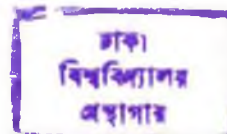# DECENTRALIZATION PRACTICES
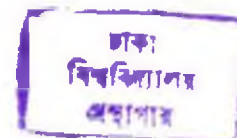# IN BANGLADESH

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UNIVERSITUY OF DHAKA

DECENTRALIZATION PRACTICES IN BANGLADESH

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MARCH 1994

DECLARATION

The material embodied in this Thesis is original and has not been submitted in part or full for any other Diploma or Degree of any University.

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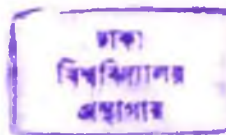
DEDICATION

This Thesis is dedicated to the
memory of my parents

DECENTRALIZATION PRACTICES IN BANGLADESH

ABSTRACT

The study "Decentralization Practices in Bangladesh" is an attempt to review decentralization process in Bangladesh in general and upazila (sub-district) decentralization in particular. The study reveals that decentralization measures, so far carried on in Bangladesh, were taken by military regimes and their main objectives were to use local government institutions for political purpose in order to build support base in the rural areas where bulk of the population live. The different military regimes experimented local government reforms differently according to their own plan. Consequently, there have been frequent changes in the structure of local government with the change of power at the centre.

The upazila scheme of local government was the continuation of chronic changes in the structure of local government following the change of ruling power at the centre by military take over in 1982. The distinctive characteristics that theoretically marked upazila scheme from previous reforms were elected Chairman, distribution of responsibilities between centre and local government; and

subordination of bureaucracy to democracy. The central government retained to itself regulatory and major development functions and transferred all other functions basically rural development in nature to the *Upazila Parishad*, the local government at this level. But in fact as the study indicates, the *Upazila Parishad*, the hub of *upazila* administration was not so autonomous in administration and finance as is expected under devolutionary decentralization. Although, the *upazila* scheme provided civilian supremacy by introducing the provision of elected Chairman, it also strengthened bureaucracy by posting senior officials at the *upazila* level'. The *Upazila Parishad* was given power to generate revenue from some local sources, but these were encountered with many problems regarding the collection. So the *Upazila Parishad* could not collect revenue properly. Consequently, the revenue collection at the *upazila* level was very poor. In the face of meagre revenue collection the *Upazila Parishad* was absolutely dependent on the centre for grants. There was no proper initiative from the centre to make the *Parishad* financially viable. Having dependent on the centre for grants the *Upazila Parishad* had nothing but to extent its political support to the centre than would become an institution that can exist on its own local resource mobilization base. On the contrary as the ruling power at

the centre uses local authorities for political purpose, it is more interested in building support base in the countrywide at the local levels. There was no accountability to anyone at the upazila level for resource mobilization either for rising revenue or for spending it. However, there were rules and regulations for spending the funds granted by the centre, but these were not followed properly. Hence corruption like nepotism, misuse and misallocation of fund became endemic at the upazila level.

Decentralized planning is one of the main thrust of decentralization. But planning at the upazila level was neglected from the very beginning. Decentralized planning requires a team to be at work to prepare such plan. The Upazila Parishad was required to prepare Five Year Plan. But mechanism for setting up such planning team was not provided. As a result, no Upazila Parishad under review could prepare its Five Year Plan. In the absence of Five Year Plan, Annual Development Programmes of upazilas were prepared in a piecemeal manner. With regard to the selection of development projects, allocation of fund among the various projects and execution of projects, there were rules to be followed by the Upazila Parishads. But these were

followed more in breach than in observance. The block development funds were generally divided union wise. So the plans of projects were not taken on the basis of local needs.

People's participation in development projects undertaken at the *upazila* level was found to be almost nil. Because the common people were not involved in any stage of development planning process. The common people came to know the projects at the stage of implementation and their participation in this stage was confined to hired labour. Thus under *upazila* scheme the vast majority of rural poor were kept dark about rural development process. As a result, *upazila* development process had not benefitted them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Muhammad Abdul Wahhad

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS AND
LOCAL TERMS USED

Abbreviations

ADC	:	Additional Deputy Commissioner
ADP	:	Annual Development Programme
ASRC	:	Administrative and Services Reorganisation Committee
AUDP	:	Annual Upazila Development Programme
BARD	:	Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development
BD	:	Basic Democracy
BDR	:	Bangladesh Rifles
BGP	:	Bangladesh Government Press
CIRDAP	:	Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific
CARR	:	Commettee for Administrative Reorganisation/Reform
DC	:	Deputy Commissionar
ESCAP	:	Ecomonic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FFWP	:	Food for Works Programme
IGP	:	Institutional Group Feeduing
LGRD	:	Local Government, Rural Development
MCH	:	Maternity Child Health
NICARR	:	National Implementation Commettee for Administrative Reorganisation/Reform
NILG	:	National Institute of Local Government
NIPA	:	National Institute of Public Administration
PATC	:	Public Administration Traning Centre
RWP	:	Rural Works Programme
SDO	:	Sub-Divisional Officer

TNO   : Thana Nirbahi Officer

UCCA   : Upazila Central Cooperative Association

UNO   : Upazila Nirbahi Officer

UP   : Union Parishad

UZ   : Upazila

UZP   : Upazila Parishad

V-AID   : Village Agricultural and Industrial Development

VDP   : Village Defence Party

VGP   : Vulnerable Group Feeding

ZP   : Zila Parishad

Local Terms

Ansar   : Para military police

Choukidar   : Village police

Gram Shava   : Village Assembly

Gram Unnayan Committee   : Village Development Commeety

Jalmahal   : Inland water body owned by
                           the government

Joatdar   : Petty land loard

Mouza   : The lowest unit of land revenue
                           collection

Panchayat   : A village council usually
                           consists of five members

Palli Parishad   : A local body at the village level

Para   : A portion of village

Pourashava   : Municipality

Sub-Division   : Former administrative unit next
                           to district

Swanirvar Gram Sarkar	:	Self reliant village government instituted by General Zia
Thana	:	Administrative unit consists of several unions covered by a police station
Thana Unnayn O Samannoy Committee	:	Thana Development and Coordinating Committee
Union	:	The lowest rural local government unit
Union Parishad	:	Local government body at the union level
Upazila	:	Sub-district— the administrative unit in place of thana during the period of General Ersahd
Upazila Nirbahi Officer	:	A civil servant deputed to the Upazila Parishad as Chief Executive Officer
Upazila Parishad	:	The local government body at the upazila level
Zila	:	District
Zila Parishad	:	Local government body at the district level

PART ONE

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the importance of decentralization and identifies the specific objectives of present study. It also deals with the methodology of the study and covers survey of the literatures.

Modern state is a welfare state. The government of modern state has to perform multi-dimensional activities. Without decentralization of administration it has become almost impossible on the part of central government alone to perform all of its activities effectively.[1] Secondly, central authority far away from the people, may not have adequate knowledge about the local conditions and problems. Hence central planning and administration proved to be inadequate to the local socio-economic variations. Decentralization of planning and administration is the only alternative of this condition. Thirdly, development programmes and projects need local support and popular participation. To secure local support and to facilitate popular participation,

decentralization of planning and administration is essential. Fourthly, decentralization has its roots in democracy. Political commitment to democracy pushed the central government to adopt decentralization policy in administration. Finally, national governments of many states "are using decentralization as a strategy for coping with political instability which is threatened by secessionist movements and demands for regional autonomy".[2] Thus, decentralization exists in every state, whether it is big or small. "The appeal of decentralization is now so great that it is in competition with democracy as the concept and no political theory, ideology or movement can afford to eschew".[3] But the governments of developing states are showing more interest in decentralization. This is perhaps due to the fact that most of the developing states achieving independence after the Second World War, inherited a highly centralized administration which could not meet the requirements of independent nations. The centralized administration was introduced by the colonial rulers to serve their interest. Moreover, policies taken under the centralized structure focused more on industrial and urban development.[4] The newly independent states are predominantly rural and their development means the development of the rural areas. Hence there has been a greater interest in decentralization among the governments

of developing states. Now they regard decentralization as a necessary condition for economic, social and political development.

Bangladesh is a developing country. Nearly 85 per cent of its population live in around 68 thousand villages.[5] So Bangladesh is not an exception to the interest in decentralization. At different times efforts have been made in Bangladesh by different governments to decentralize powers and responsibilities from the centre to the local levels.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The present study is an attempt to review decentralization practices in Bangladesh with special reference to *upazila*[6] decentralization. In analyzing this, the study explores the following specific objectives :

1. To review the past local government reforms and to find out the changes in the local government administration at the *thana* level.

2. To state the powers and functions of *Upazila Parishad* in connection with development administration.

3. To examine the leadership characteristics of the members of *Upazila Parishad* and its personnel strength and capability in managing development activities.

4. To enquire into the financial adequacy of *Upazila Parishad* in the context of development.

5. To state the practices of development planning process under *upazila* decentralization.

6. To examine the scope of people's participation in the *upazila* development process.

7. Finally, the study evaluates decentralization process in Bangladesh and recommends some measures to strengthen the local government system in Bangladesh.

1.2 Methodology of the Study

1.2(i) Selection of Field Sample Area and Respondents

Due to resource constraints and for research convenience two districts from each of the former four divisions[7] were selected at random and then one *upazila* from each selected district was also taken at random. Again eight unions, one from each selected *upazila*, were taken. The selection of the unions was made acoording to our research convenience and nearness to *upazila* headquarters. The selected *upazilas* and unions are presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

Selected Upazilas and Unions

Division location	District location	Name of upazila	Name of union
Chittagong	Chittagong Comilla	Hathazari Chandina	Fatepur Chandina East
Dhaka	Dhaka Jamalpur	Savar Dewangonj	Aminbazar Bahadurabad
Khulna	Khulna Meherpur	Paikgacha Gangni	Paikgacha Gangni
Rajshahi	Dinajpur Kurigram	Chirirbandar Fulbari	Abdulpur Shimulbari

It was planned to interview all *Upazila Parishad* (UZP) Chairmen, the *Upazila Nirbahi* Officers (UNOs) and other UZP members of the selected eight *upazilas*. But except the Chairmen and the UNOs we could not interview all members due to their non-availability and unwillingness. The villagers selected randomly were from three income groups, viz. the rich with an annual income Tk.35,000/- and above,the middle-income people earning annully below Tk.35,000/- and the poor-income people earning below Tk.15,000/-. The villagers were taken equally from each of the selected unions. The number of rich in the villages is few and the number of poor is large. Hence this weight was given in determining

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the sample size of the different income groups. The total number of respondents in the villagers' category is 904. The different categories of respondents along with their number are presented in Table 1.2 .

Table 1.2

Different Categories of Respondents and their Number

Categories of Respondents	Number
Upazila Parishad Actors	
1. Upazila Parishad Chairmen	08
2. The Upazila Nirbahi Officers(the UNOs)	08
3. Upazila Parishad representative members (UP Chairmen)	60
4. Upazila Parishad nominated members	20
5. Upazila Parishad official members	60
Total:	156
Villagers	
6. Rich	168
7. Middle income	232
8. Poor	504
Total:	904
Grand total:	1,060

1.2(ii) Technique of Data Collection

Historical-legal methods substantiated by conventional data collection techniques such as questionnaire and observation were used for gathering necessary information for the study.

Secondary Data

The study is the outcome of both secondary and primary data. Secondary data were collected from various sources which may broadly be divided into the following categories:

i) The relevant books, journals, periodicals, research monographs and others.

ii) Government documents, such as Bangladesh constitution; reports of the various Commissions/Committees; Cabinet resolutions, rules, ordinances, notifications and other circulares; published materials of Planning Commission and Local Government Division and so on.

iii) Records and documents of the selected *Upazila Parishads*. These included budgets, lists of schemes undertaken and their progress reports, proceedings of the meetings and other records related to our purpose.

Primary Data

Primary data for the study were collected through interviewing with structured questionnaires and other techniques such as observation, key-informants and informal meetings.

A. Questionnaire

Three sets of questionnaire were prepared in Bengali keeping in view the objectives of the study. One set of questionnaire was used to elicit the opinions of the UZP representative members including the Chairmen. The second set of questionnaire was meant for the official members. The third set was used to record the perceptions and attitudes of the different people living in the villages. All sets of questionnaire contained very simple questions. Except a very few, all questions were open ended. Before finalization, each questionnaire was pre-tested in a *upazila* for judging the suitability of the questions. Each questionnaire contained additional blank sheets for writing relevant information that came out during the time of interviewing which were not covered in the questionnaire.

B. Observation

Besides the interviewing with structured questionnaire, observation technique was also adopted for primary data collection. We attended the meetings of *Upazila Parishads* and observed the various dimensions of decentralized administration and development processes that were discussed. We recorded the relevant information either at the time of meeting or after the meeting was over. We also

visited the sites of different development projects and observed the implementation process. During the time of observation we always maintained diary to record necessary information.

C. Key-informants

For data collection we partially depended on key-informants too, because it was not possible for us to collect all information. Some informants voluntarily helped us and some were paid for the purpose. They included employees at the *upazila* levels, local college and school teachers and some of our students.

D. Informal Meeting

Before and during data collection period, we informally met the UZP Chairmen and the UNOs requesting their help in connection with our mission. They helped us in various ways. We also informally met the local leaders and sought their help. Their help made us able to over-come the problems that we encountered while administering the questionnaire at the village levels.

1.2(iii) Survey Period

Collection of official records and documents of *Upazila Parishads* took about two months from May to July 1990. The

administration of questionnaire was done in two phases. The first phase took place in August and October 1990 and the second phase in July and September 1991. The nationwide movement against the government of General Ershad created the interception. With the fall of General Ershad in December 6,1990 the *upazila* scheme became inoperative, although it was officially abolished in October 1991. However, the fall of General Ershad provided an opportunity for the respondents to express freely their reactions and attitudes towards the *upazila* decentralization because the interim government was no longer supporting it. So, the fall of General Ershad was convenient for us to record the opinion of respondents both during the operation of *upazila* decentralization and also during its termination.

1.2(iv) Analysis of Data

The data collected through the above mentioned techniques were diverse in nature. These were categorized, classified and then analyzed. The analysis of some data was made by assertive description and some data were coded and put into different tables so that they might yield meaningful results.

1.2(v) Organization of the Study

Textually the entire study has been organized into two parts dividing into eight chapters including the present one. Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical framework of the study and chapter 3 analyses the ecology of decentralization in Bangladesh. Chapter 4 states the past decentralization process and the background of *upazila* decentralization. Chapter 5 deals with the profile of selected *upazilas* and leadership as well as personnel strength of *Upazila Parishads*. Chapter 6 examines the finances for *upazila* development and chapter 7 discusses the planning process and people's participation under *upazila* scheme. Chapter 8 is a concluding one which contains summary of the findings of the study and suggests recommendations.

1.3 Literature Survey

Although decentralization and local government institutions are old, the studies on these are fewer still. The studies made by Roy[8] and Tinker[9] are regarded as the comprehensive studies as to the genesis and development of local government in the country. Roy dealt with Bengal local government and Tinker dealt with local government of India in general. But these two studies are mainly concerned with theoretical aspects of local government focusing on different Acts. It is perhaps Rahman[10] and Wheeler[11] who first made empirical studies on the functioning of local government. Rahman's main focus was on Union Council at the

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grass roots level and Wheeler focused on Divisional Council, the higher tier of local government under basic democracy system.

Rashiduzzaman also made an empirical investigation into the politics and administration of local government under basic democracy. He observed that after the introduction of periodical election through adult suffrage, the traditional leadership is breaking down in the villages and an emerging leadership is dominating the local councils.[12] In discussing the local government election during the period of the British rule, M.A. Chaudhury remarked that as the voters had to vote by open declaration before the presiding officer and in the presence of the candidates or authorized agents, they could seldom exercise voting right freely without fear. Consequently the local *zamindars* and money-lenders influenced the voters.[13] Sobhan analyzed the political motive of basic democracy through the functioning of Rural Works Programme.[14] The works of Ali Ahmed[15] and Faizullah[16] contain the growth and development of local government institutions in Bangladesh. The volume edited by Siddiqui also contains a brief discussion of local government system in Bangladesh.[17] But these works do not attempt intensive analysis. Tepper's study contains the history of evolution of rural development administration in the then East Pakistan. He observed that the changes introduced for the

implementation of rural development projects were more in nomenclature than in substance.[18] In his another study he noted the centralizing tendencies of rural development administration and expressed cautions optimism about institutional building efforts which were underway in basic democracy system and Comilla model of rural development.[19] The study of Raper provides information on the mechanism of Comilla model of rural development.[20]

Abedin's work offers an analysis of the changing pattern of local administration and politics focusing on the district administration in Bangladesh.[21] Ali's work of 1982 also deals with the district administration, but he gave emphasis to the role of District Collector in rural development.[22] Latif, on the other hand, conducted his research on sub-divisional administration with particular reference to the role of Sub-divisional Officer.[23] Bhanu[24] and Khan[25] conducted their studies on the problems of co-ordination at the local level administration. The former related her study to the agricultural administration of a *thana* and the later to the Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) Programmes at the same level. Wahhab dealt with local government election and observed that it is largely influenced by the questions of religion, neighborhood, local

and non-local and other factional issues.[26] In another study he remarked that the persons who win the local government election, they not only control the local government but also control the total power structure at the villages.[27] His third study reveals that the political affiliation of the members of local councils is very fluid and shifting to the party in power.[28]

The study made by Ali *et.al.* is perhaps the comprehensive study dealing with the decentralization and people's participation in Bangladesh.[29] The study, based on opinion survey, indicates that majority of the opinion holders preferred *thana* as focal point of development administration and district as the co-ordinating unit of *thana* administration. Most of them also preferred a directly elected people's representative as the head of *thana* administration. Shamsur Rahman's study deals with the people's participation—its problems and prospects at the *upazila* level.[30] The study of Yeahia Akhter analyses the socio-political impact of *upazila* decentralization.[31] The study of Tofile Ahmed[32] and also the study of Aminur Rahman[33] are concerned with the relationship between central government and local government. Hoque analyzed the failure of *Gram Sarkar* instituted by General Zia.[34] Lutful Hoq Choudhury stressed the need for reorganizing local government institutions in Bangladesh by strengthening *Union*

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Parishads.[35] H.A.Hye[36] and Zillur Rahman[37] discussed planning process at the various local levels in general, while M.M. Khan and H.M.Zafarullah analyzed the planning process at the *upazila* level.[38] The book edited by H.A.Hye contains articles relating to decentralization processes of different countries including Bangladesh.[38] On the other hand, the book edited by Blair contains articles on local resource mobilization in Bangladesh.[40]

The book of Shawkat Ali[41] published in 1986 is probably the commendable exercise on *upazila* decentralization. The author was a Member-Secretary of the Committee for Administrative Reform 1982 according to the recommendations of which, the *upazila* decentralization was introduced. So he had been associated with *upazila* administration before its birth. He analyzed the different political and administrative problems which the government of General Ershad encountered during the implementation of *upazila* decentralization. M.M. Khan wrote a number of articles on decentralization policies undertaken by General Ershad.[42] He emphasized the need for the reorientation of bureaucracy in order to make the decentralized programme a success. The same finding is revealed from the observation of Mahbubur Rahman when he studied the bureaucratic attitude towards decentralization policy of General Ershad.[43] Nizam Ahmed also observed the same finding while studying the

relationship between people's representatives and bureaucracy at the local levels.[44] Nurul Islam, on the other hand, dealt with the gap between urban and rural areas of Bangladesh and held an optimistic view about the prospect of *upazila* decentralization. To him " despite many shortcomings the *upazila* scheme has the promise to lead the country a new era".[45] The almost similar optimistic view was also held by Ashraf Uddin Ahmed.[46] Yusuf Hyder dealt with the performance of *upazila* decentralization and spoke high of it. To him *upazila* decentralization made miraculous development in the way of economic growth. He observed:

> I have attempted to show what miracle the *upazila* can do in the way of economic growth accompanied by equity within a matter of five years. The secret behind the magic lies in the will of the people to improve their lot by the thrift and the hard work and by playing their pioneering role in the development process. The *Upazila Parishad* can provide the leadership, input and service support during the planning and execution stages of the plan and see its post commission performance.[47]

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CHAPTER 2

DECENTRALIZATION : A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

In this chapter an attempt has been made to discuss theoretical aspects of decentralization and to define and clarify different concepts used in the study.

2.1 Meaning of Decentralization

We frequently talk about decentralization. But its academic discussion is very complex and confusing. For the term "decentralization" is used to mean a variety of different organizational processes and structures. So the discussion on decentralization in isolation may lead to confusion unless we relate it to centralization and discuss its (decentralization) various forms and related issues.

Centralization is a system in which all authority and powers of the government lie in the central government. On the other hand, when authority and powers are given to the local levels decentralization takes place. Rondinelli defines decentralization as the transfer or delegation of legal and political authority to plan, make decisions and

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manage public functions from the national level to local levels.[1] In the same tune Smith observes "Decentralization involves the delegation of power to lower levels".[2] But these definitions of decentralization are narrow. They are limited to territorial decentralization and exclude the functional decentralization i.e. the transfer of authority from central to peripheral organizations at the national level, e.g. from government department to attached offices. But although these definitions are narrow, they are consistent with the way in which the term "decentralization" is frequently used today specially in less developed countries.[3]

It should be noted here that the essence of centralization and decentralization lies in the distribution of powers for taking decision and the difference between the two is one of degree, not of kind. No government can completely be centralized or decentralized. Complete decentralization means withering away of the state.[4] Both centralization and decentralization take place simultaneously and hence "should therefore be envisaged as the processes of movement in either direction along a continuum which has no finite ends".[5]

The above discussion invariably indicates that "decentralization is a process not a condition".[6] It is

changing one, not a fixed state. This change has been described by Philip Mawhood as a "pendulum model" in the context of African countries.[7]

2.1(i) Benefit and Objective of Decentralization

The advocates of decentralization have suggested a variety of benefits for decentralization. Cohen *et.al.* described the benefits of decentralization in four categories, viz. (a) administrative, (b) political, (c) economic and (d) primary values such as participation, democracy and self-reliance.[8] Cheema and Rondinelli identified a wide range of reasons for the governments of developing countries to adopt decentralization policies and programmes. Most important of these are :

   i) the concern of some governments that economic growth often had not been accompanied by equitable distribution of benefits ;

   ii) pressure from below for increased popular partici- pation in development process ;

   iii) influence of aid agencies attempting to promote rural development projects ;

   iv) failure of centrally planned and managed pro- grammes to mobilize human and physical resources for rural development in the past ;

   v) increasing complexities of development which increased responsibilities of national agencies ;

vi) the need to strengthen the planning and management capabilities of local organizations so that they can design and implement their own projects ;

vii) concern about the lack of adequate coordination among the national and local organizations at the local level;

viii) interregional economic disparities and ethnic variations ;

ix) the need to mobilize political support from rural areas: and

x) recognition of the need to formulate special programmes outside the traditional administration to assist the disadvantaged group.[9]

Rondinelli and his colleagues at the World Bank reviewed the decentralization practices in developing countries and broadly classified the objectives of decentralization into (i) political and (ii) administrative and management.[10] Conyers categorized the objectives of decentralization into three dichotomous pairs : managerial versus political, top-down versus bottom-up and explicit versus implicit objectives.[11] A short description of these is given below :

Managerial vs. Political Objectives: By managerial objectives Conyers means the objectives which are associated with the organization and management of development programmes. Under the managerial objective, decentralization is used as a means of improving the planning and implementation of development programmes and projects by

taking account of local needs, increasing flexibility in the administration of development, mobilizing local resources and increasing local commitment.

With regard to the political objectives of de-centralization she held the view that these are more difficult to identify and analyze. Because they are often not stated explicitly and also because of their ubiquity. In fact, decentralization is a political decision about the distribution of power between different levels in political and administrative hierarchy. So in the managerial objective of decentralization there is political objective or motive also.

Bottom-up vs. Top-down Objectives: The distinction between top – down and bottom-up objectives, according Conyers, helps to explain the objectives at the national level and local levels. The objectives of national level may sometimes differ from that of local or regional resulting conflict between the objectives at both levels. The majority of decentralized programmes in developing countries seem to be initiated at the national level and a few countries had demand of decentralization from local or regional levels. For bottom-up objectives,Conyers cited the example of Sudan, Papua New Guinea and Sri-Lanka. However, the initiative of

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decentralization from national or local/regional can not be outside the purview of political and managerial objectives.

Explicit vs. Implicit Objectives : The objectives of decentralization when explicitly are stated in a public document or through a declaration known as explicit objectives. These may be managerial or political, top-down or bottom-up. These are invariably positive objectives. Implicit objectives, on the other hand, are not publicly stated and these are usually political objectives. To explain the explicit and implicit objectives of decentralization conyers cited the example of Zambia. In 1980 the government of Zambia in a public statement expressed the decentralization as a means of `bringing the government closer to the people' especially in the rural areas. But another motive which was not explicitly stated was the desire to strengthen the role of party at the district and local levels.

From the above discussion it emanates that decentralization according to Conyers is used as a means of achieving a variety of different objectives. But in the ultimate analysis, her different types of objectives fall in the category of (a) political and (b) administrative and management objectives already enunciated by Rondinelli and his colleagues as stated above. But Conyers "can claim the

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distinction of being among the few to mention the explicit versus implicit objectives, a subject not touched by many probably because of its delicate nature".[12] Equally she made an important contribution when she observed "political objectives of decentralization are rather more difficult to identify and analyze, partly because they are not often stated explicitly but also because of their ubiquity."[13]

2.1(ii) The design of decentralization

The design of decentralization involves the following questions :

    i) Which functional activities are decentralized ?

    ii) How these functions are to be decentralized ?

    iii) To whom powers are decentralized ?

    iv) To what level powers are decentralized ?

The first question is to decide the type of activities over which the authority is decentralized. The second question deals with the legal basis or sanction of decentralization. Generally the legal basis or sanction behind the design of decentralization is the constitution and/or legislation. Sometimes order or ordinance of the Chief Executive acts as the basis of decentralization. The third question is to identify who hold the decentralized powers e.g. elected representatives or appointed officials, an individual or a group. The fourth question is to select

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the level/levels to which the powers are decentralized. There may be several levels where decentralization of planning and administration work :

(a) National level : peripheral organizations at the national level i.e. transfer of authority from government department to attached offices;

(b) Regional level : such as states in India, division in Bangladesh and province in Indonesia;

(c) District level ;

(d) Sub-district level : such as *thana /upazila* in Bangladesh and block in India;

(e) Locality level : such as union or municipality in Bangladesh;

(f) Community level i.e, village ; and

(g) Group level : such as economic enterprise, occupational group etc.[14]

2.2 Forms of Decentralization

The question of measuring the degree of decentralization gave birth to the forms of decentralization. But it is very difficult to determine the degree of decentralization in a quantitative manner. In spite of this, there have been efforts to measure decentralization by using different terms which are popularly known as the forms of decentralization. They are devolution, deconcentration, delegation and dispersal.[15]

A. Devolution

Devolution indicates the transfer of power to locally constituted political bodies. It has constitutional/legal connotations. The local government or as in India it is referred to local self-government (*Panchayati Raj* Institutions) is essentially a form of decentralization under the spirit of devolution.[16] Devolutionary decentralization is also known as democratic decentralization. But when devolution is referred to provincial legislature, it is called political decentralization.[17] Devolution in its purest form, has certain fundamental characteristics which are given below :

> First, local units of governments are autonomous, independent and clearly perceived as separate levels of government over which central authorities exercise little or no direct control.

> Second, the local governments have clear and legally recognized geographical boundaries within which they exercise authority and perform public functions.

> Third, local governments have corporate status and power to secure resources to perform their functions.

> Fourth, devolution implies the need to develop local governments as institutions in the sense that they are perceived by local citizens as organizations providing services that satisfy their needs and as governmental units over which they have some influence.

> Finally, the devolution is an arrangement in which there are reciprocal, mutually beneficial and coordinate relationship between central and local governments[18].

From the characteristics mentioned above, it reveals that the local governments have clear geographical

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boundaries, corporate status and are considered as separate levels of government. They are not merely as subordinate level of government, they have some independence and autonomy and represent the concept of separateness of diversity of structures within the political system as a whole. Since local governments are parts of the entire political system they interact with the central government and other units of government in reciprocal, mutually benefitting and coordinated manner.

Local governments usually assume to entail democracy and exercise collective authority through the councils. The members of the councils are elected and are accountable to the electorate. The elected members are known as lay personnel.[19] As miniature political institutions operating at their periphery, the local governments enjoy power in raising revenue and in the expenditure of resources required, although the central government plays a larger financial role in the operation of the local governments. To enable them perform the functions which have been entrusted to them, the local governments employ their own professional staff of administrators and specialists.[20]

B. Deconcentration

As a form of decentralization, deconcentration is less extensive than devoltion and mostly administrative in nature. It is usually the transfer of specific responsibilities from centre to its subordinate officials operating outside the capital city in a system of field administration.[21] The district collectorate in India, Pakistan or Bangladesh may be cited as the example of deconcentration. Deconcentration is also called bureaucratic decentralization. Thus both devolution and deconcentration mean the transfer of power from one level to another with territorial jurisdiction. Local administration under deconcentration may either be integrated or unintegrated. In the integrated system of local administration field officers work under the supervision of local executive. But in the unintegrated system of local administration, the field officers work independently of each other and are supervised by different sets of executive.[22]

C. Delegation

Delegation means the transfer of power by a superior authority to a subordinate one in which ultimate responsibility lies with the transferring authority. Delegation transfers managerial responsibility for specific functions to organizations that are outside the regular bureaucratic structure and that are only indirectly

controlled by the central government[23]. Stephen S. Cohen *et.al.* divided the delegation of authority into (a) delegation to autonomous agencies and (b) delegation to parallel organization.[24]

D. Dispersal

Unlike the above " dispersal refers to the posting of officials outside the capital without any substantial transfer of powers and functions to them".[25] Some writers did not mention dispersal as the form of decentralization. In the place of dispersal they regarded privatism i.e. transfer of authority from public to private sector as the fourth form of decentralization.[26] Privatism is also called by other as debureaucratization.[27]

It should be pointed out that under each form of decentralization powers are limited and may be withdrawn by the transferring authority. But generally the transferring authority does not withdraw powers under devolution unless there is constitutional/legal compulsion or where the national interest suffers. On the contrary, in the cases of other forms, the transferring authority does not require any formal authorization in annulling the transferred powers. Again in relation to accountability, there is difference among these forms. Devolution connotes

responsibility to the respective electorate, not to the transferring authority, and hence it is downward. But in the cases of other forms accountability is upward i.e. to the transferring authority. And hence generally the transferring authority is responsible for the act of commission and omission of those who act under deconcentration, delegation and dispersal.

From the above discussion it is clear that, of the four forms devolution manifests the highest degree of decentralization and the dispersal refers to the least. Because in the case of dispersal neither functions nor responsibilities are substantially transferred to the field level. What happens here is that the officers from the centre are sent to the different regions for the realization of certain purpose. Again delegation is more limited than deconcentration in the sense that under deconcentration some responsibilities are transferred to the field offices, but under delegation though functions are transferred to the lower levels, the responsibility lies at the centre.

It should be noted that though the different forms of decentralization may be distinguished in respect of their nature, scope and accountability, they are not mutually exclusive. All government structure have some combination of all these four forms with an emphasis on the degree of

authority transferred to the decentralized units differing from country to country.[28] For this reason, no clear cut distinction is found in decentralization policy adopted by the developing countries and hence there are confusion and complexity in implementing the decentralized programmes. However, of the four forms devolution and deconcentration are the most common recognized forms of decentralization, although not all decentralized system of government fit clearly into either one or other category[29].

In the context of the present study decentralization is meant for devolution.

2.3 Local Government vs. Provincial Government

In discussing the modern state we frequently use the term "sovereignty". Although the term "sovereignty" is undergoing rapid change, yet it provides a measuring rod for the distinction between national government and provincial government and also the distinction of local government from national government or provincial government/state government. In considering the concept of sovereignty there are four types of government. These are :

    a)   Supra-sovereign government : such as European Economic Community, are still relatively underdeveloped.

    b)   National government : Today national government is regarded as sovereign which exercise the most authority.

c)   Provincial government : It is the quasi-sovereign government. It functions in a federal country. The essence of federal form of government is that the sovereignty i.e. the supreme power is divided between national government and provincial governments/state governments.

d)   Local government : It is infra sovereign. It works under sovereign national government or quasi-sovereign provincial/state government.[30]

From the above discussion it is clear that quasi-sovereign provincial government is not a local government. The laws establishing or controlling local government are generally provincial/state laws in a federal country.

2.4 Local Government vs. Field Administration

The distinction between local government and field administration may be cited from the distinction between devolution and deconcentration as the forms of decentralization. The devolution or democratic decentralization is manifested through the establishment of local government, the characteristics of which we already discussed. Field administration is an example of deconcentration. Smith observes three important characteristics of field administration:

Firstly, the kind of authority is delegated to the officers at the field level is bureaucratic and not political. The field level officers are part of an organizational structure hierarchy with spheres of competence

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formally defined. Secondly, the field officers generally
civil servants recruited according to normal selection
procedure. They are posted at the field level for a limited
period before being moved to another area or back to
headquarters. Thirdly, the areas within which field officers
function are delimitated by the administrative requirements
rather than local requirements unless these have relevance
to the administrative tasks of field staff.[31]

So far we have stated decentralization in general and
devolutionary decentralization in particular. Now we shall
discuss other issues associated with devolutionary
decentralization for its effective functioning.

As mentioned earlier that the growing interest in
decentralization is not only due to the disillusionment with
the result of central planning and the shift of emphasis
with equity policy, but also to the realization that the
development is a complex process that cannot be easily
planned and controlled from the centre. In other words, the
need of decentralized or local level planning arises not
only because the national level planners can not often
identify local problems but also because there is a need to
involve the people in development process. Hence the main
thrust of decentralization is to facilitate popular partici-
pation in both planning and implementation of development

activities. This not only creates a more democratic society but also makes projects and programmes more relevant to local needs and demands; and engenders local commitment and, in some cases, contribution in the form of money and manpower[32]. Thus decentralization, local level planning and people's participation are interrelated and interdependent and inseparable from each other. We already stated the different dimensions of decentralization in general and devolutionary or democratic decentralization in particular. Now we shall discuss in brief, the different dimensions of decentralized planning and people's participation.

