Local Government: A Comparative Study of 81 Countries*. The Hague: International Union of Local Authorities.

<sup>17</sup> Kamal Siddiqui (2005) (Edited) *Local Government in Bangladesh*, University Press Limited, Dhaka.

developing world. It has already been mentioned that the recent decades have been marked by tremendous changes in global politics (M Asaduzzaman, 2009). In order to understand the local government bodies more fully, it would be present briefly the existing literature on the theories of local government and decentralization. However, in doing so, it should be pointed out at the very outset that the theoretical materials on local government and decentralization are still rather limited, sometimes narrowly focused on a certain segment only (for example, functions, structure and composition, central-local relations etc.) and based mostly on Western experience (K. Siddiqui, 2005).

There are four major theoretical schools on local government, namely (1) liberal-democratic, (2) economic, (3) radical elitist and (4) Marxist. These are briefly discussed below:

### **3.2 Liberal Democratic Theory of Local Government**

In general view, the main proponents of liberal arguments are R. A Dahl, A de Tocqueville, H. Laski, J S Mill, and P. Yivisaker. The fact that is noted to all that the liberal arguments in favor of democratic local government is the best method of arranging for the local administration of public services fall mainly into two categories. Some thinkers claim that local government is good for national democracy, and there are those whose major concern is with the benefit of local democracy to the locality. They can be further sub-divided into three sets of interrelated values. At the national level, these values relate to political education, training in leadership and political stability. At the local level the relevant values are equality, liberty and responsiveness. The first function which local government is said to perform for the democratic state is political education of the citizens. However, the extent to which the educative claim on behalf of local democracy is justified is open to debate. It has been criticized as being paternalistic. Also, there are many other social factors and institutions, such as class and formal education which contribute to political awareness. Given the apathy towards local politics

among common citizens, the educative impact of local government is not likely to go beyond a small minority of activities<sup>18</sup>.

So, analogous prudence should be employed in handling the related claim that local government provides valuable training ground for national leaders. There is certainly evidence that some national leaders had prior experience as local government functionaries (Bangladesh is no exception to this) and no doubt local government provides valuable experience to politicians. However, in some countries common membership of national and local legislatures is allowed. Trade unions also offer experience in resolving conflicts, decision-making and allocating scarce resources. Local government experience may be so distinctive that it is rendered almost useless for leadership at the national level. Finally, there are many examples of successful national leaders all over the world without any local government background.

After all, democratic decentralization is said to contribute to the creation of better societies and the establishment of social harmony, community spirit and political stability. A number of caveats may be made in this regard. First, in many instances, stable democracy at the national level has preceded the establishment of local democracy. Second, many countries have experienced political instability after a period of active local government. Third, it is probably impossible to single out the effect on national political stability of local government from a multitude of other pertinent factors.

Local democracy is said to engender political equality at the local level. By providing extra opportunities for citizens to participate in public policy-making, it strengthens political equality implicit in civil rights. Local government gives additional opportunities for voting, forming political associations and exercising freedom of speech. It sets up a further barrier to the concentration of power. However, as has been argued, the local polity often shows evidence of mal-distribution of power, and of domination by those who wield economic power.

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<sup>18</sup> Kamal Siddiqui (2005) (Edited) *Local Government in Bangladesh*, University Press Limited, Dhaka.

Indeed, the above mentioned virtue might be no more than a romantic idealization of the local political system—glossing over conflicts inherent in the structure of local society and replacing them with the idea of power residing in electoral accountability. Power is thought to be equally distributed by the right to vote. The possibility that those holding economic power at the local level will dominate local political institutions in order to perpetuate privilege, hierarchy and conservatism tends to be ignored. Power is conceived in narrowly legal terms, as if this adequately specifies the whole power structure within the society.

The second value of democratic decentralization to the individual and the local community is that it facilitates accountability and thereby also liberty. Some scholars have established the accountability of local government by asserting the right of individuals to be grouped in local immunities for self-regulation. Others have drawn attention to local democracy as a defense against arbitrary power.

### **3.3 Economic Interpretation of Local Government**

This approach is assumed to choose their place of residence by comparing packages of services and taxes on offer by different municipalities. The rational individual will locate himself where the best combination is found according to his own preference schedule and will choose a place that affords the greatest net advantage. A system of local government offering the widest range of choices is, therefore, to be preferred, as it will increase the chance of any given individual being better off than if faced with less variation. The citizen should be able to "vote with his feet" if he is dissatisfied with the benefits received from the local authority and move to a locality where the level and mix of services relative to taxes comes closer to meeting his preferences<sup>19</sup>.

We know that the public choice approach proceeds from the assumption that a diversity of individual preferences needs to be matched by a diversity of goods and

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<sup>19</sup> Kamal Siddiqui (2005)

services. It is assumed that the citizen is informed of the alternative packages available. Unlike private goods, local government goods and services are collectively enjoyed, so that one's consumption does not preclude another's. The local government bears the cost of providing local public goods and services when voluntary efforts are ineffective. It also provides through election and other political processes a means by which preferences are communicated.

According to the public choice principles, a local government system organized is said to overcome many of the problems which public provision of goods and services creates for efficiency and responsiveness. The problem of responsiveness is here seen as one of determining community-wide demand in the absence of competitive pricing. The test of efficiency is whether local governments actually supply the goods and services citizens prefer, in the absence of measures of consumer satisfaction.

Whereas in private markets, on the demand side, consumer preference is indicated by willingness to pay, in a political system it has to be expressed through voting and other political activities, such as lobbying, petitions, public inquiries, opinion polls, demonstrations, etc. Demand is difficult to identify in politics because goods are dissociated from their prices (i.e. taxes). Different citizens have different opportunities for expressing preferences. Also different groups may pay different "prices." The public choice approach to local government claims to reduce these problems by increasing the number of units and the degree of specialization of functions.

### **3.4 Radical Elite Theory of Local Government**

It is noted that the radical elite theorists agree that state activity has grown in scope and become increasingly centralized. But they offer three conflicting accounts of how different tiers of government operate. First, the dual polity model suggests that local governments (plus regional governments, parliaments, etc.) are fundamentally pluralist because they only handle secondary issues of little importance to national elites.

For these, by provide a useful and complex institutional facade, which absorbs illicit energies in non-threatening ways while masking the effective realization of power in a tightly coordinated executive-military policy linked to big business. In other words, the real elites find the political formulas and consecrated myths of decentralization or a lamentation of powers a convenient cover for their monopoly control the key decisions of the state.

Second, the elite theory community power studies argue by contrast it national elites do not simply float in a disconnected way above the mass of secondary issues, which compose the domestic politics of *Hartal* democracies. Instead, national elites need to be supported by an underpinning structure of regional and local elites, and the policy-makers. These local levels also play a major role in channeling diverse influences external business and social elites into the government. Local governments are also tied to national elites by networks of patronage, and control over public expenditure. Local notables are thus owed to control local governments, exploiting local interests, and incumbency to mobilize very diverse kinds of political support for national, state and corporate elites.

Third, according to more technocratic accounts, local governments constitute an efficient division of political labor, which permits a national segmentation of the state. This is, of course, not only a matter managerial wisdom but also a useful political strategy to shift the load unpopular decision-making to the executive elites. The main problem with the elite theory lies in the definition. For Marxists, the elite theory is not sufficiently located in the socio-economic realities of class and class struggle and hence mystification arises despite its radical stance. Radical elite theory assumes that the masses are passive and manipulated because of the pervasive manipulative influence of the mass media.

### **3.5 Marxist Interpretation of Local Government**

Marx did not deal with local government. His interest mainly lay in analyzing the central state. Consequently, until relatively recently, Marxists have tended to see the

state as a unity that need not be differentiated between geographical levels. Second, there is neither a single Marxist theory of local government, nor is any of the Marxist theories comprehensive in character. Finally, Marxist theories of local government are based on the experience of developed capitalist states of West Europe and North America, and hence of marginal relevance to Third World countries enjoying mostly pre-capitalist and capitalist modes of production. Some of the major Marxist works on local government are briefly discussed below<sup>20</sup>.

**Structural Thesis-** Cockburn's structuralist interpretation of local government is based on the writings of Marx and his latter day structuralist interpreters such as Althusser and Poulantzas. According to this view, local government becomes the local state as a part of the whole, where the whole—the capitalist state—is a relatively autonomous instrument of class domination, thus allowing it to manage social and economic reproduction above the competing demands of different fractions of the capitalist class, but in the interest of capital as a whole. The local state plays its part in this process of reproduction through the detailed management of families and institutions locally, and so differs institutionally but not socially, from the central state.

In doing so, Saunders identifies three sets of limiting conditions within which local democracy operates, ecological, political and economic. Ecologically, towns and cities encapsulate inequalities in the urban environment, which impose different living conditions on different categories of people. The urban system also corresponds to market forces rather than managerial direction by elected functionaries. Redistribution in pursuit of social justice inevitably fails as the market diverts funds from areas of greater social needs to areas of greatest economic returns. Politically, elected representatives become increasingly dependent on bureaucrats and professionals as corporate management practices spread. Central governments also put brakes on local political autonomy.

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<sup>20</sup> Kamal Siddiqui (2005)

### **Marxist Position on Inter-Governmental Relations**

This perspective on the state at the local level provides a new interpretation of inter-governmental relations, one that offers an explanation of centralization in terms of class interests and conflicts and moves away from seeing different levels of government as cohesive forms of authority in conflict, partnership/interdependence with each other, independent of the interests represented at each level<sup>21</sup>.

Centralization has been interpreted as a reflection within the state apparatus of the needs of monopoly capitalism. It is argued that central institutions and policies increasingly represent the interests of monopoly capital. When the interests of monopoly capital are dominant within the state, local government, as a residual element of earlier stages in the development of capitalism, will be controlled. For example, in order to protect the profitability of urban investments, monopoly capital needs massive expenditure by the state on services and infrastructure. To do this, it needs access to resources of the local government. This, in turn, requires that the political autonomy of local government be curbed.

### **3.6 Decentralization Theory**

Local government can also be understood from a consideration of decentralized arrangements for development management. According to its advocates (for example, Manor, 1999; Crook and Manor, 1998; Turner, 1997, Cheema and Rondinelli, 1983; Uphoff and Esman, 1974; Montgomery, 1988; Cochrane, 1983; Conyers, 1981; Sharpe, 1981; Maddick, 1963; and UN, 1962), decentralization provides the following benefits<sup>22</sup>:

1. ensures better results in development programmes and projects;
2. increases people's participation;
3. ensures efficient delivery of services;
4. helps mobilize local resources;

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<sup>21</sup> Kamal Siddiqui (2005)

<sup>22</sup> Hicks, Ursula K. (1961) *Development from Below: Local Government Finance in Developing Countries of the Commonwealth*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.



5. engenders lower-level democracy;
6. enhances coordination;
7. promotes equity;
8. increases the flow of information from bottom up;
9. enhances the responsiveness of the central government to citizen demands and interests;
10. maintains political stability; and
11. provides education and training in political leadership.

Decentralization, following Rondinelli (1984), would denote the following: delegation, de-concentration, devolution and privatization, with a minimum of central control. Delegation includes the transfer of functions to regional or functional development authorities, parasitical organizations or special project implementation units on the understanding that these would operate relatively free of central government regulations concerning personnel recruitment, contracting, budgeting, procurement and other matters, and that they would act as agents for the state in performing prescribed functions, with ultimate responsibility for them remaining with the central government<sup>23</sup>.

De-concentration involves transfer of functions within the central government hierarchy through a shifting of the workload from central government apparatuses at the centre to field offices, the creation of field agencies or the shifting of responsibilities to local administrative units that are part of the central government structure. This may lead to technical improvements in service delivery deriving from improved responsiveness, and may promote equity in the distribution of services. However, autonomous local political pressure will be needed to make the officials accountable to their local constituents (Turner and Hulme, 1997).

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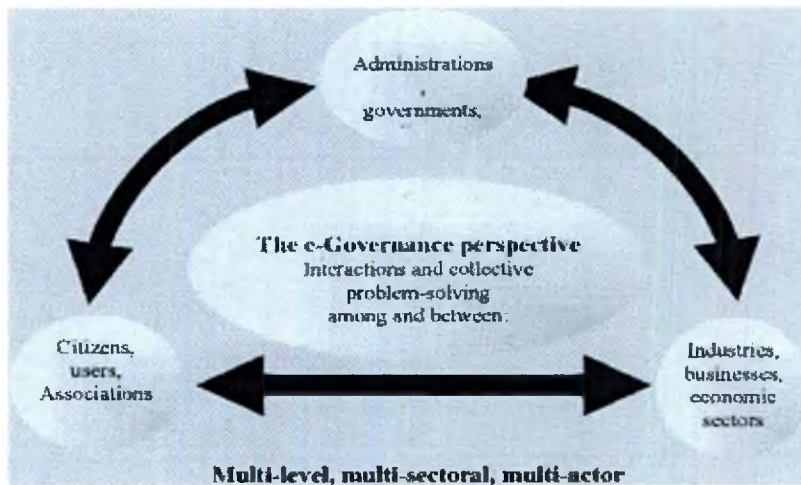
<sup>23</sup> Hicks, Ursula K. (1961) *ibid*

### **3.7 E-Government Perspective**

E-government is the composite trend of governments at all levels, mainly through their operational arm, the administration, and subsidiary through the access of citizens to public affairs, aimed at promoting: 1) a better and more efficient administration; 2) more effective inter-administration and administration-enterprise relationships; and 3) user-empowering servicing and more transparent access of citizens to political decision-making. (Misuraca G, Rossel P., Finger M., EPFL, CDM, e-Gov, 2006).

Considering instead the combination of ICTs with governance in the sense we formulated it above, e-government is more and more moving towards e-governance, where the concept of e-governance further encompasses e-government. E-governance is a growing phenomenon around the world and is emerging as a significant discipline, initially within the field of public administration reform, but that is now being realized as not only being a "government business", but a societal challenge as well. e-governance is defined by the Inter-American Development Bank as being "beyond the scope of e-government.....", and in particular by Blake Harris that, to summarize, says that "e-governance is not just about government websites and email, etc..." and that "....it will change how citizens relate to governments as much as it changes how citizens relate to each other"

UNESCO defines e-governance as "the public sector's use of information and communication technologies with the aim of improving information and service delivery, encouraging citizen participation in the decision-making process and making government more accountable, transparent and effective".



Source: Gianluca Misuraca (2007), *E-Governance in Africa, from theory to action: a handbook on ICTs for local governance*; IDRC

### 3.8 Theoretical Framework for this Study

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#### Decentralization Theory

The theoretical perspectives on decentralization range from the populist domain of local government and decentralization to the Marxist school of class, state and political economy. This theoretical framework is needed for Bangladesh in order to make a decentralized government system where the LG system would be the autonomous body.

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#### The Administrative Approach

The idea of decentralization from an administrative perspective as the transfer of responsibility for planning, management, and the raising and allocation of resources from the central government and its agencies to field units of government agencies, subordinate units of levels of government, semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations, area-wide, regional or functional authorities, or non-governmental private or voluntary organizations. This framework also applicable for this study because here the LG can be designed by using the pattern.

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### **The Political Approach**

The neglect in studies of decentralization arises from failure to take account of the total political system and by extension of the total social and economic system. This theory strongly recommended the examination of political decentralization because, it said, "illusory decentralization is presented when formal powers or administrative arrangements are purportedly decentralist but politically controlled or influenced by the center. Indeed, this theory contributes to consolidate the understanding of the complex political administrative structure within which decentralization operates in the Third World. As Bangladesh is a Third World country so this theory can be applied for the analysis. This is why I also used this theory.

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### **The Public Choice Approach**

. In their 'public choice theory' the neo-classical economists like Ostrom et al. (1961) and Tiebout (1972) argued that a large number of local institutions are more desirable than only the central government for providing public goods of free choice. I have used this thought in my study for the analysis of findings

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### **Marxist Approach**

The Marxist approach to local government contributes to an understanding of decentralization from the geo-political and economic points of view. It provides an analytical framework for the discussion and examination of the problem of decentralization. Though the issues raised in this Marxist discussion are most common in a capitalist society, they can also be used as a checklist to examine the pattern of decentralization in the pre/partly -capitalist Third World. Given the context of decentralized governance in the Third World countries, the political and Marxist approach to local government can contribute to an understanding of the role of the state from political and economic points of view. Though the issues raised in this Marxist discussion are most common in a capitalist society, they can also be used as a checklist to examine the pattern of decentralization in the pre or partly-capitalist Third World country like Bangladesh. While the public choice approach sets the Third World context into a place of debate, the political and Marxist interpretations unfold interesting issues that aid in understanding the problematic of decentralization and development.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 Methodology of the Study

This study primarily is an empirical one to analyze the existing structure and functions of rural local self-government system in Bangladesh and its relations with the central government. The field research has been undertaken under a preliminary survey study. Both primary and secondary sources have been used for this study. Interviews were conducted based on pre-tested structured interview schedule. Primary data has been collected from seven Union Parishads under seven Upazilas from all divisions in Bangladesh. In the following table depicts that—

Union Parishad	Upazila Parishad	District	Division
Chiknagoul		Jaintapur	Sylhet.
Bisnupur	Kaligonj	Satkhira	Khulna
Vodroghat	Kamarkhand	Sirajgonj	Rajshahi
Golapgonj	Nawabgonj	Dinajpur	Rangpur
Amtoli	Amtoli	Borguna	Barishal
Bijaypur	Sadar (South)	Comilla	Chittagong
Pubail	Gazipur Sadar	Gazipur	Dhaka

For this study, secondary data were collected from review of the available literature on local self-government to get relevant information. The secondary materials were basically- official documents, government policies and acts, statistical reports of NGOs, research studies and newspaper clippings. This chapter divided into 7 parts like-- 1. General view of the research area 2. Research design and sampling 3. Questionnaire content 4. Time schedule and interviewing 5. Data collection procedures 6. Techniques of data analysis and 7. Limitations of the study.