2.5. Decentralized Planning: Some Issues

A. Units of Decentralized Planning

Decentralized or local level planning may be exercised in such levels where decentralization of administration works. But opinions vary as to the appropriate level of such planning. In some countries district is considered as the focal unit of decentralized planning. In other countries a higher or lower level relative to district is identified for appropriate level.[33] However, in order to select the appropriate level for decentralized planning a country has to take into certain considerations which according to the report of Expert Group Meeting on local level planning for

integrated Rural Development for ESCAP region, include the following:

    i) Its possibility to facilitate direct and indirect participation of local people in the planned development process;

    ii) Its coverage with an area viable enough to allow the provision of essential services and upgrading managerial and productive skills of rural people through group action to assist in mobilization of resources to activate a locally inspired development programme;

    iii) Its coincidence with the lowest level of administrative hierarchy.[34]

It emanates from the above discussion that decentralized planning takes place above the village level. In other words, in between national/provincial level and villages there are administrative units where decentralized planning is exercised.

B. Tasks of Decentralized Planning

Decentralized planning is not an isolated exercise. Its tasks comprise the following:

    i) To inter-link and coordinate the planning and development at the levels of homogenous small groups, the local government and the administrative unit and formulate a well integrated local area plan;

    ii) To inter-link the plans and policies for the local area with regional and national policies and plan;

    iii) To mobilize resources at local and from supra-local levels in order to match the planned programmes and activities with the available resources;

iv) To implement, monitor and evaluate the development plan and programme in terms of outputs, effects and impact, with particular reference to the target groups.[35]

C. Scope of Decentralized Planning

The range and scope of decentralized planning is determined by the size of its geographical limits and quantitative and qualitative appraisal of its human and material resources. Generally, the activities which can be planned and executed at the local level without sacrificing planning efficiency, are considered fit for the subjects of decentralized planning. Thus in the Indian context the Dantwala Working Group on block level planning listed the following areas of activity which form the range and scope of block-level planning:

    i)   Agriculture and allied activities;

   ii)   Minor irrigation;

  iii)   Soil conservation and water management;

   iv)   Animal husbandry and poultry;

    v)   Fisheries;

   vi)   Forestry;

  vii)   Processing of agricultural produce;

 viii)   Organizing input supply, credit and marketing;

   ix)   Cottage and small industries;

    x)   Local infrastructure;

xi)   Social services:

(a) Drinking water supply;
(b) Health and nutrition;
(c) Education;
(d) Housing;
(e) Sanitation;
(f) Local transport; and
(g) Welfare programmes.

xii)   Training of local youth and upgrading the skills of the local population[36].

D. Stages of Planning

For its successful working a development planning pro-cess, whether national or local has to pass four well-defined stages. These are formulation , adoption, execution and evaluation.[37]

The first stage of development planning is to prepare a development plan. The task of drafting the plan at the national level is generally performed by the government through a statutory body called Planning Commission.The adoption or approval of the plan is the function either of the legislature or the executive organ of the government.

The execution or implementation of the national plan is the responsibility of the government.The various departments and agencies take necessary measures to implement the plan. The evaluation on the implementation of the plan is the task of an independent body of experts unconnected with plan formulation or plan execution. This body evaluates the

fulfillment of the plan in a strictly impartial manner. To perform the evaluation functions properly it prepares quarterly, semi annual and annual evaluation of plan progress.

2.6 People's Participation: Meaning and Form

The most important and at the same time most complicated issue bearing on decentralization of planning and development is the people's participation."Calls for participation in development and praise for the value of participation in development have become a common as the ubiquitous adulation one finds for motherland, patriotism, self-improvement and democracy".[38] In short, the people's participation is regarded as the key component of the development process and its need in development is accepted and recognized all around. But there is no clear cut agreement on the definition of the concept and the mechanism for ensuring effective people's participation.

People's participation means the involvement of the people in the development process voluntarily and willingly. Such participation cannot be coerced. According to Blair such participation excludes the participation in general political process of the country and takes three forms. They are:(a) participation in the project cycle specially within

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the implementing institutions itself. This involve
participation in planning,implementation and evaluation
stages of project cycle; (b) participation in local
organisation and (c) participation in local government
institutions.[38] The main shortcoming of the forms of
people's participation given by Blair is the exclusion of
people's participation in the benefits of development
project, which is the most important form of people's par-
ticipation. So the forms suggested by Yadav are worth
mentioning here. According to him people's participation has
to be understood in the following forms :

   i) Participation in decision making;

  ii) Participation in implementation of
     programmes and projects;

 iii) Participation in monitoring and
     evaluation of development programmes and
     projects; and

  iv) Participation in sharing the benefits
     of development.[40]

2.7 Prerequisites for Effective Decentralization

Some development theorists held the view that a minimum
level of economic development is necessary before
decentralized institutions specially the local government
assume broad development responsibilities. Other opined that
decentralization partially creates conditions of its own
success.[41] However,the following conditions are conducive to
effective decentralization.

i) Democratic Environment and Political Commitment

The local government, created under devolutionary decentralization, is a sub_system of national/provincial government. It has roots in democracy. Without democratic environment, the local government institutions cannot develop properly. Strong political commitment is also essential for effective decentralization. The national leaders, both from ruling party and opposition should have support and commitment to the transfer of planning and decision making at the lower levels outside the direct control of central government.

ii) Administrative Support and Capability

Administration or bureaucracy plays an important role in the working of decentralization of administration. So the support of and commitment to decentralization policies and programmes within the line and staff agencies of central bureaucracy are very important in the success of decentralization .There should also have sufficient adminis-trative and technical capacity for implementing decentralized programmes and projects.

iii) Explicit Objective

The objectives of decentralization should be explicit. These must be stated in a document or through a

declaration. The rules and directives of decentralization must also clearly be written in order to maintain harmonious relationship among different levels of government and administration so that confusion and conflict may not arise as to their jurisdiction.

iv) Behavioural Factor

The paternalistic and authoritarian attitude and behaviour of both the political leaders and officials should be changed in order to create a minimum level of trust and respect between them and the citizen. This will create effective channel of participation and representation for the people specially the rural residents in decentralized planning and administration.

v) Organizational Factor

Organizational factors that are needed for effective decentralization are : (a) appropriate allocation of planning and administrative functions among the various levels of government and administration; (b) flexible arrangement based on performance criteria,for allocating functions as the resources and capabilities of local government change over time, (c) clearly defined and relatively uncomplicated planning and management procedures for eliciting participation of local leaders and people in the formulation, organizations, implementation and

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evaluation of development projects and programmes; and (d) diverse supporting institutions that complement local government in carrying out decentralized development functions.[42]

vi) Resource Condition

The local government created under decentralization should have sufficient power to raise or obtain financial resources to acquire the equipment, supplies, personnel and facilities required to carry out decentralized responsibilities and to undertake development projects. In many developing countries the inadequacy of financial resources was the main factor that hindered the proper implementation of decentralized policies. Resource mobilization for local government has two broad dimensions : first the local effort and second the government's support.

Although it is possible to identify the above conditions that are conducive to the effective decentralization, "the levels of adequacy or measures of effectiveness expressed or implied in these conditions can not be universally prescribed, nor can the precise combination of conditions needed to make decentralization feasible".[43] But among the conditions mentioned above the democratic environment and political commitment are the most important conditions. If democratic environment prevails in

the country and political leadership is committed to the decentralization of planning and administration at the local levels, the other conditions automatically will get facilities to be developed. However, fewer the conditions that exist or the grater the obstacles to creating them, the greater the difficulty in implementing decentralized programmes.

CHAPTER 2

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35. " Report of the Consultative Committee on Alternative Strategies for Development with Focus on Local Level Planning and Development in *Local Level Planning and Rural Development*, pp.164-165.

36. K.P.A. Menon "India" in *Local Level Planning and Rural Development*, p.226.

37. M.L. Seth, *Theory and Practice of Economic Planning*, sixth edition, (New Delhi: Schand and Company Ltd,1977), pp. 98-100. For Detailed analysis on the stages of Planning, see, Albert Waterstone, *Development Planning: Lessons of Experience* (London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, fifth edition 1974),pp.45-102.

38. Harry W.Blair, "Participatory Rural Development " in Hasnat Abdul Hye ed., *op.cit.*, p.79.

39. *Ibid*, pp. 79-107.

40. Ram P. Yadav, "People's Participation: Focus on Mobilization of the Rural Poor" in *Local Level Planning and Rural Development*. p.87.

41. D.A. Rondinelli 1981, *op.cit.*, p.142.

42. *Ibid*, pp. 142-143.

43. *Ibid*, p. 143.

CHAPTER 3

ECOLOGY OF DECENTRALIZATION IN BANGLADESH

Decentralization is a political decision. It occurs in a political setting. "It is this setting that substantially accounts for initiatives to decentralize, conditions the operation of decentralization, and is in turn altered by the political consequences".[1] Hence any study of decentralization is closely related to the political setting within which the decentralized policies and programmes operate. Administration plays an important role in functioning decentralized programmes. So the discussion of administrative setting can not be ignored in the study of decentralization. It is also essential to discuss the demographic view and socio-economic settings of the country. The present chapter is devoted to give a short account of all these conditions.

3.1 Territory and its Characteristics

Bangladesh is the creation of the partition of India in 1947 into two dominions : Indian Union and Pakistan and the subsequent break up of Pakistan in 1971. Before the

partition of India in 1947 Bengal was a province of united India.[2] After the partition West Bengal joined Indian Union and East Bengal declared herself in favour of joining Pakistan. East Bengal later known as East Pakistan remained as the province of federal Pakistan for about 24 years. It was renamed as Bangladesh and became independent in 1971.

Geographically Bangladesh lies in the north eastern part of South Asia between 20°34′ and 26°38′ north latitude and 88°01′ and 92°41′ east longitude. It is positioned at the top of the Bay of Bengal which forms its southern boundary. The other sides of it are surrounded by India, excepting a short land border with Myanmar (Burma) in the south east.

The total area of Bangladesh is 55,598 sq. miles or 143.999 sq.km. An overwhelming proportion of the surface of Bangladesh is a vast, flat, even, alluvial and plain. The rest regions are hilly in the north-east and south-east and highland in the north and north-eastern part of the country. Bangladesh is very much the child of its rivers. A network of rivers of which the Padma, the Jamuna, the Teesta, the Brahmaputra, the Surma, the Meghna and the Karnaphuli are important, and their tributaries numbering about 230 with a total length of about 24140 km. covering the country flow

down to the Bay of Bengal. The alluvial soil is thus continuously being enriched by heavy silts deposited by the rivers during the rainy season. The total forest area of the country covers about 16 per cent of the land area.[3] Bangladesh enjoys generally a sub-tropical monsoon climate and suitable for agriculture.

3.2 Political Setting

Bangladesh is a unitary state. According to the constitution, the government of Bangladesh is to be democratic one.[4] Both the governments in exile and post-liberation led by the *Awami* League followed parliamentary democracy of the British type. But within three years after taking office, the government of the *Awami* League amended the constitution and presidential rule of one party political system was introduced in the country.[5] After the political change in 1975, though multi-party politics was introduced by the government of General Zia, presidential form of government[6] continued to function till the Twelfth Amendment of the constitution in September 1991. According to the Twelfth Amendment parliamentary democracy again has been revived in the country.

The constitution provides for a unicameral legislature which is called *Jatyo Sangsad* (House of Nation).

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It consists of 300 members directly elected by adult franchise. The Members of *Jatyo Sangsad* elect 30 female Members. The *Jatyo Sangsad* is a National Parliament and is vested with the legislative powers of the Republic.[7]

The highest judiciary of Bangladesh is the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court comprises two Divisions—the Appellate Division and High Court Division.[8] The Supreme Court consists of the Chief Justice to be known as the Chief Justice of Bangladesh and such number of other judges as the President deems it necessary to appoint to each Division. [9] The Chief Justice and other judges are appointed by the President. Below the Supreme Court there are subordinate courts which have been created by the law.

The constitution of Bangladesh introduced in 1972 made provision for elected local government and people's participation. Article 11 of the constitution states : The Republic shall be a democracy . . . in which effective participation by the people through their elected representatives in administration at all levels should be ensured.[10] Article 59 deals with the local government in the following languages :

    i) Local government in every administrative unit of the Republic shall be entrusted to bodies, composed of persons elected in accordance with law.

ii) Every body such as is referred to in clause (1) shall subject to this constitution and any other law, perform within the appropriate administrative unit, such functions as will be prescribed by the Act of Parliament, which may include functions relating to -

    (a) administration and the work of public officers :

    (b) the maintenance of public order ; and

    (c) the preparation and implementation of plans relating to public services and economic development.[11]

Article 60 of the constitution delineates the fact that :

For the purpose of giving full effect to the provision of article 59, Parliament shall by law, confer powers on the local government bodies referred to in that article including power to impose taxes for local purpose, to prepare their budget and to maintain funds.[12]

Although constitutionally Bangladesh is a democratic country, before the national election of 1991 there had been no change in the government at the national level through proper election. Changes in the government had been the results of coups, assassination or mass movement. As a result, except a sort break (1971-75) Bangladesh was governed by military rule, either directly or indirectly. The provisions of local government were abolished in 1975 when under the Fourth Amendment of the constitution one party political system was introduced in the country. The local government institutions were constituted by the ordinances, the discussion of which follows in the next chapter. But when multi-party political system was

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introduced by General Zia, a sentence on local government was incorporated in the constitution in 1979 under the Article 9 which states:

> The state shall encourage local government institutions composed of representatives of the areas concerned and in such institutions, special representation shall be given, as far as possible, to peasants, workers and women.[13]

The provisions for local government that were abolished by the Fourth Amendment in 1975 were again revived in September 18, 1991 under the Twelfth Amendment of the constitution by the present government of Khaleda Zia.[14]

3.3 Administrative Setting

The apex organization of the national administration is the secretariat, the nerve centre of entire administrative organization and main spring of all governmental activities . It is the hub of administration and the main centre of policy-making. The secretariat consists of all Ministries. A Ministry is composed of one or more divisions. A division is divided into wings, branches and sections. A Minister is the political head of a Ministry and Secretary is its administrative head. Next to Secretary, there are in descending order, Additional Secretaries, Joint Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries.

Figure 3.1

Secretariat Set-up

Minister	<———>	Political/Policy head
Secretary	<———>	Administrative head of the Ministry/Division
Additional Secretary	<———>	In-charge of the Ministry/Division
Joint Secretary	<———>	Head of Wing
Deputy Secretary	<———>	Head of Branch
Assistant Secretary	<———>	Head of Section
Subordinate Staff	<———>	Supportive function
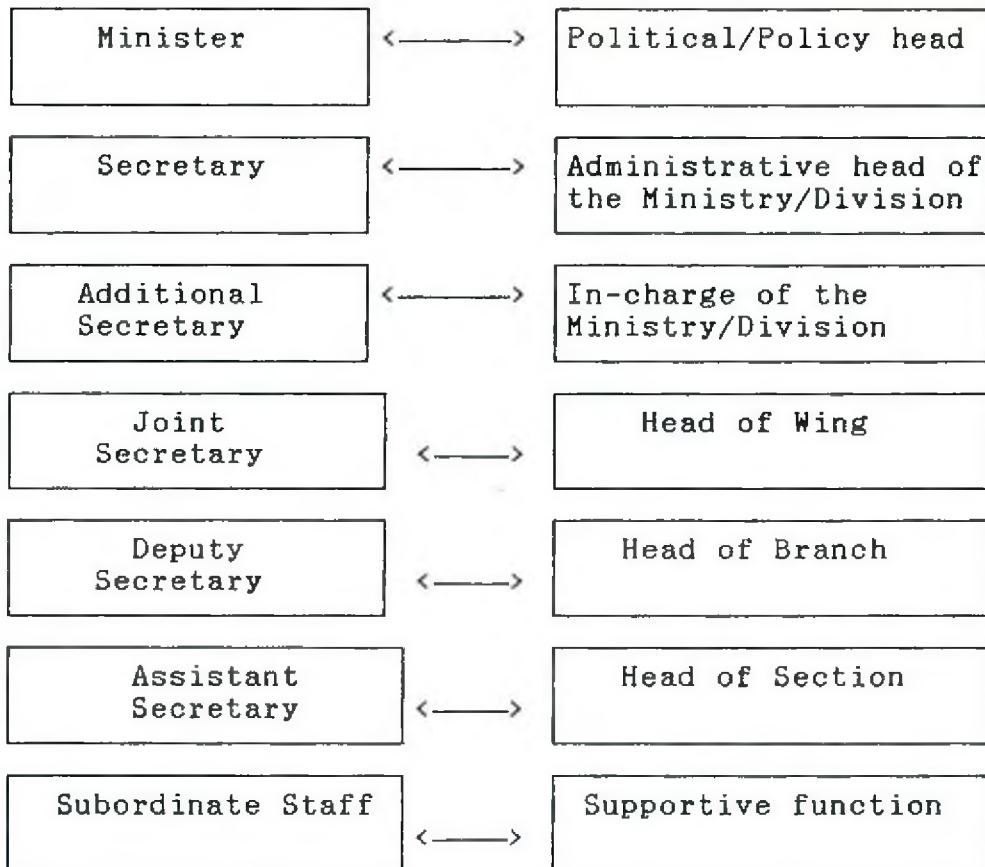
The Ministries are responsible for the formulation of government policies; and the implementation of those policies are the functions of executive agencies, called Attached Departments and Subordinate Offices. The Attached Departments, also called Directorates, are responsible for providing executive directions required in the implementation of policies laid down by the Ministries to

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which they are attached. Subordinate Offices are responsible for the detailed execution of the policies at the field levels.

There is another type of functional administrative bodies called public statutory organizations (Autonomous/ Semi-Autonomous Bodies). These bodies are variously known as Corporation, Authority, Board, Trust, etc. They function according to their respective acts, ordinances, rules and executive orders. They have also subordinate offices spreading over the country. The functional departments and their subordinate offices may be classified into various categories, viz. regulatory departments, service departments, nation building departments, etc. But this is an arbitrary classification.

For the convenience of field administration the whole country is divided into divisions headed by Divisional Commissioners. Each division is divided into *zilas* (districts). The administration of *zila* is run by a Deputy Commissioner. The *zilas* are sub-divided into several *thanas/ upazilas* (sub districts). Formally the *upazilas* were *thanas* and the *zilas* were basically sub-divisions, when administrative re-organisation was carried out in 1982-1984

Figure 3.2

Level   Field Administrative Set-up

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                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
Central             │      Ministry/Division       │
                    └─────────────────────────────┘
                              │              ┌──────────────┐
                    ┌─────────────────────┐  │Corporations/ │
                    │Department/Directorate│  │Autonomous    │
                    │       Bureau         │  │Bodies        │
                    └─────────────────────┘  └──────────────┘
                              │
Division            ┌─────────────────────────────┐
  No.5              │Divisional Commissioner       │
                    │Division Level Offices         │
                    └─────────────────────────────┘
                              │
Zila                ┌─────────────────────────────┐
No.64               │Deputy Commissioner           │
                    │Zila Level Officers            │
                    └─────────────────────────────┘
                              │
Thana/Upazila       │Thana/Upazila                  │
  No.460            │Administration                 │
                    └─────────────────────────────┘
                              │
Union               ┌─────────────────────────────┐
No.4401             │            None              │
                    └─────────────────────────────┘
                              │
Village             ┌─────────────────────────────┐
No.68,000           │            None              │
                    └─────────────────────────────┘

Urban Areas                   │

City                ┌─────────────────────────────┐
Corporation         │            None              │
No.4                └─────────────────────────────┘
                              │
Pourashava          ┌─────────────────────────────┐
No.94               │            None              │
                    └─────────────────────────────┘
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by General Ershad which we shall discuss later, the sub-
divisions were converted into *zilas* and *thanas* were upgraded
into *upazilas*. The present government again renamed *upazila*
as *thana*. Next to *thanas/upazilas* there are unions in the
rural areas. A union is composed of several villages.[15] The
urban areas of the country is divided into two categories.
One category is under *Pourashavas* (Municipalities) and other
is under City Corporations.

3.4 The People and Socio-economic and Cultural Settings

Literally the word "Bangladesh" means "the land of
Bengalis". In fact it is a Bengali country. Bengali is the
state language and also the language of almost all the
people except some tribal people who constitute one per cent
of the population. Like linguistic homogeneity, there is
also a religious homogeneity. Islam, the state religion is
followed by 86.60 per cent of the population. The rest are
mainly Hindus, with some Buddhists, some Christians and a
few pagan religions.

Bangladesh is a small country having 143,999 squire kilometers in size. It stands 89th country in the world by size. But from the view point of population it is the eighth most populous country in the world and fifth in Asia. The total population of Bangladesh according to the Census of 1981 is 89.91 million. The percentage of urban population is 15.2 while that of rural is 84.8. Hence it is called rural Bangladesh. The density of population is 647 persons per sq. km. and it is most thickly populated area in the world. According to the Census of 1981 the literacy is 23.8 per cent for the population of 5 years and above. The sex ratio of the population is 106:100 i.e 106 male per 100 female. The labour force participation for population 10 years and above is 43.9 per cent of which 78.2 per cent is male and 5.1 per cent female.

Currently Bangladesh is one of the Least Developed Country (LDC) in the world where stark deprivation blights the life of more than two thirds of her population.[15] More than seventy per cent of her population consume less than average calorie requirements (2200 k.cal per day).[16] Rapid growth of population, traditional agriculture, high man-land ratio and low level of Industrialization have led severe unemployment and under employment in the country. Moreover frequent natural calamities such as flood, cyclone, etc. affect the agriculture, the main occupation of the majority

people. As a result, food deficiency and wide spread poverty prevail here. The labour unrest in the industries and frequent hurtle from several corners, have reduced the industries of the country to losing concern. The export of the country lagging the imports. From food grain to almost all essential commodities Bangladesh has to import. Hence Bangladesh has been facing with a heavy and persistent balance of trade deficit. Misuse of government funds and expenditure on unproductive sectors are great threat to the economic development of the country. Since independence in 1971 Taka, the currency of Bangladesh, has been devaluated by 450 per cent in 18 times. The development budget of the country is almost entirely dependent on foreign aids.

Bangladesh is a transitional society which is gradually getting ride of its traditional characteristics. Dependence on tradition, custom and hierarchy of authority are the characteristics of Bangladesh society.[17] In Bangladesh society, the hierarchy of authority began at the family in which the children are born and brought up. The children are to obey their fathers or mother, elder members and carry out their orders. The children are not encouraged to exercise their own choice and responsibility. As a result, a feeling of subordination grows among the children in the family and they become dependent on other to take decision. This prevents the children from building their personality

and self-confidence. The hierarchy of authority is also manifested in the social life. The *sardar* and *matbar*, the grass roots level leaders are consulted by general members in the *samaj* (society) for taking any decision. This outlook of the people is not conducive to the change and development. The requirement for development and modernization is that the people themselves must change. Development will not occur without psychological change in individual thoughts and personality. Development requires creative and innovative persons—entrepreneurs.[18]

The authoritarian outlook is not only confined to family and social environment, it is also manifested in the wider environment of administration and politics. So it is generally alleged that the authoritarian outlook of the Bangladesh bureaucrats has the root in the family and social environment. The bureaucrats, specially the petty officers behave the ordinary people in a most unsympathetic and irresponsible manner.[18] Hence the ordinary people are not only submissive to them but also afraid of them. As a result, there is a wide gap between ordinary people and the bureaucrats. However the gap is now partially filled by lawyers, elected representatives and appointed agents or local *touts*. Moreover, the family and social environment is slowly undergoing change and moving towards egalitarian direction.

Most of the people of Bangladesh are illiterate (76.20%).The illiteracy and authoritarian family and social life as well as authoritarian attitude of the bureaucrats created a situation that the ordinary people generally do not get much interest in community development works. "Being unaccustomed to make their own decision, the ordinary people find it very difficult to exercise the task of decision-making and thus they continue to look to the officials for decisions and for answer to their many problems.[20] On the other hand, a considerable number of bureaucrats also believe that the ordinary people are not capable of doing anything with their own initiative. Hence a sense of apathy has developed among the people and thus popular participation in developmental works remained very low. The people are not only indifferent of developmental works, they are also indifferent of their rights. So "of the three elements of the state—the citizens, politicians and administrators the citizens are the least well organised and articulate elements.[21]

The "sociological dualism" propounded by Bocke is a peculiar characteristic of the traditional society like Bangladesh.[22] In Bangladesh there is little contact between the member of the elite living in the cities and towns and the people living in the rural areas. Because there is a remarkable difference between the style of life and associational outlook of the modern educated people who generally live in the urban areas and rural masses. The situation has aptly put by Abedin:

> While the inarticulate illiterate rural masses, who are under the strong influence of religion and traditional thoughts and practices and who are very conservative and orthodox, stood at one extreme, the modernized elite, who are relatively much more secular and progressive and who are familiar with western ideas, stand at the other extreme.[23]

Corruption, in one from or another, is found in almost all societies. Bangladesh is not exception to this, But there has been widespread allegation of corruption in Bangladesh. Almost every day the newspapers cite the examples of corruption. Corruption takes the forms of bribery, misappropriation and misuse of public funds, use official position for private monetary gains, fraud, tempering with official records, negligence of duty and favoritism by public officials.[24] Corruption has, therefore, become endemic and cancerous in the society. It is a menace to honest and efficient administration resulting the adverse effect on the economy and development of the country.

Corruption is not only confined among the government officials. It is also rampant among the members of the public, such as "contractors, dealers, suppliers and other through whom the development works are undertaken".[25] The elected representatives are also not out of corruption.

However, it is believed that corruption in the sub-continent had its root in the administration of the East India Company. During Pakistan period when Rural Works Programme was launched in the country in the year of 1962, 5 per cent money of the programme was taken by the government officials concerned. With the passage of time this percentage increased and on the eve of Ayub's downfall it increased to 15 per cent. After the independence of Bangladesh in 1971 the percentage taken by the officials increased more. In this connection a study reveals that some UP members argued that if a person prepare false master roll of 15 per cent money or more for the officials concerned then what amount he will appropriate for himself ? From this one can understand the cases of UP members.[26]

In Bangladesh most of the people are suffering from frustration. In connection with frustration the people many be divided into three categories. Firstly the moneyed and educated employed persons are not satisfied with their income and position. They want more and more. Their

frustration results partly from the fact that nepotism, money and contacts with high-ups in political, administrative and social hierarchies play a vital role in furthering one's interest and partly from the facts that the above mentioned malpractice are so widespread that it is not surprising for them to imagine that they failed to get facilitates such as promotions or permits or licenses etc.[27]

Secondly, many educated or half-educated men who are unemployed or underemployed are severely frustrated. Because there are least possibilities of employment opportunities according to their educational qualification.

Thirdly, the unequal distribution of wealth and corrupt practices made concentration of wealth and/or land in the hands of few people.[28] As a result, the number of low income people and landless labourers is increasing tremendously. Now they are vast majority and suffering from frustration. The feeling of frustration resulted in social tension and consequently this situation made the people selfish, irresponsible, parochial, abusive and contemptuous.

This is the socio-economic and politico-administrative environments in Bangladesh. Under such environments the different governments of Bangladesh introduced different decentralization measures, the discussion of which follows in the next chapters.

CHAPTER   3

Notes and References

1. James W.Fesler "Approaches to the Understanding of Decentralization" in *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 27,1965, p.535.

2. The Muslim conquest incorporated Bengal into the Delhi *Sultanate* and the territory that comprised undivided Bengal received the name Bangla. Before the Muslim rule, the different parts of Bengal were known with different names.The Southern and Eastern Bengal were called *Banga* and the Western Bengal was called *Rarh* while the North Bengal was known as *Pundravardhan, Varendra, Lakhnawati and Gaur*. It was during *Sultani* period specially from the time of Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah (1342-57) the territories which comprised pre-partition Bengal (1947) was given the name Bangla. For detailed information about this see M.A Rahim, *Social and Cultural History of Bengal*,(1201-1576),Vol.I,(Karachi : Pakistan Historical Society, 1963,Chapter-1). The British called it Bengal.During the *Sultani* period the Governor of Bengal ruled it independently with a show of allegiance to the *Sultan*. This gave opportunity to some Governors to establish independent dynasties in Bengal. The Mughal Emperor Akbar conquered Bengal in 1776 A.D. But he failed to subjugate Bengal *Zamindars* called Baro Bhoyans who independently ruled their respective territories. During the period of Jahangir, Bengal province was completely brought under full control of Mughal rule by Bengal *Subadar* (Governor) Islam Khan (1608-11), with provincial capital at Dhaka renamed as Jahangir Nagar. During the time of Aurangazeb, Subadar Shayesta Khan conquered Chittagong from Arakanese and added it to the *subadari* (province) of Bengal. After the death of Aurangazeb in 1707, when Mughal Empire was in a position to decline, the Bengal

Subadar Murshid Quli Khan (1717-27) began a practical independent rule in Bengal with capital at Murshidabad. He annexed Orissa to the *subadari* of Bengal and his successor Nawab Shuja Uddin (1727-38) annexed Behar to it. The Muslim rule came an end after the Battle of Palassey in 1757 and East India Company laid the foundation of British empire in Bengal with Calcutta as its nerve centre. Subsequently the British Empire was extended to the whole of Indian sub-continent. The East India Company ruled India for one hundred years. The British government took direct responsibility of India after the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. Lord Curzon,the then Viceroy of India partitioned Bengal province in 1905. East Bengal along with Assam became a separate province with capital at Dhaka. The other province consisted of West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Curzon's object in dividing big Bengal Province was not only administrative but also political. Because during that time the Muslim majority East Bengal was used as the hinterland of Calcutta, the seat of the British government. Curzon thought that the partition may satisfy the Muslims who were against the British rule. However, the partition of Bengal was annulled in 1911 and only Bengal constituted a Governor's province of India.

3. Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Ministry of Planning, Statistics Division, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *1987 Statistical Year Book of Bangladesh* (Dhaka : BGP, 1988), p.xxiii.

4. Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Ministry of Law and Parliamentary Affairs, *The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh*, 1972 (Dhaka : Bangladesh Government Press), Article-11. Henceforth the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh cited as the Bangladesh Constitution.

5. Fourth Amendment of Bangladesh Constitutions 1975. For detailed discussion on one party rule of the government of the *Awami* League see Talukdar Maniruzzaman, *Bangladesh Revolution and its Aftermath*, second edition (Dhaka : Bangladesh Books International Ltd. 1983).

6. The presidential form of government that was in operation in Bangladesh till 1991, differed from the real presidential type as it is found in the United States of America. It had similarity with the form of government under the Fifth Republic of France. President, the Chef Executive of the country was directly elected and he took precedence over all other

persons in the state. There was a provision of Vice-President to be appointed by the President. The Vice-President would exercise powers as the President by order would specify. The President was assisted by a Council of Ministers and he presided over its meetings. The Council consisted of a Prime Minister, one or more Deputy Prime Minister and other Ministers, all were appointed by the President and were accountable to him. They were the members of the legislature, but not accountable to it. Thus though presidential in name it also maintained some characteristics of parliamentary system.

7.   Bangladesh Constitution, 1972, Article 65

8.   *Ibid*, Article 94(1).

9.   *Ibid*, Article 94(2).

10.   *Ibid*, Article 11.

11.   *Ibid*, Article 59.

12.   *Ibid*, Article 60.

13.   Bangladesh Constitution as amended up to February 28,1979, Article 9.

14.   Bangladesh Constitution as amended up to October 10,1991, Articles 59 and 60.

15.   As self governing unit village had always been in Bengal from time immemorial. The Mughal divided Indian empire into a number of *subas* (provinces). Each *suba* was divided into several *sarkars* and each *sarkar* was divided into a number of *paraganas*. The British converted *subas* into provinces and *sarkars* into districts. For revenue collection they appointed Collectors in the districts in 1771. Later Collector was appointed as Magistrate who was renamed as Deputy Commissioner during Pakistan period. In 1826 to supervise the functions of Collectors, division was created consisting of four or five districts headed by appointed Commissioner. Later when it was felt that the areas of the districts are too big to cope with the situation, the districts were divided into sub-districts called sub-divisions headed by appointed Sub-divisional Officers who worked under the direct control of their respective District Magistrates. Although the term *Thanadar* was found in the Mughal period, the modern *thana* administration was laid down by the

British in 1774 as the lowest unit of police administration. Union was created as a seat of local government at village level in 1870. The municipalities were created in Bangal before the creation of union with the Acts of 1842 and 1850.

16. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Report of Bangladesh Households Expenditure Survey*, 1981-82 (Dhaka : BGP, 1986) p.44.

17. Lutful Hoq Choudhury, *Social Change and Development Administration in South Asia* (Dhaka : NIPA, 1979), p.40.

18. *Ibid*, p.41.

19. Nazmul Abedin, *Local Administration and Politics in Modernizing Societies: Bangladesh and Pakistan* (Dhaka: NIPA,1973), p. 57.

20. *Ibid*, p.63.

21. A.N.Samsul Haque, *Administrative Reforms in Pakistan* (Dhaka: NIPA, 1970), p.19.

22. Lutful Hoq Choudhury, 1979, *op.cit.*, p.30.

23. Nazmul Abedin *op.cit.*, p.66.

24. A. N.Samsul Haque, "Sub-national Administration in Bangladesh and its Role in Development: An Overview", unpublished research report (Rajshahi: Department of Political Science, Rajshahi University, 1982), p.173.

25. *Ibid*, p.177.

26. For detailed discussion on the misuse of rural development funds see M.A.Wahhab, "Attitudes of UP Leaders towards Rural Development Programme in Bangladesh in *Political Studies*, Vols.II-VIII (Department of Political Science, Chittagong University, 1979-85).

27. Nazmul Abedin *op.cit.*, p.74.

28. Regarding the concentration of land among the UP members see M.A.Wahhab," Socio-economic Background of the UP Leaders in Rangpur " in *Chittagong University Studies*, Social Science, Vol.VIII, No. (June 1985), pp.76-94.