#### 4.2 General View of the Research Area

The basic information of the seven Union Parishad under seven Upazillas from every division of Bangladesh had been collected from the respective Union Parishads the information are delineating in the bellow -

(1)

#### Bijaypur Union:

Sadar (South), Comilla District, Chittagong

NAME	Amount
Area	11342skm
Mouja	21
Village	51
Population	45819
Male	24268
Female	21551
Educated person	14997
Family	7276
Farmer	4925
Electricity Pillar	193
Mosque	55
Temple	2
Primary school	14
High school	5
College	18
Madrasha and moktob	48
Tube-well	406
Pond	297
Bazaar	5
Culvert	121
Krishok Somobai Somiti	40
Sramik Somobai Somiti	4
Jubo kollan somobai somiti	16
Name of the villages	Salmanpur, Alokdia, Gabtoli
Structure of the Union - rohit Parishad	1+9+3=13

(2)

**Bisnopur Union Parishad**  
Kaligonj Upazilla, Satkhira, Khulna

NAME	Amount
Area	09 sqm
Mouja	14
Village	15
Population	23430
Male	11930
Female	11500
Educated person	0
Family	0
Farmer	0
Pillar	0
Mosque	42
Mondir	5
Primary school	10
High school	3
College	0
Madrasha and moktob	2
Tube-well	0
Pond	500
Bazaar	5
Post Office	2
Krishok Somobai Somiti	5
Sramik Somobai Somiti	0
Jubo kollan somobai somiti	0
Name of the villages	Bisnopur, Chatai, Hogla.
Structure of the Union Parishad	1+9+3=13
Occupation (Male)	Agriculture, Business, Fishing, Poultry Farm, Peasantry,
Occupation (Female)	Peasantry, Agriculture.

(3)

**Pubail Union Parishad,  
Gazipur Sadar, Dhaka.**

NAME	Amount
Area	33 sqm
Mouja	43
Village	63
Population	83515
Male	42141
Female	41374
Educated person	0
Family	0
Farmer	0
NGOs	12
Mosque	0
Mondir	19
Primary school	24
High school	9
College	1
Madrasha and moktob	20
Orphanes	17
Pond	188
Bazaar	7
Post Office	3
Krishok Somobai Somiti	11
Women Somobai Somiti	4
Landless Somobai Somiti	2
Name of the villages	Bindan, Koromtola, Badul
Structure of the Union Parishad	1+9+3=13
Occupation	Service, Agriculture, Business, Driver,
Industry	16
Poultry Farm	83



(4)

**Chiknagoul Union Parishad,  
Jaintapur, Sylhet**

NAME	Amount
Area	32.19 sqm
Mouja	15
Village	22
Population	15928
Male	8161
Female	7767
Educated person	0
Family	0
Farmer	0
NGOs	0
Mosque	18
Mondir	0
Primary school	11
High school	2
College	1
Madrasha and moktob	5
Orphanes	0
Pond	95
Bazaar	3
Post Office	1
Krishok Somobai Somiti	9
Women Somobai Somiti	3
Landless Somobai Somiti	0
Name of the villages	Ghater soti, Umon pur, Sikar kha.
Structure of the Union Parishad	1+9+3=13
Occupation	Service, Agriculture, Business, Poultry Farm, Peasantry,
Industry	2
Poultry Farm	203

(5)

**Amtoli Union Parishad,  
Amtoli, Borguna, Barishal**

Name	Amount
Area	59 sqm
Mouja	7
Village	17
Population	41503
Male	22300
Female	19203
Educated person	0
Family	0
Farmer	0
NGOs	11
Mosque	72
Mondir	3
Primary school	14
High school	3
College	1
Madrasha and moktob	7
Assaylum	3
Pond	4500
Bazaar	5
Post Office	2
Krishok Somobai Somiti	0
Women Somobai Somiti	0
Landless Somobai Somiti	0
Name of the villages	Islam pur, Nasna para, Mohisdanga
Structure of the Union Parishad	1+9+3=13
Occupation	Service, Agriculture, Business, Poultry Farm, Peasantry,
Industry	0
Poultry Farm	200

(6)

**Vodroghat Union Parishad,  
Kamarkhand, Sirajgonj, Rajshahi**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Area	22.97 sqm
Mouja	16
Village	33
Population	26731
Male	13559
Female	13172
Educated person	0
Family	5467
Farmer	0
NGOs	07
Mosque	80
Mondir	04
Primary school	21
High school	08
College	1
Madrasha and maktob	10
Assaylum	0
Pond	210
Bazaar	08
Post Office	04
Krishok Somobai Somiti	0
Women Somobai Somiti	0
Landless Somobai Somiti	0
Name of the villages	Joyal vanga, Chor vodroghat, Shekhi para
Structure of the Union Parishad	1+9+3=13
Occupation	Service, Agriculture, Business, Poultry Farm, Peasantry,
Industry	10
Poultry Farm	15

(7)

**Golapgonj Union Parishad**

Nawabgonj, Dinajpur, Rangpur

NAME	Amount
Area	41 sqm
Mouja	37
Village	80
Population	31200
Male	
Female	
Educated person	More than 46%
Family	0
Farmer	0
NGOs	9
Mosque	0
Mondir	16
Primary school	11
High school	7
College	1
Madrasha and moktob	22
Orphanes	8
Pond	201
Bazaar	6
Post Office	3
Krishok Somobai Somiti	11
Women Somobai Somiti	5
Landless Somobai Somiti	2
Structure of the Union Parishad	1+9+3=13
Occupation	Service, teaching, Agriculture, Business, Driver,
Industry	2
Poultry Farm	102

**4.3 Research Design and Sampling**

This study is a solid work based on field level data and in a certain extent it uses the secondary data to make the study more valid and logical. The primary level data followed the In-depth Interview technique which is a part of Qualitative Approach but

quantitative in nature because of its questionnaire administration. The whole methodological framework is demarcating the bellow-

#### 4.4 Area and Sample Selection

I have taken seven Union *Parisods* from seven divisions of the country. The Union *Parisods* can be found in the following table. We know, every Union *Parisod* is constituted by 13 members among them 1 chairman, 1 Secretary, 9 Members, 3 Women Members, 1 *Dafadar* and 9 *Mahalldars*. Among these administrative persons I have taken 6 respondents like 1 Chairman/Chairperson, 1 secretary, 3 Members (2 male member and 1 female member), 1 Village Police (total 42 respondents from administration). But I also further interviewed 383 respondents (general population) from these union parishads. From these two types of respondents the total number of sample was 425.

#### Formula for Drawing Sample Size:

According to W G Cochran,

#### For the known Universe

#### Equation- 1

$$n_0 = \frac{z^2 \times p \times q}{e^2}$$

Where,

$n_0$  = initial sampling

$z$  = z score value

$p$  = probability

$q$  = 1-  $p$

$e$  = Precision level (i.e. error level 5% or 0.05/± .5)

**Equation- 2**

$$n = \frac{n_0}{1 + \frac{(n_0 - 1)}{N}}$$

Where,

n = sample size

N = population size

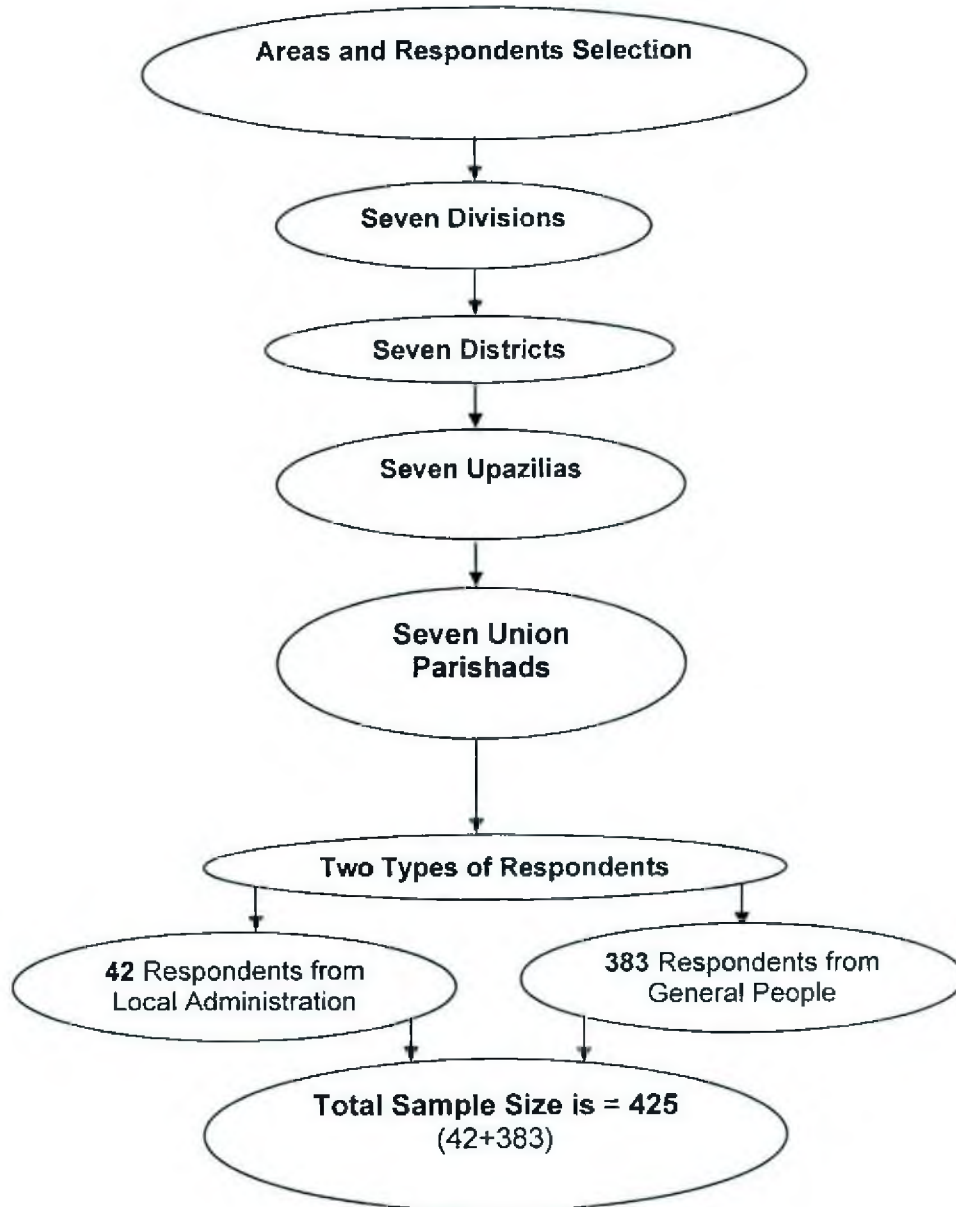
Z score values

Confidence Level	Z score values
80%	1.28
85%	1.44
90%	1.65
95%	1.96
99%	2.58

The sampling framework is bellow-

Divisions	Districts	Upazila Parishads	Union Parishads	Population	Sample Size (from general population)	Sample Size (from administration)
Dhaka	Gazipur	Gazipur Sadar	Pubail (Village 63)	83515	119	6
Chittagong	Comilla	Sadar (South)	Bijaypur (Village 15 )	45819	65	6
Barishal	Borguna-	Amtoli	Amtoli (Village 17 )	41503	59	6
Rangpur	Dinajpur	Nawabgonj	Golapgonj (Village 80)	31200	45	6
Rajshahi	Sirajgonj	Kamarkhand	Vodroghat (Village 33)	26731	38	6
Khulna	Satkhira	Kaligonj	Bisnupur (Village 51)	23430	33	6
Sylhet.	Jaintapur		Chiknagoul (Village 12)	15928	23	6
Total =				268126	383	42
<b>Total Sample Size = (383+ 42) = 425</b>						

### Sampling Framework:



#### 4.5 Questionnaire Content

**Pretest:** The questionnaire had been thoroughly pre tested before finalization.

The main topics covered in the questionnaire were:

1. Demographic variables
2. Economic and social variables
3. Government's Duties to the UP and Up's duties to the Government
4. UP's special functions and problems
5. UP's special responsibilities toward people
6. People's responsibilities toward the Up
7. Satisfaction and mutual understanding between and among the people, local government bodies and central administration.
8. Violence and terrorism
9. Consciousness about rights, family planning, health facilities and STDs
10. And many other things

#### 4.6 Time Schedule and Interviewing

Time scheduled for the fieldwork was June 2010 to November 2010.

This study used a list of 47 questionnaires for both Union *Parishad* administration and general people. A semi-structured questionnaire with an option of being open-ended was directly administered to the respondents by the interviewers (I had appointed two research assistants for collecting data and processing collected information). The average length of interview was 70 minutes. But for some special cases it took about 100 minutes.

#### 4.7 Data Collection Procedures

This study used qualitative (In-depth Interview) method to collect data. It is very close to the Case Study methods in nature. To select the respondents from administration I have used purposive sampling and for selecting the mass people I



have used the simple random sampling. Though, I have selected the villages and union Parishad purposively.

#### **4.8 Techniques of Data Analysis**

The purpose of the data analysis is to provide answers to the research questions or objectives. The results of the study interpreted according to the univariate. This univariate presentation is consist of simply saying what the data look like, signifying primarily the extent of a particular phenomenon or event.

The collected data of this research are mainly of qualitative. Almost all the collected information organized, analyzed and presented with the use of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Scientist) and MS Excel Program. By the SPSS program the raw data has been processed and at the same time it used to analyze data.

#### **4.9 Limitations of the Study**

As we know that any social research dealing with the social sciences is confronted with a variety of obstacles in terms of time-space variation. During the study I encountered some limitations such as- firstly, time and budget for this study is not sufficient to conduct this type of research because frequent visits to the study field and staying to the study area is always required more time and money. Secondly, some respondents were hesitant and some were reluctant to answer certain issues like income, expenditure, violence, crime, wrongdoings, trafficking, health facilities, rights to the government facilities and all others. Because they have lot of political pressures to disclose the hidden truth about the above problems. But after persuasion of the discussion and explanation they personated me to carry out the conversation. Thirdly, people are disinterested to give the information about the VGF and VGD program because of political pressure. But the local authority claimed that there is no mismanagement and corruption in distributing this type of facilities to the people. Accordingly, these contradictory staments made me perplexed to find the actual truth about on. Though I got correct information from the cross checking of my interview, particularly by taking with the key respondents.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **STRUCTURE, FUNCTIONS AND PROBLEMS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

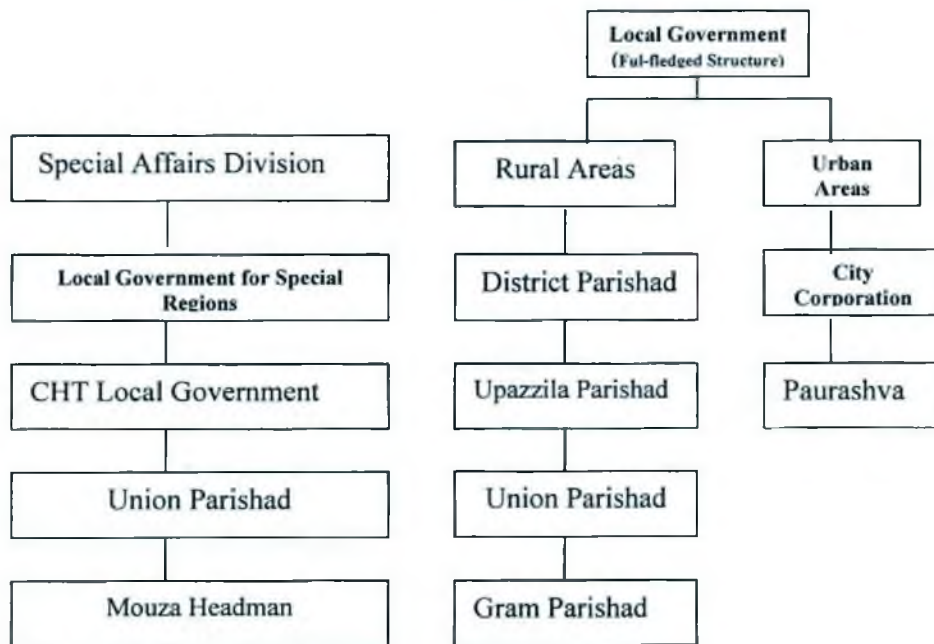
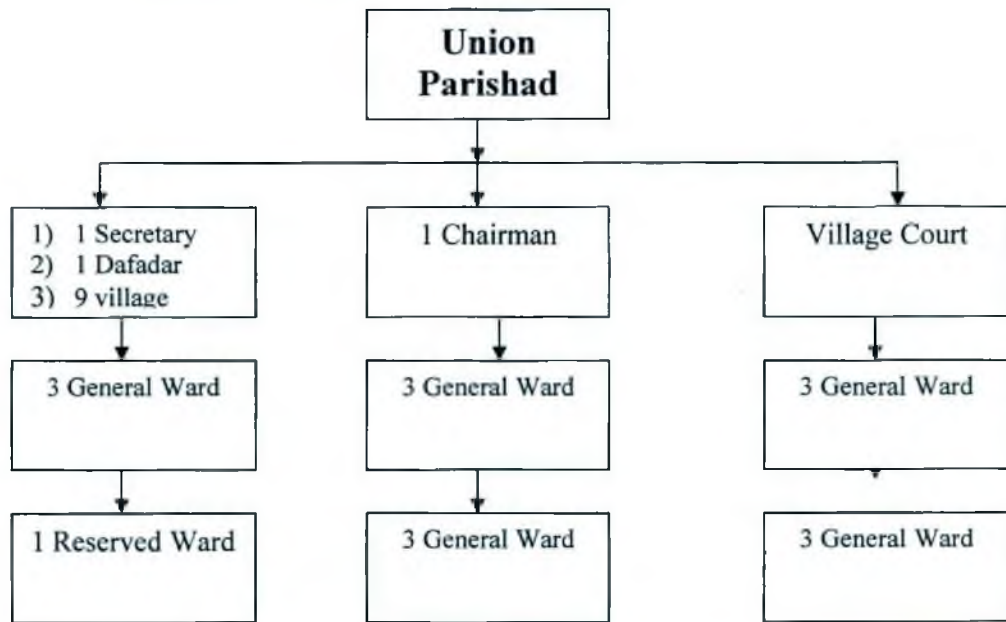
#### **5.1 The Structure of Local Government**

In some countries, the local extensions of the central government, and in others, traditional local power structures utilized for supporting field administration, have been misconstrued as being equivalent to local government. At times local government has been mistakenly considered an insignificant segment of the government. However, in industrialized countries, the number of civil servants at the local level is much larger than is commonly believed. In the United States, for example, there are four times as many local government employees as federal employees; even in a developing country, like India, the number of local level employees is as high as 40 percent that of federal employees (Siddique, 1994: 2).