CHAPTER 4

DECENTRALIZATION PROCESS IN BANGLADESH

The present chapter is devoted to analyse the past decentralization processes since the British rule in India. Here an attempt has also been made to state the background of *upazila* decentralization and the changes that occurred at the *thana* level administration after the introduction of *upazila* scheme.

4.1 Historical Perspectives: The British Period

The history of Bangladesh is intertwined with the history of the united Pakistan and India in general and Bengal in particular. The early history of Bengal is obscure. But recent research and excavations at the several sites of Bangladesh and Indian state of West Bengal reveal the existence of flourishing pre-historic culture of Bengal. Bengal emerges in the full light of history with the rise of Palas in the middle of eighth century. Before that there

were glimpses of its history under the first national monarch Sasanka. Immediately before the Muslim rule in Bengal in the beginning of thirteenth century A.D. the Senas held sway over it. The Muslim conquest incorporated Bengal into the *Sultanate* of Delhi[1] and the territories that comprised undivided Bengal received the name Bangla.[2] The Muslim rule in Bengal came to an end after the Battle of Plassey in 1757 and the East India Company laid the foundation of the British Empire in Bengal with Calcutta as its nerve centre. Subsequently the British Empire was extended to the whole of Indian sub-continent. The East India Company ruled India for one hundred years. The British government took direct responsibility of India in 1858 following the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857.

Thus the genesis of Bangladesh administration dates back to the periods of the Hindu and the Muslim rules. But undoubtedly, it is the British who introduced modern administration in the sub-continent. They introduced a large number of reforms for administrative problems of the country including the problem of decentralization. But as we are concerned with devolutionary decentralization, the present chapter is devoted to deal with past efforts of

decentralization in connection with the development of local government institutions. The emphasis will be given to the rural local government rather then urban local government.

The British introduced colonial rule in India. To prolong their rule they developed controlled institutions like army and bureaucracy and discouraged the growth of democratic institutions like elected legislatures, political parties, etc. Hence they were not interested in decentralization unless it served their colonial interest. However, politically decentralization process in a re-stricted sense was started in the British India with the Charter Act of 1853 which first created Legislative Assembly in India consisting of 12 members including the Governor-General, Commander-in-Chief, 4 Members of Administrative Councils and 6 government Officials from the provinces.[3] Under the India Council Act of 1861 provincial legislatures were created and the Government of India Act 1919 demarcated the provincial subjects from the central subjects. Finally, the Government of India Act 1935 granted autonomy to the provinces. But administratively, the decentralization process started before the Charter Act of 1853. Even the local government, which is essentially a form of

decentralization and "operationally an administrative organization"[4] was given start before the British became ruler in India. The regular and modern municipal government started its journey in 1687, when king James II granted East India Company a Charter according to which the Company was empowered to establish Municipal Corporation at Madras. The Company was also empowered to establish Municipal Corporation at Calcutta and Bombay through the Charter of 1726 granted by King George I.[5] Attempts were made to establish municipalities in other towns with the Acts of 1842 and 1850. Since then many Acts were passed in connection with municipal government. The Bengal Municipal Act 1932 was the final Act which still provides the fundamental principles of municipal government in Bangladesh.[6]

The local government in the rural areas of Bengal was established with the Bengal Village *Choukidari* Act, 1870.[7] The Act was passed in response to Lord Mayo's resolution on financial decentralization which, among others, proposed to extend opportunities for the development of local self-government. But this does not mean that before the Bengal Village *Choukidari* Act, Bengal had no village government at

all. The villages of Bengal in the olden days had *Panchyats* or bodies of elders who were responsible for running the village affairs. However, before 1870, the British governments took no initiative to organize the self-governing institutions in the villages. Rather they wanted to maintain law and order in the villages by the *zamindars* created for revenue collection under the provisions of the Permanent Settlement Act 1793. The function of revenue collection was carried on by the *zamindars* properly, but the maintenance of law and order was hampered seriously. Because most of the *zamindars* were urban dwellers. They generally came to the villages during the harvesting seasons. Due to their long absence law and order situation in the villages deteriorated. But when the problem of law and order took an acute turn in the villages, the British government passed the Bengal Village *Choukidari* Act in 1870.[8] The Act created a primary unit of local government called union consisting of several villages. This was presided over by five men committee called *Panchyat*. The *Panchyat* was not an elected body but appointed by the District Magistrate. Membership of the *Panchyat* was obligatory and on refusal one could be fined up to Rs. 50/=.[9] The District Magistrate was empowered to remove the members of the *Panchyat*. The *Panchyat* was

responsible only for maintaining law and order in the villages and *Choukidars* (watchmen) were its instrument. To meet the expenditure of maintaining *Choukidars,* the *Panchyat* was given power to asses and collect tax called *Choukidari* tax from the villagers.[10]

Lord Ripon, the then Viceroy of India is deservedly known as the father of modern local self-government in India. To him goes the credit for giving more prominence to the idea of local self-government than to the idea of more local taxes for the services which was the dominant feature of the preceding years. The objectives of his famous resolution on local self-government in 1882, were three folds: (1) the financial decentralization should be carried to the local bodies, (2) administration of local bodies should be improved, and (3) local bodies should be developed for political and popular education.[11] Ripon´s resolution with certain modifications was accepted in 1885 and the Bengal Local Self-Government Act,1885 was passed. The Act of 1885 established a network of local government throughout the country which still provides the basis of network system in the rural local government of Bangladesh. The Act created three tiers of local bodies in Bengal. These were : Union

Committee for a union, Local Board for a sub-division and District Board for a district. The Union Committee was to be constituted by the villagers with an election of informal character.[12] The Union Committee was given power with regard to municipal functions such as education, sanitation and communication; and the management of village police remained with the *Panchyat* created in 1870. The Local Board at the sub-divisional level was simply a coordinating body for the Union Committees without independent authority and source of income. It acted as the agent of District Board. On the other hand, the District Board was given wider executive and financial powers. The Union Committee although was given power of municipal functions, it had no financial power and in this way it was made dependent on the charity of District Board. The Act of 1885 did not provide any Chairman for the Local Board and Distract Board. The District Magistrate and Sub-divisional Officer respectively were made the Chairmen of District Board and Local Board. Two thirds members of the Union Committee, Local Board and District Board were elected and one third were nominated by the government. The system of nomination continued till 1946 when it was abolished on the recommendation of the Bengal Administration Enquiry Committee 1944-45.[13] Thus the extensive control of the

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government on local bodies through the system of nomination as well as the official Chairmen and limited financial power hampered the proper growth and development of local self-government bodies in Bengal. In other words, the local self-government reforms since 1885 onwards were more for administrative convenience than for either national or local political aspirations.

In 1892 an Act was passed according to which the control of *Choukidars* was given to the regular police. Now the *Panchyat* could recommend candidates for the posts of *Choukidars* and the District Magistrate would appoint them. Thus the Act of 1892 made the *Panchyat* totally powerless.[14]

The Decentralization Commission (Hobhouse Commission) of 1907 reviewed the existing tiers of local self-government. It suggested that the members of *Panchyat* should be elected and their functions should also be expanded gradually. It also suggested that Local Board should have independence and separate sphere of duties, otherwise it could not justify its existence. With regard to the District Board, the Commission held the view that there should be more elected members in the District Board and its Chairman

should also be non-official. The Commission also recommended
the formation of circles within the sub-division in order to
extend the civil administration to the rural areas.[15]
According to the recommendation of the Commission, the
circle consisting of two or three *thanas* was introduced in
the selected sub-divisions of Bengal in 1911, headed by
Circle Officer, a member of junior civil service. The main
function of the Circle Officer was to supervise and guide
the local bodies at the union levels. While recommending the
circle system, the Decentralization Commission proposed to
create Circle Board, a new tier of rural local government.
But Circle Board was never constituted in Bengal. The circle
system became universal in all sub-divisions of Bengal with
the recommendations of the Bengal District Administration
Committee, 1913-14 (Levinge Committee).[16] The circle system
was in operation in the country after the independence in
1947 till January 1961 when *thana* was converted into
development circle which we shall discuss later.

Meanwhile in the political arena the Muslim League and
the Congress were demanding greater participation and self-
government through constitutional means. Moreover, the
British government after the First World War did not possess

sufficient finance for taking welfare measures of the people and earn their confidence. Hence they decided to place the local bodies under popular control while retaining effective powers of government firmly in official hands. Montague-Chelmsford Report of 1918 clearly pointed out this policy of the British government which was culminated in the Bengal Self-government Act, 1919[17].

Under the Bengal Self-Government Act, 1919 the *Panchyat* and the Union Committee were merged into one body called Union Board. The Local Board and the District Board remained unchanged. However, the Local Board was abolished in 1936. The Act of 1919 provided the Union Board with wide scope and authority for municipal functions including some power of finance. The Act also provided that the Union Board and the District Board would have their President/ Chairman from their own elected members. No doubt the Act of 1919 contributed a lot towards the development of local bodies, but yet they were not fully representative bodies. Two thirds members of the Union and District Boards were elected and on third were nominated. The element of nomination was a clear departure from the concept of local self-government. Moreover, during that period women were not

enfranchised. The franchise was limited to those male persons of 21 years and above who paid one rupee as tax or cess.[18] The limited male voters also could seldom exercise their vote freely without fear. The voters had to vote by open declaration before the presiding officers and in the presence of candidates or their authorized agents. Consequently the local *zamindars* and money lenders influenced the voters.

From the above discussion it may be said that the British government appointed several Commissions/ Committees and also passed many Acts for administrative reforms in the sub-continent, yet the processes of decentralization specially the local government institution building was very slow and obscure. Because the District Board was main and powerful body in the local government system, which for all practical purpose became the part of the district administration since its inception in 1885. In other words, the main motive of the British was to prolong their rule and hence they were interested more in administrative purpose rather than political/democratic decentralization.

4.2 Historical Perspective:
   Pakistan Period

Like all other British colonies both India and Pakistan started their political career with parliamentary democracy of the British type. India has been successful in maintaining parliamentary democracy. But Pakistan failed in this regard. Because the power structure of Pakistan was located in the west wing and the ruling coteries specially the *Panjabis* persuaded the policies to dominate the East Bengal, which constituted 56 per cent population of Pakistan. The ruling coteries were afraid of parliamentary democracy which may provide scope for the majority East Bengalis to dominate the politics of Pakistan. The Governor General of Pakistan used to exercise so much powers which not only ate into the vitals of parliamentary democracy but also made the central and provincial governments of Pakistan unstable.[18] The political instability aggravated the situation in such a way that no government could give any serious thought of introducing comprehensive reforms in the field of local government. As a result, the inherited two tier system of local government i,e. Union Board and District Board were in operation in the country till the military take over in 1958.

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The constitution of Pakistan was promulgated in March 1956.[20] It made provisions for parliamentary form of government both at national and provincial levels. It also made provision for universal adult franchise. Accordingly, the elections of local government were held in 1956. But surprisingly enough when country was taking preparation for holding national election in March 1959, the military staged coup in October 1958. As a result, the constitution of Pakistan was abrogated and democratic political process was subverted. The coup d'etat leader General Ayub argued that West Minister model of democracy was not suitable for Pakistan. He promised the restoration of democracy, but a type which is, according to him, understandable and workable to the people. To implement his plan, he introduced basic democracy according to which the President of Pakistan and Members of legislatures, both national and provincial would be elected by the members of the lowest tier of local government. General Ayub also gave Pakistan a constitution in 1962 which provided for authoritarian presidential rule.

The system of basic democracy introduced by General Ayub, made a radical change in the inherited local government system. It covered both urban and rural areas of

the country. It was pyramidal in structure consisting of four tiers.[21] These were Divisional Council, District Council and *Thana* Council respectively at division, district and *thana* levels. At the grass roots levels there were Union Councils in the rural areas ; Town and Union Committees in the urban areas ; and Cantonment Boards in the cantonment areas. Later Municipal Committees were formed in the towns where Union Committees were established.[22]

At the time of promulgation of the Basic Democracies Order 1959, General Ayub said that with the introduction of basic democracy " democracy has been brought to the door step of the people".[23] According to him the aim of basic democracy was " the direct participation of people managing their affairs through representative bodies not far away from their own village".[24] But the system of basic democracy was far away from the principles of local self-government and democracy. Except the bodies at the grass roots levels all bodies of higher tiers were devoid of elective and representative character. Even initially the bodies at the grass roots levels were not fully elected. One third of their members were nominated and two thirds were elected.[25] The Chairmen of these bodies were not elected directly by

the general voters, rather they were elected by the members among themselves. The Chairmen of Union Councils and Town Committees were the ex-officio representative members of *thana* Council and *thana* level officials were its official members. However, the number of officials would not exceed the number of representative members. The Sub-divisional Officer was the Chairman of *Thana* Council. In his absence the Circle Officer (Development) was Acting Chairman and in fact he was the nerve centre of the body.

The District Council consisted of equal number of both officials and non-officials members. The non-official members were elected by the Chairmen of Union Councils and Town and Union Committees within the district. The Deputy Commissioner was Chairman of the District Council. The Divisional Council was also composed of official and non-official members headed by the Divisional Commissioner concerned. Thus all bodies from the *Thana* Council upward were not elected by the people and thus "lacking any elective support they tend to become rubber stamps for official decision making".[26] In other words, these bodies were used as the extended arms of the government through

bureaucracy rather than the organization of local government.

The control on local government by the central government through bureaucracy may further be analyzed if we discuss the functions of different Councils under basic democracy system. The Union Council was given a wide range of functions including the power to levy taxes, but the *Thana* Council like the former Local Board had neither power to generate its fund from imposing taxes nor any specific functions in relation to local government. The main responsibility of *Thana* Council was to co-ordinate and control the functions of Union Councils and Town Committees. The *Thana* Council also performed such functions as was given to it by the government and District Council. District Council, on the other hand, was given a number of functions and it was so bureaucratized that it marked retreat beyond 1885 position when only one third of the members were nominated[27], like the *Thana* Council, the Divisional Council had no specific functions of local government except coordinating activities of local bodies at lower levels, and formulating and recommending to the provincial government development schemes of importance to the division. The

government could further direct the Divisional Council to undertake any functions entrusted to the District Councils. The government provided fund to the Divisional Council to meet its routine expenditure and to give grants to the District Councils and other local bodies.

The main motive behind the introduction of basic democracy was to legitimize Ayub's regime and to create a new pattern of leadership specially in the rural areas in support of the regime. First, after the election of Union Councils and Town/Union Committees, General Ayub sought a vote of confidence of the basic democrats, i.e. the members of these bodies including the members of Cantonment Board on his assumption of Presidency through a referendum held in February 1960. He managed to win about 96 per cent affirmative vote of basic democrats.[28] Secondly, the basic democrats were given the function of electoral college for the election of President, central and provincial legislatures. "This political role of the Basic Democracies, however, assumed greater importance than their administrative and local government functions".[29] Thirdly, an economic programme called Rural Works Programme (RWP) was launched in 1962 with the objective that it would strengthen

basic democracy and help the rural poor to participate in the development process. But basic democracy was so much politicized by General Ayub as a prop for his regime that Rural Works Programme was corrupted beyond description and it was turned into an alliance of Union Council members, village and public functionaries, denying the people at the grass roots levels a participatory role.[30]

However, despite the shortcomings of basic democracy as devolutionary decentralization, it had a great impact on the development of decocentrationary decentralization specially at the *thana* level. With the introduction of basic democracy the *thana* administration was reorganized in 1961 and the *thana*, so far used as police outpost, was converted into a development circle where Rural Works Programme (RWP) *Thana* Irrigation Programme (TIP) and two Tier Co-operative KSS and TCCA were launched and *Thana* Training and Development Centre (TTDC) was established.

With the establishment of TTDC in 1963, *thana* was provided with some infrastructure and become an important unit of development administration. Many offices from various nation building departments including a development

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officer called the Circle Officer (Development) were posted at the *thana* level. Most of the offices of these officers were located at the TTDC building. Thus the establishment of TTDC brought the officers of nation building departments at *thana* level into a campus to work as a team. They were also getting organized when they were made the official members of the *Thana* Council. As Vice-Chairman of the Council,the Circle Officer (Dev.) emerged a team leader and coordinator. The assumption behind the official and non-official members of the *Thana* Council were that (a) the people should be mobilized through their elected leaders; and (b) the officers should be coordinated in departmental activities with each other as well as with the elected leaders.[31]

4.3 Decentralization in Bangladesh: Mujib Period

Although the government of General Ayub was not acceptable to the people, the system of basic democracy and the bureaucracy, both civil and military, made the government functioning for a decade . However, the uprising from the two wings of Pakistan compelled General Ayub relinquish office in March 1969 and military led by General

Yahya took the reins of the government. General Yahya promised for the restoration of parliamentary democracy in Pakistan that was replaced with presidential autocracy by General Ayub. Accordingly, the parliamentary election was held all over Pakistan in December 1970 .The Awami League, led by Sheikh Mujib captured majority seats in the Parliament of Pakistan (out of 169 seats in East Pakistan the Awami League won 167 seats having no seat in West Pakistan). The People's Party led by Z.A. Bhutto, a member of Ayub Cabinet emerged second majority in the Parliament (having no seat in East Pakistan), But it is surprising that according to the game of parliamentary democracy power was not handed over to the Awami league. Hence Mujib called civil disobedience and non-co-operation movement which paralysed the entire administration of East Pakistan . On March 26, 1971 East pakistan renamed as Bangladesh declared herself independent. But the formation of the first government of Bangladesh (government-in exile) dates a little back on April 10, 1971. Sheikh Mujib who was detained in the prison of Pakistan, was declared President of the new state and Syed Nazrul Islam was made Acting President. After a 9 month war of liberation Bangladesh became independent in December 1971.

With independence the new government of Bangladesh was confronted with many problems including the problem of relief distribution . For the administration of relief goods, the Relief committees were constituted at union and *thana* levels comprising the members of the <u>Awami</u> League, the then ruling party.[32] The government abolished basic democracy and renamed Union Council as Union *Panchyat* and later Union *Parishad, Thana* Council as *Thana* Development Committee, District Council as *Zila* Board and Municipality as *Paurashava*. The government also converted each and every town, whether big or small in size, into *Pourashava*. Initially the plan for the constitution Union *Panchyat/ Parishad* was like that of Relief Committee, but for the strong criticism from various corners, the plan for the appointment of party members was given up and *Tahshildar* (Land Revenue Collector) or Agriculture Assistant at the union level was appointed its Administrator; and keeping in view the location of *Paurashava*, Circle Officer, Sub-Divisional Officer or Additional Deputy Commissioner was appointed its Administrator. This system continued till the elections of Union *Parishad* and *Pourashavas* in 1973.

The government of Sheikh Mujib took the question of administrative reform and set up on March 15,1972 the Administrative and Services Reorganization Committee (ASRC) headed by Professor Muzaffar Ahmed Chaudhury , the then Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University . The Committee is popularly known as the Chaudhury Committee.[33] The report of the Chaudhury committee was the first comprehensive report which dealt with almost all aspects of administration . The report pleaded for democratization of administration and strongly argued for devolution of authority to the local government. It proposed that the sub-divisions with necessary territorial adjustment should be converted into districts and division should be eliminated as a unit of administration . But it recommended that the post of Deputy Commissioner should be retained with necessary changes and the post of Divisional Commissioner should be converted into the Vigilance Commissioner. The Committee proposed for establishing Regional Planning Authority.[34] It also proposed that *thana* should become the basic unit administration; and the development administration both at *thana* and district levels should be transferred to the *Thana and Zila Parishads*. As to the constitution of Union, *Thana* and *Zila Parishads* the Committee recommended as follows:

- Fully elective Union and *Thana Parishads* including Chairman and Vice-chairman, the election to be held on the basis of universal adult franchise;

- *Zila Parishad* would be a directly elected body having the number of members @ one member per 40,000 of population;

-The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of *Zila Parishad* may, however, be elected indirectly by an electoral college consisting of all Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen and members of the Union and *Thana Parishads* within the district.[35]

The constitution of Bangladesh, promulgated in December 1972 made provision for elected local government and people's participation as mentioned elsewhere[36]. So the government as it was then constituted and headed by Sheikh Mujib, was constitutionally committed to establish local government and local administration run by the elected representatives of the people. But unfortunately the government of Sheikh Mujib neither followed the provision of the constitution in respect of local government nor it made the report of the Chaudhury Committee public. It organized Union *Parishads* and *Paurashavas* only; and made no provision for the *Thana* Development Committee and *Zila Board*. As there was no provision for organizing *Thana* Development Committee and *Zila* Board, the function of *Thana* Development Committee was performed by the Circle Officer

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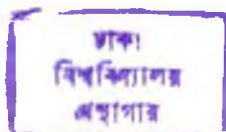
(Dev.)in consultation with the *Thana* Relief Committee; and the Deputy Commissioner was made the Administrator of the *Zila* Board.[37]

Thus the government headed by Sheikh Mujib was not willing to establish elected local bodies at *thana* and district levels. Rather the government was thinking of party-oriented administration at *thana* and district levels, the discussion of which follows in the next section:

A number of achievements may be attributed to Mujib and the *Awami* League in relation to the independence of Bangladesh. But the government headed by Mujib became unpopular within two years after taking the office, and it became clear that Bangladesh was steadily approaching a grave political crisis.[38] Among the most important factors, responsible for this were the large scale distribution of political patronage to the party members and the creation of special militia called the *Jatyo Rakhhi Bahini* (National Security Force, JRB). Mujib had more reliance on the *Rakhhi Bahini* than the regular army and police. The mission of

the *Rakhhi Bahini* was to maintain Mujib security and to eliminate anti-Mujib and anti-*Awami* League forces. In doing this the *Rakhhi Bahini* took "a heavy toll of innocent."[39]

In the face of severe crisis in the country the government promulgated state of emergency on December 28, 1974 and suspended the constitutional provisions relating to fundamental rights. Except four, all news paperers and periodicals were closed down. Now Sheikh Mujib, who fought for parliamentary democracy during Ayub regime and was jailed for long time, argued like Ayub that parliamentary system was not suited to Bangladesh's needs. so "he insisted on the adoption of presidential system that would better allow him to consolidate power."[40] On January 25,1975 at the single initiative of Sheikh Mujib, and reportedly against the wishes of most of the Members of the Parliament belonging to the *Awami* League, the constitution was amended (Fourth Amendment) to provide one party state of presidential rule. The amendment bill was passed so hurriedly that it took a period of half an hour, without debate, According to the amendment Sheikh Mujib became President of the Republic with enormous powers and authority symbolizing one man rule. He was also empowered to form a

single national party. Accordingly all political parties were banned and a national Party called BAKSAL (Bangladesh *Krishak Sramic Awami* league) was formed in june 1975. Almost all members of the new party were the members of the Awami League. Hence BAKSAL was virtually the Awami League under a different name.

As per the requirement of the Fourth Amendment of the constitution, the provisions for elected local government were abolished. And by a Presidential Order, issued on june 21,1975, the government introduced a new administrative system in which division and sub-division were to be abolished and sub-division was to be upgraded into district. According to the new system a district was to be governed by an appointed District Governor as Chief Officer-in-Charge of general administration of the district. The District Administrative Council to be set up from September 1975 in the following manner:

1) Governor;   Chairman

2) All MPs from district;   Member

3) District Magistrate;   Member, ex-offico

4) Secretary of the District
   Committee of the National Party; Member, ex-offico

5) Police Superintendent;   Member, ex-offico

6) One member of the National Party from
   the district to be nominated by the
   Chairmen of the Party;   Member

7) One representative from each of the
   district unit of the *Jatyo Krishak* League,
   Jatyo Sramik League and *Mohila* (woman) League
   to be nominated by the Chairman of the
   Party;   Member

8) One representative of each *thana* unit
   of the National Party to be nominated
   by the Chairman of the Party;   Member

9) The Chairman of each *Pourashava* in the
   district;   Member

10) One representative of the Cantonment
    Board of the district, if any, to be
    nominated by the Board;   Member

11) One senior officer of the Army, the
    Navy, the Air Force, the BDR and the JRB
    stationed in the district to be
    nominated by the Chief of Staff or
    as the case may be, D.G of the force
    concerned; and   Member

12) The holder of such other office of the
    government and local authorities of the
    department as the government may from time
    specify.[41]   Member

It was also decided that like the Administrative Council at the district level, the Administrative Council at the *thana* level was also be set up in one year´s time. However the constitution of the District Administrative

Council mentioned above clearly indicates the authoritarian attitude of the then government headed by Sheikh Mujib and to devise a net work of control for it. According to its plan the government announced the names of the District Governors. The Governors were the members of the National Political Party, BAKSAL. They were supposed to take the charges of the districts after a special political training for one mouth. "The plan was to put half a battalion of *JRB* under each Governor, with governor being directly under the control of the president".[42] However, this party oriented administrative system was not materialized as the August coup of 1975 did away with Mujib and his authoritarian rule. The government after the coup abolished this party based restructuring of administration and ordered the continuation of original districts.

4.4 Decentralization :
Zia period

After the August coup Mushtaq Ahmed, a minister of Mujib Cabinet was made President[43] and one party political system was dispensed with, but the presidential form of government was retained. Mushtaq period was very short. On

November 3, 1975 a counter coup was staged and Chief Justice Sayeem was installed as the next President. After four days, on November 7 a Sepoy Revolt occurred and Lt. General Ziaur Rahman, the Chief of the Army Staff emerged as strongman and effective power holder. General Zia took over the power of the Chief Martial Law Administrator on November 19, 1976 and subsequently installed himself as President on April 11,1977. His assumption of the office of President was legitimized through a referendum held on May 30,1977. He was elected President on June 3,1978. In February 1979 Parliament election was also held and General Zia's party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) won sweeping victory. The martial law was lifted on April 2, 1979. However, General Zia's regime ended on May 30,1981 when he was assassinated in the port city of Chittagong by some of his army commanders.

The government of General Zia also took administrative reform measure. But the Commission he constituted for this purpose mainly dealt with the pay and services. By an ordinance known as the Local Government Ordinance 1976[44] General Zia introduced three tier system of rural local government. They were: Union *Parishad*, *Thana Parishad* and

Zila Parishad. By another ordinance (the *Pourashava* Ordinance 1977) he also organized *Pourashavas* (Municipalities) in the urban areas. Both Union *Parishad* and *Pourashava* were elected bodies except a few nominated women members/commissioners. But *Thana Parishad and Zila Parishad* were not elected bodies. The composition of the *Thana Parishad* was almost similar to that of the former *Thana* Council. The *Zila Parishad* was also not constituted as per the provision of the Ordinance 1976. The Deputy Commissioner worked as its Chairman and another officer viz. Assistant Director for Rural Development/Assistant Director of Local Government was made its secretary. However the nature of functions and the control of government over the local bodies through bureaucracy remained essentially the same as under Ayub regime, Over and above, the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Sub-divisional Officer and Circle Officer (Dev.) were given more co-ordinative power.[45]

In the Local Government Ordinance 1976. there was a provision for the creation of a new institution of local government at the village level.[46] But strategically the implementation of this provision was delayed and another new institution viz. *Thana* Development Committee parallel to

the *Thana Parishad* was created in 1978. The UP Chairmen within the *thana* were made the members of *Thana* Development Committee. The UP Chairmen elected one of them to be the Chairman of *Thana* Development Committee. The Deputy Commissioner was the controlling authority of both *Thana Parishad and Thana* Development Committee. It was also decided that 3 to 8 persons from general public would be added to *Thana* Development Committee, provided that the number of such members would not exceed the number of representative members i.e. UP Chairmen. Although the Chairman of *Thana* Development Committee was the drawing and disbursing officer, the Circle Officer (Dev.) was to issue certificate for fund and Sub-Divisional Officer countersigned the bills of *Thana* Development Committee. The plan of *Thana* Development Committee further required the approval of *Thana Parishad*. This dual authority of *Thana* Development Committee and *Thana Parishad* created difficulties in planning and implementing development projects at the *thana* level.[47]

After being elected President in 1978 and the victory of his party, BNP in the parliamentary election of 1979, General Zia turned his attention to the district and village

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levels in order to execute his own plan of administration. Accordingly, the District Development Coordinator and *Swanirvar Gram Sarkar* (Self Reliant Village Government) schemes were introduced in 1980.

In early 1980, perhaps with sri Lanka model, General Zia appointed District Development Coordinator (DDC) in each district of Bangladesh from the among the MPs of his ruling party, BNP. At same time a Minister from the district was made Chairman of Agricultural Development Coordination Committee. The DDCs were assigned the status of the Deputy Ministers and their duties were as follows :

1) to coordinate and assist in implementation of different development schemes in respective administrative district,as directed from time to time;

ii) to entertain and process public complaints; and

iii) any other duties given by the President [48].

But as these decisions were politically motivated, there was no evidence for improving development conditions at the district levels. Rather a study reveals that the scheme of DDC failed in its purpose.[49]

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Swnirvar Gram Sarkar was a most notable feature of the government of General Zia. In April 1980, he announced to set up *Swanirvar Gram Sarkar* in each village starting from May next. Accordingly *Sawnirvar Gram Sarkar* (Constitution and Amendment) Rules 1980 was promulgated in May 1980. The Rules got the approval of the Parliament in June 1980 with the passing of Local Government (Amendment) Act, 1980. A *Swanirvar Gram Sarkar* (henceforth cited as *Gram Sarkar*) consisted of a Chief Executive called *Gram Pradhan* and eleven members of which two must be women. The *Gram Pradhan* and members were to be selected through consensus of persons present in the meeting of the *Gram Shava* (Village Assembly) which was composed of all persons whose name appeared in the electoral roll of the village. The *Gram Sarkar* was given such functions as it considered necessary for overall development of the village and in particular to (i) to increase in food production; (ii) mass literacy; (iii) population control; and (iv) law and order and settling local disputes.[50]

With regard to the introduction of *Gram Sarkar* the opposition leaders specially the Awami Leaguers expressed their doubt about the sincerity of the government. According

to them, the government planed to create a class of village touts to perpetuate the BNP rule thorough *Gram Sarkar*. On the other hand, in response to their criticism the government replied that the political opportunists were opposing *Gram Sarkar*, who practiced politics with basis only in the towns. According to the government, *Gram Sarkar*, a village level tier of local government on self-help basis is essential to build a just society , so that the villagers can be made conscious of their community and participate in development process.[51]

But whatever might be the reply of the government, the implicit political objective appeared when the government made hurry in amending the Local Government Ordinance 1976 to pass the Local Government (Amendment) Act 1980 for establishing *Gram Sarkar*. The entire machinery of government was also employed for *Gram Sarkar* and within a year the government could bring all villages of Bangladesh under *Gram Sarkars*. Moreover the detailed rules for the constitution and functioning of *Gram Sarkar* were framed in such a way that the government officials as well as ruling party members were allowed to play prominent role. The government could inquire into the affairs of *Gram Sarkar* through its

officers and suspend it for some time. The sources which were expected to supply the required fund to the *Gram Sarkar* were: (a) contribution from individuals, village cooperative societies or any institution or local authority and (b) any other income from any legitimate source.[52] Thus the sources of fund of *Gram Sarkar* were vague and consequently it had to depend fully on the government for fund. The *Gram Sarkar* was set up in isolation from the main structure of local government and no linkage was established with the Union *Parishad*. However, with the assassination of General Zia on May 30,1981, the momentum generated by *Gram Sarkar* began to degenerate slowly, and ultimately in 1982 after the assumption of power by General Ershad the . *Gram Sarkar*, along with the scheme of District Development Coordinator, was abandoned.

Although General Zia did not install elected local governments at district and *thana* levels, he took attempt to gear up development activities at *thana* level that got set back after the independence of Bangladesh. As a result, during the period of his time,the scope of *thana* administration became so wide that officers from almost all nation building departments were posted at the *thana* level.

In the study of Birgonj *thana* of Dinajpur district Majumdar observed that 41 officers from 14 Ministries were posted there.[53] The study made by Ali *et.al.* shows that on an average as many as 62 officers (excluding staff) of government departments and autonomous bodies were working in a *thana*.[54] But these two studies included the officers of bank, railways, etc. who were outside the purview of development administration. However, for development administration at the *thana* level,there were about 24 officers of different Ministries, and most of these officers were class II category and only a few of them were from class I category.

Although there was attempt to gear up development administration at *thana* level by posting almost all officers from nation-building developments,the following decisions taken by the government of General Zia created problems in its smooth functioning:

i) Introduction of higher scale of pay to some *thana* level officers other than Circle Officer (Dev.) in 1977, and

ii) creation of *Thana* Development Committee parallel to *Thana Parishad*.

It has already been discussed that the Circle Officer (Dev.) was posted in 1960s to be the team leader of all officers from national building departments working at the *thana* level. The Circle Officer (Dev.) was given higher pay and status compared to other officers in the *thana*. He could thus exert his influence as a senior officer over the officers of other departments to get the desired cooperation. And hence his role as coordinator was effective. But the situation was changed with the implementation of new national pay scales in 1977. The new national pay scales placed the Circle Officer(Dev.) in the scale of Tk.625-1315, and some officers in the *thana* such as Agriculture, Live-stock,etc. who are junior in pay and rank, were placed in the scale of Tk.750-1470. Now the officers having higher scale could not easily accept the co-ordination or the chairmanship of Circle Officer (Dev.) in the meeting of *Thana Parishad*.

4.5 Decentralization:
   Ershad Period

After the assassination of General Zia, Vice-President Abdus Satter became Acting President of Bangladesh. Satter was elected President in November 1981. But soon after the

Presidential election of 1981, the armed forces of the country demanded to make provisions in the Constitution for their role in the society i,e, sharing of power. Since then a confrontation was going on between the government and the armed forces. This was ended when on March 24, 1982 again martial law was proclaimed throughout Bangladesh and the Chief of the Army Staff Lieutenant General Hossain Mohammad Ershad took over as the Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA). In pursuance of the Proclamation Order, the constitution of Bangladesh was suspended and the CMLA was empowered to nominate a civilian President as head of the state who will act according to his pleasure. Accordingly, Ahsanuddin Chowdhury, a retired Justice of the Supreme Court was made President.