With a view to avoiding confusion, it is better to differentiate 'local government' from 'local politics' and 'local administration'. Local politics is a wider term and covers a host of areas besides local government. On the other hand, local administration means implementation of decisions by not only local government institutions but also national/ provincial government units operating at the field level. In South Asia, local government is widely known as local self-government.

For the purpose of this essay, local government is defined essentially in terms of some attributes: first, its statutory status; second, its power to raise finance by taxation in the area under its jurisdiction; third, participation of the local community in decision making on specified subjects and administration; fourth, the freedom to act independent of central control; and lastly, its general function, in contrast to the single-purpose character of many autonomous bodies.

**Local Government Structure:**



Source: Tofael Ahmed (1999) Staniyo Sarkarer Samskar Vabna, Kost Trust (the idea of reformation in Local Government)

### **5.1.a Constitutional and Legal Basis**

In any democratic polity, local government is given legal recognition either by an act of Parliament or by incorporation of relevant provisions in the Constitution (Khan, 1996: 1). Bangladesh's Constitution of 1972 clearly spelt out the legal basis and responsibilities of local government. Article 59, Chapter III of the Constitution states that, 'Local government in every administrative unit of the Republic shall be entrusted to bodies composed of persons elected in accordance with law'. Article 60 of the Constitution states 'for the purpose of giving full effect to the provision of article fifty nine, 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 (Constitution of People's Republic of Bangladesh, as modified up to 30th of November, 1998)<sup>24</sup>.

It is necessary to mention the constitutional and legal basis of the local government of Bangladesh because if the duties and responsibilities of the local government institutions are not demarcated by the Constitution or by the act of the parliament, or if there is no scope for the government to decentralize powers to elected local bodies, it is difficult to devolve powers. It is evident that the legal basis of the local government is clearly spelt out in the Constitution and the Constitution through Article 59, Chap III has ensured the devolution of power to local government bodies<sup>25</sup>.

### **5.1.b Structure of Local Government in Bangladesh**

The institution of Local Government (LG) in Bangladesh goes back a long way. The origin of the existing local government institution can be traced back to the demand for self-government in British India. Initially local government was developed by the British to maintain law and order in the rural areas with the help of local elite backed by local police (Ali, 2001). The local elites were to be nominated in the local

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<sup>24</sup> Cabinet Resolution on Renaming the Upazilla (in Bengali), (Dhaka: Cabinet Division, Government of Bangladesh (GOB), 1992)

<sup>25</sup> Local Government in Bangladesh: An Agenda for Governance, United Nations Department for Development Support and Management Services (UNDDSMS), New York, 1996.

government institutions from among those who were trusted by the colonial authority. The British rulers institutionalized this system to perpetuate their political, economic and administrative ends and colonial extortion (Ali, 2001). In 1870, they introduced 'Choukidary Panchayet as the local government institution. This system was later changed and renamed in different regimes from the British period to present Bangladesh as three-tier Union Committee (1885), two-tier Union Board (1919), four-tier Union Council (1959), and Union Parishad (1973) (Shafi, et.al, 2001: 3). After 1973, Union Parishad became the lowest unit of local government in Bangladesh.<sup>26</sup>

There are two distinct kinds of local government institution in Bangladesh – one for the rural areas and another for urban areas. The local government in the rural areas represents a hierarchical system comprising of four tiers: Gram Sarkar, Union Parishad, Upazilla Parishad and Zilla Parishad while the urban local government consists of *Pourashavas* and Municipal Corporation (Alam, 1984: 48). The following figure shows the existing local government structure in Bangladesh:

### **British period**

Decentralization in Bangladesh began even before the country's liberation in 1971. The British colonial administration established local governments through the Local Self-Government Act of 1885 to maximize land revenue collection and maintain law and order. Local officials during this period came from the local elite. But the process of decentralization during British rule was obscure. The British were not interested in any degree of devolution. What appears from the real practice of local bodies is a picture of oppression and exploitation<sup>27</sup>. There has not been any positive result for rural people apart from the fact that these experiments served the colonial interests of the empire. Although India was the first colony to become the experimental ground for such policies of decentralization, the British reluctance to implement any

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<sup>26</sup> Pranab K Panday (July-September 2005) *Local Government in Bangladesh*; South Asian Journal, retrieved from [www.southasianmedia.net](http://www.southasianmedia.net)

<sup>27</sup> Pranab K. Panday (2005)

real degree of decentralization is also evident. One example of such reluctance is when the empire rejected the report of the Decentralization Commission in 1907 which recommended an elected *Panchayat* (Tinker, 1967: 87).

### ***Pakistan period***

Reforms regarding local governance were also introduced during the Pakistan period. A new system of local government, known as the system of Basic Democracies, was introduced in the late 1950s. According to Zarina Rahman Khan of the University of Dhaka, 'General Ayub Khan devised a decentralization policy for rural development under the banner of the Basic Democracies System, which offered a four-tier government reflecting a mix of deconcentration and devolution.' Rahman and Khan (1997:8) also added that the system of Basic Democracies was designed as a blend of democratic and bureaucratic values. It was, in other words, between 'devolution' and 'deconcentration' having nothing in common with the 'principles' and 'characteristics' of a democratic decentralized system. Though explicitly propagated as a program of decentralization, the system actually helped the military regime of General Ayub Khan in extending the stronghold of bureaucracy to the local level.

### ***Bangladesh period***

As a result of the long history of struggle for freedom and democracy, Bangladesh saw the importance of developing a sound democracy and increasing people's participation in the political process, decision-making, and development of the country after it emerged as an independent nation. Though slow in progress, reforms to strengthen local governance and expand democracy were made. Decentralization was viewed as a strategy that would allow democratic governance and encourage people's participation. It was also a response to the challenge of reducing poverty. 'The Constitution...gives enough opportunity to the lawmakers to develop viable self-governing local government institutions. However, as far as the implementation of the objective is concerned, the achievement is far from satisfactory.' (Mujeri and Singh)

The following are the various decentralization strategies and developments in the local government system after 1971:

***The Mujib Period (1972 to 1975)***

After the independence in 1971, the Awami League government, headed by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, brought the following reforms in the local government.

- 1) The system of basic democracies was abolished and government bodies carried over from the days prior to independence were dissolved.
- 2) Public officials were authorized to form committees at different tiers of government to fill the void created by the termination of some government bodies. The committees created would, for the interim, perform local functions.
- 3) District governorship was introduced in 1973. This provided for a three-tier system with a directly elected Union Parishad (Council), a Thana development committee under the control of the sub-divisional officer, and Zila Parishad under the control of deputy commissioner. (An almost replica of Ayub Khan's Basic Democracies - Ed.)
- 4) Union councils were elected but were not able to function effectively due to the coup in 1975.<sup>28</sup>

Mujib paid more attention to national than local issues. Although the Union Parishad (Council) was designed as a decentralized body of local government and the election in 1973 was to ensure grassroots democracy, the Awami League did not hold elections to the higher level councils, nor did it take any measures to devolve authority to any of them. There was a substantial lack of political and behavioral support among Awami League leaders for democratizing the system of governance. It was manifested when Sheikh Mujib abolished the parliamentary system altogether, introduced presidential rule under one-party rule known as BAKSAL, along with the 'governor system' introduced at the district level ( Rahman and Khan, 1997:8).

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<sup>28</sup> Pranab K Panday (2005)

### ***Under General Ziaur Rahman (1975 to 1981)***

In August 1975, Major General Ziaur Rahman seized all power as the Chief Martial Law Administrator. Nevertheless, Gen. Zia played a critical role in reviving the local government institutions in the country. The Local Government Ordinance 1976, promulgated by Zia, created Gram Sbaha (village councils) in an attempt to decentralize government down to the village level. In 1980, two years after General Zia became the elected president, all the Gram Sbahas were transformed into Gram Sarkar (village government) in each of the 68000 villages of Bangladesh. The Gram Sarkar was a body consisting of gram pradhan (village executive) and 11 elected members representing different classes of the village. The Gram Sarkar was a mini-government which could undertake planning and promotional programs (Chowdhury, 1987:20)<sup>29</sup>.

The reforms initiated by Gen. Zia were different from the earlier policies of decentralization. The bureaucracy was given a free hand to control the local councils once again. These bodies of local government remained as the deconcentrated form of decentralization. The only exceptions were the Union Parishads and Gram Sarkars. The Gram Sarkar had many characteristics common to those of Mawhood model of decentralization. Although for the first time in Bangladesh, the Gram Sarkar provided for an equality of representation to various functional interests, many argue that implicit objectives of the reform package of decentralization during Zia's period was to gain direct political support for the military regime in its process of civilianization (Hossain, 1989).

### ***Lieutenant General Ershad (1982 to 1990)***

After Gen. Zia was assassinated by a military coup d'etat in 1981, the Gram Sarkar was abolished by the new military regime of Ershad, which seized power in March 1982. In his first year of office, Ershad initiated the reform measures to decentralize the administration through the abolition of former subdivisions and upgraded the

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<sup>29</sup> Z. R. Khan, 'Decentralized Governance: Trials and Triumphs', Raunaq Jahan (ed.), Bangladesh: Promise and Performance, (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 2000b)



Thanas into Upazillas (sub-district). In hundreds of public meetings in the beginning of reform, Ershad and his associates of the Upazilla model pronounced that improving access and promoting participation were the primary goals of their reform. In contravention of this pledge to the nation, the military regime exploited every possible opportunity to weaken the democratic forces in the country and strengthened the autocratic bureaucracy. The political history of Bangladesh was repeated in the 1980s as the Upazilla was politicized in favor of the ruling military regime the way Pakistan's dictator Ayub Khan used the system of Basic Democracies in the 1960s, and the Gram Sarkar of the 1970s (Rahman and Khan, 1997:9)<sup>30</sup>.

#### ***Under Khaleda Zia's Five-Year Rule (1991 to 1996)***

It took Prime Minister Khaleda Zia only a few months after she came to power to abolish the Upazilla Parishad and reinstate the previous bureaucracy-dominated thana administration by promulgating the Local Government (Upazilla Parishad and Upazilla Administration Reorganization) (Repeal) Ordinance, 1991. In June 1992, a cabinet division resolution was passed to replace the Upazilla Parishad with Thana administration (GOB, 1992). Khaleda Zia's decision to depoliticize the Upazilla system was also due to the fact that her party Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) had only a handful of chairmen in the Upazilla of the country. Since BNP had not taken part in the first Upazilla election in 1985. In the second Upazilla election in 1990, BNP was placed at the 5th position getting only 24 Upazilla (out of 460) under its control (Mukta Barta, 31 March 1990). However, the abolition of the Upazilla is seen as a victory of the bureaucrats whose plan during this crucial period was to exploit the changed political situation to their own benefit. Ironically, the democratically elected government of Khaleda Zia indulged in anti-democratic practices with regard to decentralization<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> Pranab K Panday (2005)

<sup>31</sup> Cabinet Resolution on Renaming the Upazilla (in Bengali), (Dhaka: Cabinet Division, Government of Bangladesh (GOB), 1992)

Begum Khaleda Zia, who failed to provide any new form of local government during her five-year rule, is criticized for the persistent crisis in governance. The local government institutions have become weak. The NGO's effective intervention rendered the local government institutions purposeless since they failed to perform. The rural people apparently getting more resources from the foreign funded NGOs seemed to have distanced themselves from local government (Rahman and Khan, 1997:9)<sup>32</sup>.

### ***Sheikh Hasina's Period (1996 to 2001)***

When the Bangladesh Awami League came to power in 1996, it constituted a Local Government Commission and came up with a Report on Local Government Institutions Strengthening in May 1997. The Commission had recommended a four-tier local government structure including Gram/Palli (Village) Parishad, Union Parishad, Thana/Upazilla Parishad and Zila (District) Parishad. While local government bodies' exercised some degree of local autonomy, the central Government or a higher body in the administrative hierarchy of the state closely supervised them. Westergaard (2000) observes that, 'like the previous local government systems, the local bodies are controlled by the central government in all aspects.' Mujeri and Singh, in their study on the impact of decentralization in Bangladesh, describe the patron-client relationship existing between the national and local governments. According to them, 'the territorial jurisdiction, functions and revenue/expenditure patterns of different tiers of the local government are determined by central legislation and their activities are guided and supervised largely by departments/agencies of the central government.'<sup>33</sup>

### ***Begum Khaleda Zia's Period (2001-2006)***

The immediate past government, after assuming power in 2001, initiated a change in

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<sup>32</sup> Kirsten Westergaard, (2000) '*Decentralization in Bangladesh: Local Government and NGOs*', (Retrieved from <http://www.yale.edu/ycias/events/decentralization/>).

<sup>33</sup> Pranab K Panday (2005)

the local government structure. Gram Sarkar in place of Gram Parishad had been introduced. There had been recent legislation creating Gram Sarkars. Those bodies were created at the Ward levels. Each Gram Sarkar represented one or two villages comprising of about 3,000 people at an average. The UP member elected from the ward was the Chairman of the GS, which would have other members -- both males and female -- elected in a general meeting of the voters of the Ward under the supervision of a 'prescribed/ directing authority'. There were defined functions of the Gram Sarkar (GS) and other functions may be assigned to it as may be specified by the government from time to time. Gram Sarkars would have the right to constitute issue-based standing committees as and when required, and determine the membership of such committees. The way the Gram Sarkar Act had been passed and its members selected in each ward had been criticized by every section of society. It was obvious that GS had been introduced for strengthening the power base of ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party in the rural areas.

The local government bodies had never been in independent Bangladesh, 'self-governing' bodies in the true sense of the term. They could simply be labeled as an extension of the central government with guided and limited local participation. Consequently, local governments had always been institutionally and financially weak, poorly managed and lacked social and political credibility. The importance and significance of earlier reform efforts with regard to local government lie in their contribution towards some incremental strengthening of the system. However, there was a consensus that the following issues should be taken into consideration in any future attempt to reform the local government institutions and reorganize them to make them truly decentralized, institutionally effective, financially viable, participatory, gender sensitive, transparent and accountable.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> H. R. T. Rahman and M.M. Khan, 'Decentralization and Access: Theoretical Framework and Bangladesh Experience', *Asian Profile*, vol. 25, no. 6, December 1997.

### **5.1. c Local Government and Decentralization**

If we recognize the concept and definition of government and governance as indicated above, then we can discuss their implications at local level, trying to define the major forms of public sector decentralization arrangements. But first of all what do we intend for local government?<sup>35</sup>

In modern nations, local governments usually have fewer powers than national governments do. They usually have some power to raise taxes, though these may be limited by central legislation. In some countries local government is partly or wholly funded by subventions from central government taxation. The question of Municipal Autonomy - which powers the local government has, or should have, and why - is a key question of public administration and governance.

The institutions of local government vary greatly between countries, and even where similar arrangements exist, the terminology often varies. Common names for local government entities include state, province, region, department, county, district, city, township, town, borough, parish and village. However, all these names are often used informally in countries where they do not describe a legal local government entity.

Local Government can therefore be defined as follows:

Linked to the concept of local governance is of course the idea of decentralization. Conceptually, decentralization relates to the role of, and the relationship between, central and sub-national institutions, whether they are public, private or civic. The concept and definition of decentralization has evolved over time and has acquired several shades of meaning. The "Classic" Decentralization, as Mawhood and Davey described it, has rarely taken place. Instead, regimes in developing countries modified the term to fit different types of administrative setups.

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<sup>35</sup> Kirsten Westergaard, (2000)

Classic Decentralization is based on the following five principles:

1. Local authorities should be institutionally separated from central government and assume responsibility for a significant range of local services (primary education, clinics and preventive health services, community development and secondary roads being the most common).
2. These authorities should have their own funds and budgets and should raise a substantial part of their revenue through local direct taxation.
3. Local authorities should employ their own staff, although in the initial stage the regular civil service staff could be employed temporarily.
4. Councils, predominantly composed of popularly elected representatives, would govern the authorities internally.
5. Government administrators would withdraw from an executive to an advisory and supervisory role in relation to local government (Mawhood and Davey, 1980)<sup>36</sup>

**Definition of Decentralization:**

A gradual process expected to enhance the opportunities for participation by placing more power and resources at a closer, more familiar, more easily influenced level of government. In an environment with poor traditions of citizens' participation, therefore, decentralization is perceived to be an important first step in creating opportunities for citizen-state interaction.

Organizationally, decentralization, or decentralized governance, refers to the restructuring of authority so that there is a system of co-responsibility between institutions of governance at central, regional and local levels according to the "principle of subsidiarity", thus increasing the overall quality and effectiveness of the governance system, while increasing the authority and capacities of sub-national levels.

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<sup>36</sup> Philip Mawhood (ed.), 1983, *'Decentralization: The Concept and the Practice': Local Government in the Third World: the Experience of Decentralization in Tropical Africa*, (New York: Chichester)

Broadly speaking, according to the United Nations, decentralization can take the form of devolution, deconcentration, delegation, or outsourcing, defined as follows:

**Devolution:** is the closest to 'classic' decentralization. It implies that responsibilities and resources are transferred to local governments with a high degree of autonomy to decide how to use the resources.

**Deconcentration:** refers to institutional changes that shift the authority to make certain types of decisions from the center to dispersed locations. In this arrangement, staff and resources are transferred from headquarters to lower units of administration, under officers who could take operational decisions without reference to the headquarters.

**Delegation:** refers to transfer of authority to public corporations or semi-autonomous bodies or public enterprises. The central government sets the objective of the delegated agencies and transfers resources to them on the basis of approved plans and budgets. However, these agencies have a fair degree of autonomy in performing their functions and may even have autonomous revenue sources.

**Outsourcing/transfer-partnership:** a relatively new phenomenon refers to transfer of responsibility for public functions to private enterprises or voluntary organizations. Of the four forms of decentralization described above, deconcentration represents the least amount of transfer of power to local people<sup>37</sup>.

**5.1.d Local Government Funds and Finances** Local bodies in Bangladesh are in constant shortage of funds. The sources of their income are generally taxes, rates, fees and charges levied by the local body as well as rents and profits accruing from properties of the local body and sums received through its services. Contribution from individuals and institutions, government grants, profits from investments, receipts accruing from the trusts placed with the local bodies, loans raised by the local body and proceeds from such services are another source of income

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<sup>37</sup> Philip Mawhood (ed.), 1983,

governments may direct to be placed at the disposal of a local body. Holding taxes is the most important source of own income of local bodies. Loans and voluntary contributions are rare. Non-tax revenues are of two kinds: fees and tolls and rents and profits on properties of the local bodies. Urban local bodies raise between 55-75 per cent of the revenue from their own source while a significant proportion comes from government grants. Nowadays, foreign or international project funds also contribute a significant share of a corporation's budget.

### Sources of Municipal Revenue

Source	Sub-components
Property tax	Property tax on annual value of buildings and lands
	Conservancy rate
	Water rate (except Dhaka and Chittagong)
	Lighting rate
Shared property tax	Surcharge on the transfer of property ownership
Other taxes	Tax on professions, trade and callings
	Tax on vehicles and animals
	Tax on cinema, dramatic and entertainment
	Tolls and minor taxes (on advertisement, marriage etc.)
Non-tax source	Fees and fines
	Rents and profits from property
	Other sources
Loans	Internal, from banks, etc.
	International agencies
Government grants	Salary compensation grants
	Special compensation grants
	Normal development grants
	Extra ordinary grants

Source: Chowdhury, 1997

The tax management of Municipalities is weak, resulting in poor collection (Chowdhury 1997). There are many reasons for this, including a poor assessment

system, lack of efficient manpower and legal issues (e.g. more than 50 per cent of property assessments are appealed with proceedings taking time and judgment generally going against the Municipalities). Corruption is another major reason for low collection of taxes. Municipal expenditures are mainly geared towards physical infrastructure (equaling 30 to 40 per cent of total expenditures). Public Health in turn accounts for 15 to 20 per cent and administrative expenditure average between 7 to 16 per cent. Expenditures on social sectors are negligible (Chowdhury 1997 p. 42).

#### **5.1.e Human Resources Systems in Local Government**

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

In the proposed new system, Union Parishad would have a full time Secretary, 9 Mahalladars (Neighborhood Workers) and 1 (Caretaker). There would also be a Tax Collector and an Assistant Secretary, who would also work as an accountant. The Chairman of the Union Parishad is the Chief Executive. In the proposed new system, the Thana/Upazila Parishad would represent officers and employees of all central government administrative and development agencies. As long as they work at the Thana/Upazila Parishad, they serve as seconded officers and employees, (except for the police and judiciary). The Parishad's own staff includes a secretary, an assistant secretary, one accountant, a security guard and one sweeper. The Chairman has a three member personal staff. All officials are answerable to the



Chairman. In case of the Zila Parishad; the secretary is a deputed (seconded) official from the government. All other officials such as the administrative officer and others are employees of the Zila Parishad. In respect of Hill Tract District Local Government Parishads, the Deputy Commissioners work as ex-officio Secretaries of the Parishad.

Pourashavas and City Corporation have their own personnel set-up determined by the government. Each of the four City Corporations and a number of Pourashavas has a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) seconded from the central civil service. Under such situation all other officials, whether directly recruited by the Pourashavas or City Corporation, or coming on secondment, are directly under the CEO. He assists the Chairman or Mayor in the affairs of the Pourashava or Corporation. He is the custodian of all Pourashava/Corporation records and may also exercise magisterial powers. In the case of Dhaka City Corporation, exception is seen in the fact that all senior level appointments in its services are made by the Mayor. He is also the supreme chief executive of the Corporation making all major negotiations and signing and contracts. For other City Corporations the CEO makes appointments.

In the case of Pourashavas and Corporations, these are guided by their respective service rules. The Special Affairs Division under the Prime Minister's Secretariat is responsible for employees of Hill District Local Government Parishads. The Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives is the central personnel agency for the management of Local Council Service and Pourashava and Corporation service.

In the rural and urban local government system, a few of the officials and employees are recruited through election, while others are appointed. The employees in most cases outnumber the elected executives. The local governments recruit the general staff through a set procedure. Government does not earmark any officers exclusively for the local government bodies. Government, however, places some civil servants and technical personnel (e.g. engineers, doctors etc.) with the local government bodies on 'deputation' (secondment) for a specified period (normally 3 years) from its central pool. Such employees or officials are officially barred from belonging to any

political party or support any political ideology. There is as of yet no such cadre as the Local Government Service Cadre. Any local government body may appoint temporary class IV (lowest level) employees on a work charge basis to meet urgent requirements.

#### ***5.1.f Training and Workshops***

Training of local government officials and employees is generally limited to the officers and conducted at the National Institute of Local Government (NILG), located at Dhaka. Elected representatives as well as appointed and nominated personnel are provided training at NILG. Some are even sent abroad for short term training. Lower level technical or general staff are rarely given any training or chance to improve their skills.

#### ***5.1.g Service Conditions***

The salary scale and service conditions are more or less similar to other government services in the country. In addition to basic salary certain fringe benefits such as house rent allowance, medical allowance, contributory provident fund, gratuity benefits, festival bonus etc. are enjoyed by local body employees. Normal retirement age is 57. Class III and Class IV in large corporations and Municipalities also form unions to uphold their rights and privileges.

#### ***5.1.h Law and Discipline***

The Bangladesh Local Council Servants Rules (1968) guide the disciplinary conduct of employees of local bodies. These rules contain grounds for penalization, which include inefficiency, misconduct, corruption and subversion. Enforcement of disciplinary action often becomes difficult due to union pressure.

### **5.1.i Relationship between Central and Local Governments**

In the existing system, local government bodies are subject to strong control from higher level authorities, specially the central government. In case of Union Parishad, there used to be a dual control and supervision exercised by both Upazila Parishad and the central government in various matters. In the recently approved system however, control would only come from the central government, e.g. in auditing income expenditures. In case of Upazila/Thana Parishad and Zila Parishad, similar control will prevail from central government. Upazila/Thana and Zila Parishads would also be subject to internal auditing. The present Awami League government (in power on a five-year term since June 1996) has taken steps to give importance to the empowerment of local governments, beginning at the Gram (Village) Parishad to the Zila (District) Parishad. To this end, a Commission was set up and a report has been prepared. The Gram Parishad Bill and the Union Parishad Bill have already been approved.

Upazila/Thana Parishad and Zila Parishad Bills are yet to be placed in the Parliament. But it already appears that the Cabinet is not enthusiastic about the recommendation to transfer or devolve some 26 Departments of the central government at the Upazila and Zila levels. However, the debate is ongoing and a positive outcome is expected.

The autonomy of urban local governments is yet to be discussed. This issue was not included within the Terms of Reference of the Commission. At present, local governments are subject to control in various matters, such as:

The National Government exacts legislation on local bodies and formulates detailed rules relating to conduct of election, business, powers and duties of chairmen, assessment of taxes, preparation of budget, making of contracts, appointment and service matters of local government employment, accounts and audit and many other important areas. Even when local governments make regulations, these are to be approved by the central government;

- The Central Government has the final authority in the determination of the size and boundaries of the local body's territory;
- The Central Government has the power to decide on the structure and composition of the local bodies;
- The Central Government substantially controls the personnel system of local bodies, particularly the appointment of the Chief Executive Officer in City Corporations and Pourashavas as well as other officials;
- The Central Government controls the functional jurisdiction of local bodies. Besides, designated functions (as in ordinance), the government can assign any other function to a local body;
- Inter-institutional disputes within local body areas are to be settled by the Central Government;

In the large cities there are multiple agencies offering services to the citizens. Often there is serious lack of coordination amongst them and between the local government body and service delivering central government agencies. This recently assumed a critical situation in Dhaka, as a reaction to which the Mayor of Dhaka proposed a Metropolitan Government for Dhaka. In response, the Central Government formed a Coordination Committee in October 1996 headed by the Minister for Local Government, rather than by the Mayor. Central Government control over even the largest urban local government was thus increased rather than relaxed;

In the field of finance, government supervision and control is wide and strict. In addition to financial control in general, the central government can wield power by reducing or enhancing Grant-in-aid to local bodies, even to city authorities like Dhaka;

The Central Government asserts control and supervision over general administration of local bodies, including of large City Corporations. The central government may order an inquiry into the affairs of a local body generally or into any particular affair either on its own initiative or on an application made by any person to the

government; and the Central Government has the power to dissolve a local body on charge of gross inefficiency, abuse of power, or inability to meet financial obligations. However, instances of such action in Bangladesh have been rare in recent time.

The present system of local government in Bangladesh is under heavy control of the central government. It is hoped however, that the ongoing process of empowering local governments by the present regime will be able to bring about significant change in the structure. Even if it is a partial success, this would be some gain in favor of local body autonomy.

## **5.2 The Functions of Local Government**

Traditionally, Local Government (LG) in Bangladesh has limited jurisdiction over specific (and limited) developmental functions. The area of regulatory administration has always been kept aside from the purview of the role and functions of these bodies (Hussain and Sarker et al, 1994). Most of the developmental functions for which LG units are made responsible under the legal framework, such as: family welfare, education, public health, social welfare, etc., are administered by different agencies of the national government. For example, the UP has no authority other than reviewing and reporting to the Upazilla Nirbahi Officer (UNO), a national government functionary. UPs virtually have no scope to get involved in the implementation of development projects initiated by these agencies at the local level<sup>38</sup>. The exact relationship between the field level units of various government departments and the LG is vaguely defined.

Local level infrastructure development is one of the important functions of the LG. These projects are generally implemented through food aid and grants received from the national government. Food aids are channeled through different agencies of the national government. In this area, for example the role of UP as a Local Government

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<sup>38</sup> Md Habibur Rahman and Md Mohabbat Khan (1997) *Decentralization and Access: Theoretical Framework and Bangladesh Experience*, Asian Profile, Vol. 25, No. 6, pp. 513-526.

(LG) unit is again limited to the selection of the possible projects only. Such selected projects are finally approved by the UNO in consultation with the Upazilla Engineer (UE) and the Project Implementation Officer (PIO). The above type of scenario clearly suggests that the role and functions of LG units are restricted in the area of development administration. In addition the other functions of the LG units are again subjected to bureaucratic supervision and guidance (Khan, 2000).

### **5.2.a Local Government Functions**

Rural and urban local government bodies are entrusted with a large number of functions and responsibilities relating to civic and community welfare as well as local development. The functions of the Gram Parishads, Union Parishad, Thana/Upazila Parishads and Zila (district) Parishads are elaborate and include amongst other optional functions. The present government in its recent Local Government Institutional Strengthening Report, written by the Local Government Commission in May 1997, has laid down the responsibilities of the various rural and rural/regional local bodies. The Gram Parishad and Union Parishad Bills have been approved on 4 September 1997, while Thana Upazila/Zila Parishad Bills will be placed in Parliament soon<sup>39</sup>.

### **5.2.b Rural local government functions**

The Gram Parishad functions are as follows:

1. Conducting socio-economic surveys of households, every five years to be used for development plan preparation;
2. Maintain vital statistics like registration of births-deaths, marriage etc.;
3. Make plans for natural resource management and development;
4. Supervise management of primary educational institutes; motivate parents to send their children to school and create better awareness for adult and female literacy;
5. Create awareness for better primary health care;

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<sup>39</sup> Md Habibur Rahman and Md Mohabbat Khan (1997)

6. Maintain law and order and control terrorism, violence against women etc.;
7. Ensure participation in local and central government development planning;
8. Encourage co-operatives and NGOs;
9. Initiate participatory development of local roads, bridges, culverts etc.;
10. Support various development activities related to agriculture;
11. Encourage and initiate tree plantation program;
12. Assist various organizations in their development efforts.

Union Parishads have also been assigned functions quite similar to Gram Parishad functions. In addition, Union Parishads have been assigned with the adoption and implementation of poverty alleviation programmes directly by themselves and through NGOs and co-operatives. The Thana/Upazila Parishads are entrusted with functions similar to Gram Parishads and Union Parishads. In addition, they have the responsibility of making integrated 5-year development plans for the Thana/Upazila on the basis of plans submitted by the Union Parishads. Zila (District) Parishads are responsible for monitoring activities of the Thana/Upazila Parishads, implementing district level economic, social and cultural development programs and preparing project proposals for road, bridges and culverts.

### **5.2.c Urban local government functions**

Pourashavas (Municipalities) and City Corporations constitute the two types of urban local governments. The four largest cities of Bangladesh (Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi) are City Corporations. The functions of Pourashavas and City Corporations are basically similar with one important difference: the 1997 Pourashavas Ordinance categorized the functions of Pourashavas as compulsory and optional. This categorization does not apply to City Corporations. However, for both Pourashavas and City Corporations functions continue to be seen as compulsory and optional.

#### **Mandatory functions**

1. Construction and maintenance of roads, bridges and culverts;
2. Removal, collection and disposal of garbage;
3. Provision and maintenance of street lighting;

4. Maintenance of public streets, provision of street watering;
5. Provision and regulation of water supply;
6. Establishment and maintenance of public markets;
7. Plantation of trees on road sides;
8. Regulation of unsanitary buildings and prevention of infectious diseases and epidemics;
9. Registration of births, deaths and marriages;
10. Provision and maintenance of slaughter houses;
11. Provision and maintenance of drainage;
12. Control over the construction and reconstruction of buildings;
13. Provision and maintenance of graveyards and burning places;
14. Control over traffic and public vehicles.
15. Optional functions
16. Checking adulteration of food products;
17. Control over private markets;
18. Maintenance of educational institutions and provision of stipends to meritorious students;
19. Provision of flood and famine relief;
20. Provision and maintenance of parks and gardens;
21. Establishment of welfare homes, orphanages, prevention of begging and organization of voluntary social welfare services;
22. Establishment of public dispensaries, provision of public urinals and latrines;
23. Establishment of veterinary hospitals, registration of cattle sale and improvement of livestock;
24. Celebration of national holidays;
25. Reception of distinguished visitors;
26. Establishment of public libraries and reading rooms;
27. Promotion of community development schemes; and
28. Naming of roads and numbering of houses.
29. The Pourashavas/City Corporations are empowered to perform a variety of socio-economic and civic functions, as described above. In practice, however, they cannot perform all these functions owing to the acute paucity of funds caused by poor and irregular collection of taxes, non-realization of taxes from



government, semi-government and autonomous organizations for years together and insufficient government grants. The functions actually performed are:

30. Construction and maintenance of roads, bridges and culverts;
31. Provision, maintenance and regulation of graveyards and burning places;
32. Registrations of birth, deaths and marriages;
33. Maintenance of slaughter houses;
34. Control over private markets;
35. Provision and maintenance of parks and gardens;
36. Naming of roads and numbering of houses;
37. Provision of nominal stipends to primary education institutions; and
38. Slum improvement.

Apart from the formal functions described above, the Pourashavas/City Corporations perform some additional functions such as issuance of certificates and settlement of petty disputes (over ownership/control of land, houses and markets) through discussions with concerned parties and with the help of commissioners and other functionaries. Some of the more important certificates are character, nationality, birth, death and succession certificates. Character and nationality certificates are required for job applications and admission to educational institutions. Birth, death and succession certificates are issued to the legal heirs on request and are also necessary for mutation of land ownership<sup>40</sup>.

During the past decade, 20 Pourashavas and the four City Corporations have also been carrying out an additional function (on project basis) of slum improvement. The funding for this came from UNICEF. Dhaka City Corporation has even made the slum improvement an integral part of activities with its own funding and tries to rehabilitate slum dwellers and street hawkers. Besides, Dhaka recently has started to maintain a City Museum and has begun construction of a large theater for dramatic performance. Some of the Municipalities maintain public libraries.

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<sup>40</sup> Md Habibur Rahman and Md Mohabbat Khan (1997)

The Pourashava (Municipal) Parishads and City Corporation Parishads are elected directly by the people. Each Pura Parishad is supposed to have a Chairman and a Commissioner for each Ward, while a City Corporation is supposed to have a Mayor as head of the Parishad (Council) and a Commissioner for each Ward. The number of Wards depends on the size of the city. Although women can contest for direct election, there are also reserved seats for them. These are filled through election of the Chairman/Mayor and Commissioners only. The tenure of an elected urban local government is five years. The latest City Corporation elections were held in March 1994.

### **5.3 The Problems and Prospects of Local Government**

But the system of local self—government particularly in rural Bangladesh has yet to be built on a sound footing because of the following perennial problems:

1. The local government (LG) structure is primarily a colonial legacy. Introduced first by the British, it passed through the Pakistan period to independent Bangladesh. During the British and Pakistan period the experience of LG was within a federal framework whereas during independent Bangladesh it is operating under unitary system.
2. Though the structure of national political government has undergone transformation from despotic to democratic, the local government in Bangladesh has not undergone any basic revision or transformation to suit unitary governmental structure. The legal constitutional basis of local government has remained virtually unaffected.
3. The local government suffers from considerable inconsistency in respect of chartered functions, seemingly varied and multifarious, prescribed in the statutes. But in reality the functions have been restricted to few and those that are dictated by, the central government.
4. The local government bodies do not have enough own sources of income, hence they lack in local resource mobilization and become wholly dependent on central government grants.