General Ershad took over the charges of Presidency on November 11, 1983. Like Generals Ayub and Zia he also sought approval of the people to his becoming President through a referendum held on March 21, 1985. Later he managed to hold Parliamentary and Presidential elections on May 7 and October 15,1986 respectively. His party *Jatyo* Party (National Party) won majority seats in the Parliament and he assumed the mantle of elected President. Martial

Law was lifted on November 10, 1986. But as there was wide spread vote ragging in the election , a movement was started against General Ershad. Most of the leaders of major political parties were arrested. Lastly when *Jamat-e-Islami,* (which had ten seats in the Parliament) resigned from the seats in the Parliament, General Ershad dissolved the Parliament. Again Parliamentary election was held on March 3, 1988. But no major political parties participated in the election and General Ershad´s political Party, *Jatyo Party* managed to capture almost all seats in the Parliament.

A. Formation of CARR

On the very day of assumption of power General Ershad announced the desire to evolve a new administrative system which would be people oriented and be capable of removing the gap between people and administration.[55] To recommend such administrative system a Committee was appointed on April 28, 1982 known as the Committee for Administrative Reorganisation/Reform (CARR). The Committee was headed by Rear Admiral Mahbub Ali Khan, the then DCMLA and Chief of the Naval Staff and Adviser-in-Charge of the Ministry of Communication. The terms of reference of the Committee were:

a. To review the structure and organization of the existing civilian administration with a view to identifying the inadequacies of the system for serving the people effectively ; and

b. to recommend an appropriate, sound and effective administrative system based on the spirit of devolution and the objective of taking the administration nearer to the people.[58]

CARR submitted its report on June 22, 1982, i,e, within less than two months of its establishment. The report of CARR has three important dimensions : (i) observation about the prevailing bottleneck of administration, (ii) recommendations to overcome the situation and (iii) suggestions to implement the recommendations.

B. Observation of CARR

CARR identified nine major inadequacies of Bangladesh administration as follows :

(a) lack of appropriate and uniform personnel policies with regard to recruitment, promotion and training of public services;

(b) *tadbir*-based approach to decision making;

(c) difficulties of the common men to comprehend compartmentalized functions and complexity in governmental decision making;

(d) absence of sound and durable political process to provide appropriate policies for the welfare of the people;

(e) vertical-functional departmentalism that vitiates area based coordination ;

(f) weak local government system rendered weaker by lack of appropriate political directions;

(g) weakening of traditional administrative and repre- sentative institutions at different levels of administration;

(h) creation of parallel political and administrative institutions leading to conflict in jurisdiction; and

(i) reluctance on the part of political authority to devolve power to the representative institutions at local levels.[57]

According to CARR these inadequacies may be removed and administrative improvement can be achieved by building representative local administration in the framework of revitalized system of local government. In order to increase the vitality of existing local government institutions in Bangladesh the following recommendations were made by CARR.

C. Recommendations of CARR

CARR provided a long list of agreed recommendations of which the following are important in the context of the present study :

a. Elected local councils at union, *thana* and district levels;

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b. Directly elected Chairman at Union *Parishad* (UP),
   Thana Parishad (TP) and *Zila Parishad* (ZP). In the
   case of *Zila Parishad* an alternative of electoral
   college comprising of UP and TP members may also be
   considered.

c. Chairmen of UP to be members of TP.

d. Chairmen of TP to be members of ZP.

e. All officials working at union, *thana* and district
   levels attend and participate in the meetings of
   Parishad at their respective level.

f. ZP/TP to be provided with senior staff support.

g. UP/TP/ZP Chairmen to be Chief Coordinators of all
   government activities except magistracy/judiciary
   which will be separate.

h. Elected Chairman to be vested with adequate powers
   to ensure accountability of local officers.

i. Regulatory administration should be brought under
   the purview of local councils within a time-bound
   programme.

j. A real recognition of existing administrative units
   should be made in terms of converting existing sub-
   divisions into districts and abolition of division
   as an unit of administration.

k. In view of the large number districts created, it
   may be necessary to provide regional planning and
   vigilance support. Seven such centres may be created
   which will include the existing four divisions[58].

D. Suggestions of CARR

CARR categorically called upon the government to carry

out the principles of devolution in letter as well as in

spirit by establishing refurbished local government set-up. In order to achieve this objective CARR strongly suggested the government to follow the recommendations made by the Chaudhury Committee. In implementing its recommendations CARR also suggested a gradualist approach according to which the entire set of recommendations may be implemented by 1985, the terminal year of the Second Five Year Plan. The Committee further suggested that before the creation of districts, the elections to the *Thana Parishads* and Union *Parishads* might take place as soon as is practicable. The election to the *Zila Parishad* might follow the creation of new districts. The Committee also suggested that a high-powered National Implementation Committee will have to be constituted to implement the decentralization measures that are recommended in the report.[58]

From the above recommendations it is evident that CARR owed much to the Chaudhury Committee. Because (i) elected local government at union, *thana* and district levels: (ii) devolution of authority to the local government, (iii) demarcation of the areas of responsibility between the central government and local government and (iv) abolition of division and conversion of sub-division into districts

are the main theme of the recommendations of CARR; and these were already recommended by the Chaudhury Committee. Even with regard to the process of devolution of authority to local government CARR suggested the government nothing, but to follow the recommendations made by the Chaudhury Committee.

E. Implementation Process of Decentralization

Though the government of General Ershad accepted in principle, the recommendations of CARR and instituted a high powered National Implementation Committee in August 1982 styled as the National Implementation Committee for Administrative Reorganisation/Reform (NICAR), it did not follow the recommendations of CARR in toto. However, the process of decentralization recommended by CARR began on October 23, 1982 with the Cabinet decision entitled "Resolution on Reorganization of *Thana* Administration" [80] according to which the *thana* was declared as focal point of local administrative activities. The Resolution divided the governmental functions at the *thana* level between central government and *Thana Parishad*, the local government at *thana* level. The central government retained itself regulatory and

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major development functions. The rest functions, basically local development in nature, were transferred to the *Upazila Parishad*. Now as per the decision of NICAR, the *thanas* were upgraded and officials of high calibre including a Chief Executive Officer called *Nirbahi* Officer were posted there. The task of upgradation of *thanas* started on November 7, 1982 and completed on January 1, 1984. In all there were ten phases of upgradation. After completing the fifth phase, the upgraded *thanas* were renamed as *upazilas*. Eight of the ten phases involved the upgradation of rural *upazilas*. The remaining two phases involved the upgradation of urban *upazilas* (Appendix-1). The *thanas* under Dhaka and Chittagong metropolitan cities were not upgraded. These *thanas* continued to be used as police stations.[61]

Elimination of divisions and upgradation of sub-divisions into districts are other aspects of the administrative reform recommended by CARR. But it was decided to retain division as a unit of administration to maintain relation between central government and districts and *upazilas* and also between districts. The sub-divisions

were upgraded into districts on the various days in 1984. The total number of sub-divisions upgraded into districts was 42. So with the existing 22 districts another 42 were added.

To give effect to its own plan of devolutionary decentralization, the government of General Ershad introduced three tier system of local government,viz, Union *Parishad ,Upazila Parishad* and *Zila Parishad* (Figure 4.1.)

Figure 4.1

Administrative unit		Local government unit
Division		
District	<—>	Zila Parishad
Upazila	<—>	Upazila Parishad
Union	<—>	Union Parishad
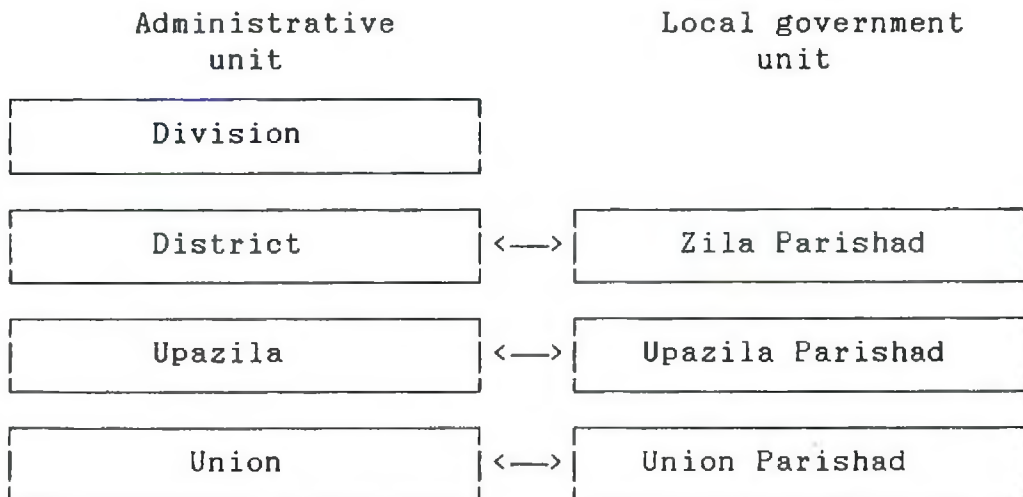
The Local Government (Union *Parishad*) Ordinance 1983 provides rules for the constitution of Union *Parishad*.

According to the Ordinance the composition of Union *Parishad* is almost the same as before. The only difference is that formerly the Union *Parishad* had two nominated women members and now the number increased to three i.e. one nominated woman member from each of the three ward.[62] The first election of the Union *Parishad* under this new arrangement was held in 1983.

The *Upazila Parishad*, the central point of decentralization policy of General Ershad, was organized with the Local Government (*Thana Parishad* and *Thana Administration Reorganisation*) Ordinance 1982.[63] The Ordinance of 1982, which had been amended several times, provides the composition, functions and other operational details of the *Upazila Parishad*. According to the Ordinance a *Upazila Parishad* consists of

      a) a Chairman;

      b) representative members;

      c) three nominated women members;

      d) official members;

      e) Chairman of UCCA and;

      f) a nominated member.[64]

The UZP Chairman was directly elected by the voters of entire *upazila* for a period of 5 years.[85] But till the election is held in 1985, the *Nirbahi* Officer acted as the Chairman of UZP. The UP Chairmen, who were also elected, within the *upazila* were the ex-officio representative members of the *Parishad*. The Chairman of the *Pourashava*, if any within the *upazila* or a commissioner to be nominated by the Chairman, was also ex-officio representative member of the *Parishad*.[86] The women nominated members of *Parishad* were appointed by the government from among the women residing in the *upazila*. The government also appointed a person preferably a freedom fighter residing in the *upazila* to be member of the *Parishad* provided that if he was eligible for the election of *upazila* chairmanship.[87] A member, representative or nominated, held office for a period of five years.

The Local Government Ordinance 1982 simply states that the holders of such officers in the *upazila* as may be specified by the government shall be the official members of the *Parishad* without voting right. There is no mention about the number and the type of official members. A notification from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development

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provided a list of officers who were made ex-officio official members of *Parishad*. They are set forth below:

   i)   *Upazila* Health and Family Planning Officer;

  ii)   *Upazila* Education Officer;

 iii)   *Upazila* Agriculture Officer;

  iv)   *Upazila* Engineer;

   v)   *Upazila* Co-operative Officer;

  vi)   *Upazila* Live-stock Officer;

 vii)   *Upazila* Fishery Officer;

viii)   *Upazila* Social Welfare Officer;

  ix)   *Upazila* Rural Development Officer;

   x)   *Upazila* Revenue Officer (Later
        Assistant.Commissioner,Land);

  xi)   Officer-in-Charge, Police Station; and

 xii)   *Upazila* Family Planning Officer.[68]

Although the sub-divisions were upgraded into districts in 1984, the laws regarding the proposed *Zila Parishad* were framed after four years. The Local Government (*Zila Parishad*) Act passed in 1988, provides the constitution of *Zila Parishad*. According to the Act, a *Zila Parishad* consists of (a) representative members,   (b) nominated members, (c) women members, (d) official members and (e) a

Chairman appointed by the government. The Members of Parliament and Chairmen of *Upazila Parishads* and *Pourashavas* within the district are ex-officio representative members. Nominated members and women members are nominated by the government from among the inhabitants of the district. Their number, however, is not to be more than the number of representative members. The Deputy Commissioner and other selected officials working at the district level are ex-officio official members of *Zila Parishad* and they have no voting right in the meetings of *Parishad* [89]. However, the proposed *Zila Parishad* was not constituted, although the names of Chairmen of the *Zila Parishads* were announced.

Form the above discussion relating to the decentralization measures taken by the government of General Ershad it may be said that excepting the conversion of sub-division into district, the other recommendations of CARR were not fully materialized. The three tier system of local government including elected bodies at union levels is not a

new phenomenon in the history of rural local government in Bangladesh. What CARR wanted were elected councils at *upazila* and district levels which were not materialized. However, the novelty of Ershad regime is the elected Chairman of the *Upazila Parishad*.

4.5(i) Organizational Set-up of Upazila Administration

Annexure-II of the government Resolution of 1982 provides the organizational set-up of *upazila* administration which are presented in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2.

Administrative Set-up of
Upazila Decentralization

```
                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                    │   Upazila administration    │
                    └─────────────────────────────┘

    ┌─────────────────────┐              ┌─────────────────────┐
    │  Retained subjects  │              │ Transferred subjects│
    └─────────────────────┘              └─────────────────────┘

    ┌─────────────────────┐              ┌─────────────────────┐
    │         UNO         │              │  Upazila Parishad   │
    └─────────────────────┘              ├─────────────────────┤
                                         │      Chairman       │
          ┌ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ └─────────────────────┘
          Only supervision

                                                   dir│── UNO
                                                   ect│
┌────┬────┬────┬────┬────┬────┬────┬────┐          con├──FO/AC(D)
│    │    │    │    │    │    │    │    │          trol│
AC(L) OC  Ac.O AVO RDO  FO   SO  Mag. AJ               ├─PIO


┌────┬────┬────┬────┬────┬────┬────┬────┬────┐
│    │    │    │    │    │    │    │    │    │
HO   EO   FPO   LO   Fi.O  Eng.  SWO  AO   CO
│         │                  │         │
│         │                  │         │
├─Hospital ├─Medical         ├─Civil &  ├─Eten.
│ wing     │ wing            │ electric.│ wing
│          │                 │ wing     │
└─Domiciliary └─ Family planing └─Rural   └─Instruments
  wing         wing             works      supply &
                                prg.wing   services
                                           wing
```
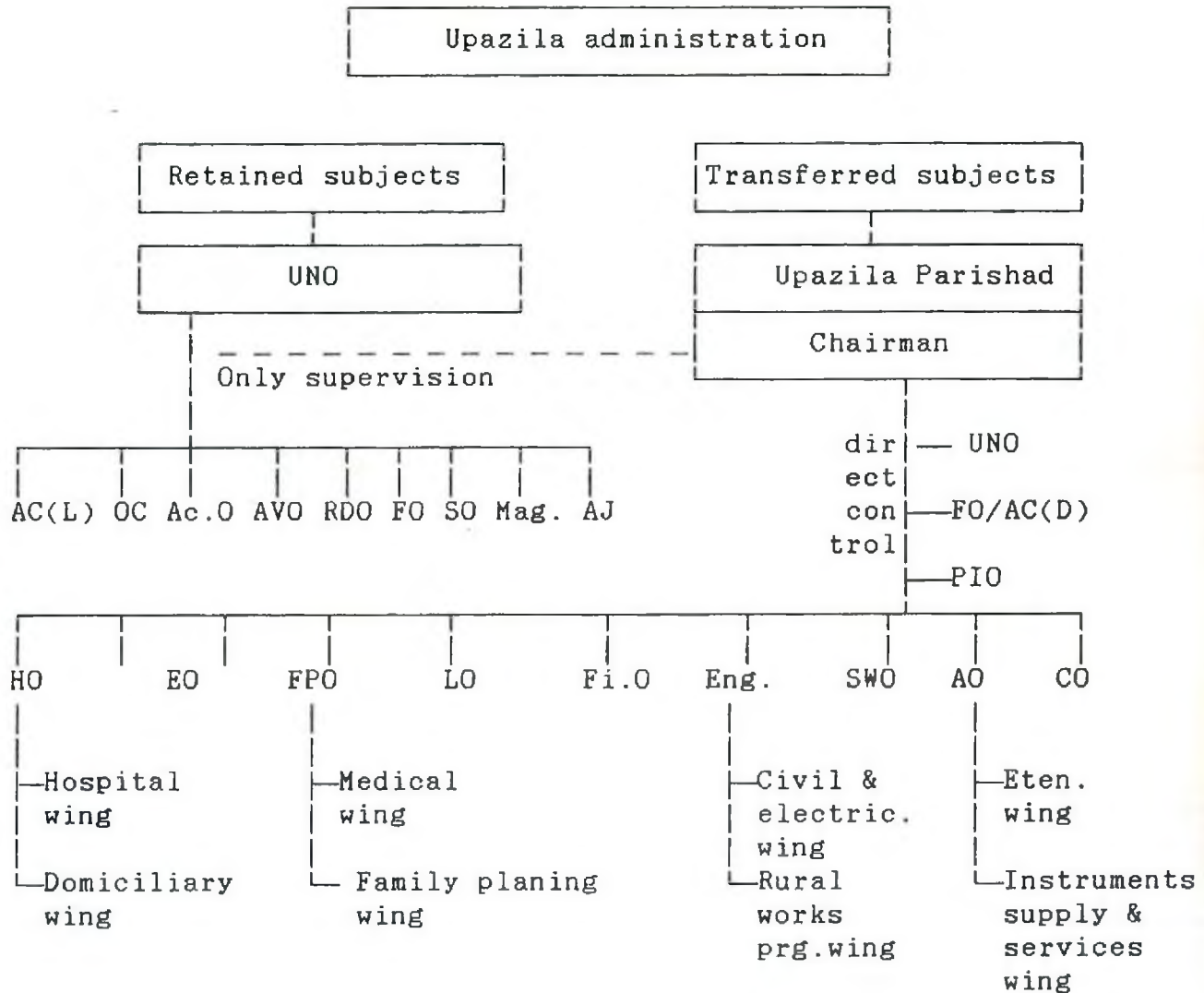
Note: Note:
Retained subject   Transferred subjects
AC(L)=Assistant Commissioner (land)   HO   =Health Officer
OC   =Officer-in-charge (P.S)   ED   =Education Officer
Ac.O =Accounts Officer   FPO   =Family Planning Officer
AVO   =Ansar and VOP Officer   LO   =Live-stock Officer
RDO   =Rural Development Officer   Fi.O =Fishery Officer
FO   =Food Officer   Eng. =Engineer
Mag. =Magistrate   SWO   =Social Welfare Officer
AJ   =Assistant Judge   AO   =Agricultural Officer
                                       CO   =Cooperative Officer

            UNO   = Upazila Nirbahi Officer
            FO/Ac(D)= Finance Officer/Assistant
                       Commissioner(development)
            PIO   = Project Implementation Officer

Under *upazila* administration the officers and staff dealing with the transferred subjects were placed at the disposal of *Upazila Parishad* and were accountable to it[70]. Later, they were deputed to the *Upazila Parishad*. Hence they were subject to all terms and conditions applicable to the government officials on deputation. They, therefore, drew their salaries, allowances, etc. from the respective *Upazila Parishad*. For this purpose, the government made necessary grant to it. However, the government and the respective departments had the responsibility of appointment, transfer, promotion and discipline of the officials. The *Upazila Nirbahi* Officer and the Assistant Commissioner, (later designated as Assistant Commissioner, Development) working at the *upazila* level were also deputed to the *Upazila Parishad*. But they continued to preform their duties and functions in respect of subjects retained by the government.[71]

The service and functions of the officers dealing with the retained subjects were controlled by the line Ministries. The *Upazila Parishad* could simply coordinate the retained functionaries except Magistrate and Assistant

Judge. Thus keeping in view the independence of judiciary, the architect of *upazila* model made *upazila* judiciary separate and independent. Given the entire organizational set-up of administration, the *upazila* judiciary was a separate entity functioning under the Assistant Judge and Magistrate, who disposed of the cases independently. However, while coordinating the function of the officers dealing with retained subjects, the *Upazila Parishad* could call report from them and also summon them for hearing. The *Parishad* was also empowered to inspect their offices and report to the government for any laps in the discharge of their duties.[72]

4.5(ii) Scope and Function of Upazila Parishad

The government Resolution of 1982, that laid down the foundation of *upazila* decentralization , divided the government functions at the *upazila* level into retained subjects and transferred subjects. The responsibility of transferred subjects were given to the *Upazila Parishad*. But the Resolution did not provide the list of transferred subjects. It simply provided the list of retained subjects. The retained subjects included civil and criminal judiciary,

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administration and management of central revenue, maintenance of law and order, registration, maintenance of essential goods including food, generation and distribution of electricity, irrigation schemes involving more than one district, education above primary level, large scale industries,etc. (Appendix-II).

Since the government Resolution of 1982 did not provide the list of transferred subjects, by adopting the method of exclusion,the subjects which are not included in the retained list may be regarded as the transferred subjects. They are as follows:

    i) Agriculture including extension services,input supply services and irrigation.

    ii) Small and cottage industries.

    iii) Primary education and child development programme.

    iv) Health and family planning including *Upazila* Health Complex, MCH and all population control services.

    v) Fishery

    vi) Live-stock

    vii) Co-operative

    viii) Rural Works Programme

    ix) Food for Works Programme

x) Disaster relief including VGA, IGF, etc.

xi) Social welfare.

The above distribution of government functions is generally found in a federal state. In the federal state like the United States of America, the power and functions of the central government are fixed and residuary powers and functions have been given to the states (provinces). This distribution is done by the constitution. In the British India and in the United Pakistan also this type of distribution existed between the central government and provincial governments. The provincial governments through legislation worked out the spheres of responsibility between them and local government institutions. Bangladesh is a unitary state and the reform measures of 1982-84 were introduced by a military government when there was no legislature ; and constitution was suspended. Hence the sharing of functions between the national government and local government i.e. *Upazila Parishad*, was implemented in the form of government Resolution. The only strength of the Resolution was that it had the sanction of the Cabinet consisting of senior armed forces and appointed Ministers.[73]

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The functions entrusted to the *Upazila Parishad* in relation to the transferred subjects are enumerated in the Second Schedule of the Local Government Ordinance of 1982. They are :

1) All development activities at the *upazila* level, formulation of *upazila* level development plans and programmes; and implementation, monitoring and evaluation thereof.

2) Preparation of *upazila* development plans on the basis of union development plans.

3) Giving assistance and encouragement to Union *Parishads* in their activities.

4) Promotion of health, family planning and family welfare.

5) Provision for management of environment.

6) Training of Chairmen, members and secretaries of Union *Parishads*.

7) Implementation of government policies and pro-grammes within the *upazila*.

8) Supervision, control and co-ordination of functions of officers serving in the *upazila* except Munsifs, Trying Magistrates and officers engaged in regula-tory functions.

9) Promotion of socio-cultural activities.

10) Promotion and encouragement of employment genera-ting activities.

11) Such other functions as may be specified by the government from time to time.

12) Promotion and extension of co-operative movement in the *upazila*.

13) Assistance to *Zilla Parishad* in development activities.

14) Planning and execution of all rural public works programme.

15) Promotion of agricultural activities for maximizing production.

16) Promotion of educational and vocational activities.

17) Promotion of live-stock, fisheries and forest.[74]

From the above discussion it emanates that the *Upazila Parishad*, the hub of *upazila* development administration, had two organs:

a) Policy making deliberative organ called `Parishad' consisting of a elected Chairman and three sets of members representative, nominated and official.

b) Policy implementation called 'Executive' comprising the Chairman, the *Nirbahi* Officer and other officials.

Defining *Parishad* the Local Government Ordinance 1982 stipulates that every *Parishad* shall be a corporate body, having perpetual succession and a common seal, with power subject to the provisions of this Ordinance and rules acquire, hold and dispose of property, both movable and unmovable and shall by its name sue and be sued.[75] Stating the scope and operation of executive powers of the *Parishad*, the Ordinance 1982 reads: (1) the executive powers of the

Parishad shall extent to the doing of all acts necessary for due discharge of its functions under this Ordinance. (ii) Save as otherwise provided in this Ordinance and the rules, the executive powers of the *Parishad* shall vest in and be exercised by the Chairman, either directly through the *Upazila Nirbahi* Officer or any other officer or person authorized by him in accordance with this Ordinance and the rules. (iii) The Chairman shall be responsible to the *Parishad.* (iv) All acts of a *Parishad*, whether executive or not, shall be expressed to be taken in the name of the *Parishad* and shall be authenticated in the manner prescribed.[76] Although the officers were made members of the *Parishad*, their role in decision making/policy formulation process of the *Parishad* was not specified. They simply could participate in the debate and discussion in *Parishad* without voting right. The representative members were the real decision makers in the *Parishad* as they were given voting rights and they were majority among the voting members. According to the Ordinance 1982, the officials were assigned the role for the implementation of the public policies which were formulated by the *Parishad* under the leadership of elected Chairman.

CHAPTER 4

Notes and Reference.

1. Muhammad Bakhtyar Khilji, a general of Qutubudden Aibeck of Delhi conquered Bengal and brought it to Delhi *Sultanate*. Khilje was appointed first Governor of Bengal. But the Muslim rule in Indian sub-continent was started from the beginning of the eighth century A.D when Muhammad Bin Quasim conquered Sind and Multan of present Pakistan.

2. The detailed discussion on it had been made in *supra* end note -3 in Chapter 3.

3. Shaikh Maqsood Ali *et.al.*, *Decentralization and People's Participation in Bangladesh* (Dhaka : NIPA, 1985),p.39.

4. M.A Muttalib and M.Akbar Ali Khan, *Theory of Local Government* (New Delhi : Sterling Publishers Private Limited,1983) p.17.

5. Keshab Choudhury, *Calcutta: A Story of its Government* (Calcutta : Orient Longmans,1973),pp. 12-19.

6. M.A Wahhab, "Municipal Government in Bangladesh : A Study in its Evolution,"paper presented at the *7th National Conference of Bangladesh Political Science Association*, March 24-26,1993 at the University of Chittagong.

7. Government of Bengal, Legislative Department, *The Bengal Village Choukidari Act,1870* (Alipur: Bengal Government Press, 1870.)

8. M.A. Chaudhury, *Rural Government in East Pakistan* (Dhaka: Puthighar Ltd,1969),p.3.

9. N,C Roy, *Rural Self-Government in Bengal* (Calcutta: Calcutta University Press, 1936), p.133.

10. The *choukidari* tax still is collected by the Union *Parishad*.

11. For detailed discussion on Lord Repon's resolution on local self government see, Hugh Tinker, *The Foundation of Local Self Government in India,Pakistan and Burma* (London   : The Athlone Press,1954), pp.43-63.

12. Government of Bengal , Legislative Department, *The Bengal Local Self-Government Act of 1885* (Alipur: Bengal Government Press, 1885).

13. M.Rashiduzzaman, *Politics and Administration in Local Councils* (Dhaka: Oxford University Press,1968),p.5.

14. Ali Ahmed, *Administration of Local Self-Government for Rural Areas in Bangladesh* (Dhaka : Local Government Institute 1979), pp.13-14.

15. "Report of the Royal Commission" (Hobhouse Commission)1908, cited in Hugh Tinker *op.cit.*,pp.64-83.

16. A.M.M. Shawkat Ali, *Field Administration and Rural Development in Bangladesh* (Dhaka : Centre for Social Studies,1982), p.37.

17. Lutful Hoq Choudhury, *Local Self-Government and its Reorganisation in Bangladesh* (Dhaka : NIIG, 1987), pp.10-11.

18. N.C. Roy,*op. cit.*, p. 149.

19. For detailed discussion on the political instability in Pakistan see, G.W.Chowdhury, *Democracy in Pakistan* (Dhaka: Green Book House 1963).

20. Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Ministry of Law and Parliamentary Affairs, *The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan 1956.* (Karachi : Pakistan Government Press, 1956).

21. Originally basic democracy was a five tier system. But the highest tier i.e. the Provincial Development Advisory Council was abolished when Provincial Legislative Assembly reconstituted in 1962.

22. Under the basic democracy system a Town Committee was formed in a town with population 15000 or below according to the Census of 1951 but a town with population more than 15000 was divided into unions and Union Committees were formed. In 1960 Municipal Committees were established in the towns having population more than 15000. A Municipal Committee consisted of the Chairmen of the Union Committees (ex-officio members) and equal number of appointed non-official and official members including official Chairman.

23. Inayatullah, *Basic Democracy District Administration and Development* (Peshwar; Pakistan Academy for Rural Development,1964)p.29.

24. *Idem.*

25. During the first election held in 1959 one third of the basic democrats were nominated by the government and two thirds were elected. The nomination system was abolished during the second election held in 1964.

26. Rehman Sobhan, *Basic Democracies, Work Programmes and Rural Development in East Pakistan* (Dhaka : Oxford University Press, 1968), pp.94-95.

27. *Ibid,*p.78.

28. M.A.Wahhab "Bangladesh Local Government : Endless Search for Newer Structure"in *The Journal of Political Science Association* (Bangladesh Political Science Association,1988),p.217.

29. Raunaq Jahan, *Pakistan: Failure in National Integration* (N.Y.,London: Columbia University Press,1972),p.130.

30. For an elaborate discussion on the Rural Works Programme see Rehman Sobhan *op.cit.*

31. Shaikh Maqsood Ali, *et. al. op. cit.*, p.153.

32. M.A Wahhab,"The Rural Political Elite in Bangladesh : A Study of Leadership Pattern in Six Union Parshads of Rangpur Distict", unpublished M.Phil. Thesis (Rajshahi : Institute of Bangladesh Studies, Rajshahi University,1980),p.9.

33. *The Report of the Chaudhury Committee* in five Volumes were submitted to the government in phases starting from April 1973 and ending with May 1975.

34. *The Report of The Chaudhury Committee*, Part II,pp.270-288.

35. "The Report of The Chaudhury Committee" cited in the *Report of the Committee for Administrative Reorganisation/Reform*, June 1982,pp. 23-24.

36. Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs ,*The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh* 1962 (Dhaka : BGP, 1972), Articles 59-60.

37. Lutful Hoq Choudhury, 1987 *op.cit.*,pp 17-18.

38. Syed Giasuddn Ahmed, *Public Personnel Administration in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: University of Dhaka: 1986),p.130.

39. Lawrence Ziring " Bangladesh in the 1970s: External Relation and National Politics " in M.M. Khan and H.M. Zafarullah eds. *Politics and Bureaucracy in a Nation: Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Centre for Administrative Studies, 1980) p.42. The article is abridged version of the article"South Asian Tangles and Triangles" in Lawrence Ziring ed., *The Sub-continent in World Politics : India: Its neighbors and the Great Power, 1978.*

40. *Ibid*,p. 43.

41. Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Cabinet Secretariat, *The District Administration Act 1975* (Dhaka: BGP, 1975).

42. Talukder Maniruzzaman, *Bangladesh and Its Aftermath*, second edition (Dhaka : The University Press Limited, 1988),p.181.

43. Khandokar Mustaq Ahmed was made President of Bangladesh because he knew nothing about the coup of August, 1975. The Majors who staged coup contacted him after killing sheikh Mujib and he accepted their request to assume Presidency. For Detailed information about this see, Talukder Maniruzzaman *op.cit.*

44. Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Ministry of Law and Parliamentary affairs, *The Local Government Ordinance,1976* (Dhaka:Bangladesh Government Press, 1976), Henceforth cited as the *Local Government ordinance,1976.*

45. *The Bangladesh government circular*,No.CD/DA/73-75-170(1000), dated February 27,1976,quoted in Shaikh Maqsood Ali,*et.al. op.cit.*, p. 59.

46. *The Local Government Ordinance* 1976, Article 86.

47. Interview of researcher with some UP Chairmen who were members of the *Thana* Development Committee.

48. Vide Establishment Division, *Notification*, No. ED/SA iv-57/80-102, dated 23.4.1980, quoted in Shaikh Maqsood Ali, *et.al. op.cit.*,p. 134.

49. J.K. Roy "Administration Restructuring and Development : Bangladesh" in *Asian Affairs*, Vol-III. No.2 (June 1981), pp. 144-157.

50. "*The Bangladesh Gazette*" May,24, 1980, Rules 17, quoted in Ahmed Shafiqul Huque, *Problems of Participation: Politics and Administration in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: The University Press Limited 1988), pp.73-74.

51. Parliament debate, dated June 21,1980; and the Speeches of the President and Minister for Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operative published in different Daily News Papers.

52. *The Bangladesh Gazette, op.cit.,* Rules 24(2).

53. B. Majumder,*Thana Administration and its Reorganization and Decentralization* (in Bangali) (Dinajpur; Anowara Begam,1981),

54. Shaikh Maqsood Ali *et. al. op. cit.,* op.150.

55. General Earshad's address to the nation over Radio and Television on March 24,1982. For details, see *The Bangladesh Times* (Dhaka) March 25,1982.

56. Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, *Report of the Committee for Administrative Reorganization/Reform* (Dhaka: Naval Headquarters, 1982), p.i. Henceforth cited as Report of CARR.

57. *Ibid,* pp. vii-viii.

58. *Ibid,* pp. 150-151.

59. *Ibid,* pp. 170-173.

60. Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Cabinet Division, "Resolution on Reorganization of Thana Administration" (as amended up to 3rd Feb.1983) in the government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, *Manual on Thana Administration* vol-1 (Dhaka: Chief Martial Law Administrator's Secretariat, Cabinet Division,1963), pp. 21-58. Hence-forth cited as only *Manual on Thana Administration,* vol-1.

61. Besides these metropolitan *thanas,* there were 21 Railway *thanas* and 6 River *thanas.*

62. For further information about Union *Parishad* see"The Local Government (Union Parishad) Ordinance,1983" in *Manual on Upazila Administration,* Vol-III.pp.1-34. Although the military government of General Ershad brought about change in the rural local government,it made no change in the urban local government. Hence *Pourashavas* of Bangladesh were being governed under the provisions of the *Pourashava Ordinance,1977.*

63. "The Local Government(Thana Parishad and Thana Administration Reorganisation) Ordinance 1982," No.LIX,Dhaka, the 23rd December,1982,in *Manual on Thana Administration vol*-1 pp.1-20. Henceforth cited as The Local Government Ordinance 1982. The Ordinance was promulgated on 23rd November, 1982, but it was given retrospective effect from November 7, 1982, as the upgradation of thanas was started on November,7,1982. The word *'thana'* was renamed as *upazilla* (laterally means sub-district) in 1983 according to the provision of the Second Amendment of the Local Government Ordinance 1982 (July,1983).The spelling of word "*upazilla*"`has been changed into *upazila* as per the provision of the Third Amendment of the said Ordinance (October,1983).