5. Repeated disruptions in the political process halted national constitutional growth thereby disturbing constitutional base of local government.
6. Again, occasional switchover to non-political military rule increased political dependence of central government upon the local governments for legitimacy and conversely tied the local government with central government in financial dependency.

### ***Other Problems***

Local government is part of overall governance. Local government institutions, being nearer to people, can involve them in various ways:

- (a) planning and implementation of projects
- (b) supervision of educational institutions, hospitals and other government financed units
- (c) mobilization of support for new initiatives like campaign against dowry, child labor etc.
- (d) enforcement of laws regarding gender discrimination, violence against women, environment protection
- (e) mobilization of resources in the form of taxes, fees, tolls etc. Popular participation also assumes importance because of its potential for holding the local government institution accountable to the community.

On the other hand, local government institutions can enforce accountability of the central/national government authorities. The more aware, vigilant and active the community becomes through its participation in local government bodies, the greater is the pressure on both local government institutions and the government authorities to become transparent and responsive (Z. R. Khan: 1999).

The potential of local government institutions can be realized more effectively where there is decentralization and devolution of power. Accountability, transparency, participation, empowerment, equity and all other attributes of good governance can become a part of the daily work of both the government and local bodies when decentralization and devolution take place. Without decentralization and devolution,

local government bodies remain paper organizations without any effective role. It is no exaggeration to say that it is in a decentralized local government system that most of the attributes of good governance have a chance to survive and prosper. Strengthening of local government institutions can, therefore, be seen as a positive trend towards good governance.

All successive governments in Bangladesh felt the need to have viable local government for ensuring effective governance. As a result, we have seen 'decentralization' as an important policy agenda of all governments. The repetitive process of local government reform has been handed down to Bangladesh from Pakistan as a post-colonial extension. However, the necessity to reform the existing structure of local government by various successive governments in Bangladesh indicates their failure to create effective institutions for enhancing local democracy and delivering development programs.

#### **5.4 Local Government and Women Empowerment**

Mainstreaming women through gender specific policies is an acknowledged precondition for achieving meaningful development in any developing country like Bangladesh. Yet it is only recently that this issue has been recognized as such in the context of policy reforms in both administrative and local government arenas<sup>41</sup>. Recent local government reform in Bangladesh has led to creation of quota for women in grassroots democratic institutions. In the context of local government, women's concerns had surfaced intermittently and were highlighted in the government reform agenda as evident in the last Local Government Reform of 1997. As a consequential effect Local Government (Union Parishad) Amendment Act 1997 was promulgated. It provides 3 directly elected women members in the Union Parishad from 3 reserved seats. However, there are serious lacunas in gender balancing both in terms of governance policy and reform agenda. Union Parishad is the most popular democratic institution at the grassroots level. Therefore, the state

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<sup>41</sup> Md Mostafizur R Khan and Fardaus Ara (2006), *Women Participation and Empowerment in Local Government: Bangladesh Union Parishad Perspective*; Asian Affairs, Vol. 29, No. 1 :73

of women's participation at this level is crucial and deserves special attention to empower them as participation and empowerment are closely related.<sup>42</sup>

The overall development of a country depends upon the maximum utilization of her people, both men and women. In Bangladesh women comprise nearly half of the total population. But the status of women is much lower than that of men in every sphere of life. Women are identified with domestic life while politics is viewed as a male-dominated public activity that is typically masculine in nature. With the advancement of time, the fact has now been recognized that without ensuring women development, the national development cannot be achieved. Women's equal participation in political life plays a pivotal role in the general process of the advancement of women<sup>43</sup>. It is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved. (FWCW, 1995:1)

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

Women's role in decision-making is one of the most important questions for consideration in the movement for their empowerment. Keeping in mind, the importance of women's participation in decision-making, like the other government in the world, the government of Bangladesh has initiated efforts to widen the scope of women for participation in the development process. The Local Government (Union Parishad) Second Amendment Act 1997 of Bangladesh is a mile stone towards

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<sup>42</sup> Ali, A. M.M. Shawkat (1986), *Politics, Development and Upazilla*. National Institute of Local Government, Dhaka.

<sup>43</sup> Ahmed, Shafi and Nabi, Bela (2001), *One Decade of Bangladesh Under Women Leadership*. Alochana Magazine, 24 September 2004.

ensuring women's equal access and increased participation in political power structures. This amendment provided for direct elections to reserved seats for women in local level elections. As a strategy of affirmative action for providing the structural framework for women's participation in political decision-making and provided an opportunity to bring women to the center of local development and develop new grass-roots level leadership<sup>44</sup>.

Empowerment is a process, though the result of the process may also be termed empowerment. But more specifically, the outcome of empowerment should manifest itself as a redistribution of power between individuals, genders, groups, classes, castes, races, ethnic groups or nations. Empowerment means the transformation of structures of subordination, through radical changes in law, property rights, control over women's labor and bodies, and the institutions that reinforce and perpetuate male domination (Batliwala, 1993:5). Empowerment of women is now a global issue. Although this term is usually used for improving women's condition, in real sense it may be applied to any disadvantaged group of society for bringing them to the same level of advanced section<sup>45</sup>.

The Copenhagen Declaration of the World Summit on Social Development (WSSD) called for the recognition that empowering people, particularly women, to strengthen their own capacities is a main objective of development, and that empowerment requires the full participation of people in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of decisions determining the functioning and well-being of societies. The Report of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women called its Platform for Action 'an agenda for women's empowerment' meaning that 'the principle of shared power and responsibility should be established between women and men at home, in the workplace and in the wider national and international communities' (Baden, 1997:3). Vanessa Griffin (1987:117-18) identifies, some components to illustrate what the term empowerment indicates:

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<sup>44</sup> Md Mostafizur R Khan and Fardaus Ara (2006), *Ibid*;

<sup>45</sup> Bilquis Ara Alam, 'Women's Participation in the Local Government in Bangladesh', *The Journal of Local Government*, vol. 13, No-2, July -December, 1984.

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

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

Local government is basically an organized social entity with a feeling of oneness. By definition, local government means an intra-sovereign governmental unit within the sovereign state dealing mainly with local affairs, administered by local authorities and subordinate to the state government (Jahan, 1997:92). In political terms, it is concerned with the governance of a specific local area, constituting a political sub-division of a nation, state or other major political unit. In the performance of its functions, it acts as the agent of the state. In other words, the local government is an integral part of the political mechanism for governance in a country. Then, as body corporate with juristic person, it represents a legal concept (Muttalib and Khan, 1983:2).

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

Union Parishad is the lowest tier of administrative unit in Bangladesh. And Union Parishad is the second tier of rural local government from below. As per the statutes at present Bangladesh contains a four-tier local government structure. But in compliance to the constitutional provision an elected local government body exists

only at the union level. According to LG (UP) Ordinance, 1983, 'union' means 'a rural area' declared to be a union under section 3 (Declaration of union and alteration of limits thereof) [GOB, 1990:2-3]. It is entrusted with forty functions. The main functions include public welfare, maintenance of law and order, revenue collection, development and adjudication. Its source of income includes grants, taxes, rates, fees etc.<sup>46</sup>

#### **5.4.a Obstacles to Women's Participation in Union Parishad in Bangladesh**

The elected women member's participation in local government bodies remains generally insignificant, as they are not given any specific duties<sup>47</sup>. The absence of operational guidelines and terms of reference for female elected representatives, the limited capacity of the female elected representatives to operate in public institutions of this nature, they lack of awareness over their roles and responsibilities, the systematic discrimination and biases by male elected colleagues all these are seen as factors impeding women's meaningful participation in local government (ADB, 2001:14)<sup>48</sup>. Some of the major problems to women's participation in local government include the following:

1. Though the constitution guaranteed the equal rights for women, the reality is that they are not seen as equal, their roles are closely tied to their reproductive and household activities only. At the same time women are considered as unfit to perform political and community affairs. This is due to lack of clarity in the constitution on the role of women in local government. A common complaint regarding women's reserved seats is that the law does not specify what their roles and responsibilities are to be.

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<sup>46</sup> Ahmed, Shafi and Nabi, Bela (2001), *One Decade of Bangladesh Under Women Leadership*. Alochana Magazine, 2004

<sup>47</sup> Bilquis Ara Alam, (1984) Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ahmed, Tofail et. al. (2003), *Gender Dimensions in Local Government Institutions*, Dhaka: Nari Uddug Kendra.



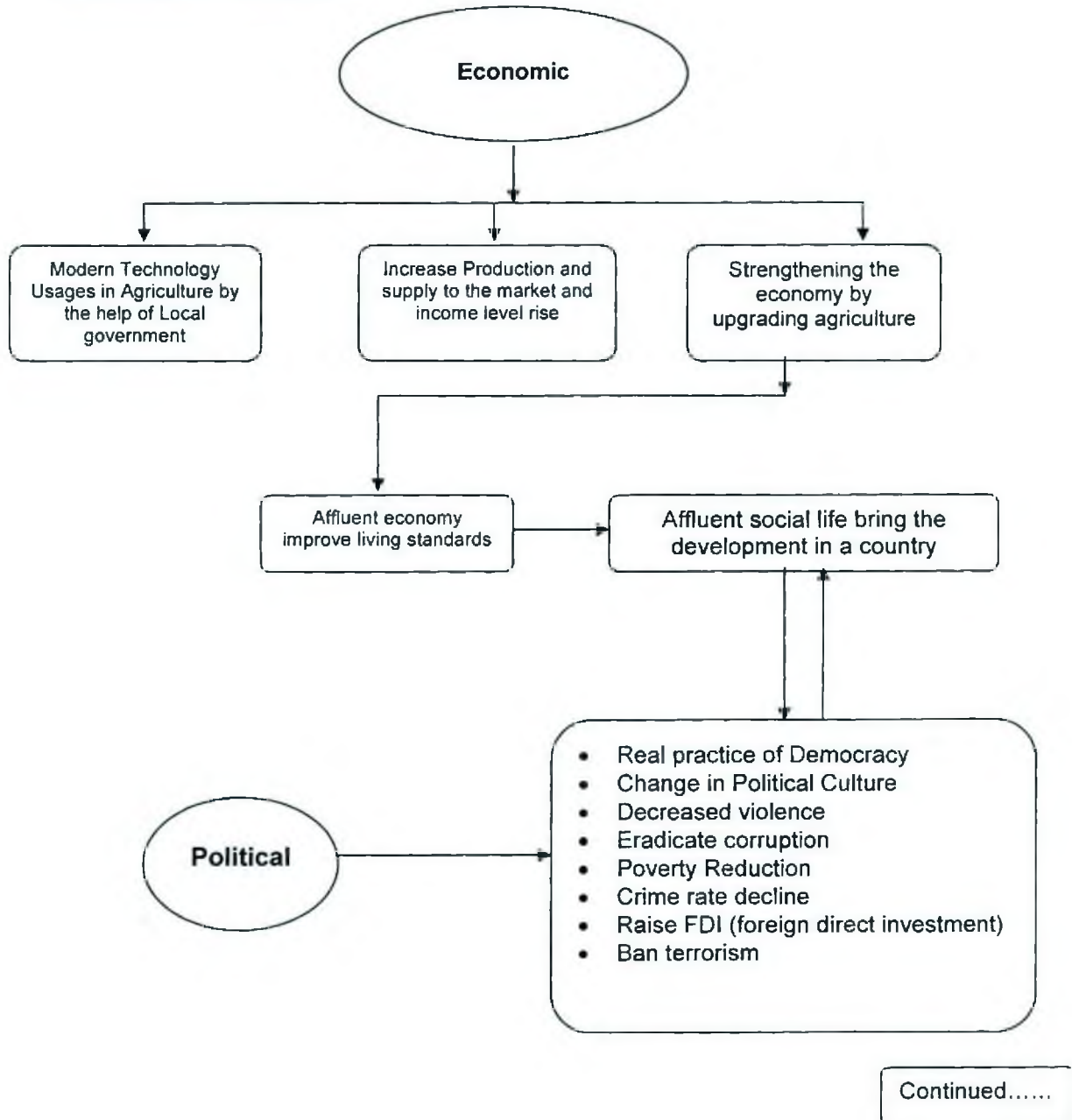
2. Patriarchy as a system, an ideology and practice impacts in different ways on the lives of women wherever they are. Patriarchal attitudes become so embedded that they are taken as natural. Even where there is supposed equality, these attitudes tend to prevail. Socio- cultural norms and religious misinterpretations are used frequently for challenging and reinterpreting women's rights and create insecurity for women. And although women have equal political rights to participate as voters and representatives, in reality they can be actively discouraged to do so. The patriarchal society enforces rules and laws in such way that affect the self-confidence of women, limit their access on resources and information and thus keep them in a lower status than men.<sup>49</sup>
3. Education is the strongest factor influencing women's control of their own fate. In Bangladesh women are furthermore handicapped because of lower educational achievements and the prevalence of social norms that severely restrict their freedom of movement in the public place. And so they do not show interest in participating in local government activities.
4. Work within styles and modes acceptable to men. As a result women cannot give attention to their issues. Sometime they are treated by their colleagues and society harshly. Many-if not all-male elected members harbor negative attitude towards elected women members. They believe women should not run for general seats. They degrade the value of the reserved seats. Lack of cooperation by men in the local government is a significant barrier to women's effectiveness in decision-making.
5. The introduction of direct election to the reserved seats is undoubtedly a breakthrough for women in Bangladesh. In no other way could these women have moved in to these institutions and participated in them. Still there is a gender imbalance in the ration of men and women in the Union Parishad. As a result the elected women members have very limited scope to influence decisions.

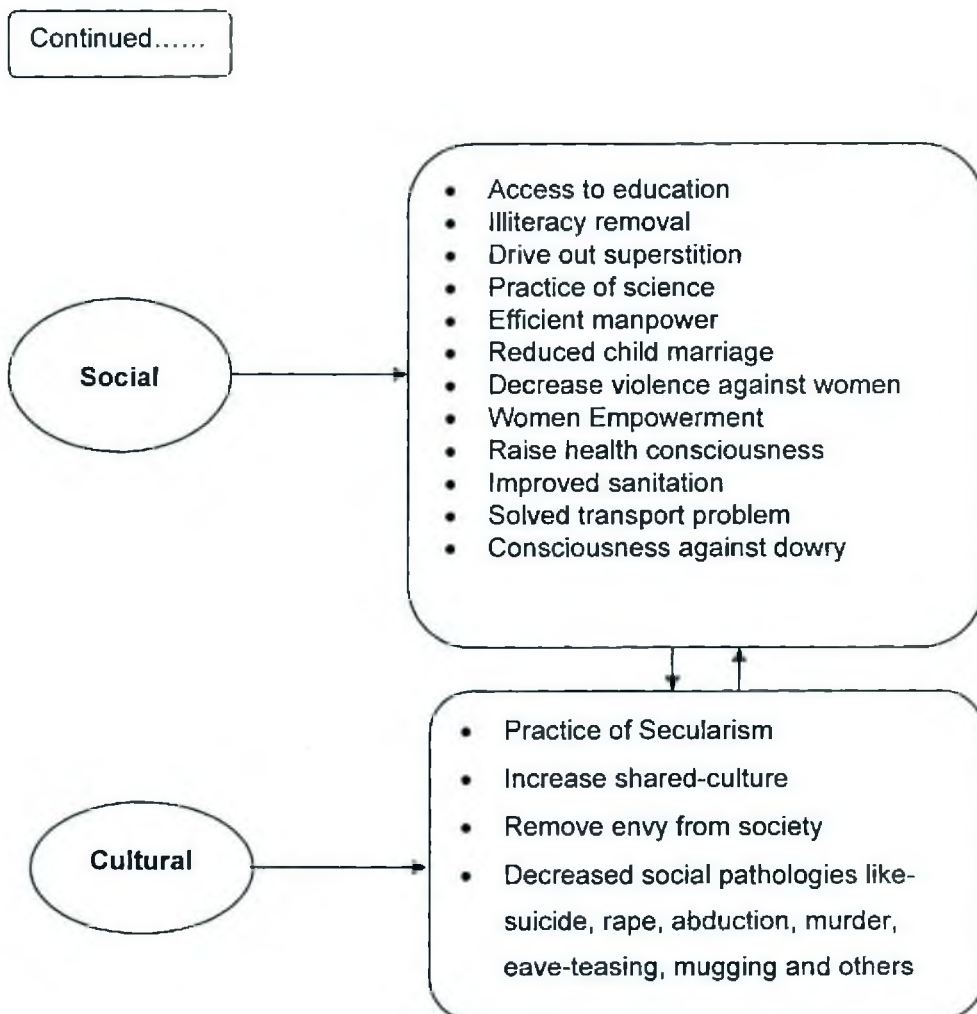
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<sup>49</sup> Md Mostafizur R Khan and Fardaus Ara (2006), *Ibid*;

### 5.5 The Role of Local Government In Social Change and Development

Any development in a country can't be sustained without involving the participation of local government. Root level development brings real change in society. In the following given model by which we can elucidate the local government participation in development activities-