64. Local Government Ordinance 1982, Article 4(1).

65. It was provided that till the election of Chairman is held, the *Upazila Nirbahi* Officer, will act as the Chairman of the *Upazila Parishad.*

66. Originally in the Local Government Ordinance of 1982 there was no provision for *pourashava* representative. In the first Amendment of the Ordinance (1983) the Chairman of the *pourashava* within the upazila was included in the representative category members. Again the nomination of a commissioner of the *pourashava* made by the Chairman to be member of Upazila Parishad was provided by another Amendment of the Local Government Ordinance in 1986.

67. For the purpose of giving adequate representation to different groups in the districts of Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bandorban and Khagrachari,the government could appoint more than one person as nominated members, provided that their number would not exceed one half of the total number of representative members (Fourth Amendment of Local Government Ordinance 1982). For details, see *Manual on Upazila Administration*, Vol. III(April,1984) p.37.

68. "Notification" NO. S-VIII/2E-3/83/41 dated the 26th January 1983, in *Manual on Thana Administration* Vol.1, pp.87-88. In the said Notification Upazila Family

Planning Officer was not the official member of the
Parishad. He was included by another Notification
No.S.R.O.10-L/84/5-VIII/2E-383/13 dated the 10th
January,1984, in Syed Lutfur Rahaman, *Upazila Parishad
Laws Manual* (Dhaka : Sailur, 1988), pp.266-267. Again
according to the Notification of 1983 the Upazila Mass
Communication Officer was the official member of the
Upazila Parishad, But as the list of subjects retained
by the government does not include information so it was
decided to withdraw Mass Communication Officer from
upazila and he was posted at the district headquarters
and/or other suitable location and entrusted with
responsibility of a number of *upazilas (Manual on
Upazila.*

69. For an elaborate discussion on *Zila Parishad see Local
Government (Zila Parishad)* Act 1988.4th Jun 1988.
Separate Acts were passed for the constitution of *Zila
Parishads* in the districts of Chittagong Hill Tracts,
Bandorban and Khagrachari. The Chairmen of *Zila
Parishads* in these three districts were elected like the
Chairmen of *Upazila Parishad* and they are still holding
their offices . For details, see the *Local Government
(Chittagong Hill Tracts Zila Parishad) Act 1989,*⁶ᵗʰ March
1989; *Local Government (Bandorban Zila Parishad) Act
1989.* 6th March 1989 and *Local Government (Khagrachari
Zila Parishad) Act 1989*, 6th March,1989.

70. *Manual on Thana Administration*, Vol-1, p.23.

71. Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh,
President's Secretariat, Cabinet Division," The
Bangladesh Gazette, Extraordinary," dated Dec 1,1985
also" Bangladesh Gazette Extraordinary",Dated May
21,1985 in Syed Lutful Rahman ed. *Upazila Parished Laws
Manual* (Dhaka: Soilur, 1988), pp. 378-379.

72. *Manual on Thana Administration*, Vol-I, p.23

73. A.F.M.Showkat Ali " The Upazila : A Study of Political
Administration Relationship" in *The journal of Local
Government*, special issue on upazila (Dhaka, nd.), p.56.

74. *The Local Government Ordinance 1982,* The Second Schedule.

75. *Ibid,* Article 3(3).

76. *Ibid,* Article 27(1-4).

PART TWO

DECENTRALIZATION IN PRACTICE : A STUDY OF SELECTED UPAZILAS

CHAPTER 5

CHARACTERISTICS OF SELECTED UPAZILAS
AND   LEADERSHIP PATTERN

This chapter gives a short profile of the *upazilas* selected for the study. It also discusses leadership pattern and personnel profile of the *Upazila Parishads* in the selected areas.

5.1 Profile of the Selected Upazilas

Hathazari of Chittagong district is located at a distance of 288 km. south-east form Dhaka. Chittagong-Rangamati/Nazirhat high way and Chittagong-Nazirhat Railway pass through Hathazari. Chittagong University is situated in its hilly area . Hathazari was upgraded into *upazila* in the fifth phase (July 2, 1983) of upgradation of *thanas* into *upazilas*. Chandina from Comilla district is also situated at south-east of Dhaka, but it is at a distance of about 100 km. from Dhaka. Dhaka-Chittagong high way runs through Chandina. It was upgraded into *upazila* in the eighth phase (November 7,1983) of upgradation.

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Savar under Dhaka district is close to Dhaka city,the capital of Bangladesh. Savar is located at a distance of 29 km. north-west of Dhaka city. Jahangir Nagar University, Bangladesh Public Administration Centre (BPAPC), National Monument   *Ganashastya Kendra*   (Public Health Centre), a local NGO and other important government offices are located here. Savar was upgraded into *upazila* in the fifth phase (July 2, 1983) of upgradation. Dewangonj in the district of Jamalpur is situated 233 km. north-east of Dhaka. It stands on the east bank of the Jamuna, the widest river in the country. The railway ferry *ghat* (station) on the Jamuna, that connects northern part of the country with the eastern part, is located here. Dewangong *thana* was upgraded to *upazila* in the first phase (November 7, 1982) of upgradation.

Paikgacha of Khulna district is situated at a distance of about 386 km. south-west from Dhaka. It stands on the River Shibsha and the Bay of Bengal touches its southern part. There is no railway in Paikgacha. It was converted into *upazila* in the first phase (November 7,1982). Gangni under Meherpur district is 325 km. west of Dhaka. The north-west part of Gangni touches international border/line

BANGLADESH

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY LINE
DEVISIONAL BOUNDARY LINE
SELECTED UPAZILAS
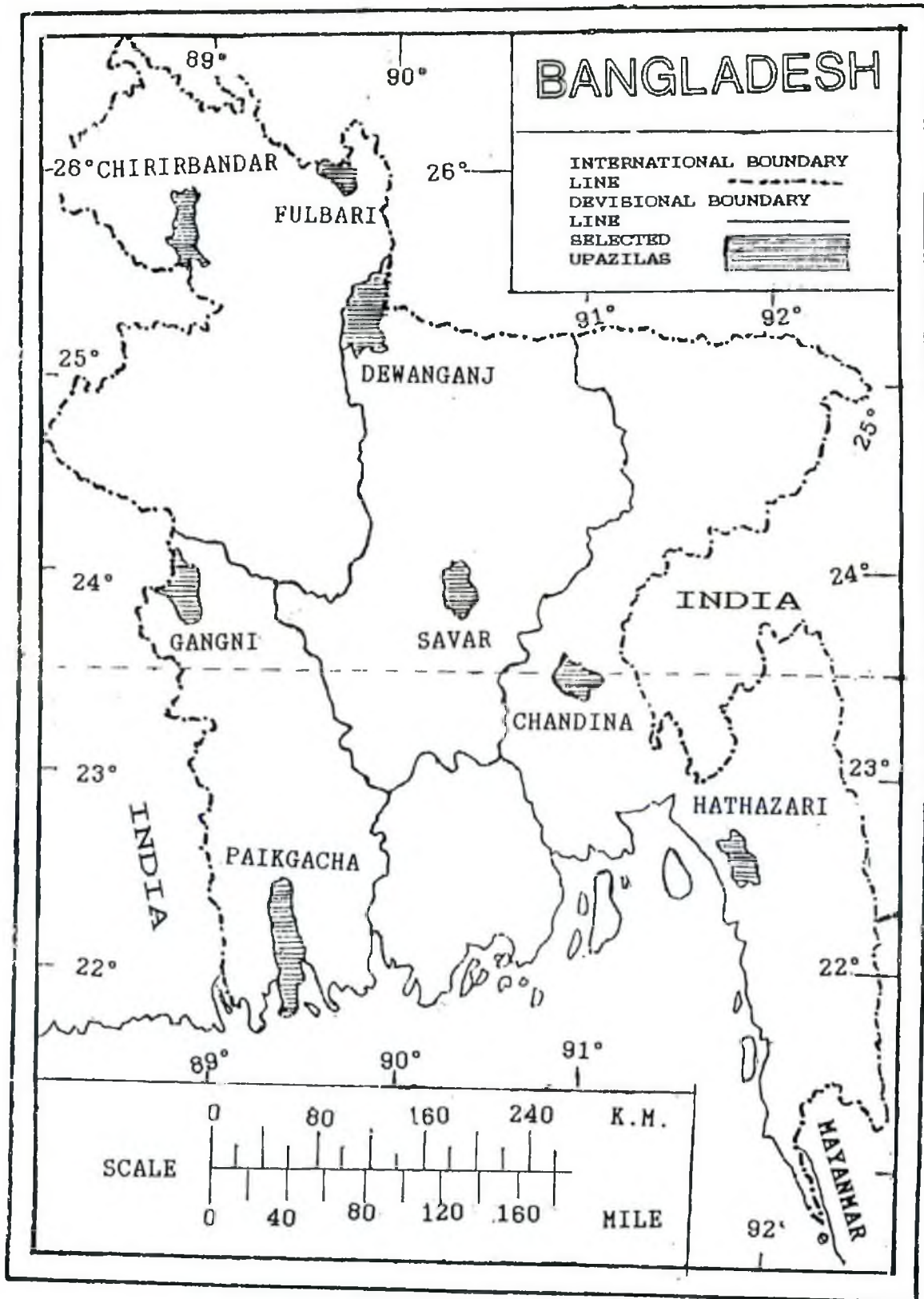
between India and Bangladesh. Kushtia-Meherpur high way runs through it. Gangni acquired the status of *upazila* in the second phase (December 15, 1982) of upgradation.

Chiribandar under the district of Dinajpur lies at a distance of 430 km. north-west of Dhaka. Dhaka-Dinajpur high way and Dinajpur-Parbotipur railway run over it. It was made *upazila* in the seventh phase (September 14, 1983) of upgradation. Fulbari of Kurigram district, the smallest *upazila* in our sample areas, is at a distance of 417 km. north-west of Dhaka. It stands on international border line between India and Bangladesh. The River Dharla flows at the west side of Fulbari. There is no railway in Fulbari. It was upgraded to *upazila* in the fifth phase (July 2, 1982) of upgradation.

The above is a short description of the *upazilas* selected for the study. The other information of the *upazilas* has been projected in the following tables.

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Table 5.1

Areas of Selected Upazilas

Name of upazila	Total area in sq.km.	Land in sq. km.	Reserve forest in sq.km.	River in sq.km.	Population Density
Hathazari	207	148	59	–	140
Chandina	207	202	–	–	1061
Savar	279	272	02	05	939
Dewangonj	425	409	–	16	581
Paikgacha	388	308	–	80	453
Gangni	344	337	07	–	542
Chirirbandar	308	341	–	67	599
Fulbari	163	145	–	18	635

Source: Compiled from Upazila Statistics (1979-80 to 1982-83), Vol. 1, 1985

Table 5.2

Administrative Units of Selected Upazilas

Name of upazila	Number of union	Number of mouza	Number of village
Hathazari	15	51	514
Chandina	12	16	233
Savar	12	256	425
Dewangong	13	64	332
Paikgacha	10	172	204
Gangni	09	103	127
Chirirbandar	12	145	145
Fulbari	06	50	50

Source: Compiled from Upazila Statistics (1979-80 to 1982-83), Vol. 1, 1985

Table 5.3

Demographic View of Selected Upazilas

Name of upazila	Total population	Literacy in %(5 yrs.+)	Male lit-racy in%	Female lit-racy in %
Hathazari	290,044	36.6	46.8	24.0
Chandina	214,222	19.3	26.4	12.3
Savar	261,904	23.2	32.0	13.0
Dewangong	246,987	12.1	17.4	8.6
Paikgacha	175,715	24.5	35.5	13.1
Gangni	186,498	13.2	17.9	8.3
Chirirbandar	184,664	21.2	30.6	11.3
Fulbari	103,577	16.4	24.4	7.9

Source: Compiled from Upazila Statistics (1979-80 to 1982-83), Vol. 1, 1985

Table 5.4

Communication and Physical Facilities in Selected Upazilas

Name of upazila	Road mileage by type		
	Metalled	Semi-metalled	Non-metalled
Hathazari	21	22	325
Chandina	16	–	180
Savar	18	–	450
Dewangong	07	03	113
Paikgacha	01	15	100
Gangni	14	20	560
Chirirbandar	05	05	158
Fulbari	06	05	674

Source: Compiled from Upazila Statistics (1979-80 to 1982-83), Vol. 1, 1985

Table 5.5

Electricity and other Facilities
in Selected Upazilas

Name of upazila	Electrified union No.	Deep tubewell & power pump No.	Post office No.	Bank branch No.	Hat & bazar No.
Hathazari	06	10	25	14	31
Chandina	10	20	23	06	29
Savar	11	150	13	19	15
Dewangong	04	-	17	06	21
Paikgacha	02	01	21	09	24
Gangni	05	09	14	07	18
Chirirbandar	09	09	17	08	41
Fulbari	-	-	05	03	17

Source: Compiled from Upazila Statistics (1979-80 to 1982-83), Vol. 1, 1985

Table 5.6

Religious Institutions in
Selected Upazilas

Name of upazila	Mosque No.	Temple No.	Church No.
Hathazari	300	100	-
Chandina	358	-	-
Savar	266	-	-
Dewangong	332	02	-
Paikgacha	Not available		
Gangni	185	05	04
Chirirbandar	451	39	-
Fulbari	201	30	-

Source: Compiled from Upazila Statistics (1979-80 to 1982-83), Vol. 1, 1985

The above discussion is the short description of the profile of *upazilas* selected for the study of decentralization practice in Bangladesh. Now we shall discuss the political leadership of *Upazila Parishad* responsible for running decentralized administration in these *upazilas* and also the development management capacity for the implementation of decentralized programmes/projects undertaken by the *Upazila Parishad*.

5.2 Leadership Characteristics of the Upazila Parishad

The overall development of any community depends largely on the qualities of its leaders. Hence the study of the background of leaders is very important to assess the development process for which they are responsible. Here we shall discuss the background of *Upazila Parishad* (UZP) members by examining certain factors, such as age, education, occupation, experience ,etc.

Age

The age composition of the members of any institution is an important index to assess the kind of people who are responsible for running it. If the institution is dominated

by elderly people, it is doubtful whether they can meet the
necessity of an emerging society. Bangladesh is a
transitional society with an interaction of the forces of
traditionalism and modernization. It is, therefore, expected
that younger educated people should assume the leadership in
social life.

The age of UZP members ranged from 28 to 59 years. For
a precise and meaningful analysis, the age data have been
divided into four age groups. Table 5.7 explains their age

Table 5.7

Distribution of UZP Members by Age

Category of members	Age in year			
	Below 30	30-39	40-49	50-59
Chairman, No.8 (100.00)	–	2 (25.00)	5 (62.50)	1 (12.50)
Representative members, No.60 (100.00)	–	15 (25.00)	40 (66.67)	05 (8.33)
Nominated members, No.20 (100.00)	02 (10.00)	13 (65.00)	04 (20.00)	01 (5.00)
Grand total: 88 (100.00)	02 (2.28)	30 (34.09)	49 (55.68)	07 (7.95)

Notes: (a) Nominated members includes both male and female
members and the Chairmen, UZCCA
(b) Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Source: Field work

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distribution. The data projected in the table show that none of the Chairmen and representative members came from the age group below 30 years. Only 2 i.e. 10 per cent nominated members, all were women, came from the age group below 30 years. Majority Chairmen and representative members respectively constituting 62.50 and 66.67 per cent came from the age group between 40-49 years. On the contrary, majority nominated members were in the age group between 30-39 years.

Thus the age data clearly reveal that the leaders belonging to the age group between 40-49 years dominated the *Upazila Parishads* in our study area. However the leaders belonging to this age group not only dominate the local/regional politics, they also dominate the national politics.[1] A notable feature of the age distribution of the UZP members is that the persons belonging to the age group of 60 and above were found absent from the leadership structure of *Upazila Parishad*.[2] This is a good sign for healthy local government administration, because the persons older than 59 years generally do not get full energy for the work, as their active period of life has come to an end.

Education

In a traditional society like Bangladesh a mixture of traditional and modern forces is obvious. It is, therefore, expected that the forces of modernization and social change would be dominant over the traditional forces of the society. Here lies the necessity of educated leaders. Looking at the level of education, it reveals that UZP members were an educated group (Table 5.8).

Table 5.8

Distribution of UZP Members by Education

Category of members	Level of education		
	Below Secondary	Secondary / Higher Secondary	Graduation/Post Graduation
Chairman, No.8 (100.00)	-	2 (25.00)	6 (75.00)
Representative members, No.60 (100.00)	15 (25.00)	35 (58.33)	10 (16.87)
Nominated members, No.20 (100.00)	-	16 (80.00)	04 (20.00)
Grand total: 88 (100.00)	15 (17.50)	53 (60.23)	20 (22.27)

Note : Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Source: Field work

The data presented in Table 5.8 show that Chairmen were better educated than the members. Majority Chairmen constituting 75.00 per cent were either Graduates or Post-Graduates and the rest passed the Secondary School Certificate Examination or Higher Secondary Certificate Examination. There was no Chairman whose educational qualification was below Secondary level. Again if we consider the members category wise, the nominated members were comparatively better educated than the representative members. Like the Chairmen no nominated member had educational qualification below Secondary level. But one fourth of the representative members had educational qualification below Secondary level.

Occupation

Cultivation constitutes main occupation in Bangladesh. But our data on occupation show that majority of the UZP members were not exclusively engaged in cultivation. They accepted other modern occupation. Out of them only 12.50, 40.00 and 05.00 per cent respectively from Chairmen, representative members and nominated members had cultivation as their main occupation. But the majority

constituting 62.50, 57.67 and 55.00 per cent respectively

from Chairmen, representative members and nominated members

Table 5.9

Distribution of UZP Members by
Principal Occupation

Category of members	Cultivation	Business	Others
Chairman, No.8 (100.00)	1 (12.50)	5 (62.50)	2 (25.00)
Representative members, No.60 (100.00)	24 (40.00)	31 (51.67)	05 (8.33)
Nominated members, No.20 (100.00)	01 (5.00)	11 (55.00)	8 (40.00)
Grand total: 88 (100.00)	26 (29.55)	47 (53.41)	15 (17.04)

Note: Figures in parentheses
indicate percentages

Source: Field work

had business, including contract and industry, as their

principal occupation. The remaining members maintained other

principal occupations. The other occupations included

teaching, law practice, medical practice, pension and

household affairs (for women).

It is to be noted that none of the UZP members under review was found with single occupation. Even the two women members who identified themselves with household affairs were also engaged in secondary occupation (stock business).

Annual Income

The UZP members under the study were asked to assess their approximate annual income in terms of Taka.[3] Their yearly income varied widely ranging from Tk.40 thousands to Tk. more than 1 million. For the advantage of analysis various amount of income have been classified into four groups :(a) Tk.40,000-59,000,(b) Tk.60,000-79,000 (c) Tk.80,000-99,000 and (d) Tk.100,000 and above (Table 5.10).

Table 5.10

Distribution of UZP Members by Annual Income

Category of members	Annual Income in thousand Taka			
	40-59	60-79	80-99	100 & above
Chairman, No.8 (100.00)	-	1 (12.50)	2 (25.00)	5 (62.50)
Representative members, No.60 (100.00)	08 (13.33)	09 (15.00)	31 (51.67)	12 (20.00)
Nominated members, No.20 (100.00)	02 (10.00)	13 (65.00)	03 (15.00)	02 (10.00)
Grand total: 88 (100.00)	10 (11.36)	23 (26.14)	36 (40.91)	19 (21.59)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Source: Field work

It appears from the data presented in Table 5.10 that the UZP leadership came from the rich stratum of the society. The data also reveal that the Chairmen as a group were comparatively richer than the members. The representative members as a group also were richer than the nominated members. While majority from the Chairmen (62.50%) belonged to the group of persons whose yearly income was Tk.100,000 and above; the majority representative members (51.67%) and also majority nominated members (65.00%) respectively

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belonged to the income groups of Tk.80,000-99,000 and 60,000-79,000.The data also indicate that no Chairman came from the income group below Tk.60,000, but 13.33 per cent representative members and 10.00 per cent nominated members belonged to this group.

Landholding

As it is evident from income background that the UZP members belonged to the rich stratum of the society, the size of landholding owned by them indicates that they also belonged to the group of large farmers. The sizes of land-holding of the UZP members varied from 4 acres to 50 acres.[4] The different sizes of landholding have been categorized into three groups and shown in Table 5.11.

Table 5.11

Distribution of UZP Members by the Ownership of Landholding

Category of members	Landholding in acre		
	Below 5	Below 10	10 & above
Chairman, No.8 (100.00)	–	1 (12.50)	7 (87.50)
Representative members, No.60 (100.00)	08 (13.33)	21 (35.00)	31 (51.67)
Nominated members, No.20 (100.00)	03 (15.00)	05 (25.00)	12 (60.00)
Grand total: 88 (100.00)	11 (12.50)	27 (30.68)	50 (56.82)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Source: Field Work

The data projected in Table 5.11 show that Chairmen not only were higher income earners (Table 5.10), they also owned larger size of landholding than that of the members. Although majority from all categories came from the group of persons having 10 acres of land or more than 10 acres, the highest concentration in this group was found among the Chairmen. Again no Chairman belonged to the group of persons who owned land below 5 acres. On the contrary, 13.33 per

-155-

cent representative members and also 15.00 per cent nominated members belonged to this group.

Experience

Prior experience of UZP members in their line is an important factor to assess their capability in planning and administration of works for which they are responsible. The data projected in Table 5.12 show that majority Chairmen and

Table 5.12

Distribution of UZP Members by Prior Local Government Experience

Category of members	No.Exp- erience	Experience in			
		UP	UP & TP	UZP	Pour- ashava
Chairman, No.8 (100.00)	1 (12.50)	4 (50.00)	1 (12.50)	1 (12.50)	1 (12.5)
Representative members, No.60 (100.00)	15 (25.00)	25 (41.67)	10 (16.67)	08 (13.33)	02 (3.33)
Nominated members, No.20 (100.00)	17 (85.00)	02 (10.00)	-	01 (5.00)	-
Grand total:	88 (100.00)	33 (37.50)	31 (35.23)	11 (12.50)	10 (11.36)	03 (3.41)

Note:Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.
Source:Field work

representative members had experience in different local government institutions. On the other hand, an overwhelming majority nominated members had no experience in the local government institution. But the absence of prior experience in local government does not mean that they (inexperienced) had no experience in other organizations/institutions before the they held the formal position in the *Upazila Parishad* (Table 5.13). It appears from Table 5.13 that all Chairmen

Table 5.13

Distribution UZP Members by the Involvement in Voluntary Organizations/Institutions

Category of members	No. of Organisation/Institutions		
	1 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 12
Chairman, No.8 (100.00)	–	1 (12.50)	7 (87.50)
Representative members, No.60 (100.00)	–	05 (8.33)	55 (91.67)
Nominated members, No.20 (100.00)	06 (30.00)	09 (45.00)	05 (25.00)
Grand total: 88 (100.00)	06 (6.82)	15 (17.05)	67 (70.14)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Source: Field work

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and members, whether experienced in local government or not, were involved in different organizations/institutions with different capacities.[5] Maximum involvement of an individual member was in 12 organizations/institutions and minimum one. It also appears from the Table 5.13 that a preponderant majority from the Chairmen and representative members involved in 9-12 organizations/institutions; and a minority were involved in 5-8 institutions. It is also evident from the table that none of the Chairmen and representative members was found in the group of persons who were involved in less than 5 organizations/institutions. But a sizeable number of the nominated members, and all were female, were found in the group of people who were involved in 1-4 organizations/institutions.

Training

As *Upazila Parishad* was given power to plan and implement the development projects which are technical in nature, it is essential that the members of *Upazila Parishad* should have training in this regard . But our data reveal that almost all members (95%) had no training of any kind (Table 5.14). All Chairmen and only 3 representative members (5%) had training for one time. The Chairmen attended the

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training course in the areas of office management and different rules of *upazila* administration. The course was held at the National Institute of Local Government located at Dhaka. Only three representative members claimed for training of one time, and they received training at the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development, Comilla, and their area of training was rural development. None from the Chairmen and members was found trained in planning and implementation of development projects for which they were responsible.

Table 5.14

Distribution of Upazila Parishad Members by Training

Category of members	No. of non-trained	No. of trained for one time
Chairman, No.8 (100.00)	-	08 (100.00)
Representative members, No.60 (100.00)	57 (95.00)	03 (5.00)
Nominated members, No.20 (100.00)	20 (100.00)	-
Grand total: 88 (100.00)	77 (87.50)	11 (12.50)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Source: Field work

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Political Affiliation

When *upazila* decentralization was introduced, it was criticized from different corners specially by the political parties that its main objective is to build support structure for the ruling regime. The criticism has positive co-relation with our finding relating to the party affiliation pattern of the UZP Chairmen and members studied by us. The data on the party affiliation, arranged in Table 5.15, show that except two representative members (3.33%), all had affiliation with one or other political party. It is interesting to note that from among the party affiliated members, the highest representation went to the JP (the *Jatyo* Party, National Party), the then ruling party. More interesting is that in the case of nominated members the percentage of ruling party is very higher (75%).[9] The remaining members were affiliated to different political parties including the AL (*Awami* League), the BNP (Bangladesh Nationalist Party), *the Jamat (Jamat-e-Islam),* the ML(Muslim League), the JSD (*Jatio Samajtantric Dal*— the National Socialist Party)and the NAP (National *Awami* Party).

Table 5.15

Distribution of UZP Members by
Affiliation to Political Parties.

Category of members	Non-affil-iaion No.	Name of parties to which affiliation				
		JP No.	AL No.	BNP No.	Jamat No.	Others No.
Chairman, No.8 (100.00)	–	3 (37.50)	2 (25.00)	2 (25.00)	1 (12.50)	–
Representative members, No.60 (100.00)	02 (3.33)	29 (48.34)	08 (13.33)	09 (15.00)	05 (8.00)	07 (11.67)
Nominated members, No.20 (100.00)	–	15 (75.00)	01 (5.00)	02 (10.00)	01 (5.00)	01 (5.00)
Grand total:	88 (100.00)	02 (2.27)	47 (53.41)	11 (12.50)	13 (14.77)	07 (7.95)	08 (9.09)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate
        percentages

Source: Field work

However, the influence of ruling party on the local/regional body politic is not a new phenomenon in Bangladesh. The same trend is found in other South Asian countries also. Sirsikar studied the party affiliation pattern of the members of District Council and *Panchyat Samitis* in Maharastra, India and observed that 85 per cent

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of them had affiliation to the Congress, the then ruling party.[7]

5.3 Sense of Obligation of the Upazila Leaders

Leaders are the agents through which the development works in their locality are initiated and executed . So it is essential to know their sense of obligation and commitment to the duties for which they are responsible. Here an endeavour has been made to examine the sense of obligation and commitment of UZP members by studying their attendance at the meetings of the *Upazila Parishads* and the time they spent for public works.

A. Participation in Meetings

Upazila Parishad was the key decision making body for local level planning and development. So the participation of members in the meetings of *Parishad* was very essential. The *Upazila Parishads* under examination conducted both ordinary and special meetings. According to the *Upazila Parishad* Business Rules 1983, the ordinary meeting was to be held at least once a month on a day to be fixed by the *Parishad*. The special meeting was held for an emergency

situation or any important business of the *Parishad*. The meetings of *Parishad*, whether ordinary or special, were called by the Chairman or in his absence, by the UNO.

The members were asked to state their presence in the meetings of the *Parishad* that were held after their holding formal position in the *Parishad*. Their replies were summarized in an average form and is shown is Table 5.16.

Table 5.16

Showing Presence of UZP Members
in the Meetings of Parishad

Category of members	Average presence
Chairmen	90 per cent meettings
Representative members	80 per cent meettings
Nominated members	50 per cent meettings

Source: Field work

In appears from the data projected in Table 5.16 that the Chairmen and representative members seemed to have demonstrated a high degree of enthusiasm in attending the meetings of *Upazila Parishads*. Out of the total meetings held during their term, the Chairmen were present in 90 per cent meetings on an average, and the representative members

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were present in 80 per cent meetings. On the other hand, on an average basis the nominated members were present only in 50 per cent meetings. This invariably indicates that nominated members, specially the women as our data (not presented in table) reveal, seemed to have taken less interest in the meetings of *Parishad*.

The factors that prevented the Chairmen to attend the meetings were two: (a) their absence from the *upazila* for official purpose and (b) illness. But the factors that prevented the members, both representative and nominated, were various such as illness, preoccupation with other activities, absence from the *upazila* for official or personal business, distance of *upazila* headquarters from their union and less interest in the activities of *Parishad*.

B. Time Spent for Public Works

The sense of obligation and commitment of *UZP* members to their duties was further evident when they were asked : how much time you spent for public works a day on an average ? Their replies, summarized in Table 5.17, indicate

Table 5.17

Distribution of UZP Members by the Time Spent for Public Works

Category of members	Time spent for public works per day on an average				
	Below 2 hours	2-4 hours	4-6 hours	6-8 hours	Indef-inite
Chairman.No.8 (100.00)	-	-	-	1 (12.50)	7 (87.50)
Representative members,No.60 (100.00)	-	-	6 (10.00)	19 (31.67)	35 (58.33)
Nominated members,No.20 (100.00)	7 (35.00)	5 (25.00)	5 (25.00)	3 (15.00)	-
Grand total: 88 (100.00)	7 (7.95)	5 (5.68)	11 (12.50)	23 (26.14)	42 (47.73)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Source: Field work.

that except one, all Chairmen (87.50%) and majority representative members (58.33%) were so busy with public works that they could not mention how much time they spent per day for public works. The nominated members who spent time 2-4 hours or below 2 hours for public works a day, were the nominated women members. The remaining members including a Chairman spent time 4-6 or 6-8 hours.

5.4 Profile of Upazila Officials

The personnel of *Upazila Parishad* may broadly be divided in to two categories, namely,(i) the deputed officers loaned from various Ministries/Departments and (ii) those who constituted *Parishad's* staff, whom the *Parishad*

Table 5.18

**Showing Officials and Staff
Deputed to Upazila Parishad**

Name of the office	Officials		Staff	
	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV
UNO	01	–	08	09
AC (Dev.)	01	–	02	–
PIO	–	01	01	–
Engineering	01	–	09	04
Health	13	–	73	24
Family planning	02	03	96	19
Agriculture	02	01	45	07
Live stock	02	–	07	02
Fisheries	01	–	01	01
Education	01	05	569	02
Social welfare	–	01	05	03
Co-operative	–	–	04	01
Total:	24	12	820	72

Source: Hathazari Upazila Statistical Office

had power to recruit. But in fact, a great majority of the staff were absorbed from the previous *thana* administration. Table 4.18 shows the number of officers and staff working at the disposal of a *Upazila Parishad*.

The number of officials , both class I and class II shown in Table 5.18 were found in all *upazilas* surveyed by us except the officers of health, family planning, agriculture and education. In the case of health, class I officers and in the case of education, class II officers varied with the population of *upazila*. So also the case with class III staff of health, family planning, agriculture and education. Their number varied from one *upazila* to another according to the number of population. The above table shows the number of officials and staff of a *upazila* consisting of 15 unions having 290,044 population .

Age of the officials

The age data of the officials presented in Table 5.19 indicate that the UNOs and class II officials were older than the class I officials. This is because the UNOs were senior officials and class II officials mostly were

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Table 5.19

Distribution of Upazila Officials by Age

Category of officials	Age in year			
	Below 30	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 57
The UNO. NO.8 (100.00)	-	4 (50.00)	3 (37.50)	1 (12.50)
Other officials Class I. No.50 (100.00)	05 (10.00)	31 (62.00)	09 (18.00)	05 (10.00)
Class II. No.10 (100.00)	-	01 (10.00)	07 (70.00)	02 (10.00)
Grand total: 68 (100.00)	5 (7.35)	36 (52.94)	19 (27.94)	8 (11.77)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Source: Field work

promoted from class III employees. But in comparison to people's representatives, the officials as a whole were younger in age than the people's representatives. This is because the *upazila/thana* is the lowest unit of field administration, generally the junior officers are posted there. So it is not unusual that the officials working at the *upazila* level were more younger than the people's representatives who spent long time to build their political career and support base. The age data of officials and people's representatives presented earlier

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tend to support the above observation. While majority Chairmen and representative members came from the age group of 40-49 years (*supra* Table 5.7), the majority officials belonged to the age group of 30-39 years (Table 5.19).

Education

With regard to the education, the data projected in Table 5.20 reveal that the UNOs and other class I officials were better qualified than the class II officials. This is because the minimum educational qualification is Bachelor Degree for the recruitment of class I officials in Bangladesh. On the contrary, most of the class II officials were promoted from class III employees whose minimum educational qualification is Higher Secondary or Secondary level. All UNOs and class I officers had either Master Degree or Bachelor Degree in Medicine/Agriculture/ Engineering which is equivalent to general Master Degree. On the contrary, majority class II officers had general Bachelor Degree. Only one class II officers had general Master Degree and also one had qualification at Higher Secondary level.

Table 5.20

Distribution of Upazila Officials by Education

Category of officials	Level of education		
	Secondary/Higher Secondary	Bachelor	Master
The UNO. No.8 (100.00)		1 (12.50)	7 (87.50)
Other Officials Class I, No.50 (100.00)		40 (80.00)	10 (20.00)
Class II, No.10 (100.00)	01 (10.00)	08 (80.00)	01 (10.00)
Grand Total: 68 (100.00)	01 (1.47)	49 (72.06)	18 (26.47)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate
      percentages

Source: Field work

If one compares the education of officials with the education of people's representatives, the officials are found more educated than the people's representatives. For, unlike the people's representatives, there is education bar for the recruitment of officials. Hence it is likely that the officials are highly qualified than the people's representatives specially at the local level. Our data on educational qualification of the officials confirm this. The

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officials under observation were found to have higher education than the people's representatives who held the formal position in the *Upazila Parishad.* Except one, who was a cooperative officer, all officials had Bachelor or Master Degree   (*supra* Table 5.20). On the other hand, many members including two Chairmen had qualification below the Bachelor/Higher Secondary level (*supra* Table 5.8).