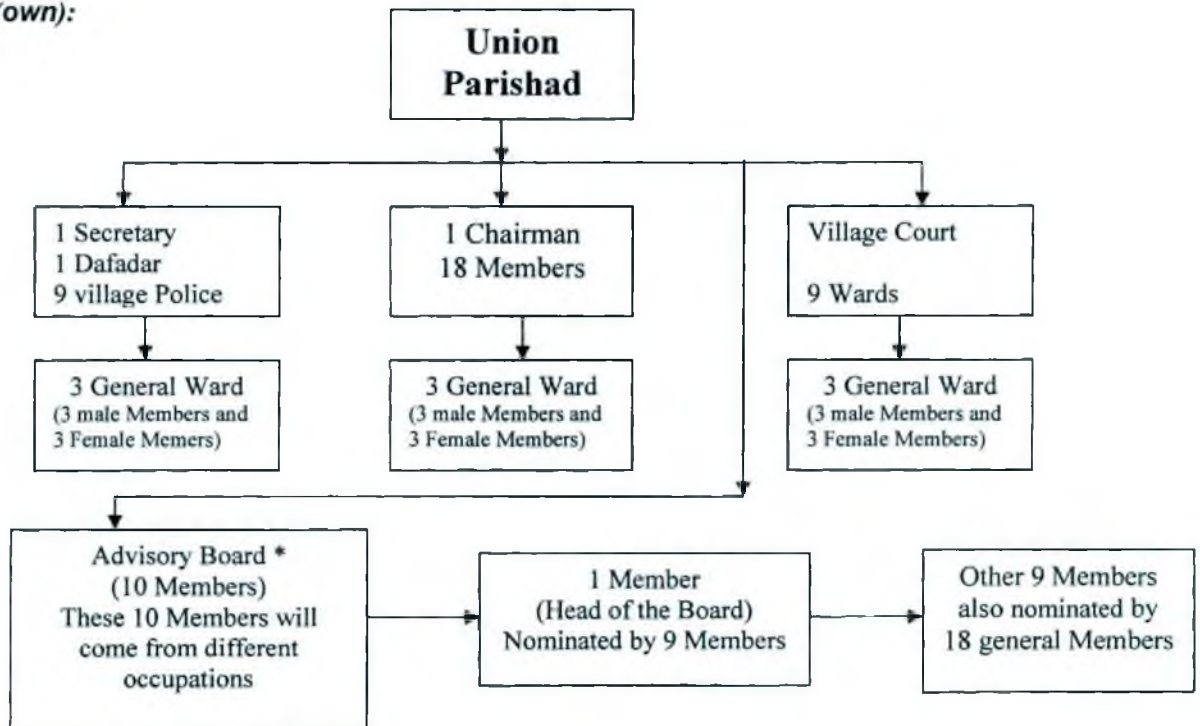


### 5.6 My Understandings and Recommendations on this Chapter

With the existing structure and functions of local government I would like to recommend some issues and guideline to improve it further. I think a regular monitoring and evaluation process is needed to strengthen the local government. This is why I would like to make a local administrative body which would be constituted by the 18 Members for nine wards whereas the male and female members would be the same number i.e. 9 male Members and 9 female members. This structure also strengthens the transparency and accountability level. For this recommended structure of UP administration there should have an Advisory Board

to monitor and evaluate the all activities of UP annually and make a report by them in order to inform all things to the higher authority (i.e. Upazilla, Zilla Parishad and Ministry of Local Government Affairs). This Advisory Board would be comprised by 10 members who will come from different occupations like- Teacher, Farmer, Businessman, Doctor, Engineer and any other occupations). Among these 10 members one member (who would be the head of the board) would be nominated by other 9 members and rest of the 9 members would be nominated by 18 (that 1 proposed) elected members.

The recommended structure of local self-government is delineating the bellow-  
(own):



\* This Advisory Board will monitor and evaluate the all activities of UP and make a report annually in order to inform all things to the higher authority.

## CHAPTER SIX

### LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT: PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

This chapter focuses on the processing of data, derived from the field study, through tabular and graphical presentation and on making an analysis of findings. The data have been collected from two types of respondents: the local authority and the people of the respective areas. Accordingly the age, occupation, education, income, expenditure, pattern of power relationships, types of basic facilities and services they get are different from local authority to the local people. This is why it is very difficult to present the data in a same table or graph, though the pattern of question is similar in some cases.

Besides, the number of respondents is not same in two sections; therefore, it is not possible to make the frequency table or percentage calculation or any other measurement. I have divided the size of sample into two parts because of knowing the underlying dynamics of recent problems embedded in local administration. Without having the experience of both groups' dynamics, the study would not be scientific and rational in terms of information and analysis. The findings that I got from the study have been presented in the following way;

#### **6. Findings taken from the respondents of the local administration:**

The following data on this study is regarding to the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents like occupation, gender, age marital status, education, income and expenditure.

#### **6.1 Occupation of the Respondents**

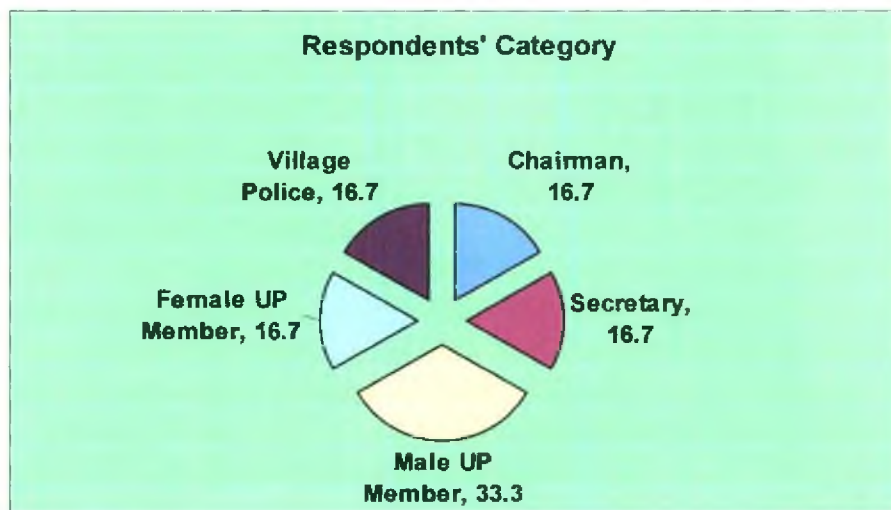
<b>Name of the Occupation</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Chairman	7	16.7
Secretary	7	16.7
Male UP Member	14	33.3
Female UP Member	7	16.7
Village Police	7	16.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June–November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.1:**

The above table enunciates that among the local administration 7 Chairmen are respondents (16.7 percent of all), 7 are secretaries (16.7 percent of all), 14 respondents are male UP Members (33.3 percent of all), 7 female Up Members (16.7 percent of all) and 7 village polices (16.7 percent of all). I have selected them as respondents because of showing the representativeness in my study. As my study areas are seven unions from seven Divisions, I studied the people from administration that was proportionately distributed.

**Graphical Presentation:**



**6.2 Age of the Respondents**

Age	Respondents	Percentage
35-39	14	33.3
40-44	21	50.0
45-49	7	16.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.2:**

This table exemplifies the age categories of the respondents where I found 33.3 percent respondents are in age group 35-39; 50 percent respondents belong in 40-44 age groups; and 16.7 percent respondents are in the age group of 45-49. Here

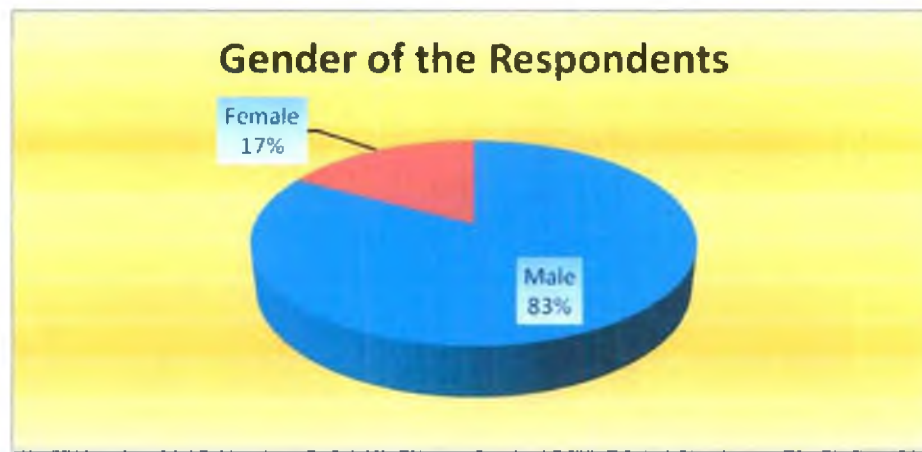
we can see that more than half of the respondents are in matured age group that is really needed for these types of position.

### 6.3 Sex of the Respondents

Sex Category	Respondents	Percentage
Male	35	83.0
Female	7	17.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June–November, 2010

Graphical Presentation:



#### Interpretation of Table 6.3:

From the above table it is found that among the respondents male are the most dominant, which contains 83 percent and only 17 percent are female. As I have taken seven Union Parishad from seven Divisions, it quite natural that the number of female respondents would be 7.

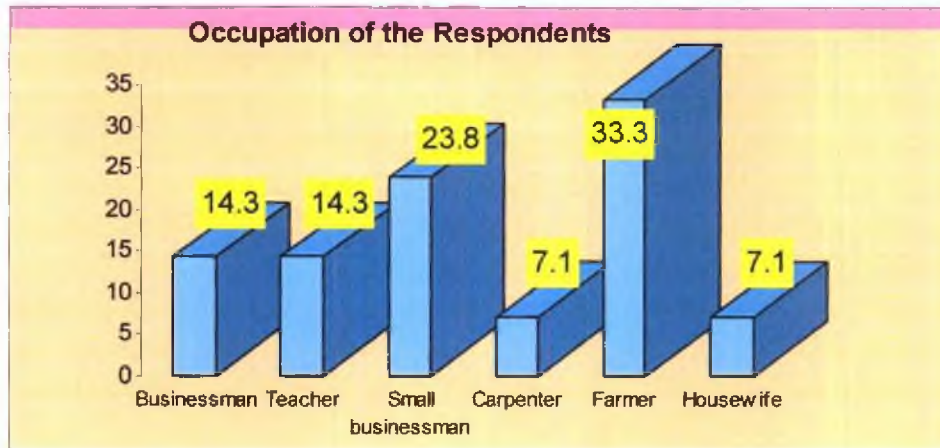
### 6.4 Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	Respondents	Percentage
Businessman	6	14.3
Teacher	6	14.3
Small businessman	10	23.8
Carpenter	3	7.1
Farmer	14	33.3
Housewife	3	7.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June–November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.4:**

Table 6.4 demonstrates that majority of the respondents are farmer and businessman considering 33.3 percent and 23.8 percent individually. Teacher and small businessman contain the similar percentage of 14.3, and only 7.1 percent respondents are carpenter and housewives individually.



**6.5 Education level of the Respondents**

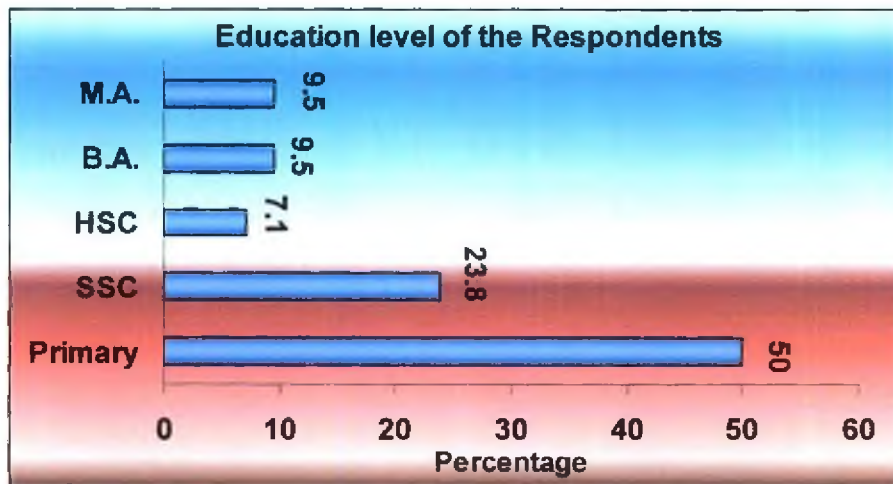
Education level	Respondents	Percentage
Primary	21	50.0
SSC	10	23.8
HSC	3	7.1
B.A.	4	9.5
M.A.	4	9.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June–November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.5:**

According to the education level, the above table delve into that 50 percent respondents are in primary level; 23.8 percent are in SSC level. Respondents with the education level HSC contain 7.1 percent and only 9.5 percent respondents have B.A and M.A. level of education.





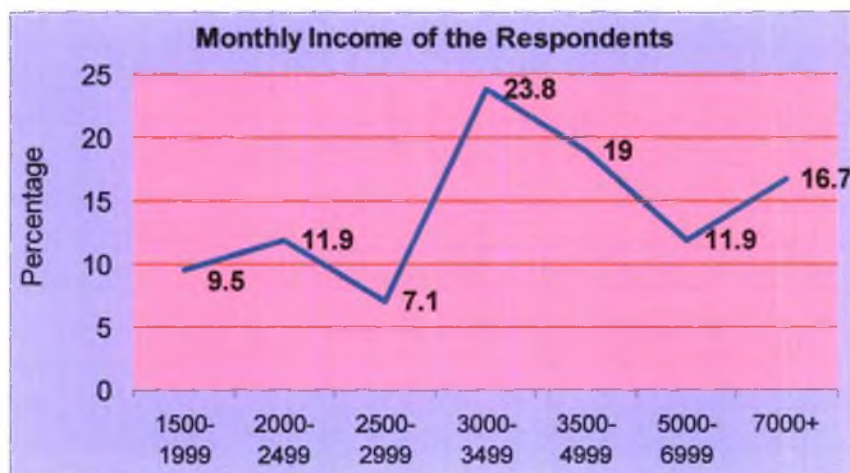
### 6.6 Monthly Income of the Respondents

Monthly Income	Respondents	Percentage
1500-1999	4	9.5
2000-2499	5	11.9
2500-2999	3	7.1
3000-3499	10	23.8
3500-4999	8	19.0
5000-6999	5	11.9
7000+	7	16.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June–November, 2010

#### Interpretation of Table 6.6:

From the above table I found that, highest percentage (23.8 percent) of the respondents' monthly income in between Tk. 3000-3499. Respondents with monthly income Tk.1500-1999 are 9.5 percent. 11.9 percent respondents have the similar income level i.e. Tk. 200-2499. Only 7.1 percent respondents have the income level upto Tk. 3000 and the highest income level (7000+) respondents are about 17 percent.



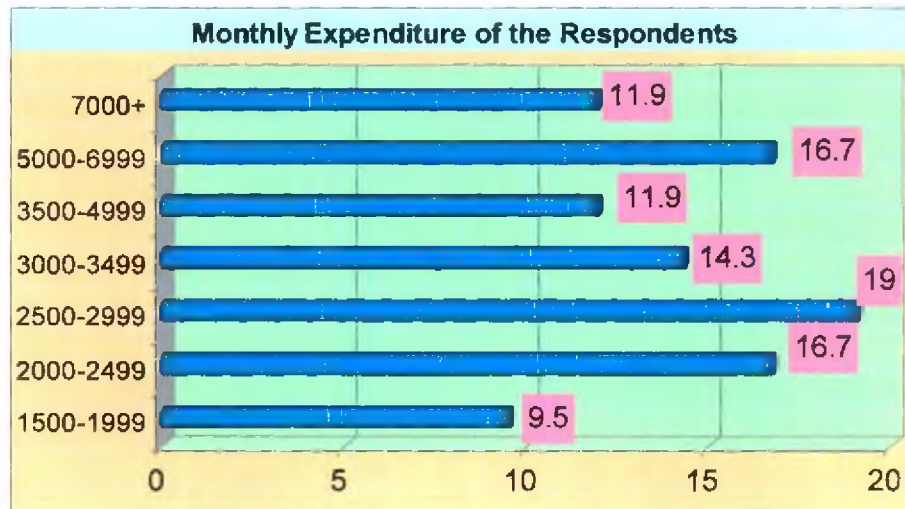
### 6.7 Monthly Expenditure of the Respondents

Monthly Expenditure	Respondents	Percentage
1500-1999	4	9.5
2000-2499	7	16.7
2500-2999	8	19.0
3000-3499	6	14.3
3500-4999	5	11.9
5000-6999	7	16.7
7000+	5	11.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

#### Interpretation of Table 6.7:

Data on monthly expenditure as stated in table 6.7 shows that 9.5 percent of the respondent's monthly expenditure is Tk. 2000. 16.7 percent respondent's monthly expenditure is Tk. 2500 and Tk. 7000 individually and 12 percent respondents have the expenditure level of Tk. 5000 and Tk. 7000+ separately. But only 14.3 percent respondents would be able to expend money ranges between Tk. 3000 to Tk. 4000. This table also depicts that, in this study area, only 10 percent respondents are able to expend over Tk.7000 for their monthly necessities and 90 percent of the respondents are below the range of Tk.7000.



**6.8 What type of duties you carry out for the government and people?**  
(Multiple response)

Duties to govt. and people	Respondents	Percentage
VGF Card distribution	40	95.2
VGD Card distribution	41	97.6
Sanitation Improvement	27	64.3
Child marriage prevention	23	54.8
Road-Culvert construction	31	73.8
Illiteracy eradication	35	83.3
Consciousness about education	39	92.9
Health consciousness	40	95.2
Awareness against dowry	29	69.0
Agriculture improvement	26	61.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>

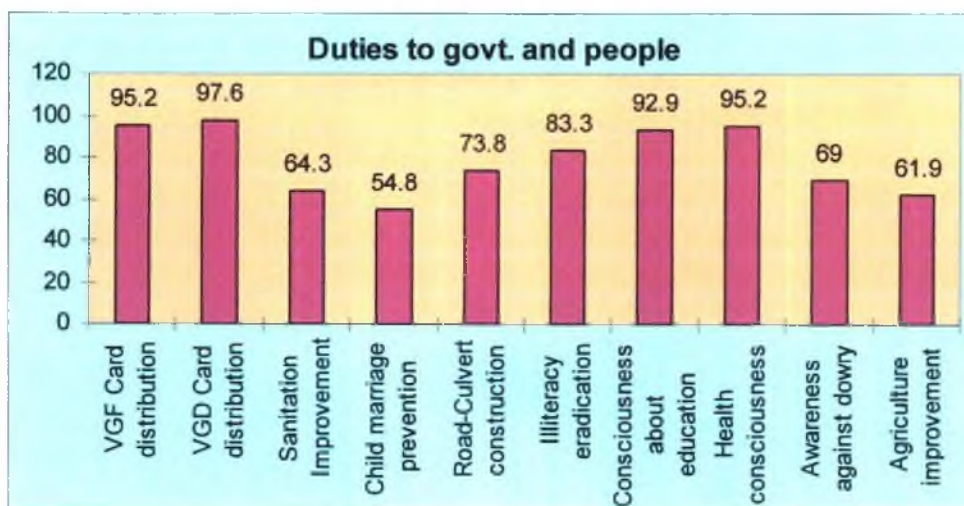
Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.8:**

This table is composed to multiple responses of the respondents regarding the duties toward government and people. Among the respondents 95 percent are involve in VGF card distribution and health consciousness program. Some respondents (83 percent and 93 percent respectively) said that they worked on illiteracy eradication and consciousness about education as their administrative and moral duties. 98 percent are involved with VGD card distribution, 64 percent are involved in sanitation improvements; and 69 percent and 62 percent are taking the

duties about making awareness against dowry as well as in agriculture improvements respectively. The percentage of the respondents engaged in child marriage prevention (55 percent) and road-culvert construction (74 percent).

### Graphical Presentation



### 6.9 What kind of problem you face to do the work in your locality? (Multiple response)

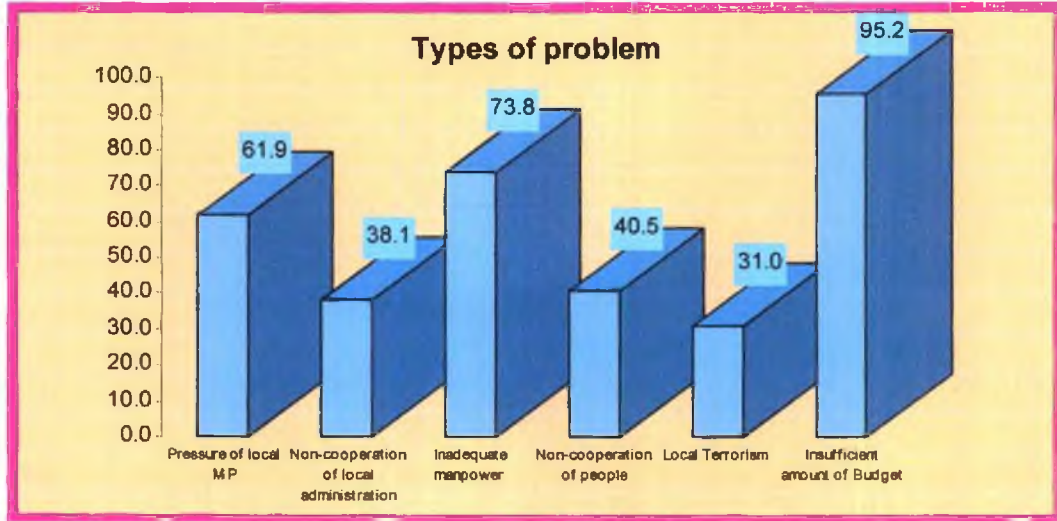
Types of problem	Respondents	Percentage
Pressure of local MP	26	61.9
Non-cooperation of local administration	16	38.1
Inadequate manpower	31	73.8
Non-cooperation of people	17	40.5
Local Terrorism	13	31.0
Insufficient amount of Budget	40	95.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June–November, 2010

### Interpretation of Table 6.9:

From the above table it is seen that pressure of local MP, inadequate manpower and insufficient amount of budget are largely responsible to create a problem to do the work in their locality, which contains 95 percent, 74 percent and 62 percent respectively. 38 percent respondents said that non-cooperation of local administration create problem for their work. Other responses like non-cooperation

of people, local terrorism contain lower percentage, but it is significant for this study to get a full-fledged idea.



**6.10 Do you have access to all facilities given by the government?**

Access to all facilities	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	19	45.2
No	23	54.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.10:**

Table 10 described that among the all respondents, 55 percent have no access to all facilities whereas 45 percent have access to all facilities. But the question is why most of the respondents said they did not get the all facilities- the answer regarding this question is very vivid to all. They said it for the nepotism and corruption.



### 6.11 Why you don't have access to all facilities given by the government?

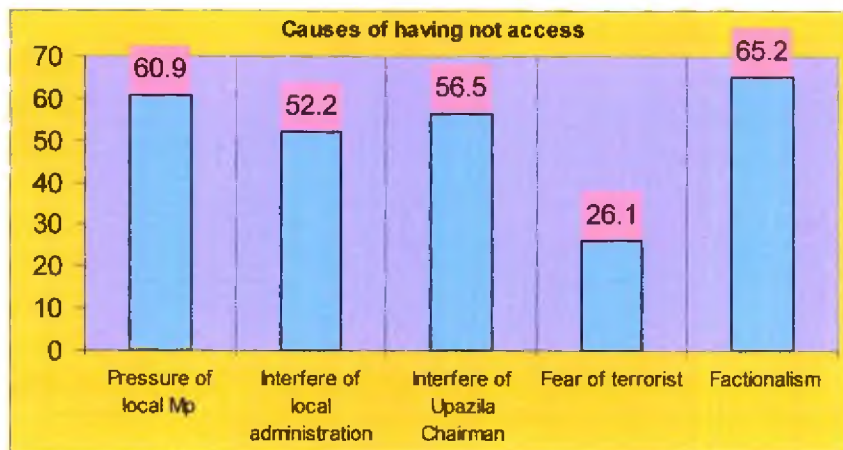
(Multiple response by no category i.e. 23 respondents)

Causes of having not access	Respondents	Percentage
Factionalism	15	65.2
Pressure of local Mp	14	60.9
Interfere of local administration	12	52.2
Interfere of Upazila Chairman	13	56.5
Fear of terrorist	6	26.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June–November, 2010

#### Interpretation of Table 6.11:

From the above table it is found that factionalism and pressure of local MP are the main factors not to have access to all facilities, which contains 65 percent and 61 percent respectively. Interfere of local administration and interfere of Upazila chairman also highly responsible for that, which contains 52 percent and 57 percent respectively. 26 percent respondents also responds fear of terrorist are the main reason for not to have access all facilities. This table also delves into that people are affecting from these kinds of problems what we do not get usually from the newspapers or other sources.



**6.12 Is national government helped you to do the work smoothly?**

National government help	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	25	59.5
No	17	40.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.12:**

Table 6.12 shows that 40.5 percent respondents said national government don't help them to do their work properly and 60.5 percent said national government helps them to do their work smoothly. Here the main and underlying cause is that the people who have political connection or the party people they are able to do the work smoothly, but who are out of national government's connection are unable to do the work properly.

**6.13 Do Upazilla and Zila Parishad help you to do the work smoothly?**

Help of Upazilla and Zila Parishad	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	23	54.8
No	19	45.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.13:**

On the basis of responses of the respondents, 55 percent said Upazila and Zila Parishad help them to do their work whereas, 45 percent respondents said no. Here the differences between the two categories of respondents are sharply distinguished wherein the people who are educated and wealthy only they can make the good relation to the upper administration.

### 6.14 Why Upazilla and Zila Parishad do not help you to do the work?

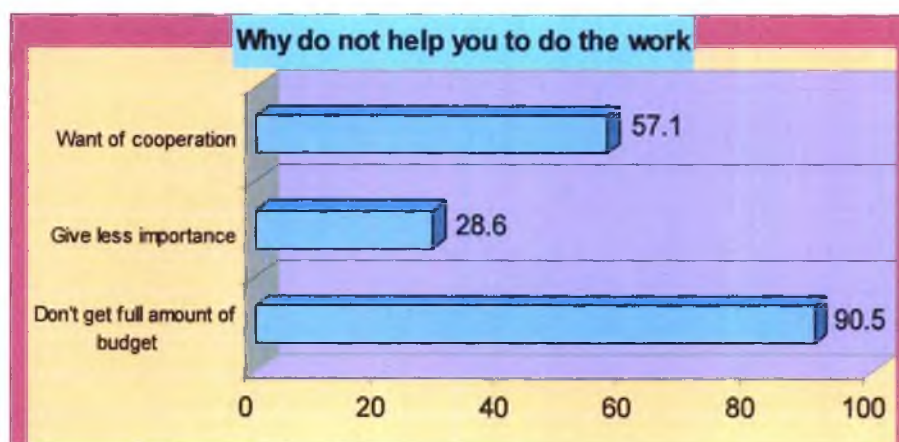
(Multiple response by 19 respondents)

Causes of non-cooperation	Respondents	Percentage
Don't get full amount of budget	16	84.2
Give less importance	13	68.4
Want of cooperation	14	73.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June–November, 2010

#### Interpretation of Table 6.14:

From table 6.14 it is found that 84 percent respondents said that they don't get the full amount of budget that hampered the situation of work environment. 68 percent respondents claim that the administration gives less importance to them and 73 percent respondents assert that lack of cooperation is the another vital problem for us.



### 6.15 What kind of success you already have achieved during your period?

(Multiple response)

Types of Success	Respondents	Respondents
Child marriage prevention	29	69.0
Education awareness	17	40.5
Health awareness	36	85.7
Awareness about Dowry	40	95.2
Agriculture improvement	26	61.9
Ensure safe drinking water and sanitation	33	78.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June–November, 2010



**Interpretation of Table 6.15:**

Table 6.15 shows that 95 percent respondents achieved success to create awareness against dowry and 85 percent respondents are capable to make the awareness about health. 41 percent and 62 percent of the respondents achieved to create the awareness about education and agricultural development individually. 79 percent respondents achieved the success regarding to provide safe drinking water and sanitation, and 69 percent achieved the prestige of preventing the child marriage.

**6.16 What kind of failure you face in your duties?**

(Multiple response)

Causes of failure	Respondents	Respondents
Fail to modernize agriculture	19	45.2
Fail to mitigate factionalism	26	61.9
Fail to root out terrorism	16	38.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.16:**

It is observed from table 6.16 that, 38 percent respondents think they fail to root out terrorism, 62 percent think they fail to mitigate factionalism and 45 percent think they fail to modernize agriculture. I think they are mainly failure because of non-cooperation and mismanagement. When people ask for help to them they just avoid the incidence by claiming that they are unable to do the work for them.

**6.17 What do you expect to improve the situation of local government system?**

(Multiple response)

<b>Expectation pattern</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Autonomous LG	42	100.0
Need to increase manpower	32	76.2
Need to increase budget	40	95.2
No interference of local MP and administration	30	71.4
Eradicate factionalism	25	59.5
Increase remuneration	41	97.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.17:**

Here, table 6.17 indicates that 100 percent of the respondents think that autonomous local government system would be the best idea for performing the better work. 98 percent respondents claim that it is needed to increase budget and remuneration because of achieving better result from LG. 71 percent respondents want no interference of local MP and administration. 76 percent and 60 percent respondents said that increase manpower and eradicate factionalism should be improved for the improvement of the local government system.

**6.18 How you solve the problem of your union by your respective duties?**

(Multiple response)

Process of solution	Respondents	Percentage
Own effort	22	52.4
By the support of higher administration	34	81.0
By the support of local Mp	38	90.5
By the support of people	36	85.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.18:**

As multiple responses stated in the table 6.18, it is found that 81 percent respondents want to solve the problem by the support of higher administration and by the support of people 86 percent respondents do it. But 91 percent respondents want to solve the problem by the support of local MP and by own effort 52 percent respondents did it.

**6.19 Do the local people come to you for solving the problem?**

People needed to come	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	30	71.4
No	12	28.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.19:**

The table 6.19 shows that 71 percent respondents claim about themselves that people come to them for solving the problem whereas, 29 percent assert that people don't come to them for the solution of problem. We know that most of the people in rural area are poor so that they cannot go to the court or other types of judicial system because of unaffordability. As a result they go to the local administration.

**6.20 What kind of problem you have to solve for them?**

(Multiple response)

<b>Types of problem</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Land related	24	57.1
Divorce	9	21.4
Deception	12	28.6
Licensee	26	61.9
Various types of certificate	17	40.5
Violence against women	29	69.0
Administrative problem	36	85.7
Legal problem	28	66.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.20:**

The above table emphasizes the attention on the types of problem in their locality. Respondents –here- had to solve the various types of problems like- land related problem (57 percent), divorced problem (21 percent), deception problem (29 percent), license problem (62 percent), certificate problem (41 percent), violence against women (69 percent), administrative problem (86 percent), and legal problem (69 percent).

**6.21 Who are the background people behind the factionalism, terrorism and violence?** (Multiple response)

<b>Background people</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Own party people	17	40.5
Opposition party	35	83.3
People of MP	22	52.4
Local terrorist	14	33.3
Mass people	13	31.0
Upazila and Zilla administration	24	57.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.21:**

Table 6.21 shows that, 83 percent respondents said opposition party are mainly responsible for the factionalism, terrorism and violence. But 57 percent respondents claim that these type of incidents occurred because of the affiliation to the people of Upazila and Zilla administration and 52 percent respondents said people of MP are responsible for the regarding matters. Only 31 percent respondents alleged the mass people to commit these types of crime.

**6.22 Do you read the Newspaper daily?**

<b>Newspaper reading</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	26	61.9
No	16	38.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June–November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.22:**

It is found from table 6.22 that 62 percent respondents are not reading newspaper and only 38 percent are reading newspaper. Here the case is very simple. We know that before the two decades it was unthinkable that the rural people would able to read the daily newspaper. It is happened because of technology and mass education.

**6.23 Are you a supporter of any political party?**

<b>Supporters of political party</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	39	92.9
No	3	7.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.23:**

From the above table it is found that 93 percent respondents are a supporter of any political party and only 7 percent are not the supporter of any political party. They

are either no voter or give their vote to the neutral candidate. In the context of Bangladesh, administrative people are usually categorized into four main ideologies.

#### 6.24 Do you provide training for the farmer in order to improve agriculture?

Giving training for the farmer	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	27	64.3
No	15	35.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

#### Interpretation of Table 6.24:

It is found in the table 6.24 indicate that 64 percent respondents asserted that they provide various types of training- in very small scale- for the farmer in order to improve the agriculture and other activities. But 36 percent respondents acclaimed that they have no extensive program for providing the training so they are far from these types of activities.

#### 6.25 Do you help to the people to farm the handicraft, poultry, hatchery, and farming?

Support for	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	31	73.8
No	11	26.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

#### Interpretation of Table 6.25:

Table 6.25 exerts that 74 percent respondents help the people to cultivate the handicraft, poultry, hatchery and farming and the remaining are not to do so. Because of global connection and development of NGOs, rural people are now engaging these types of activities.

**6.26 Are you succeeded to improve law and order situation?**

Law and order situation	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	29	69.0
No	13	31.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.26:**

In case of succeeded to improve law and order situation 69 percent respondents claimed that they are capable and 31 percent respondents are failed to do that. We know that in rural areas law and order situation is better than the urban areas. So it is easy to tackle the law and order situation. This is why we find the yes category of responses more.

**6.27 What type of activities you accomplish for maintaining friendly environment? (Multiple response)**

Activities for friendly environment	Respondents	Percentage
Tree plantation on road side	36	85.7
Social forestry	13	31.0
Maintain reserved waters	21	50.0
Garbage Disposal	26	61.9
Cleaning canal, river and others waters	24	57.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.27:**

Table 6.27 describes the activities of the LG administration for the friendly environment where I found the following categories of responses like- tree plantation on road side (86 percent), garbage disposal (62 percent), maintaining reserved waters (50 percent), cleaning canal, river and other waters (57 percent) and social forestry (86 percent).

**6.28 Do you know what type of violence against women occurred in your Union Parishad?** (Multiple response)

Type of violence	Respondents	Percentage
Dowry	12	28.6
Illegal divorce	4	9.5
Eve-teasing	13	31.0
Child marriage	7	16.7
Want of security at home	7	16.7
Want of security outside home	21	50.0
Acid throwing	11	26.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.28:**

From the above table it is found that want of security outside the home (50 percent) and eve-teasing (31 percent) are the dominant violence against women. Dowry, child marriage and acid throwing are also consisted higher percentage of violence against women. But illegal divorce and want of security at home are the lowest pattern of violence against women.

**6.29 Are female members able to do their work independently?**

Ability to work independently	Respondents	Percentage
yes	19	45.2
No	23	54.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.29:**

It is observed from table 6.29 that 55 percent respondents think female member are not able to do their work independently and 45 percent said positively about that. Here the underlying cause for this situation is patriarchal society and male domination in decision making process.



**Findings taken from the respondents of the selected three villages:**

The following data on this study is regarding to the demographic and socioeconomic variables of the respondents like age, occupation, gender, marital status, education, income and expenditure and other variables regarding the problems and functions.

**6.30 Age of the Respondents**

Age	Respondents	Percentage
20-24	32	8.4
25-29	35	9.1
30-34	73	19.1
35-39	125	32.6
40-49	81	21.1
50+	37	9.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.30:**

This table certifies the age categories of the respondents where I found 8.4 percent respondents are in age group 20-24; 9 percent respondents belong in 25-29 age groups; and 19 percent respondents are in the age group of 30-34. Here we can see that the highest percentages of the respondents are in the age group of 35-39. But 21 percent respondents belong to the age group of 40-49 and 10 percent are more than fifty years old.

**6.31 Sex of the Respondents**

Sex Category	Respondents	Percentage
Male	317	82.8
Female	66	17.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.31:**

It is found that -from the above table- among the respondents male are the most dominant, which contains 83 percent and only 17 percent are female. As I have

taken seven Union Parishad from seven Division, it quite natural that the number of male respondents would be more in percentage. Here the females – in rural areas- are not inclined to respond to me as the regarding matters.