Yearly Income

The yearly income of *upazila* level officials varied widely ranging from Tk.60 thousands to Tk.1 million, The income data have been classified into three groups : (a) Tk.60,000-79,000; Tk.80,000-99,000 and Tk.100,000 and above. It reveals from income data (Table 5.21) that none from the officials came from the group of people whose yearly income is below Tk.60,000. Although the officials' recruitment was found in the income group of Tk.60,000-79,000, majority of them (60.29%) came from the group of TK.80,000-99,000.

Table 5.21
Distribution of Upazila Officials by
Yearly Income

Category of Officials	Yearly income in thousand Taka		
	60-79	80-99	100 and above
The UNO, NO.8 (100.00)	1 (12.50)	5 (62.50)	2 (25.00)
Other officials Class I, No.50 (100.00)	10 (20.00)	29 (58.00)	11 (22.00)
Class II, NO.10 (100.00)	2 (20.00)	7 (70.00)	1 (10.00)
Grand total: 68 (100.00)	13 (11.12)	41 (60.29)	14 (20.59)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate
percentages

Source: Field work

Landholding

The officials at *upazila* level owned different sizes of
landholding ranging from 3 acres to 25 acres. The various
sizes of landholding have been categorized into three
groups: (a) below 5 acres, (b) below 10 acres and (c) 10
acres and above. Landholding data presented in Table 5.22
show that although some officials were found in the group of
people who own land below 5 acres, an overwhelming
majority of them came from the group of people who own land
above 5 acres.

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Table 5.22
Distribution of Upazila Officials by
Ownership of Landholding

Category of Officials	Landholding in acre		
	Below 5 acres	Below 10 acres	10 acres and above
The UNO,NO.8 (100.00)	1 (12.50)	5 (62.50)	2 (25.00)
Other officials Class I,No.50 (100.00)	18 (36.00)	22 (44.00)	10 (20.00)
Class II,NO.10 (100.00)	1 (10.00)	6 (60.00)	3 (30.00)
Grand total:(100.00) 68	20 (29.41)	33 (48.53)	15 (22.06)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate
percentages

Source: Field work

Experience

The experience data of officials presented in Table 5.23 reveal that the UNOs and class II officials were more experienced in their line of work than the class I officials. This is also because the UNOs were senior officials and class II officials were also senior in service in the sense that they were promoted from the class III employees as mentioned earlier.

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Table 5.23

**Distribution of Upazila Officials by
Experience**

Category of officials	Experience in year				
	Less than 1 year	1-3 years	4-7 years	8-11 years	12 years & above
The UNO. No.8 (100.00)	-	-	-	6 (75.00)	2 (25.00)
Other officials Class I, No.50 (100.00)	02 (4.00)	07 (14.00)	09 (18.00)	12 (24.00)	20 (40.00)
Class II, No.10 (100.00)	-	-	01 (10.00)	03 (30.00)	06 (60.00)
Grand total: 68 (100.00)	02 (2.94)	07 (10.29)	10 (14.71)	21 (30.88)	28 (41.18)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Source: Field work

Training

The data on training (Table 5.24) show that the UNOs were more trained than other officials. All UNOs were trained at least for three times and only 3 i.e, 6 per cent other class I officials belonged to this group. Among the rest, majority officials were trained for one time and about one fourth had no training in their line of work.

Table 5.24
Distribution of Officials by Training

Category of officials	No. of no training	Training frequency		
		One time	Two time	Three time & more
The UNO. No.8 (100.00)	–	–	–	08 (100.00)
Other officials Class I, No.50 (100.00)	12 (24.00)	25 (50.00)	11 (22.00)	03 (06.00)
Class II, No.10 (100.00)	02 (20.00)	07 (70.00)	01 (10.00)	–
Grand total:	68 (100.00)	14 (20.59)	32 (47.06)	11 (16.18)	11 (16.18)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Source: Field work

The nature of training received by the officials varied according to their nature of job. The training attended by them had been in the areas of rural development, office management, financial administration, law, etc. They were trained in different institutions. A notable of them were Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) located at Savar, Dhaka, Civil Officers' Training Academy at Dhaka, Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development at Comilla, and Rural

Development Academy at Bogra. Some of the officials were also trained at the specialized institutions like Academy for planning and Development, National Institute for Population Research and Training, Bangladesh Agricultural University and Bangladesh University for Engineering and Technology. Two UNOs were found trained abroad.

As regards training we may say that the officials are more formally trained than the people's representatives. Although the UZP Chairmen received training for one time, almost all representative members and all nominated members had no training in their line of work (Table 5.14). On the other hand, majority officials including all the UNOs were found trained in their line of work (Table 5.16).

5.5 General Observations

It appears from the above discussion that the *upazila* decentralization could attract educated and middle aged people to take the leadership. Also the discussion on the profile of *upazila* personnel reveals that officials of high calibre were deputed to the *upazila* levels for the execution of development works undertaken by the *Upazila Parishads*,But

a comparative analysis reveals that officials were more advanced than the people's representatives in some respects specially in education and training. Along with other factors this tends to create a sense of superiority complex amoung the officials vis-a-vis the people's representatives, which in some cases, as our observation shows, led to the problem of cooperation amoung them. Such lack of cooperation among the major actors of local governments in turn affected the successful working of *upazila* decentralization scheme. However, for smooth functioning of *upazila* scheme a relationship of mutual understanding and respect was essential amoung them. Our observation shows that the *upazilas* where such good relationship existed, their performance happened to be also good and effective.

CHAPTER 5

Notes and References.

1. For detailed information about the dominance of national politics by the leaders belonging to the age group between 40 -49 years, see Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, *Bangladesh Parliament : A Handbook* (Dhaka : BGP, 1974), p.3. Also see Rounaq Zahan, *Bangladesh Politics : Problems and Issues* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1980), p.146.

2. The study differs from the study of Tofail Ahmed according to which 7.66 per cent UZP Chairmen belonged to the age of group of 60 and above. See Tofail Ahmed, "The Chairmen of Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh : A Study of their Background " in *The Journal of BARD* Comilla, Bangladesh Vol. XV, July 1986, p.13, Table.1.

3. In the present study income has been considered in gross sense and estimated on the basis of market price. In the case of female members the income of their husbands was considered.

4. Like the income, the landholding of the husbands of female members was also considered.

5. The various institutions and organizations were: political parties, Managing Committees of Primary Schools, Junior Schools, High Schools, Colleges and Madrashas; Committees of Mosques, *Idgahs* and Temples; Clubs; Cultural and Sports Organizations; *Hat* and *bazar* Committees; Rickshaw Pullers' Associations. *Mohila Samity* (Women's Association), etc.

6. The influence of ruling party was not only over *Upazila Parishad* members, it has also influence upon the Union *Parishad* members. For detailed, see M.A Wahhab, "Local Level Political Affiliation in Bangladesh" in B.K.Jahangir ed., *The Journal of Bangladesh Political Science Association* (Dhaka:Bangladesh Political Science Association, 1986), pp.49-62.

7. V.M. Sirsikar, *The Rural Elite in a Developing Society* (New Delhi: Orient Longmans Ltd.1970), p.92.

CHAPTER 6

FINANCE FOR UPAZILA DEVELOPMENT

In this chapter the financial position of the *Upazila Parishads* has been examined.

6.1 Upazila Parishad Fund

Financial decentralization which requires mobilization of local resources in order to increase financial contribution of local government to the development activities, is very important for devolutionary decentralization. The local government under devolutionary decentralization should have strong financial base of its own, not only for effective planning and development but also for maintaining its autonomy. Finances coming from outside are not free from conditions that limit the autonomy of local government and thus affect its planning and development process. So the degree to which local government finances its own activities is usually considered an indicator of its financial autonomy and capability for financing development works. The importance of increased resource mobilization for devolutionary decentralization at

the *upazila* level has been aptly expressed by the government

of Bangladesh in the following words:

> Implications of this process of devolution are; (a)
> reduction of dependence of the rural people on national
> government for meeting the needs which can be made
> locally and development of self-reliance in this
> process; (b) mobilization and utilization of resources
> which have hitherto remained untapped; and (c) reducing
> direct involvement of national government in planning
> and implementation of projects which are purely local
> in nature. All these are expected to lay the foundation
> of a solid local government which could be ushering a
> better life for rural people in the near future.[1]

The fund of *Upazila Parishad* composed of the following:

1) The proceed of all taxes, rates, tolls, fees, and
   other charges levied by the *Parishad* under the
   Local Government Ordinance, 1982.

2) All rents and profits payable or accruing to the
   Parishad from the property vested in or managed by
   it.

3) All sums received by the *Parishad* in the
   performance of its functions under this Ordinance
   or under any other law for the time being in
   force.

4) All sums contributed by individuals or
   institutions or by any local authority.

5) All receipts accruing from the trust placed under
   the management of the *Parishad*.

6) All grants made by the government and other
   authorities.

7) All profits accruing from investment.

8) Such proceeds from such sources of income as the
   government may direct to be placed at the disposal
   of the *Parishad*.[2]

The fund of *Upazila Parishad* comprising the above may broadly be divided into two categories, namely (i) revenue fund and (ii) development fund. The revenue fund consisted of (a) *Upazila Parishad's* own revenue income and (b) the revenue grant of the central government. The development fund had the following components:

1) Revenue surplus of the *Upazila Parishad*;

2) government grant for development;

3) fund available from other sources for undertaking development including Food for Works Programme (other than fund available for implementing the divisible components of the projects undertaken at the national level); and

4) local contribution.[3]

6.2 Sources of Revenue

It has been stated earlier that before the creation of *upazila* in 1982, the local government at the *thana* level enjoyed no revenue power to generate its own income. For the first time in the history of rural local government the *upazila* level local government was given power to generate income at its disposal. The *Upazila Parishad* was empowered with the general and special sanction of the government to raise revenue from the following sources:

1) Lease money on *jalmahals* situated entirely within *upazila* boundaries.

2) Tax on profession, trade and callings.

3) Tax on dramatic and theatrical shows and other entertainment and amusement.

4) Street lighting taxes.

5) Fees for fairs, agricultural and industrial shows and exhibitions and tournaments.

6) Fees for lincences and permits granted by *Parishad.*

7) Lease money from specified *hats, bazars* and ferries to be determined by the government.

8) Toll on services and facilities maintained by the *Parishad.*[4]

The above sources from which the *Upazila Parishad* was empowered to collect revenue, previously the revenue from these sources were collected either by the central government or by the Union *Parishad.* Profession, trade, calling, drama, theatre and other entertainment and amusement were among the sources from which the Union *Parishad* collected revenue (Appendix-111). The rest of the sources given to the *Upazila Parishad* were the sources of income of the central government. These items were transferred to the *Upazila Parishad* as grants for nine years on experimental basis and not as permanent sources of revenue.

Lease money from *hats* (by weekly markets) and *bazars* (daily markets) was a common source of revenue for *Upazila Parishads* in all upazilas of Bangladesh. For, there is no *thana/upazila* which has no *hats* and *bazars.* Bangladesh has about 7500 *hats* and *bazars* formally recognised by the

government.[5] It is, therefore, on an average every *thana/upazila* has about 17 *hats* and *bazars*. Out of the money collected as lease from *hats* and *bazars* 5 per cent was allotted to the central government and 25 per cent to the Union *Parishads* concerned for developing market facilities. The rest 70 per cent lease money was meant for *Upazila Parishad* fund.

The *Upazila Parishad* had also leasing right over the *jalmahal* (water estate). In Bangladesh there are four types of *jalmahals.*, namely, rivers and canals; beels, haors and baors; ponds and tanks; and reservoirs. There are about 1,800,000 ponds and tanks in the country. Of these only 100,000 belong to the government and as such constitute the part of the *jalmahals*. Total number of all other types of *jalmahal* is slightly above 10,000 and about 50 per cent have area below 20 acres.[6] The *Upazila Parishad* had the right to lease the *jalmahals* with an area between 3-20 acres. The *jalmahals* sized over 20 acres was to be leased out by the district. Among the 100,000 ponds and tanks, which are sized below 3 acres have been declared as water bodies free for public use and were managed by the Land Ministry officials at the *upazila* levels. Again the *Upazila Parishad* could not exercise leasing right of the *jalmahals* with an area between 3-20 areas which is situated between two *upazilas*.

The *Upazila Parishad* also raised revenue from leasing ferry *ghat* (station). But the right of leasing ferry *ghat* exercised by *Upazila Parishad* depended on the location. If the location of a ferry *ghat* is situated in a union, it is the union which had the leasing right. If one side of ferry *ghat* is situated in one union and the other side in other union of a *upazila,* the *Upazila Parishad* concerned exercised the leasing right. But when the ferry *ghat* is situated between two *upazilas*, the district concerned had the leasing right. The *Upazila Parishad* was also empowered to collect tolls on bridges and ferries, whether these were directly collected by the *Upazila Parishad* or leased out. But the government vehicles were exempted from the tolls on bridges and ferries. However, being low level of transportation in the country side, almost all *thanas/upazilas* has no such ferries and bridges.

The *Upazila Parishad* (Taxation) Rules, 1983 stipulates that no person shall carry on any profession, trade, calling or business specified in the first column of the second schedule without a licence from the *Parishad*.[7] A person carrying on such profession, trade, calling or business was to obtain licence from the *Upazila Parishad* concerned. A licence remained valid for one calendar year and was to be renewed every year. Generally the licences of trade of capital Tk. 20,000 and below were issued by the *Upazila*

Parishad and the capital over Tk. 20,000 were issued by the central government.

The *Upazila Parishad* was given power to collect tax on dramatic and theatrical shows and other entertainment and amusement. It was also given power to collect tax from street lighting. It also could collect fees from fairs, agricultural and industrial shows/exhibitions and tournaments.

6.3 Revenue Collection in the Selected Upazilas

It has been mentioned above that *hats* and *bazars* were common sources for the *Upazila Parishads* all over Bangladesh. For there is no *thana/upazila* which has no *hats* and *bazars*. All of our selected *Upazila Parishads* collected revenue from leasing *hats* and *bazars*. The other sources of revenue either did not exist there or revenue collection from these sources was very poor. Table 6.1 to Table 6.8 reveal the amount of revenue collected by the selected eight *Upazila Parishads* in successive five years.

The data on the collection of revenue from various sources presented in Table 6.1 to Table 6.8 reveal that all selected *Upazila Parishads* collected a lion share of their revenue from leasing *hats* and *bazars* (average 46.46%, Fulbari

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to 88. 77% Chandina, of total revenue collection) although the amount of collection varied from one *Parishad* to another and also from one year to another due to numerical and other importance. However, one common feature is evident from the revenue collection pattern of *Upazila Parishads* that there was no improvement in the revenue collection over a period consisting of five years.

Table 6.1

Showing Revenue Collection of Hathazari Upazila Parishad, 1985-86 to 1989-90

(Figures in Taka but bracketed figures in percentages)

Sources of revenue	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Average
Hats and Bazars	507,000 (79.78)	518,688 (78.97)	446,400 (62.48)	477,000 (56.84)	379,483 (52.40)	465,714.2 (66.09)
Licences and permits	35,321 (5.56)	35,000 (5.33)	96,000 (13.43)	111,700 (13.31)	106,143 (14.65)	76,832.8 (10.45)
Rents, sell of forms, bank interest, etc.	93,174 (14.66)	103,136 (15.70)	172,100 (24.09)	250,500 (29.85)	238,605 (32.95)	171,503 (23.45)
Total :	635,495 (100.00)	656,824 (100.00)	714,500 (100.00)	839,200 (100.00)	724,231 (100.00)	714,050 (100.00)

Source: Hathazari Upazila Finance Office

Table 6.2

Showing Revenue Collection of Chandina Upazila Parishad, 1985-86 to 1989-90
(Figures in Taka but bracketed figures in percentages)

Sources of revenue	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Average
Hats and Bazars	435,000 (88.41)	440,350 (88.18)	490,000 (88.93)	420,00 (88.70)	439,000 (89.59)	444,870 (88.77)
Licences and permits	22,000 (4.50)	23,000 (4.61)	23.991 (4.35)	23,500 (4.96)	23,000 (4.69)	23,098.2 (4.60)
Rents, Sell of forms,bank interest,etc.	35,000 (7.11)	36,006 (7.21)	37,007 (6.72)	30,070 (6.34)	28,000 (5.72)	33,216.6 (6.63)
Total :	492,000 (100.00)	499,356 (100.00)	550,998 (100.00)	473,570 (100.00)	490,000 (100.00)	501,184.8 (100.00)

Source: Chandina Upazila Finance Office

Table 6.3

Showing Revenue Collection of Savar Upazila Parishad, 1985-86 to 1989-90
(Figures in Taka but bracketed figures in percentages)

Sources of revenue	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Average
Hats and Bazars	714,671 (66.97)	475,914 (45.00)	738,600 (54.07)	676,470 (55.59)	516,750 (58.74)	624,481 (56.27)
Jalmahals	7,441 (0.70)	10,490 (1.01)	8,205 (0.60)	2,368 (0.19)	2,138 (0.24)	6,128.4 (0.54)
Licences and permits	104,400 (9.78)	86,568 (8.37)	35,116 (2.57)	33,225 (2.73)	32,950 (3.75)	58,450.6 (5.44)
Profits from investment	148,616 (13.93)	212,079 (20.50)	187,578 (13.73)	100,587 (8.73)	131,177 (14.91)	156,007.4 (12.26)
Rents,sell of forms, bank interest,etc.	91,936 (8.62)	249,597 (24.12)	396,621 (29.03)	404,173 (33.22)	196,690 (22.36)	267,803.4 (23.47)
Total :	1067,064 (100.00)	1034,642 (100.00)	1366,120 (100.00)	1216,823 (100.00)	879,705 (100.00)	1112,871 (100.00)

Source: Savar Upazila Finance Office

Table 6.4

Showing Revenue Collection of Dewangonj Upazila Parishad, 1985-86 to 1989-90
(Figures in Taka but bracketed figures in percentages)

Sources of revenue	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Average
Hats and Bazars	130,000 (65.50)	189,700 (72.77)	148,000 (65.27)	100,700 (59.00)	100,601 (44.21)	133,800.2 (61.70)
Jalmahals	8,500 (4.28)	9,001 (3.45)	9,750 (4.30)	7,500 (4.39)	7,000 (3.07)	8,350.2 (3.85)
Licences and permits	200,000 (10.07)	21,000 (8.05)	24,500 (10.81)	20,500 (12.00)	79,000 (34.71)	33,000 (15.22)
Rents, sell of forms, bank interest, etc	40,000 (20.15)	41,005 (15.73)	44,500 (19.62)	42,000 (24.61)	41,000 (18.01)	41,701 (19.23)
Total :	198,500 (100.00)	260,706 (100.00)	226,750 (100.00)	170,700 (100.00)	227,601 (100.00)	216,851.4 (100.00)

Source: Dewangonj Upazila Finance Office

Table 6.5

Showing Revenue Collection of Paikgacha Upazila Parishad, 1985-86 to 1989-90
(Figures in Taka but bracketed figures in percentages)

Sources of revenue	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Average
Hats and Bazars	275,000 (55.50)	281,000 (56.10)	290,000 (56.77)	271,000 (52.69)	270,000 (62.66)	277,400 (56.56)
Jalmahals and ferry ghat	45,000 (9.08)	46,000 (9.18)	48,000 (9.40)	44,560 (8.66)	45,600 (10.58)	45,832 (9.34)
Licences and permits	103,500 (20.89)	104,500 (20.87)	106,000 (20.75)	107,000 (20.80)	100,000 (23.20)	104,200 (21.24)
Rents,sell of forms, bank interest,etc	72,000 (14.53)	69,350 (13.85)	66,850 (13.08)	91,790 (17.85)	15,350 (3.56)	63,068 (12.86)
Total :	495,500 (100.00)	500,850 (100.00)	510,850 (100.00)	514,350 (100.00)	430,950 (100.00)	490,500 (100.00)

Source: Paikgacha Upazila Finance Office

Table 6.6

Showing Revenue Collection of Gangni Upazila Parishad, 1985-86 to 1989-90
(Figures in Taka but bracketed figures in percentages)

Sources of revenue	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Average
Hats and Bazars	150,890 (72.56)	160,688 (73.02)	167,802 (73.07)	161,520 (73.12)	160,890 (73.19)	160,358 (72.99)
Licences and permits	17,000 (8.18)	17,380 (7.90)	18,350 (7.99)	16,360 (7.41)	16,430 (7.48)	17,104 (7.79)
Rents, sell of forms, bank interest, etc.	40,050 (19.26)	42,000 (19.08)	43,500 (18.94)	43,000 (19.47)	42,500 (19.33)	42,210 (19.22)
Total :	207,940 (100.00)	220,068 (100.00)	229,652 (100.00)	220,880 (100.00)	219,820 (100.00)	219,672 (100.00)

Source: Gangni Upazila Finance Office

Table 6.7

Showing Revenue Collection of Chirirbandar
Upazila Parishad, 1985-86 to 1989-90
(Figures in Taka but bracketed
figures in percentages)

Sources of revenue	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Average
Hats and Bazars	326,994 (64.10)	515,077 (73.61)	226,085 (56.46)	305,786 (62.40)	242,210 (60.50)	323,230.4 (64.63)
Jalmahals and ferry ghat	9,461 (1.86)	10,462 (1.50)	9,162 (2.29)	10,100 (2.06)	8,000 (2.00)	9,437 (1.89)
Licences and permits	100,500 (19.70)	100,000 (14.29)	93,000 (23.23)	94,000 (19.19)	75,000 (18.73)	92,500 (18.49)
Rents,sell of forms, bank interest,eto	73,175 (14.34)	74,169 (10.60)	72,159 (18.02)	80,126 (16.35)	75,134 (18.77)	74,952.6 (14.99)
Total :	510,130 (100.00)	699,708 (100.00)	400,406 (100.00)	490,012 (100.00)	400,344 (100.00)	500,120 (100.00)

Source: Chirirbandar Upazila Finance Office

Table 6.8

Showing Revenue Collection of Fulbari
Upazila Parishad, 1985-86 to 1989-90
(Figures in Taka but bracketed
figures in percentages)

Sources of revenue	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Average
Hats and Bazars	90,778 (55.43)	94,000 (55.74)	98,000 (56.75)	99,000 (57.39)	98,500 (56.97)	96,056 (56.46)
Jalmahals and ferry ghat	30,000 (18.32)	30,800 (18.26)	30,100 (17.43)	30,000 (17.39)	30,500 (17.64)	30,280 (17.80)
Licences and permits	14,000 (8.54)	14,050 (8.33)	14,600 (8.45)	14,500 (8.41)	14,800 (8.56)	14,390 (8.46)
Rents, sell of forms, bank interest, etc	29,000 (17.71)	29,800 (17.67)	30,000 (17.37)	29,000 (16.81)	29,100 (16.83)	29,380 (17.28)
Total :	163,778 (100.00)	168,650 (100.00)	172,700 (100.00)	172,500 (100.00)	172,900 (100.00)	170,106 (100.00)

Source: Fulbari Upazila Finance Office

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It is further evident from the data presented in Table 6.9 that no *Upazila Parishad* was found achieving its annual targeted revenue income. The amount of yearly revenue collected by the selected *Upazila Parishads* ranged from 31 per cent (Gangni, 1988-89) to 55 per cent (Savar, 1987-88) of their total targeted revenue stated in the budgets.

Table 6.9

Showing Revenue Collection of Upazila Parishads against the Revenue Target
(Figures in percentages)

Name of Upazila Parishad	Yearly revenue collection					Five yearly Average revenue collection
	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	
Hathazari	53.00	54.25	55.00	54.00	52.50	53.75
chandina	49.00	51.75	53.00	52.00	50.50	51.25
Savar	53.00	54.00	55.00	52.00	53.00	53.40
Dewangonj	40.00	51.25	52.75	47.00	50.25	48.25
Paikhgacha	48.15	49.13	50.00	40.50	37.75	45.10
Gangni	35.17	35.15	35.65	31.00	36.00	43.59
Chirirbandar	41.18	40.13	35.55	35.00	36.15	37.60
Fulbari	33.25	35.33	36.25	34.00	35.50	34.86

Source: Budgets of Upazila Parishads and the records of Upazila Finance Offices

The revenue collected by the selected *Upazila Parishads* was very meagre for the expenditure of their administration and development as we shall see later. The Fourth Five Year Plan of Bangladesh gives a more dismal picture of revenue collection of the *Upazila Parishads* throughout Bangladesh.[8]

6.4 Causes of Poor Revenue Collection

Though the *Upazila Parishads* were given power to collect revenue from local sources, as stated above, they were encountered with various problems in connection with revenue collection. The selected *Upazila Parishads* collected major share of their revenue by leasing *hats* and *bazars*. The leases for *hats* and *bazars* were given by public auction arranged every year with free access for the bidders. But in fact, the lease price did not reflect the real value of markets. The lessees, as we have been reported, used all possible means to keep contestants away from the auction including payoff, threat, violence and bribes, often even involving *Upazila Parishad* staff in the process. The same problem was found in leasing *jalmahals* and ferry *ghats*, if any.

The Taxation Rules of 1983 in its second schedule listed 14 trades and professions for taxation. This means that the *Upazila Parishads* were allowed to collect taxes only from these 14 trades and professions. But a large number of professions, such as lawyers, mohurraries, barefoot doctors and others were excluded from the second schedule of Taxation Rules, and hence the *Upazila Parishads* were deprived of a good amount of revenue. The UZP Chairmen and the UNOs under observation held the view that a *Upazila Parishad* could earn revenue Tk. 20-40 thousands annually

from these sources. The *Upazila Parishads* were given authority to collect tax on dramatic and theatrical shows and other entertainment and amusement. Out of these items cinema is important one, but most of the cinema halls are located at the urban centres. So revenue collection from cinema was very negligible. Again our experience from the selected *upazilas* reveals that, the organizers of drama, theatre and other amusements generally claimed the exemption of taxes on the plea that these are non-profitable items for religious ground. Hence it was very hard to collect revenue from these items, and consequently revenue collection from these items remained very low. The problem of tax collection was more acute in connection with street lighting. The power of tax collection from street lighting was given to the *Upazila Parishad*. But the function of street lighting in the *upazila* was entrusted with the Union *Parishad/Pourashava*. Hence neither officials nor the people's representatives at *upazila* levels were aware of this source of income. So there was no revenue collection on this account by the *Upazila Parishads* examined by us.

The *Upazila Parishads* were given power to collect fees from fairs, agricultural and industrial shows/exhibitions and tournaments. But these sources, as we have been reported, were hardly profitable. Fairs are held in the country as a part of community tradition. The process is so

spontaneous and informal that neither the organisers nor the *Upazila Parishad* office bearers were aware of this account. Constituently there was no revenue collection from fairs in the selected *upazilas*. Agricultural and industrial shows/ exhibitions were started as the medium of demonstrating country's progress in those areas. But presently, as our observation reveals the emphasis has been shifted from demonstration to gambling, obscene dances, prostitution and other anti-social activities. So there was reluctance among the *Upazila Parishad* office bearers to organise such shows/exhibitions. As a result, revenue collections on this account was also nil in the selected *upazilas*. The *Upazila Parishads* were also empowered to collect fees from the tournaments. But it was not mentioned in Taxation Rules what types of tournaments from which *Upazila Parishad* could collect fees. Moreover, major tournaments in Bangladesh are generally held at the district levels and there is a tradition of holding tournaments informally in the village levels. So there was no collection of fees from tournaments by the *Upazila Parishads* studied by us.

As per the rules of the Local Government Ordinance 1982 a *Upazila Parishad* could obtain profit from its investments in local fishery farms, agricultural nurseries, gardens and other commercial establishments. It also could collect rents from its properties including land, godowns and houses used

for offices and accommodations. *Upazila Parishad* was also allowed to receive donation made by the members of public or local authorities. But in practice, as our data reveal, except the rent of houses, the other sources represent a very dismal picture. Except Savar, other *Upazila Parishads* neither earned profit from investment nor received any donation money made by the local people or other local authorities.

It is evident from the above discussion that the *Upazila Parishads* studied by us were encountered with various problems relating to revenue collection. Nevertheless, the *Upazila Parishad* being a new institution had no elaborate and efficient administrative set-up to raise revenue properly. Moreover, the principles and mechanism suggested by the government in connection with local revenue collection were not generally followed by the *Upazila Parishads* under review. The *Upazila Parishad* (Taxation) Rules, 1983 laid down these principles and mechanism, the important of which are given below:

a) All proposals for levy of tax, rate, toll or fees are to be passed by the *Upazila Parishad* in its special meeting.

b) Persons affected by the proposed levies may, within 15 days from the date of publication of the proposal, make suggestions or lodge objections which may be taken into consideration by the *Upazila Parishad*.

c) After passing the proposal, the *Upazila Parishad* shall submit the proposal for levy of the taxes, tolls, or fees to government for sanction.

d) After the government sanctioned the proposal, the *Upazila Parishad* shall notify the proposal. If again there arises objection, a review committee consisting of the UZP Chairman and two representative members will decide the same and their decision will be final. The final assessment list prepared and signed by the Chairman shall remain valid until a fresh list is prepared after three years.

e) A *Upazila Parishad* may make arrangement for collection of taxes, rates, tolls or fees and other dues by appointing assessor-cum-collector either on payment of monthly salary or on payment of certain percentage of commission to be fixed by the *Parishad*.

f) In order to recover the arrears of taxes the UZP Chairman was legally empowered to issue the warrant of distress and sale of moveable property through auction.

In the *upazilas* under observation, the above principles and mechanism were not exercised in levying and rasing taxes. Tax assessment was not done by appointing tax assessors. Simply on the basis of supposition yearly target of tax collection was fixed while preparing budget. However, taxes were collected by appointing tax collectors on payment of certain percentage of commission to be fixed by the *Parishads*. But as the taxes were imposed without making assessment of field position, there were many objections from the tax payers, and these objections were hardly heeded by the *Upazila Parishads*. As a result, a significant amount of taxes remained unrealized. Moreover, the tax payers try

to evade taxes. The *Upazila Parishads* examined by us were found unwilling to take necessary action against those who would evade taxes and the defaulters. In order to recover the arrears of tax dues, the UZP Chairman was empowered to issue the warrant of distress and sale of moveable property through auction. But none of the UZP Chairmen of selected *upazilas* was found exercising this power. The main reason for this perhaps was political. The Chairmen thought that if they issue warrant of distress against the people they would lose necessary support from them (people) in the next election.

6.5 Revenue Surplus : Contribution of Parishad to Development Expenditure

So far we have discussed the revenue income of selected *Upazila Parishads* and the problems associated with revenue collection. Now we shall discuss how far the selected *Upazila Parishads* contributed to the development expenditure with their revenue surplus after meeting revenue expenditure.

The expenditure of *Upazila Parishad* may broadly be divided into two categories, namely, revenue expenditure and development expenditure. Since the *Upazila Parishad* was regarded as the agency of development at the local level, it had to spend its income for development works. This needs

not to explain. A lion share of revenue expenditure of *Upazila Parishad* was borne by the central government in the form revenue grant for the payment of salaries, allowances and contingency expenditure of the officers and staff deputed to it. Our data reveal that a *Upazila Parishad*, on an average received yearly one crore Taka as revenue grant. According to the local Government Ordinance 1982, the heads of expenditure, which *Upazila Parishad* had to meet with its own revenue, are the following:

a) Payment of salaries and allowances to the employees of the *Parishad* including the honorarium of the nominated members;

b) the expenditure charged on the *Parishad* fund under the Local Government Ordinance 1982;

c) fulfillment of every obligation and in the discharge of any duty imposed on the *Parishad* fund under the Local Government Ordinance 1982 or under any other law; and

d) the expenditure declared by the government to be an appropriate charge on the *Parishad* fund.[9]

The charged expenditure which the *Parishad* had to incur include:

a) All sums to be paid to, or in connection with employment of any government employee who had been in the service of the *Parishad*;

b) such sum as may be required by the government to contribute towards the conduct of elections, the auditing of accounts and such other matter as may, from time to time, be specified by the government;

c) any sum required to satisfy any judgement, decree or award against the *Parishad* by any court or tribunal; and

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not to explain. A lion share of revenue expenditure of *Upazila Parishad* was borne by the central government in the form revenue grant for the payment of salaries, allowances and contingency expenditure of the officers and staff deputed to it. Our data reveal that a *Upazila Parishad*, on an average received yearly one crore Taka as revenue grant. According to the local Government Ordinance 1982, the heads of expenditure, which *Upazila Parishad* had to meet with its own revenue, are the following:

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c) fulfillment of every obligation and in the discharge of any duty imposed on the *Parishad* fund under the Local Government Ordinance 1982 or under any other law; and

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The charged expenditure which the *Parishad* had to incur include:

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b) such sum as may be required by the government to contribute towards the conduct of elections, the auditing of accounts and such other matter as may, from time to time, be specified by the government;

c) any sum required to satisfy any judgement, decree or award against the *Parishad* by any court or tribunal; and

d)   any expenditure   declared by the government   to be changed.[10]

However, in practice, as our data reveal the selected *Upazila Parishads* with their own revenue income would meet the following expenditure:

   a) Salaries and allowances of the employees of *Parishad*.

   b) Tax, fees and rent collection.

   c) Honorarium of the nominated members.

   d) Internal audit.

   e) Extension, reconstruction and maintenance of official and residential houses and godowns.

   f) Maintenance and fuel for jeep.

   g) Maintenance and fuel for ambulance.

   h) Land tax for *upazila* complex areas.

   i) Electricity and gas bills.

   j) Expenditure for the celebration of National Days as well as for other public meetings.

   k) Discretionary fund of UZP Chairman.

   l) Office maintenance.

   m) Purchase of furniture.

   n) Grants to various institutions as well as to the fund of the President.

   o) Miscellaneous and unexpected expenditure.