### 6.32 Marital Status of the respondents?

Marital Status	Respondents	Percentage
Married	348	90.9
Unmarried	35	9.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

#### Interpretation of Table 6.32:

From the above table it is found that among the respondents mostly are married (91 percent) and only 9 percent are unmarried. I have taken married respondents more because they are the experienced person regarding society and socio-political issues, though the youngsters are very much conscious nowadays.

### 6.33 Occupation of the Respondents?

Occupation	Respondents	Percentage
Businessman	38	9.9
Teacher	24	6.3
Small businessman	85	22.2
Carpenter	16	4.2
Farmer	162	42.3
Tailors	12	3.1
Construction labor	20	5.2
Day laborer	26	6.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

#### interpretation of Table 6.33:

Table 6.4 demonstrates that majority of the respondents are farmer and businessman considering 33.3 percent and 23.8 percent individually. Teacher and

small businessman contain the similar percentage of 14.3, and only 7.1 percent respondents are carpenter and housewives individually.

### 6.34 Education Level of the Respondents

Education level	Respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	140	36.6
Can only sign	32	8.4
Primary	68	17.8
SSC	55	14.4
HSC	30	7.8
B.A.	36	9.4
M.A.	22	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

#### Interpretation of Table 6.34:

According to the education level, the above table delve into that 37 percent respondents are illiterate, 8 percent can only sign, 18 percent in primary level, 14 percent are in SSC level. Respondents with the education level HSC contain 8 percent and only 9 percent respondents have B.A and 6 percent respondents have M.A. level of education.

### 6.35 Monthly Income of the Respondents

Monthly Income	Respondents	Percentage
1500-1999	51	13.3
2000-2499	33	8.6
2500-2999	28	7.3
3000-3499	124	32.4
3500-4999	37	9.7
5000-6999	48	12.5
7000+	62	16.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

#### Interpretation of Table 6.35:

It is noted in the above table -I found- that, highest percentage (32 percent) of the respondents' monthly income in between Tk. 300-3499. Respondents with monthly

income Tk.1500-1999 are 13 percent and 9 percent respondents have the income level between 2000-2499. Only 7.3 percent respondents have the income level upto Tk.3000 and the highest income level (7000+) respondents are more than 16percent.

### 6.36 Monthly Expenditure of the Respondents

Monthly Expenditure	Respondents	Percentage
1500-1999	51	13.3
2000-2499	33	8.6
2500-2999	28	7.3
3000-3499	146	38.1
3500-4999	30	7.8
5000-6999	42	11.0
7000+	53	13.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

#### Interpretation of Table 6.36:

According to the monthly expenditure, as stated in table 6.7, 13 percent of the respondent's monthly expenditure is Tk. 2000. 9 percent respondent's monthly expenditure is Tk. 2500 and Tk. 3000 for 7 percent respondents. 38 percent and 8 percent respondents have the expenditure level Tk. 3500 and Tk.5000. But only 13 percent respondents would able to expend money more than Tk.7000.

### 6.37 Where you go for solving the legal problem?

(Multiple response)

Persons for problem solver	Respondents	Percentage
Local MP	225	58.7
Court	210	54.8
Upazila chairman	146	38.1
UP Chairman	310	80.9
UP member	72	18.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

#### Interpretation of Table 6.37:

Table 6.37 shows that highest percent of the respondents go to UP chairman for solving their legal problem (81 percent) and 59 percent go to local MP, 19 percent go

to UP member, 55 percent go to court and 38 percent go to Upazila chairman for solving their legal problem.

#### 6.38 Is UP Chairman able to give justice for the people?

Judgment for the people	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	120	31.3
No	263	68.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June–November, 2010

#### Interpretation of Table 6.38:

According to the table 6.38, 31 percent respondents said UP chairman is able to give judgment for the people whereas 69 percent do not agree with this. In this case, most of the people don't get the fair justice because the Up chairman in most cases would become politically motivated.

#### 6.39 Do the Chairman give importance to improve the condition of agriculture?

Importance to agriculture	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	165	43.1
No	218	56.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June–November, 2010

#### Interpretation of Table 6.39:

Table 6.39 exerts that, 43 percent respondents said chairman is giving importance to improve the condition of agriculture whereas 57 percent give negative response. They said that governments support to the farmer for the agriculture did not reach to the people. It is reached to their kith and kins.

#### 6.40 Do you get the agriculture equipment from the UP Office?

agriculture equipment	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	126	32.9
No	257	67.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June–November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.40:**

According to the table 6.40, 33 percent respondents said they get agriculture equipment from the UP office and 67 percent do not get this from UP office. Here we also see the practice of nepotism and corruption whereas the nearest people get the facilities of all from UP.

**6.41 Do you get agriculture seeds, insecticides and fertilizer from the UP office?**

Get agriculture seeds, insecticides and fertilizer	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	190	49.6
No	193	50.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.41:**

From table 6.41, 49.6 percent respondents said they get agriculture seeds, insecticides and fertilizer from the UP office and 50.4 percent said they do not get these from UP office. Among the disadvantaged group of people many of them claimed that they are fade-up to handle this matter.

**6.42 Do the Chairman and member practice any illegal rules to distribute the VGF, VGD and ration card?**

Practice illegal rules	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	289	75.5
No	94	24.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.42:**

It is observed from table 6.42 that, 76 percent respondents said chairman and member practice illegal rules to distribute the VGF, VGD and ration card and only 24

percent do not agree with that. The people who alleged the Up Chair and Member said that we don't get the facilities because we are so poor.

#### 6.43 Are you satisfied about the situation of communication in your locality?

Satisfaction about communication	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	195	50.9
No	188	49.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

#### Interpretation of Table 6.43:

According to the table 6.43, 51 percent respondents said they are satisfied about the communication in their locality and 49 percent are not satisfied about that. I have seen in my study area that most of the roads in rural area still now out of brick-built. Only the main roads beside the district and upazilla town are *pacca*. Without these, many bridges and culverts are needed to repair and to make newly.

#### 6.44 Do you get all kinds of facilities from the government via UP?

Facilities from the government	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	167	43.6
No	216	56.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

#### Interpretation of Table 6.44:

Table 6.44 shows that, 56 percent respondents said they do not get all kind of facilities from the government via UP and 40.0 percent get this facilities from the government via UP. Here I also found the corruption and nepotism in their practices.

#### 6.45 Do you have access to safe drinking water?

Access to safe drinking water	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	201	52.5
No	182	47.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.45:**

According to the table 6.45, 53 percent respondents have access to safe drinking water whereas 47 percent said they do not have access to safe drinking water because their Chairman and Up members are not cooperative. They asked their help for installing the deep-tube-wells frequently, but they did not respond.

**6.46 Do you help to the UP activities?**

Help to UP activities	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	280	73.1
No	103	26.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.46:**

From table 6.46 it is found that, 73 percent respondents help to the UP activities. But 27 percent respondents said they do not help to the UP activities. Because the Chairman and UP members are corrupted and politically partial. Without these they work for their people not for all.

**5.47 Do you think you have adequate schools and hospitals in your village?**

Adequate schools and hospitals	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	135	35.2
No	248	64.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study, June--November, 2010

**Interpretation of Table 6.48:**

It is observed from table 6.48 that, 64 percent respondents think they have not adequate schools and hospitals in their village whereas only 35 percent said the existing number of schools and hospitals are sufficient to them. But from my observation, I can say that most of the hospitals in rural areas are poor in quality and doctors and nurses are inadequate as they needed. Without these, the quality of teaching in these schools also very poor and insignificant.



## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **7.1 Conclusions**

At the concluding part I would like to say that the existing local government bodies are not able to ensure the welfare of village community in the country because the development role of local government at local level is marginal; as there is lack of consistency in their pattern and functioning. Functionally as well as structurally a number of mutually inconsistent patterns are operating in the country. At the same time, search for and experimentation with newer patterns has not yet ceased. No national consensus has apparently emerged. The local government as a national sub-system is yet to settle down. What still remains basically an offshoot of colonial and federal tradition has to be boldly restructured consistent to the overall governmental superstructure of a unitary state as well as to the requirement of an independent and developing country. This would call for a clearly laid out policy with regard to the structure, functions, finance, management, center-local-relationship and many other things.

The various problems relating to the local government system which I have found in my study are: undue bureaucratic control, blatant interference of members of parliament (MPs) exclusionary participation of women, financial disempowerment compromising the viability of local bodies, lack of mobilization of local resources, lack of financial devolution, concentration of powers and authorities, proposals to further empower MPs, too many laws and circulars which are Meaningless and contradictory, lack of skills and competence, widespread corruption.

In a nut-shell I can present the main themes of this study in the following way- Their main duties to the local government are - among the respondents (multiple responses in table 6.8; chapter 6) 98 percent are involved in VGD card distribution

and 93 percent are engaged to create consciousness about education. 95 percent are involved with VGF card distribution, 64 percent are involved in sanitation improvements, 83 percent in illiteracy eradication, 95 percent in health consciousness, 69 percent work on awareness against dowry as well as in agriculture improvements 62 percent respondents. The main problems of local government system they found like- pressure of local MP and insufficient amount of budget are equally responsible to create a problem to do the work in their locality.

Other striking feature of the findings shows that the general people also found some functions and problems like the UP administrators, for example- the highest percent of the respondents go to UP chairman for solving their legal problem (81 percent) and 59 percent go to local MP, 19 percent go to UP member, 55 percent go to court and 38 percent go to Upazila chairman for solving their legal problem.

## **7.2 Recommendations**

The experiences of field study give me some ideas to make a recommendation list about the existing structures, functions and problems of local government system in Bangladesh. The specific recommendations are:

1. Local government system should be fully autonomous
2. To circulate all rules and regulations and all functions and problems need to be known to all people and local administration
3. A strong and regular monitoring and evaluation process needed to strengthen the local government. This is why I suggest the local administrative body which would be constituted by the 18 Members for nine wards whereas the male and female members would be the same number i.e. 9 male Members and 9 female members. This structure also strengthens the transparency and accountability level.

4. For the existing structure of UP administration there should have an Advisory Board to monitor and evaluate the all activities of UP annually and make a report by them in order to inform all things to the higher authority (i.e. Upazilla, Zilla Parishad and Ministry of Local Government Affairs). This Advisory Board should be comprised of 10 members who will come from different occupations like- Teacher, Farmer, Businessman, Doctor, Engineer and any other occupations). Among these 10 members one member (who would be the head of the board) would be nominated by other 9 members and rest of the 9 members would be nominated by 18 (that I proposed) elected members.
5. A good relation is inevitable between central and local government
6. To introduce the constitutional system in local government
7. It is mandatory to make a data base on poor and deprived people in order to make proper distribution of all facilities and rights
8. To give the special attention to agriculture and its development
9. More participation of the people in local government activities.
10. To ensure better utilization of local and national resources in order to maximize the welfare activities and reducing poverty
11. Mass media should be used to educate and mobilize public opinion in such a way that the realization about the benefits of women's full participation in the national development efforts is created among people.
12. Priority must be given to monitoring the status, conditions and rights of women.

13. Women should be given various opportunities for leadership training, training regarding the activities of Union Parishad and education in order to encourage them to take up political and leadership position.
14. Government and Donor agencies should provide lump-sum budget directly to UP and a guide lines to utilize such money. So that UP may become the central point of development activities and there should be a monitoring system which I have already mentioned.
15. Finally, women empowerment should be accelerated by involving them as independent member and administrator.

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## Appendix

### Interview Schedule

#### 1. Occupation of the Respondents

Name of the Occupation	Response
Chairman	
Secretary	
Member	
Village Police	

#### 2. Age of the Respondents

Age	Response
35-39	
40-44	
45-49	

#### 3. Sex of the Respondents

Sex Category	Response
Male	
Female	

#### 4. Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	Response
Businessman	
Teacher	
Small businessman	
Carpenter	
Farmer	

#### 5. Education levels of the Respondents

Education level	Response
Primary	
SSC	
HSC	
BA	
MA	

**6. Monthly Income of the Respondents**

Monthly Income	Response
1500-1999	
2000-2499	
2500-2999	
3000-3499	
3500-4999	
5000-999	
7000+	

**7. Monthly Expenditure of the Respondents**

Monthly Expenditure	Response
1500-1999	
2000-2499	
2500-2999	
3000-3499	
3500-4999	
5000-999	
7000+	

**8. What type of duties you carry out for the Government and people?**

Duties to govt. and people	Response
VGF Card distribution	
VGD Card distribution	
Sanitation Improvement	
Child marriage prevention	
Road-Culvert construction	
Illiteracy eradication	
Consciousness about education	
Health consciousness	
Awareness against dowry	
Agriculture improvement	

**9. What kind of problem you face to do the work in your locality?**

Types of problem	Response
Pressure of local MP	
Non-cooperation of local administration	
Inadequate manpower	
Non-cooperation of people	
Local Terrorism	
Insufficient amount of Budget	

10. Do you have access to all facilities given by the government?

Access to all facilities	Response
Yes	
No	

11. Do you have access to all facilities given by the government?

Causes of no access	Response
Pressure of local Mp	
Interfere of local administration	
Interfere of Upazila Chairman	
Fear of terror	
Factionalism	

12. Do national government help you to do the work smoothly?

National government help	Response
Yes	
No	

13. Do Upazilla and Zila Parishad help you to do the work smoothly?

Help of Upazilla and Zila Parishad	Response
Yes	
No	

14. Why Upazilla and Zila Parishad do not help you to do the work?

Causes of non-cooperation	Response
Don't get full amount of budget	
Give less importance	
Want of cooperation	

15. What kind of success you already have achieved during your period?

Types of Success	Response
Child marriage prevention	
Education awareness	
Health awareness	
Awareness about Dowry	
Agriculture improvement	
Ensure safe drinking water and sanitation	

16. What kind of failure you face in your duties?

Causes of failure	Response
Fail to modernize agriculture	
Fail to mitigate factionalism	
Fail to root out terrorism	

17. What do you expect to improve the situation of local government system?

Expectation pattern	Response
Autonomous needed	
Need to increase manpower	
Need to increase budget	
No interference of local MP and administration	
Eradicate factionalism	
Increase remuneration	

18. How you solve the problem of your union from your respective duties?

Process of solution	Response
Own effort	
By the support of higher administration	
By the support of local Mp	
By the support of people	

19. Do the local people come to you for solving the problem?

People needed to come	Response
Yes	
No	

20. What kind of problem you have to solve for them?

Types of problem	Response
Land related	
Divorce	
Deception	
License	
Various types of certificate	
Violence against women	
Administrative problem	
Legal problem	



21. Who are the background people behind the factionalism, terrorism and violence?

Background people	Response
Own party people	
Opposition party	
People of MP	
Local terrorist	
Mass people	
Upazila and Zila administration	

22. Do you read the Newspaper daily?

Newspaper reading	Response
Yes	
No	

23. Are you a supporter of any political ideology?

Supporters of political party	Response
Yes	
No	

24. Do you provide training for the farmer in order to improve agriculture?

Giving training for the farmer	Response
Yes	
No	

25. Do you help to the people to do the handicraft, poultry, hachery, and farming?

Support for	Response
yes	
No	

26. Are you succeeded to improve law and order situation?

Well Law and order situation	Response
Yes	
No	

**27. What type of activities you accomplish for friendly environment?**

Activities for friendly environment	Response
Tree plantation beside roads	
Social forestry	
Maintain reserved waters	
garbage Disposal	
Cleaning Canal, river and other water sources	

**28. Do you have any violence against women in your union Parishad?**

Type of violence	Response
Dowry	
Illegal divorce	
Eve-teasing	
Child marriage	
Want of security at home	
Want of security out side home	
Acid throwing	

**29. Are female members free to do their work independently?**

Ability to work independently	Response
yes	
No	

**(General Respondents from Selected three villages)****30. Age of the Respondents**

Age	Response
20-24	
25-29	
30-34	
35-39	
40-49	
50+	

**31. Sex of the Respondents**

Sex Category	Response
Male	
Female	

**32. Marital Status of the respondent?**

Marital Status	Response
Married	
Unmarried	

**33. Occupation of the Respondents?**

Occupation	Response
Businessman	
Teacher	
Small businessman	
Carpenter	
Farmer	
Businessman	
Teacher	

**34. Education level of the Respondents?**

Education level	Response
Illiterate	
Can only sign	
Primary	
SSC	
HSC	
BA	
MA	

**35. Monthly Income of the Respondents?**

Monthly Income	Respondents
1500-1999	1
2000-2499	2
2500-2999	2
3000-3499	2
3500-4999	3
5000-999	1
7000+	2

**36. Monthly Expenditure of the Respondents?**

Monthly Expenditure	Response
1500-1999	
2000-2499	
2500-2999	
3000-3499	
3500-4999	
5000-999	
7000+	

**37. Where you go for solving the legal problem?**

Persons for problem solver	Response
Local MP	
Court	
Upazila chairman	
UP Chairman	
UP member	

**38. Is UP chairman able to give judgment for the people?**

Judgment for the people	Response
Yes	
No	

**39. Do the Chairman give importance to improve the condition of agriculture?**

Importance to agriculture	Response
Yes	
No	

**40. do you get the agriculture equipment from the UP Office?**

Agriculture equipment	Response
Yes	
No	

**41. Do you get agriculture seeds, insecticides and fertilizer from the UP office?**

Get agriculture seeds, insecticides and fertilizer	Response
Yes	
No	

42. Do the Chairman and member practice any illegal rules to distribute the VGF, VGD and ration card?

Practice illegal rules	Response
Yes	
No	

43. Are you satisfied about the situation of of communication in your locality?

Satisfied about communication	Response
Yes	
No	

44. do you get all kinds of facilities from the government via UP?

Facilities from the government	Response
Yes	
No	

45. Do you have access to safe drinking water?

Access to safe drinking water	Response
Yes	
No	

46. Do you help to the UP activities?

Help to UP activities	Percentage
Yes	
No	

47. Do you think you have adequate schools and hospitals in your village?

Adequate schools and hospitals	Percentage
Yes	
No	