Our   experience from   the selected *upazilas*   shows that under the above mentioned   heads the *Upazila   Parishads*

spent major share of their revenue income as revenue expenditure. As a result, after meeting revenue expenditure there remained a negligible amount of revenue surplus for development expenditure. Five yearly average data projected in Table 6.10 explain this position. The projected data in Table 6.10 show that the *Upazila Parishads* differed in the amount of revenue expenditure from 70.95-97.41 per cent of their revenue income. But on an average a *Upazila Parishad* spent 83.78 per cent of its total local income for revenue expenditure. This means after meeting revenue expenditure the *Upazila Parishads* would spend only 16.22

Table 6.10

Five Yearly Average Revenue Surplus and
Revenue Expenditure of Selected Upazila Parishads
(Figures in Taka, but bracketed
figures in percentages)

Name of Upazila Parishad	Five yearly total revenue collection	Five yearly total revenue expenditure	Five yearly total revenue surplus
Hathazari	7,14,050 (100.00)	5,30,373 (74.28)	1,83,677 (25.72)
Chandina	5,01,185 (100.00)	3,55,585 (70.95)	1,45,600 (29.05)
Savar	11,12,871 (100.00)	10,24,541 (92.06)	88,330 (7.94)
Dewangonj	2,16,851 (100.00)	1,91,081 (88.11)	25,770 (11.89)
Paikhgacha	4,90,500 (100.00)	3,59,900 (73.37)	1,30,600 (26.63)
Gangni	2,19,672 (100.00)	2,13,972 (97.41)	5,700 (2.59)
Chirirbandar	5,00,120 (100.00)	3,65,120 (73.00)	1,35,000 (27.00)
Fulbari	1,70,106 (100.00)	1,65,197 (97.11)	4,909 (2.89)
Grand total:	4,436,715 (100.00)	3,717,129 (83.78)	719,586 (16.22)

Source : Calculated from the records of Upazila
Finance Offices

per cent of their local collected revenue for development
expenditure. Even it was happened that there remained no
revenue surplus and the *Upazila Parishads* ran deficit in
revenue expenditure. In two of the selected *upazilas*, as the
data presented in Table 6.11 reveal that in the period of 5
years the same *Upazila Parishads* sometimes ran deficit in

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revenue expenditure, sometimes they had neither revenue
surplus nor they ran deficit and sometimes they had revenue
surplus with negligible amount. Table 6.12 farther explains

Table 6.11

**Showing Revenue Deficit or Revenue
Surplus of two Upazila Parishads
1985-86 to 1889-90
(Figures in Taka, but bracketed
figure in percentages)**

Fiscal year	Total revenue collection	Total revenue expenditure	Revenue surplus/deficit
Savar			
1985-86	10,67,064 (100.00)	10,67,064 (100.00)	Nil
1986-87	10,34,648 (100.00)	10,79,978 (104.38)	-45,330 (-4.38)
1987-88	13,66,120 (100.00)	12,09,841 (88.56)	1,56,279 (11.44)
1988-89	12,16,823 (100.00)	10,60,351 (87.14)	1,56,472 (12.86)
1989-90	8,79,705 (100.00)	7,50,806 (85.35)	1,28,899 (14.65)
Gangni			
1985-86	2,07,940 (100.00)	2,16,282 (104.01)	-8,342 (-4.01)
1986-87	2,10,068 (100.00)	2,22,528 (105.93)	-12,460 (-5.93)
1987-88	2,19,652 (100.00)	2,19,652 (100.00)	Nil
1988-89	2,40,880 (100.00)	2,20,100 (91.37)	20,780 (8.63)
1989-90	2,09,380 (100.00)	2,01,662 (96.31)	7,718 (3.69)

Source: Savar and Gangni Upazila Finance Offices

the real position of *Upazila Parishads* in connection with their contribution to development expenditure.

Table 6.12

Showing Five Yearly (1985-86 to 1989-90) Per Head Development Expenditure Made by the Selected Upazila Parishads with their Revenue Surplus

Name of Upazila Parishad	Revenue surplus in Taka	Total population	Per head development expenditure from revenue surplus in Tk.
Hathazari	1,83,677	2,90,044	0.63
Chandina	1,45,600	2,14,222	0.67
Savar	88,330	2,61,904	0.33
Dewangonj	25,770	2,46,987	0.10
Paikhgacha	1,30,600	1,75,715	0.74
Gangni	5,700	1,86,498	0.30
Chirirbandar	1,35,000	1,84,664	0.73
Fulbari	4,909	1,03,577	0.04
Total :	7,19,586	16,63,611	0.43

Source: Calculated from the records of
Upazila Finance Offices.

It reveals from the data in Table 6.12 that on an average a *Upazila Parishad* would spend annually for an individual Tk.0.43 from its revenue surplus. In other words, the local financial contribution to the development expenditure at the *upazila* levels was very poor. In the face of meagre revenue generation from internal sources, the *Upazila Parishads* were heavily dependent on the grants of central government and other aids including the Food for

Works Programme (FFWP). But FFWP and other aids were not integrated either with the ADP at the national level or with the Annual *Upazila* Development Plan. At the local levels thesewere implemented by the Union *Parishads*. The Annual *Upazila* Development Plan would constitute with revenue surplus of the *Upazila Parishad* and the block grant of central government. Hence FFWP and other aids were excluded from our study.

6.6 Government grants

There are three methods by which central government provides financial grants to the local government :(1) conditional grants, (2) unconditional grants and (3) revenue sharing. Since *Upazila Parishad* had no constitutional basis and was created by an ordinance, the government of Bangladesh had no obligation to follow either the method two and three. Hence its usual method of granting fund to the *Upazila Parishads* was conditional. One major argument of conditional method is that, by such grant the central government can make local plans and projects compatible with national objectives. But the main problem is, as the experience of Bangladesh shows that the central government took undue advantage to control the local government through conditional grant.

Grants were made by the central government out of the Annual Development Plan (ADP) for financing development activities of the *Upazila Parishads*. This grant was known as block development assistance/block grant of the ADP. Out of the ADP grants were also made for physical infrastructure of *Upazila Parishads*. The physical infra-structure facilities were constructed and executed mainly by the Public Works Department, Road and Highways Department, Telephone and Telegram Department and Public Health Engineering Directorate. Grants were also provided to the *Upazila Parishads* by the central government agencies for individual components of centrally administered development projects. Out of the development grants, the grant provided as block development assistance or block grant was related to the schemes of projects undertaken and executed by the *Upazila Parishads*. The other development grants were related to the centrally administered projects and were entrusted to *Upazila Parishads* only for execution.

The block grant was the annual normal government allocation from the central government. This grant was a lump sum one for the first year, and it was distributed almost equally to all *Upazila Parishads* in Bangladesh. After the Guidelines issued by the Planning Commission in 1983 the distribution of this block grant was made in accordance with the following four criteria:

1) Population	20 per cent
2) Area size	20 per cent
3) Backwardness	30 per cent
4) Performance	30 per cent

The block grants received by the selected *Upazila Parishads* for successive five years have been shown in Table 6.13.

Table 6.13

Block Grants Received by the Selected Upazila Parishads 1985-86 to 1989-90
(Figures in Taka)

Name of Upazila Parishad	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Year Average
Hathazari	2100000	3610950	4897000	1112000	1200000	2583990
chandina	1600000	2571175	3750000	721300	900000	1908495
Savar	4640000	4403910	4939000	1730000	2000000	3542582
Dewangonj	2000000	3090920	4000000	900000	100000	2198148
Paikhgacha	2000000	1569315	2600000	800000	850000	1563863
Gangni	1700000	2199160	2500000	900000	1000000	1659832
Chirirbandar	1700000	2117550	2500000	900000	1000000	1643510
Fulbari	1000000	1109175	1500000	500000	500000	921835

Source: Calculated from the record of
Upazila Finance Offices

Let us now compare the position of the revenue surplus by which the *Upazila Parishads* contributed to the development expenditure with the block grants of central government. Table 6.14 reveals this position.

Table 6.14

Showing Five Yearly Average Amount of Revenue Surplus and Block Grant, 1985-86 to 1989-90
(Figures in Taka, but bracketed
figures in percentages)

Name of Upazila Parishad	Revenue surplus	Block grant	Total
Hathazari	1,83,677 (6.64)	25,83,990 (93.36)	27,67,667 (100.00)
Chandina	1,45,600 (7.09)	19,08,495 (92.91)	20,54,095 (100.00)
Savar	88,330 (2.43)	35,42,582 (97.57)	36,30,912 (100.00)
Dewangonj	25,770 (1.16)	21,98,184 (98.84)	22,23,954 (100.00)
Paikhgacha	1,30,600 (7.71)	15,63,863 (92.29)	16,94,463 (100.00)
Gangni	5,700 (0.34)	16,59,832 (99.66)	16,65,532 (100.00)
Chirirbandar	1,35,000 (7.59)	16,43,510 (92.41)	17,78,510 (100.00)
Fulbari	4,909 (0.53)	9,21,835 (99.47)	9,26,744 (100.00)
Grand total:	719,586 (4.30)	16,022,201 (95.70)	16,741,787 (100.00)

Source: Upazila Finance Offices

It is evident from Table 6.14 that 5 yearly average ratio between block development grant of central government and revenue surplus of the selected *Upazila Parishads* ranged from 92.29:7.71 to 99.47:0.43. But considering the average ratio from all *Upazila Parishads*, it was 95.70:4.30. This means that out of the total development expenditure at the

upazila levels, the *Upazila Parishads* contributed only 4.30 per cent and the rest entire amount i.e., 95.70 per cent was the grant of central government.

CHAPTER 6
Notes and References

1. Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Ministry of planning, Planing Commission, *Guidelines for Utilization by Upazila Parishads for Development Assistance Provided by the National Government through the ADP* (Dhaka : BGP,1983), p,1.Henceforth Guidelines for Utilization. . . cited as Guidelines.

2. The local Government Ordinance 1982, Section 32.

3. Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Ministry of Planning, Planing Commission, *The Fourth Five Year Plan, 1990-95* (Dhaka: BGP, June 1990), p. XV1-1. Henceforth *cited as only the Fourth Five Year Plan.*

4. The Local Government Ordinance 1982, the Third Schedule.

5. Kamal Siddiqui, *Fiscal Decentralization in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: NILG, 1991), p. 46.

6. *Ibid*, p. 43.

7. Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, "The Upazila Parishad (Taxation) Rules, 1983" (dated Dhaka, the 8th December 1983, No S.R.O. 474-L/83/S-XI/3R-3/83/147), Rules II. Henceforth cited as the Taxation Rules 1983.

8. The *Fourth Five Year Plan* p.xvi-4 Table 16.3.

9. local Government Ordinance 1982, Section 34.

10. *Ibid*, Section 35.

CHAPTER 7

UPAZILA DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

This chapter analyses the planning practices at the *upazila* levels. It also focusses on the scope of people's participation and problems of project implementation.

Decentralization as discussed in the second chapter, necessitates local level planning; and local level planning not only facilitates popular participation in development process but also provides opportunities for planning and implementing schemes according to the needs of the locality. Thus while recommending devolutionary decentralization at district, *thana* and union levels CARR held the view that elected local government at these levels "will have to be concurrently supported by decentralized planning and budgetary system to enable the local government to plan and implement projects of local importance without the usual delay that now exists in the centralized planing and budgetary mechanism".[1] CARR further expressed opinion that "without adequate decentralization of planning and budgetary

system the measure for effective devolution of authority will be an exercise in futility".[2]

However, planning under *upazila* scheme was not totally a new exercise. Local level planning in the modern sense under the ambit of local government was given start in early 1960s when four tier system of local government was introduced in the country. A short description of past experience in local planning is given below:

7.1 Past Local Level Planning Process
A. Divisional Planning.

Division Planning was introduced in the country when the Division Council was instituted at the divisional level under the basic democracy system. Beside the function relating to the coordination of the activities of subordinate local councils, the Divisional Council, as mentioned earlier, was to formulate and recommend to the government development schemes of importance to the division. But the system of nominated membership coupled with bureaucratic control and dominance did not promise anything great through this body . It met its end unhonoured and unsung because of its built-in failures as a local government institution. However, the establishment of Divisional Development Board by General Zia reopened the

question of planning at the divisional level. But again the government committed the same mistake by making the Board under complete bureaucratic control. The Board was headed by the Divisional Commissioner and consisted of the Deputy Commissioners of the districts within the division and three full time members appointed by the government. The martial law government of 1982 appointed Zonal Martial Law Administrators as the Chairmen of the Boards. The Divisional Boards were abolished in 1986.

However, in respect of development planning, a Divisional Board was given the following functions:

i) To prepare projects and schemes for the development of the division concerned.

ii) To approve the projects and schemes involving not more than 2 million Taka.

iii) To execute approved projects and schemes.

iv) To advance funds on such terms and conditions as it may determine for the execution of development schemes sponsored by various government development agencies or local bodies.

v) To grant loans, on such terms and conditions as may be prescribed, to any person for setting up or development of cottage industries[3].

A Divisional Board had fund comprising the following:

i) A non-lapsable revolving fund not exceeding Tk.50 million to be given as grant by the government.

ii) Loans raised by the Board with the sanction of the government.

iii) Receipts from any other sources.[4]

B. District Planning

The district in Bangladesh represents the most important administrative unit at the sub-national levels. It has a long experience in local government institution. The district level government has been quite active and effective in planning, executing and maintaining rural roads network and other facilities including health and education. The *Zila Parishad* was initially asked to prepare Three Year Plan, but subsequently Five Year Plan was adopted as the norm. The Plan was prepared on the basis of guidelines supplied by the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperative. The engineering staff and the secretary to the *Zila Parishad* were given training about the techniques of plan formulation. The *Zila Parishad* also required to prepare Annual Plan and implement the same with the clearance of approving authority i.e. Divisional Commissioner.

Although the *Zila parishad* had a long experience since 1885, the planning process undertaken by it failed to mobilize the people to participate in development process. Because, the *Zila Parishad* as mentioned above was dominated by the bureaucracy. As a result, the decision taken regarding the development plan did neither reflect the needs of the people particularly the rural poor nor it could create scope for popular participation in the development

process. Secondly, the district level planning was limited to the Rural Works Programme only. Though the *Zila Parishad* was responsible for other activities like agriculture, health, education etc. these were not included in the district plan. In fact, it was a plan for roads and bridges.

C. Thana Level Planning

Under the basic democracy system each *Thana* Council was required to prepare Five Year Plan and a plan book with the joint efforts of concerned *thana* level officers and the UP Chairmen, who were the ex-officio representative members of *Thana* Council. This system continued till the introduction of *upazila* system. A model book was supplied to the *Thana* Council by the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperative in connection with the formulation of plan.

The *thana* level planning was set up within the framework of Comilla model. But four components of Comilla model were not included in the *thana* level planning. It covered mainly the Rural Works Programme divided in to two components, namely, (a) drainage and embankment and (b) rural roads and irrigation. These components included the following functions:

   a) Repair of existing *kutcha* (earth made) and
      pucca (brick built) roads.

b) Construction of new *Kutcha* roads.

c) Converting *Kutcha* roads into *pucca* roads.

d) Construction and reconstruction of bridges and culverts.

e) Re-excavation of canals meant for irrigation and drainage,

f) Excavation of irrigation canals,

g) Repair of bunds and embankments.[5]

The schemes under *thana* Plan originated in the ward committee meeting called by the respective ward member. According to the rules, each ward member was to consult the people of his constituency regarding the problems requiring solution and then placed them in the ward meeting. Out of the discussion in the ward meeting emerged the important problems. The next step of planning was associated with the discussion in the meeting of Union *Parishad*. In the Union *Parishad* meeting the proposal submitted by the ward members were discussed and proposals were finalized indicating the cost of estimate. The schemes were arranged in order of priority. If the schemes were to be executed under union Rural Works Programme, these were sent to the Circle Officer (Dev.) for placing them before the *Thana Parishad* for its consideration . After preparation of necessary cost estimate and preliminary examination by the Circle Officer (Dev.) these were put before the *Thana Parishad*. After discussion in the meeting of *Thana Parishad* the schemes were

selected for the execution in the year on the basis of priority. If the schemes were to be executed by the *Thana Parishad*, these were sent to the district approving authority.

Documentarily, the outcome of above planning process resulted in the preparation of a *Thana* Plan Book. Thus *thana* level planning was confined to processing schemes generated from below and the preparation of the Plan Book for approval of the district authority. The Circle Officer (Dev.) was mainly responsible for the preparation of *Thana* Plan. He was assisted by the Thana Overseer, Rural Works Programme and often by Sectional Officer, Water Development Board. The district approving authority was headed by the Deputy Commissioner and consisted of the Chairmen of the *Thana Parishads* and heads of the offices of nation building departments at the district level. The arrangement of approving of schemes under *Thana* Plan was intended for the following reasons:

i) proper coordination of inter—*thana* projects by the higher level which facilitated a proper network of road system without any overlapping.

ii) As higher and superior engineering and technical skill were available at the district for ensuring proper planning, preparation of estimates and designs and better utilization of funds sanctioned by government could be ensured.[6]

Thana level planning suffered stress immediate after the independence in 1971. But soon after the political change in 1975 *thana* emerged as an important unit of rural development planning and administration. During the period of General Zia the Rural Works Programme played the pioneering role in this regard and dominated the *thana* scene so far as the systematic local level planning was concerned. The scope of Five Year Plan and *Thana* Plan Book was a wider than that of District Plan. The Thana plan Book also embodied methodology that was followed by officials and UP Chairmen.

But *thana* level planning had several limitations. Like the district planning it was confined mainly to Rural Works Programme and was not a comprehensive plan covering all socio-economic and infrastructural activities. Secondly, the *thana* plan was not integrated with the district plan. Thirdly, it is true that there was provision to facilitate people's participation in the planning process at the *thana* level. But the dominance of government officials in the decision making process was so pronounced and the level of education of people's representatives so low that the ideal of participatory development was hardly realized.[7] Finally, the *Thana Parishad*, as mentioned above, was not given power to raise revenue for its development expenditure. So the

finance for planning at the *thana* level was entirely dependent on the national government.

D. Union Level Planning

Union is the lowest unit of local government in the rural areas of Bangladesh. The Union *Parishad,* as mentioned above, is composed in a democratic process except a few nominated women members. The development plan for the union that started in early 1960s , covered two major components of the Rural Works Programme, namely (a) drainage and embankment and (b) roads, bridges and culverts. Later irrigation was included. The union plan book, supplied to the Union *Parishad,* contained details of the manner in which the plan book and the maps were to be drawn. The union plan book and maps were prepared by concerned officers. But before the union plan was drawn up, the UP members and ward committees were to be consulted . The union plan book drawn up from 1976 to 1982 included 9 maps for drains, irrigations and embankments and 19 maps for roads,bridge and culverts. These among others contained the following information:

> i) the present situation;
>
> ii) projects to be undertaken during the plan
>   period;
>
> iii) projects approved by the *Thana* Development
>   Committee in order of priority; and
>
> iv) projects to be completed in each year.[8]

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In addition to the Rural Work Programme and irrigation, the Union *Parishad* was also involved in other development projects, but these were not shown in union Five Year Plan.

Though Union *Parishad* enjoyed some power to raise revenue ; it was not so autonomous as is needed for local self-government. It could not collect the taxes properly. As a result, the Union *Parishad* was entirely dependent on the grant of the central government for its development expenditure. The direct involvement of the government officers in the preparation of union plan did not allow local expertise to develop.

7.2. Upazila Development Planning

A. Legal Aspects

The Local Government Ordinance 1982 which set out the legal basis of *Upazila Parishad* made provision for the development planning at the *upazila* level. Section 40 of the Ordinance stipulates:

i)   (*Upazila*) *Parishad* may and if so required by the government shall prepare and implement development plans for such period as may be specified.

ii) such plan shall be subject to the sanction of the government and shall provide, for—(i) the manner in which the plans shall be financed, executed, implemented and supervised; (ii) the agency through which the plan executed and implemented; and (iii) such other matters as be may be necessary.

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iii) The government may direct that any specified item of income of a *Parishad* shall wholly or in part be earmarked for and applied in the implementation of a development plan.[8]

Thus the Local Government Ordinance 1982 provided the *Upazila Parishad* with authority to prepare and implement development plans covering a period as may be specified by the government. According to the Ordinance the preparation of plan is not a statutory obligation; it would become an obligation only when the government directs the *Upazila Parishad* to prepare the plan. Moreover, when the plan is prepared the government has the final authority to sanction it. However, the preparation of plan was made essential when in July 1983 the Bangladesh Planning Commission issued Guidelines to the *Upazila Parishads* for the utilization of development assistance grants provided by the national government through the ADP. The Guidelines were amended in 1985 and 1988. With regard to the formulation of *upazila* development plan the Guidelines states:

> *Upazila Parishad* should prepare an *Upazila* Development Plan and maintained a Plan Book on the line so long maintained by most of the development circles and keep it continuously updated and each financial year shall prepare an Annual *Upazila* Development Programme (AUDP).[10]

Thus according to the Guidelines every *upazila* was to prepare a *Upazila* Development Plan and maintain a Plan Book updated. There was no mention of Five Year Development Plan

in the Guidelines. But when the Guidelines were adopted by the Local Government Ministry as administrative Instructions, Five Year Development Plan became an integral part of *upazila* development planning. Section-1 of the Instructions provides:

> *Upazila Parishad* should prepare a Five Year Development Plan and maintain a *Upazila* Plan Book on the line of the *Thana* Plan Book so long maintained by the Development Circles. The Plan Book should be updated every year.[11]

B. Scope

The Resolution of 1982 which provided the basis of *upazila* scheme also determined the scope of *upazila* development planning. The Resolution, as mentioned earlier, divided the government functions at the *upazila* level into retained and transferred subjects. The transferred subjects formed the scop of *upazila* development planning. But the planning, designing and implementation of all transferred subjects required considerable expertise and knowledge. As expertise and knowledge were inadequate, it was decided that the *upazila* development activities to be planned and implemented by the *Upazila Parishad* at this stage will centre round the following sectors, each of which consists of several items:

Sector	Item of activities
a. Agriculture and Irrigation	– Intensive crops programmes;

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	- Demonstration of farms:
	- Seeds programme :
	- Digging of tanks ;
	- Reclamation of derelict tank
	- Rural fisheries;
	- Development of social forestry including road side plantation and horticulture;
	- Development of poultry and livestock;
	- Drainage and irrigation;
	- Small flood embankment and small irrigation.
b. Small and Cottage Industries	- Workshop programme ;
	- Skill development, training and extension;
	- Income generation activities, etc.

Physical Infrastructure

c. Transport and Communication	- Road construction;
	- Rural Works Programme;
	- Construction, reconstruction and development of small bridges;culverts,etc
d. Housing and Physical Planning	- Development of *hats* and *bazars* ;
	- Development of storage facilities;
	- Development of community centers;
	- Management for supplying drinking water in the rural areas ;
	- Constructions of low cost sanitation units.

Socio-economic infrastructure

| e. Development of Education (Primary) | - Development of educational |

	institutions; construction of building and playgrounds; - Supply of teaching aids.
f) Child development	- Development in connection with bodies, minds and culture of the children.
g) Health and Social Welfare	- Health measures; - Family planning; - Social welfare including youth welfare and women welfare.
h) Sports and Culture	- Promotion of games,sports; cultural activities,etc.
i) Miscellaneous	- Birth and death registration services; - Disaster relief.[12]

From the above it is explicit that the scope of *upazila* development planning was quite vast. The scope further could be widened by including newer activities which the *Upazila Parishad* would like to initiate and undertake or which the government would like to initiate and entrust to the *Upazila Parishad*.

C. Rules for the Utilization of Development Fund

While describing the different sectors and various items of activities the Guidelines fixed up the allocation

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for the expenditure of development fund. An indicative
pattern of sectoral allocation of fund for different
activities is given in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1

Sectoral Allocation Pattern of AUDP

Sector	1985 Allotment		1988 Allotment	
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
a) Agriculture & Irrigation	15%	25%	12%	20%
b) Small & Cottage Industries	05%	10%	05%	10%
Physical Infrastructure				
c)Transport & Communication	17.5%	30%	15%	25%
d) Housing & Physical Planning	10%	175%	10%	17.5%
Social-economic Infrastructure				
e) Educational Development	05%	12.5%	05%	12.5%
f) Child Development	--	--	07.5%	15%
g) Health and Social Welfare	07.5%	15%	05.5%	12.5%
h) Sport and Culture	02.5%	07.5%	02.5%	07.5%
i) Miscellaneous	02.5%	05%	02.5%	05%

Source: Compiled from the Guidelines as amended
in 1985 and 1988

D. Strategies for Planning

It was provided in the Guidelines that the plan for
programmes and projects undertaken by the *Upazila Parishad*

must be inconformity with the objectives and priorities of national government as reflected in national Five Year Plan and Annual Development Programme. Also a project, proposed and selected, must be within the framework of *Upazila* Development Plan. Generally speaking, *Upazila Parishad* was required to undertake only those projects which could be planned and implemented within the resource available to them and which were not adequately covered by the national projects. To generate quick return and also to avoid inflationary stress, the *Upazila Parishads* were advised to take up projects which were immediately productive in nature and which could be completed within two years. Total cost of schemes of any year should not usually be more than double of the funds available in that year. Also the expenditure on a project should not exceed one third of the allocation of a particular sector in the AUDP.[13]

In order to ensure judicious utilization of scarce resources the *Upazila Parishads* were instructed to avoid lumpy projects and undertake a number of small but viable projects providing benefit to the largest number of people. While taking up development projects emphasis was to be given on the promotion of employment generation including self-employment and income earning activities.[14]

In undertaking *upazila* development programme it was essential that the development of growth centres should receive prime consideration. This would involve the development of *hats* and *bazars,* rural roads connecting growth centre and *upazila* headquarters, construction of small bridges and culverts to facilitate communication and to promote commercial activities. The *Upazila Parishads* had also consider taking up development programmes that supplement and complement the priorities taken by national government, Another consideration would also be to design projects that develop backward areas.[15]

Since an effective planning largely depends on reliable and quantative statistics, socio-economic survey studies are essential. Hence it was provided by the Guidelines/ Instructions that *Upazila Parishads* should undertake socio-economic survey and studies concerning their areas, so that they can prepare plan and undertake projects properly. This could not only ensure planned and effective utilization of funds, but also could help avoid haphazard investments. Normally such tasks were to be performed by *Upazila Parishads* by engaging local departmental officers and no consultant was to be engaged for such work. The survey and study needed to be designed for the preparation of plan particularly on the following components:

a) Physical infrastructure of roads, bridges, culverts connecting important growth centres and markets.

b) *Upazila* irrigation and flood protection plan.

c) Agriculture land use and crop production plan.

d) Plan for production oriented socio-economic schemes on self employment and income generation activities.

e) Social development plans including health, family planning,education,etc.[16]

7.3 Upazila Development Planning in Practice: Planning without Plan

The preceding discussion is concerned as to how the planning process at the *upazila* level was supposed to work according to the rules prescribed by the government. Now we shall discuss how far in practice the *Upazila Parishads* maintained these rules in their planning process in our selected *upazilas*.

A. Five Year and Annual Plan

Five Year Plan and Annul Development Plan are integral parts of planning process. The Annual Development Plan is an instrument for the implementation of Five Year Plan. It contains a detailed information of projects, programmes and policies from year to year. In other words, the task of Annul Development Plan is to undertake and implement the phasing of Five Year Plan.[17]

As mentioned above, *Upazila Parishads* were required to prepare Five Year plan and Annual Development Plan. But the *Upazila Parishads* we surveyed did not prepare any such plan. As reasons the Chairmen and UNOs stated that the *Upazila Parishads* were not supplied with any elaborate guidelines or model plan book for this purpose. Secondly, the preparation of plan was a technical job which needed special training. Although there were officers dealing with local development functions, and according to the rules it was their task to prepare plans relating to their areas of responsibility, but they were not given such training (*supra* pp.175-176) to develop their skills and expertise about the task of plan preparation. Moreover, our discussion with the officials reveals that the concept of planning did not exist in most of them.

Decentralized planning requires a strong institutionalized team to be at work to prepare such plan. It is stipulated in the Guidelines that Five Year and Annual Development Plans would be prepared by the *Upazila Parishad*, but the mechanism for setting up such planning team was not provided in it. There was no guide for the *Upazila Parishad* or its functionaries as to the art of plan preparation. Thus in the absence of firm directions from the government the efficient organizational network was not established at the *upazila* level for the preparation of plan.

B. AUDP: Project Identification, Preparation and Approval

The Annual Development Programme is the link between the Annual Development Plan and the annual budget. The Annual Development Programme is manifested in the Annual Development Plan.[18] It specifies expenditures on items and projects approved for inclusion in the development plan which form the integral part of the annual budget. The *Upazila Parishad* was required to prepare its Annual Development Programme in order to utilize the yearly development assistant grant given by the national government. The *Upazila Parishad* was also required, in a prescribed manner , to prepare and sanction, before the commencement of each financial year a statement of its estimated receipts and expenditure for that year i.e.budget; and forward a copy of it to the government and Deputy Commissioner concerned. These requirements compelled the *Upazila Parishads* to exercise some exercise in planning and all UZP Chairmen and UNOs claimed that they prepared Annual Development Programme and budget regularly. But the identification and selection of projects for the Annual Development Programme, as we observed in eight *upazilas*, was not according to the rules prescribed by the government. According to the rules, every project proposed and selected must be within the framework of *Upazila* Development Plan

and therefore should be conceived of in advance and included in the list prepared at the beginning of the year. Each proposal would be followed by formal proposal in a prescribed proforma filled in by concerned functional officer under the guidance of *Upazila Parishad*. The proforma contained the information, under 18 different heads, about a project to be undertaken by the *Upazila Parishad* (Appendix-1V). The functional officer was responsible for placing the same for consideration of the *Upazila Parishad*. Project proposal could further be examined by the Project Selection Committee before being finally approved by the *Upazila Parishad*. The Project Selection Committee consisting of not more than seven members including UZP representative members and officials headed by the UNO. The Project Selection Committee was required to conduct site survey of the project area, consult the UP Chairmen, members and local elites. Proposed projects would then be scrutinized and technically analyzed by the sub-committees appointed by the *Upazila Parishad*.The *Upazila Parishad* was the approving authority for its development projects. The decision to approve a scheme was to be taken in *Parishad* meeting by a consensus. In case there was no consensus the majority decision through voting would prevail. Officers attending the meetings of the *Upazila Parishad* could participate in the discussion and render technical advice but would not vote.

Our inquiry into the practices of project identification and selection reveals that the *Upazila Parishads* under review did not follow the rules prescribed by the government. Rather the *Parishads* followed a system of their own in identifying and selecting the projects. On receipt of the letter of the first instalment of Annual Development Assistant fund from the government, the letters were issued to all concerned for submitting projects to the *Upazila Parishad*. Accordingly, the UP Chairmen sometimes alone as they stated prepared the list of projects and sometimes they called meetings of the Union *Parishads* to identify the projects. But before submitting the list of project proposals the UP Chairmen generally consulted the UZP Chairmen. The concerned officers also submitted the projects after consulting the UNOs. After receiving the projects the UNOs along with *Upazila* Engineers would prepare the lists of all projects submitted and then these were placed in the meetings of *Upazila Parishads* for discussion and approval. Though the decisions of approving the projects were taken in the meetings of *Upazila Parishads* by consensus or by majority vote, it was observed that the UZP Chairmen and the UNOs played an important role in piloting the projects to be approved.

From the above discussion it emanates that the procedure adopted by the *Upazila Parishads* in identifying

and selecting the projects did neither allow for an examination of the existing situation of the locality nor provide scope for popular participation. So the practice of project identification and selection under *upazila* scheme failed to achieve primary objective of decentralized planning i.e. people's participation and to ensure sound planning process in view of the need of the total population of the area. What happened in the name of planning under *upazila* scheme was simply an exercise of the preparation of projects and estimates of cost. Even the simple format prescribed by the Planning Commission for the preparation of projects was not used in many cases. In reality, the planning process exercised by the *Upazila Parishads* was entirely political. In most cases, the effort was made to appease all unions within the u*pazila* by distributing fund equally. But ultimately the union from which the UZP Chairman came and the unions with forceful UP Chairmen received more projects than others.

It is evident from the above discussion that *upazila* plan was predominantly an amalgam of projects proposed by the UP Chairmen. Since the UP Chairmen were local political leaders they would try to satisfy their own constituencies and usually they were concerned about the short term goals of their areas. They were less concerned about the overall affairs of *upazila* and the issues which were inter-union in

nature. Thus *Upazila Parishads* were implementing the projects of unions rather than any comprehensive *Upazila* Development Plan as conceived in the government Guidelines without any coherent and integrated framework.

Under the rules, as mentioned elsewhere, the *Upazila Parishads* were required to undertake schemes within the sectors prescribed and also follow the sectoral allocations earmarked by the government. But our observation reveals that these rules were violated frequently. The violation of rules was very rampant in the initial period of *upazila* decentralization. During that period the *Upazila Parishads* not only violated allocation ceiling earmarked but also undertook many arbitrary schemes or activities. In this connection, the Monitoring and Evaluation Cell, Local Government Division, in its audit report for 1985-86 pointed out the following anomalies committed by the *Upazila Parishads*:

1. Distribution of grants to various cultural organizations/clubs without any particular projects.

2. Undertaking of projects exceeding Guidelines ceiling and undertaking of unnecessary and excess projects.

3. Expenditure on prizes for students, teachers and farmers.

4. Allocation of funds to the unions without considering their size and population.

5. Failure to submit evaluation reports of development projects in prescribed forms.

6. Failure to adopt projects proforma prescribed by the Planning Commission.

7. Failure to allocate funds to prescribed sectors.

8. Failure to prepare Annual and Five Year Plans.

9. Construction of buildings for schools and colleges without necessary survey.

10. Purchase and repair of *Upazila Parishad* jeeps and purchase of motor cycles by using the UZP Development Fund; and vehicles are sometimes heavily misused.

11. Construction of *Upazila* Training and Development Centre (UTDC) drains by using money from agriculture and irrigation sectors.

12. Undertaking of projects in one sector by using money from another sector.

13. Failure to submit statement regarding the revenue receipt.

14. Failure to approve the revised and additional expenditures.

15. Failure to submit various proceedings of the meetings of Upazila Parishads, copies of budget, manpower, etc. to the Ministry concerned.[19]

From the above it reveals that there were wide ranging anomalies which had serious implications on the planning and implementation of development projects undertaken by the *Upazila Parishads*. In order to remove the anomalies the government amended the Guidelines in 1985 and put limit to the scope of development planning at the *upazila* levels by specifying what the *Upazila Parishads* must not do with *upazila* development fund. These are as follows :

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i) Construction of cafeteria, restaurant or shopping centres.

ii) Extension of office building or any other buildings for *upazila* officers.

iii) Expenditure for payment of arrear bills of any government department such as, arrear salary or any other dues or for payment to cover any loses.

iv) Construction/reconstruction of gate or boundary walls of *Upazila Parishad* building, *Shahedminar,* Mosque, temple, church,etc.

v) Purchase of generator for electrification.

vi) Construction of new school/ college/ *madrashas.*

vii) Construction of any club or other association buildings.

viii) Construction/ repair of extension of buildings for bank or any other government or autonomous organizations.

ix) construction of Tennis ground.

x) Extension of loan to any individual, family or institution.

xi) Purchase of land for new *hats* and *bazars.*

xii) Expenditure on subjects retained by the national government.

xiii) Expenditure for any item of revenue head of the *Upazila Parishad.*

xiv) Direct purchase of land for digging pond or for play ground of school.

xv) Undertaking of projects for generating income for the *Upazila Parishad.*

xvi) Purchase of expensive equipment, furniture and luxury goods.

xvii) Undertaking of projects in municipal areas.

xviii) Establishment of kindergarten schools.

xix) Expenditure on the same project by amalgamation of *upazila* development fund and funds available for devisable components of national projects.

xx) Undertaking of schemes without considering the practical feasibility, priority, constraints of local resources, etc.[20]

However, the anomalies detected were partially removed, as the officials stated, when the government put limit to the scope of *upazila* development Planning by specifying functions, mentioned above, which could not be performed with the *upazila* development fund. Our inquiry into the eight *upazilas* reveals that after 1985 although the *Upazila Parishads* apparently refrained from taking arbitrary projects, they manipulated the allocation ceiling rules according to their own convenience, So the objective of the government to obtain sectoral balance was not achieved.

C. Projects Undertaken

It has been stated in the sixth chapter that revenue surplus of the *Upazila Parishad* and the block grant of central government constituted *upazila* development fund. With this fund the *Upazila Parishads* under study undertook a large number of development projects. Year wise distribution of those projects is presented in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2

Year-wise Distribution of Projects
Undertaken by Eight Upazila Parishads

Name of Upazila Parishad	Fiscal Year					
	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Total
Hathazari	88	87	70	66	57	368
Chandina	71	90	68	59	47	335
Savar	80	76	68	58	40	322
Dewangonj	64	67	51	45	44	271
Paikgacha	60	61	50	55	45	271
Gangi	61	60	51	45	38	255
Chiribandar	70	65	60	50	49	294
Fhulbari	50	45	41	55	39	230
Total:	544	551	459	433	359	2346

Source: Compiled from the records of Upazila
Engineer and Finance Offices.

Table 7.2 mentioned above, shows the number of projects undertaken by the selected eight *Upazila Parishads* in five successive fiscal years. It appears from the table that each *Upazila Parishad* undertook too many projects in every year . In this connection the UZP members, both official and non-official, were asked : Do you think that the available fund was enough for the implementation of projects undertaken by your *Parishad* ? All replied the question negatively. But in spite of their being aware of the limited fund they selected and approved too many projects for implementation. Although

there had been a declining trend in the number of projects undertaken from 1988-89 to 1989-90 , this was not consistent with the available fund. Because, the *Upazila Parishads* were heavily dependent on the government for fund and the government drastically reduced the development grant from the fiscal year 1988-89 (*supra* Table 6.13). From this year the selected *Upazila Parishads* received development grant 60-65 per cent less than before. But it is surprising that no *Upazila Parishad* minimized the number of projects according to the available fund. This was because the projects were selected and approved politically and consequently their implementation suffered a great deal.

Another objective of decentralized planning under *upazila* scheme as claimed by the then government was directed towards an alround development of the area and the participation of rural people specially the majority poor in the development process. But the selection of development projects not only neglected popular participation, but also failed to undertake projects of alround development of the area. Our data reveal that the development projects of *Upazila Parishads* were confined largely to the infrastructure sectors specially the physical infrastructure (Table 7.3). Many officials complained that most of the

Table 7.3

Distribution of Projects by Sectors and Fund in the Selected Upazilas

Sector	No. of projects undertaken by the selected upazilas	Fund spent in per- centage
1. Agriculture and Irrigation	479	20.41
2. Small and Collage Industries	88	2.75
Physical Infrastructure		
3. Transport and Communication	905	45.57
4. Housing and Physical Planning ...	95	4.04
Socio-economic Infrastructure		
5. Education	501	17.35
6. Health and Social welfare	102	3.34
7. Sports and Culture	95	3.03
8. Child development	12	0.57
9. Miscellaneous	69	2.94
Total:	2346	100.00

Source: Compiled from the records of Upazila
Engineer and Finance Offices

projects submitted from their offices were overlooked in
favour of construction of physical infrastructure.

The predominance of physical infrastructure in the
upazila development planing may be explained in two ways.

Firstly, the projects related to the physical infrastructure are easy to identify and implement and they provide scope for quick utilization of fund . Secondly, while taking projects it was usual consideration for the UZP Chairmen and the UP Chairmen that the projects selected would carry demonstrative values of their leadership image. Projects of physical infrastructure provided opportunities to demonstrate to their constituencies that as representatives of the people they were working for their localities. Thus conjuring up popular support was perhaps the main objectives behind taking more projects of physical infrastructure .

D. Project Implementation Practice

Another important aspect of planning is the execution or implementation of the programmes/projects. The implementation of projects is much more difficult than making their plan. Making plan for a project is an exercise of imagination, while its implementation is a struggle with reality.[21]

According to the Guidelines an official at the *upazila* level was responsible for the overall implementation of the projects undertaken within his functional jurisdiction.[22] But in fact the role of the officers concerned in the implementation phase was confined to the occasional visit to the project sites only. The projects costing less than

Tk.20,000/- could be implemented by the Project Committees[23] and the projects costing Tk.20,000/- and above were required to be implemented by the contractors. This ceiling perhaps was the reason for undertaking too many projects. The UP Chairmen who dominated the Project Committees were in fovour of distributing fund against the projects costing below Tk.20,000/- so that these could be implemented by the Project Committees.

According to the rules a Project Committee would have a Chairman appointed by the *Upazila Parishad*. Apart from the representative members, the Committee would include social workers, unemployed educated youth, school teachers, *Imams* of the mosques, representatives of target group and other local personality. There was also provision that at each project site a signboard would be displayed indicating name of project, estimated cost, volume of work, wage rates, date of commencement and completion of project, names of Chairman and Secretary of the Project Committee.[24] But in fact we found no signboard at the sites of the projects (that we visited) undertaken by the Project Committees in our selected *upazilas*.

It reveals from the records of *Upazila Parishads* under study that Project Committees were formed for the implementation of projects. But in most cases the Project

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Committees were not constituted in accordance with the rules. The UP Chairmen by virtue of their post dominated the Project Committees. Moreover, as the UZP Chairmen had supreme say in the formation of Project Committees, they would appoint people of their liking. Even fictitious names were included in the lists of the members of Project Committees. However, in either case, whether the Project Committees were constituted properly or not, the poorer section of the people were not included in the Project Committees.

Let us now see how many projects undertaken by the *Upazila Parishads* were implemented by the Project Committees and how many by the contractors, Table 7.4 presents this information.

Table 7.4

Distribution of Projects Implemented in Five Years by Project Committees and Contractors in the Selected Upazilas.

Name of Upazila Parishad	Project Committees		Contractors		Total	
	No. of pro-jects	Perce ntage	No. of pro-jects	Perce ntage	No. of proje cts	Perc enta ge
Hathazari	276	75.00	92	25.00	368	100
Chandina	268	80.00	67	20.00	335	100
Savar	242	75.15	80	24.85	322	100
Dewangonj	231	85.23	40	14.77	271	100
Paikgacha	222	81.92	49	18.08	271	100
Gangni	214	83.93	41	16.07	255	100
Chirirbandar	244	83.00	50	17.00	294	100
Fulbari	189	82.17	41	17.83	230	100
Total:	1886	80.39	460	19.61	2346	100

Source: Compiled from the records of Upazila Engineer and Finance Offices.

It reveals from Table 6.4 that on an average 80.39 per cent of development projects of the *Upazila Parishads* were implemented by the Project Committees and only 19.61 per cent were implemented by the contractors. The UP Chairmen, as mentioned above, dominated the Project Committees and as they were not trained (*supra* Table 5.14) in technical activity like project implementation, their performance in this regard was usually to be very poor.

E. Monitoring and Evaluation of Projects

The Instructions, issued by the Local Government Division, made provision for instituting a Project Inspection Team consisting of the officials and non-official members other than those involved in the Project Committees. The Projects Inspection Team was headed by the UNO and was required to inspect the works of project implementation in the field level. The Team was supposed to place its inspection report before the meeting of *Upazila Parishad*. There was also provision for instituting a Review Committee headed by UZP Chairman. The Review Committee was required to monitor and review the progress of implementation of development projects at least once a month and place its report in the meeting of *Upazila Parishad* for observation and consideration.[25]

The government officials at the higher levels were also empowered to inspect and evaluate the development projects undertaken by the *Upazila Parishads*. The Deputy Commissioner being the Chief Executive at the district could inspect and give his observations and suggestions on particular projects and report it to the Cabinet Division, Local Government Division or other concerned Ministries/ Divisions/Agencies. The Divisional Commissioner and other senior officers of the government could also visit the *upazilas* to acquaint themselves with the development

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activities of *Upazila Parishads* and could make their relevant tour notes available to the *Upazila Parishads* and endorse copies of the same to the concerned Ministry/Division/ Agency.[26]

Our investigations and inquiries into the working of the selected *Upazila Parishads* reveal that Project Inspection Teams and Review Committees were not instituted. So there was no formal mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of the projects. The officers at the *upazila* levels seldom would visit the project sites and a few big projects were visited by the Deputy Commissioners concerned. Sometimes the officers from the Ministry/Agency were also found visiting the records of the *Parishads* in connection with development activities.

In fact the UP Chairmen who generally were the Chairmen of the Project Committees would verbally report the *Upazila Parishads* about the implementation progress of the projects. The concerned officers also verbally reported the progress of the works of projects implemented by the contractors.

As there was no formal standing body to evaluate the implementation of the projects, evaluation was done in a superficial way at the meetings of the *Parishads* on the

basis of verbal report of the UP Chairmen and the officers concerned.

No mechanism was used to measure the impact of projects implemented. So this type of method for evaluation could not serve an input for the further planning process. It was observed that sometimes the people expressed their dissatisfaction about adverse effect of the projects through complaints they lodged with the *Upazila Parishad*s. But in most cases complaints were not heeded. Thus the opinions of the common people about the impacts of the projects were not sought.

The poor performance of *Upazila Parishad*s not only entailed poor implementation, but also delayed the implementation of the projects. As a result, the projects generally were not completed as per the schedule. However the reasons for poor implementation and not completing the implementation of projects in due time, were identified by the UZP members as the followings:

a) Delay of the release of fund;

b) Insufficient fund;

c) Exhaustion of fund half-way through a project;

d) Lack of technical expertise; and

e) Lack of proper supervision.

Beside the reasons mentioned above, it was reported that misappropriation of fund was rampant in all *upazilas* surveyed by us. This had an adverse effect on the proper implementation of projects. But none of the UZP members mentioned this. It was widely believed that the members of the Project Committees, the concerned officials and others, involved in the project implementation, adopted various forms of corruption particularly in embezzling project funds and taking kickbacks from contractors for undue favour.

The poor performance of *Upazila parishads* in planning process may also be seen if we analyse the capacity of the *Parishads* in utilizing fund allocated to them. It was reported by the officials of the selected *upazilas* that the *Upazila Parishads* could not utilize the entire allocated fund within the year. The government report also reveals such unsatisfactory utilization of fund throughout the country by the *Upazila Parishads* as is shown in Table 7.5.

Table 7.5

Year-wise Utilization of Development Grant Allocated to the Upazila Parishads

Year	Allocation amount in crore taka	Utilization ratio in percentage
1983-84	170.95	74
1984-85	200.00	81
1985-86	200.00	84
1986-87	160.00	44
1987-88	200.00	53
1988-89	70.00	66
1989-90	75.00	66

Source: Adopted from the Fourth Five Year Plan
1990-95

The poor performance of *Upazila Parishads* may further be seen if we review the adjustment position of fund advanced to the Project Committees. In the case of projects to be implemented through the contractors no advance was to be made to them . But with regard to the projects to be implemented by the Project Committees funds were to be advanced in installments and the amount of any instalment would not exceed 25 per cent of the total estimated cost. Second and subsequent advances could be made only after adjustment of previous advances. In the case of advances amounting Tk.15,000 to be adjusted after the spot verification of the project by the technical staff not below the rank of Sub-Assistant Engineer. Beyond this amount and

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in the case of final adjustment, projects works required to be certified by the *Upazila* engineer.[27]

It reveals from the various records of the *Upazila Parishads* that a significant portion of money advanced to the Project Committees remained unadjusted. The *Upazila Parishad* wise distribution of unadjusted money is shown in Table 7.6.

Table 7.6

Showing Unadjusted Money Advanced to the
Project Committees from 1983-84 to 1988-89
in the Selected Upazilas

Name of Upazila Parishad	Adjusted amount in percentage	Unadjusted amount in percentage	Total advanced in percentage
Hathazari	07	93	100
Chandina	60	40	100
Savar	70	30	100
Dewangonj	58	42	100
Paikgacha	44	56	100
Gangni	54	46	100
Chirirbandar	59	41	100
Phulbari	61	39	100

Source: Compiled from the records of Upazila Parishads

It is evident from Table 7.6 that from 1983-1984 i.e. from the inception of *upazila* scheme till 1988-89 a considerable per cent of money advanced by the *Upazila Parishads* to the Project Committees remained unadjusted. The

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picture of adjustment of advanced money was very dismal in the case of Hathazari where 93 per cent of the advanced amount was unadjusted and only 7 per cent was found adjusted. From the creation of *Upazila Parishad* till 1988-89 a total amount of Tk. 13,177,803/- were advanced by Hathazari *Upazila Parishad* to the Project Committees. But out of the total advanced amount only Tk. 9,29,436/- (7.05%) were adjusted and the rest Tk. 1, 22, 48, 367/- (92.95%) remained unadjusted.[28]

It is very surprising that where there was provision that 25 per cent of the total estimated cost of a project could be advanced to a Project Committee and the second and subsequent advances could be made only after the adjustment of previous advances, how a large amount of money remained unadjusted ? This was perhaps the advances of fund were made politically without adjustment of the previous advances.

7.4 People's Participation

It reveals from the above discussion that there was little scope for participation of common people in the development process at the *upazila* level. But does it mean that there was complete absence of popular participation in the *upazila* development planning process ? Let us see what the villagers whom we interviewed think of it. The present

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section is devoted to analyse their views regarding their participation in *upazila* development planning process. But before analyzing their views it is essential to discuss their socio-economic background which has close relation to the question of participation.

7.4(i) Socio-economic Background of the Villagers

Age

The data on age composition presented in Table 7.7 depict that the villagers whom we interviewed belonged to the different age groups. But the highest percentage from the rich (39.88%) and majority (53.02%) from the middle income category villagers were in the age group between 31 and 40 years. In the case of poor category the highest percentage (37.70%) was within the age group of 20-30 years.

Table 7.7

Distribution of Villagers by Age

Category of villagers	Age in years				Total
	20-30	31-40	41-50	51 and above	
Rich	20 (11.91)	67 (39.88)	46 (27.38)	35 (20.83)	168 (100.00)
Middle income	33 (14.22)	123 (53.02)	45 (19.40)	31 (13.36)	232 (100.00)
Poor	190 (37.70)	147 (29.17)	125 (24.80)	42 (8.33)	504 (100.00)
Grand total:	243 (26.88)	337 (37.28)	216 (23.89)	108 (11.95)	904 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages

Source: Field work

Education

The data on education of the villagers shown in Table 7.8 reveal that the rich were better educated than the middle income earners and again the middle income earners were better educated than the poor. Of the rich only 7.14 per cent and also 12.50 per cent from the middle income earners had no formal education . On the contrary, majority of the poor villagers (52.38%) had no formal education.

Table 7.8

Distribution of Villagers by Education

Category of villagers	Educational level					Total
	No education	Primary	Secondary	Higher Secon.	Graduation & +	
Rich	12 (7.14)	28 (16.67)	67 (39.88)	49 (29.17)	12 (7.14)	168 (100.00)
Middle income	29 (12.50)	59 (25.43)	92 (39.65)	37 (15.95)	15 (6.47)	232 (100.00)
Poor	264 (52.38)	137 (27.18)	67 (13.30)	25 (4.96)	11 (2.18)	504 (100.00)
Grand total:	305 (33.74)	224 (24.78)	226 (25.00)	111 (12.28)	38 (4.20)	904 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages

Source: Field work

Occupation

In terms of occupation, the data projected in Table 7.9 show that majority of the rich (52.98) and also majority of the middle income category villagers(51.72%) had agriculture as their principal occupation. On the other hand, majority of the poor villagers(54.96%) were day labourers. The rest villagers from all categories maintained business, teaching and other main occupation incl-uding law practice, government service, fishing, contract business, deed writing, *imamati* (the work for leading prayer in the mosque) and smithery.

Table 7.9

Distribution of Villagers by Occupation

Category of villagers	Occupation					Total
	Agricul-ture	Business	Teaching	Day La-bourer	Other	
Rich	89 (52.98)	51 (30.36)	16 (9.52)	–	12 (7.14)	168 (100.00)
Middle income	120 (51.72)	38 (16.38)	47 (20.26)	–	27 (11.64)	232 (100.00)
Poor	89 (17.66)	49 (9.72)	40 (7.93)	277 (54.96)	49 (9.72)	504 (100.00)
Grand total:	298 (32.97)	138 (15.27)	103 (11.39)	277 (30.64)	88 (9.73)	904 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages

Source: Field work

Land

With respect to the ownership of land the data presented in Table 7.10 reveal that an overwhelming majority among the rich (75.60%) and 38.99 per cent from the middle income category villagers owned land 6 acres and above. But majority from the poor (53.57%) possessed no land and the rest (46.43%) owned land below 3 acres.

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Table 7.10

Distribution of Villagers by the Ownership of Land

Category of villagers	No land	Below 3 acres	Below 6 acres	6 acres and above	Total
Rich	–	4 (2.38)	37 (22.02)	127 (75.60)	168 (100.00)
Middle income		57 (24.57)	85 (36.84)	90 (38.79)	232 (100.00)
Poor	270 (53.57)	234 (46.43)	–	–	504 (100.00)
Grand total:	270 (29.87)	295 (32.63)	122 (13.49)	217 (24.00)	904 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages

Source: Field work.

7.4(ii) Participation : Views of the Villagers

It has been mentioned elsewhere that the main thrust of decentralized planning is to facilitate the participation of common people in the development process. But under such socio-economic and educational background of villagers, mentioned above, how can we expect their participation in the development process. Nevertheless, a preponderant majority of the villagers had no idea of *upazila* development planning (Table 7.11).

Table 7.11

Distribution of Villagers about their Idea of Upazila Development Planning

Category of villagers	No idea	Some idea	Full idea	Total
Rich	125 (74.40)	34 (20.24)	9 (5.36)	168 (100.00)
Middle income	185 (79.74)	40 (17.24)	7 (3.02)	232 (100.00)
Poor	463 (91.86)	39 (7.74)	2 (0.40)	504 (100.00)
Grand total	773 (85.51)	113 (12.50)	18 (1.99)	904 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentage

Source: Field work

A. Participation : Project Identification/Selection

In order to asses the views of the villagers regarding their participation in *upazila* development process, they were asked whether they were consulted when development projects were identified and selected for implementation ? Their responses are shown in Table 7.12. It reveals from Table 7.12 that an overwhelming majority of the villagers from all categories expressed opinion that they were not consulted during the time of project identification and selection. In fact, there was no scope in the practice of *upazila* decentralization, as mentioned above to involve the common people in project identification/selection process.

Table 7.12

Responses of the Villagers whether they were Consulted at the Time of Project Identification/Selection

Category of villagers	Consultation			Total
	No	Yes	No response	
Rich	141 (83.93)	19 (11.31)	8 (4.76)	168 (100.00)
Middle income	199 (85.77)	16 (6.90)	17 (7.33)	232 (100.00)
Poor	438 (86.90)	7 (1.39)	59 (11.71)	504 (100.00)
Grand : total	778 (86.06)	42 (4.64)	84 (9.29)	904 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages

Source: Filed work

They came to know the projects only during the time of implementation.

B. Participation : Project Implementation

Again the villagers were asked weather they had participation in the project implementation. Like the project identification and selection, the majority of the villagers opined that they had no participation in project implementation also (Table 7.13) . But their percentage was

Table 7.13

Responses of the Villagers about their
Participation in Project Implementation

Category of of villagers	Participation in project Implmnt.			Total
	No	Yes	No response	
Rich	136 (80.95)	32 (19.05)	-	168 (100.00)
Middle income	189 (81.47)	43 (18.53)	-	232 (100.00)
Poor	276 (54.76)	169 (33.53)	59 (11.71)	504 (100.00)
Grand total	604 (66.48)	244 (26.99)	59 (6.53)	904 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentage

Source: Field work

comparatively less than the percentage of those who reported that they had no participation in project identification and selection. In other words,the percentage of those who claimed to have their participation in project implementation was higher than that of the villagers who expressed opinion in favour of their participation in project identification and selection process. Interestingly enough, of the villagers who claimed to have their participation in project implementation, the percentage of the poor is greater than that of other categories. But a closer scrutiny reveals that although 33.53 per cent poor villagers claimed to have the participation in project implementation, their participation was largely confined to

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the manual labour (Table 7.14). It is evident from Table 7.14 that out of the 169 poor claimed for participation in project implementation, 152 i.e. 89.94 per cent participated as paid labourers, not as free labourers.

Table 7.14

Nature of Participation in Project Implementation by the Villagers

Nature of participation	Category of villagers claimed for participation in project implmnt.			Total
	Rich	Middle	Poor	
As member of project committee	16 (48.49)	11 (26.19)	10 (5.92)	37 (15.16)
As contractor	9 (27.27)	8 (19.05)	-	17 (6.97)
As supervisor of labourers	8 (24.24)	23 (45.76)	7 (4.14)	38 (15.57)
As labourer	-	-	152 (89.94)	152 (62.30)
Grand total:	33 (100.00)	42 (100.00)	169 (100.00)	224 (100.00)

Note: figures in brackets indicate percentages

Source: Field work

C. Participation : Monitoring and Evaluation

One of the stages of development planning is the monitoring and evaluation of the projects. In this stage people's participation is necessary in order to identify

the problems and constraints that may crop up during the implementation stage. Their involvement in monitoring and evaluation is also essential to identify not only how many people but also what type of people benefit from a particular project. This also helps to reduce mismanagement of resources in a project. As a result, the government personnel as well as people's representatives become accountable to the people. But our data on this point reveal that there was also no scope for people's participation in monitoring and evaluation of the projects taken under *upazila* scheme. None of the villagers interviewed by us reported that they had participation in any way in monitoring and evaluation of the projects.

D. Participation : Sharing Benefit

Participation of the common people in sharing the benefit of the development projects is essential for decentralized system. Since people's participation in benefit sharing means equitable sharing of the benefit of development, it is regarded as the heart of the decentralized development policies and programmes. Voluntary and willing participation is possible only if people benefit from such participation. Often people do not see the benefit directly and therefore lose interest in programmes

and projects. They would think the projects as their own only when they share the benefits of those projects.

In this connection the villagers were asked whether they were benefitted by the development projects undertaken by the *Upazila Parishads* ? Their responses are projected in Table 7.15. The data projected in Table 7.15 indicate that

Table 7.15

Responses of the Villagers whether they were Benefitted by the Upazila Development Projects.

Category of villagers	Benefitted		Total
	No	Yes	
Rich	89 (52.98)	79 (47.02)	168 (100.00)
Middle	164 (70.69)	68 (29.31)	232 (100.00)
Poor	454 (90.08)	50 (9.92)	504 (100.00)
Grand total:	707 (78.21)	197 (21.79)	904 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentage

Source: Field work

more than three fourths of the total villagers under observation were not benefitted by the *upazila* development projects. This percentage is higher among the poor. Of the poor 90.08 per cent were of the opinion that they were not

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benefitted. The same view was held by 52.98 per cent and 70.69 per cent respectively from the rich and mid-income earning villagers. In other words, the benefits of development projects undertaken by the *Upazila Parishads* were enjoyed by 47.02 per cent influential rich, and also by 29.31 per cent mid-income earning villagers. Only a negligible per cent of the poor (9.92%) were benefitted by *upazila* development projects. Thus a vast majority of the rural poor were deprived of the benefits of development under *upazila* scheme.

Again the villagers were asked whether there had been positive change in their socio-economic conditions after the introduction of *upazila* scheme. Their responses are presented in Table 7.16. The data projected in Table 7.16 indicate that there was no sign of improvement in the socio-economic conditions of the majority people in general (60.18%) during the time of *upazila* scheme. Nevertheless, the economic condition of many villagers specially the middle income group and poor became worse. Thus *upazila* scheme failed to prevent the number of rural poor from increasing. It is very interesting to note that the villagers who claimed that their socio-economic conditions improved

Table 7.16

Responses of the Villagers whether there had been Improvement upon their Socio-economics Conditions

Category of People	No change	Some improve-ment	Remarkab-le impro-vement	Became worse	Total
Rich	82 (48.81)	50 (29.76)	16 (9.52)	20 (11.91)	168 (100.00)
Middle income	108 (46.55)	67 (28.88)	19 (8.19)	38 (16.38)	232 (100.00)
Poor	356 (70.63)	33 (6.55)	16 (3.18)	99 (19.64)	504 (100.00)
Grand total:	546 (60.40)	150 (16.59)	51 (5.64)	157 (17.37)	904 (100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentage

Source: Field work

remarkably were the people who accepted business as their main occupation. The villagers who claimed some improvement in their socio-economic conditions belonged to the group of people who had teaching and service as the main occupation. Thus our data invariably proved that the farmers and day labourers who constitute the bulk of the population in rural society remained outside the touch of *upazila* development process.

CHAPTER 7

Notes and References

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2. *Idem*.

3. H.A Hye. *Local Level Planning in Bangladesh* (Dhaka, National Institute of Local Government 1982) p.20.

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5. Mohammad Faizullah "Upazila Development Planning" in *Development Review* (Dhaka, Bangladesh)Vol.1, No.2 June 1986,p.38.

6. *Ibid*,p.40.

7. H.A Hye 1982,*op.cit.*, pp.45-46

8. *Ibid*,p.48.

9. The Local Government Ordinance 1982, Section 40, in *Manual on Thana Administration,* Vol.1 .p.12.

10. Guidelines,1983,p.4.

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13. *Ibid*, pp.6-11.

14. *Idem*.

15. *Idem*.

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17. Nurul Islam, Development Planning in Bangladesh (Dhaka : University Press Limited 1977),p.105.

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20. Guidelines as amended in 1985, Annexure-1.

21. W. Arther Lewis, *Development Planning; The Essentials of Economic Policy* (London : George Allen & Urwine Ltd., 1966),p. 264.

22. Guidelines as amended in 1988,p.13.

23. "Instructions" in *Manual on Upazila Administration* Vol.III, p.108.

24. *Ibid*,p,107.

25. Ibid,p.109.

26. Guidelines, as amended in 1985, p.41.

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28. "Statement for Advances from Development fund upto 1988-89," Hathazari, Upazila Parishad, 1990.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

Decentralization is a popular tropic of study following world wide tendency of nation states to adopt it as a strategy of development administration. As the modern government has to perform diverse and complex activities which can not be administered satisfactorily from the centre, decentralization appears to be the solution. The central government far away from the localities may not have adequate knowledge about the local condition and problems. It is expected that the local problems can better be identified locally and solutions can also be suggested on the basis of local needs, characteristics and capabilities. Thus decentralization in one form or another prevails in all countries whether developed or developing. But the developing countries have been showing more interest in decentralization. Now-a-days decentralization is a well known and widely practised administrative reform measure in developing countries and its popularity as a strategy of rural development is increasing day by day .

The developing countries were the colonies of the western powers. The colonial rulers were reluctant to implement real administrative reform which would go against their colonial policies. After achieving independence, the developing countries adopted decentralization policies and thereby reorganized their local government. But the difficulties that the developing countries face in implementing decentralization policies have its roots in colonial histories, strong central control, mass illiteracy and severity of socio-economic problems.

The rural Bangladesh is not an exception to the global trend of decentralization. Like other developing countries it is beset with the above mentioned difficulties in implementing decentralization policies and also here do not exist factors and conditions which are conducive to the achievement of effective decentralization. Of the conditions, the democratic environment and political commitment which are regarded as the most important conditions have been found absent in Bangladesh. Bangladesh administration has been run in a given political framework without popular participation through elected government except a short break. The different governments, that were unrepresentative in character, organized local government differently accordingly to their own interest. Hence, there emerged no consensus on this issue; and search for and

experiment in the newer structures of local government have not yet ceased in Bangladesh.

The foundation of local government, in modern sense, was laid down in the sub-continent by the British. The Bengal Village *Chaukidari* Act 1870, passed in response to the resolution of Lord Mayo, provided Union *Panchyat* at the rural areas of Bengal. In 1882 Lord Ripon desired a network of local government system throughout the country. Accordingly, the Local Self-Government Act 1885 was passed which provided three tier system of local government. These were: Union Committee, Local Board and District Board respectively at union, sub-division and district levels. During the British period the final Act in this connection was the Bengal Village Self-Government Act 1919. This Act was also passed in response to the recommendations of the Montague-Chelmsford Report. The Act made no change in the three tier system of local government, except renaming Union Committee as Union Board. However, the middle tier i.e. the Local Board was abolished in 1936.

The East Bengal now Bangladesh inherited two tier system of local government consisting of Union Board and District Board that were operating during the last days of the British rule. The governments during the parliamentary democracy era (1947-58) made no change in the inherited two

tier system of local government. But radical change was made when military took over Pakistan in October 1958. The coup d'etat leader General Ayub, who declared Pakistan unsuitable for parliamentary democracy, introduced basic democracy system under which four sets of local government in a pyramidal structure were established. A major motive behind basic democracy system was to legitimize his regime and create political support particularly in the rural areas.

After the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 the government headed by Sheikh Mujib did noting except making change in the nomenclature of local government institution . But when the government became unpopular and was approaching towards a grave crisis, it introduced one party presidential rule. Instead of organizing local government institutions at the *thana* and district levels, it made attempt at introducing party oriented local administration at these two levels. General Zia followed the presidential form of government introduced by Sheikh Mujib. But he made some change in it. In place of one party rule he introduced multi-party politics. With respect to local government General Zia was akin to General Ayub. Like General Ayub he established four tier system of local government, but with a minor change. Instead of division he brought the local government to the village level. General Ershad followed Lord Ripon and organized three tier system of local

government in which *upazila* scheme of local government was the key unit, the operational aspect of which we analyzed in the previous chapters.

It reveals from the previous chapters that like the earlier local government *upazila* scheme of local government failed to bring any significant positive change in the socio-economic conditions of rural people and also to facilitate the scope of their participation in rural development process. However, after five years of its journey with elected Chairman, the fate of *upazila* scheme received the same consequence as the basic democracy and the *Gram Sarkar.* With the fall of General Ershad the *upazila* scheme became inoperative and ultimately with the installation of the government headed by Begum Khaleda Zia, it was abolished by an ordinance known as the Local Government (*Upazila Parishad* and *Upazila* Administration Reorganisation) (Repeal) Ordinance 1991.

If it is argued that five year's time is not enough for the evaluation of the performance of *upazila* decentralization, it can also equally be argued that if there was political commitment of the government of General Ershad to introduce decentralization at the local levels, the attempt at introducing *upazila* decentralization would be made gradually and step by step with experimental basis

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taking the developed *upazilas* having higher local revenue generation. Because *upazila* administration involved annual expenditure of big amount of ADP allocation. But gradualist approach was not followed. General Ershad made hurry and in a short span of time the *thanas* were upgraded into *upazilas* and sub-divisions into districts. By making hurry General Ershad planed to create support of the people specially the people in rural areas to the policies and programmes of his government. His plan achieved some success. The demands for upgrading *thanas* into **upazilas** and the creation of new districts in the places of sub-divisions were articulated from different corners. Because the creation of *upazilas* and new districts means the supply of more fund to the local levels. However, this helped General Ershad in holding referendum for assuming the office of the Presidency. After winning the referendum General Ershad came out politically stronger than ever before. He could now claim that the people had endorsed his policies and programmes. With this political strength it became easier for him to hold UZP Chairman election and subsequently the elections of the Parliament and the President.

8.1. Major Findings and Observations of the Study

This study has uncovered a number of findings, the major of which are presented below:

Historically, Bangladesh local government has always been depended on the desire of the Chief Executive of the country. He has been the sole authority whether local government will exist or not; if it exists, in what level/ levels of the country ?; in what manner the institution/ institutions of local government will be composed of ?; with elected representatives or appointed officials or nominated persons or admixture of the two and how many powers and functions will be transferred to the local government ? In a democratic polity the solutions to these questions are settled by the constitution and with the Act of Parliament. But in Bangladesh these questions have been decided by the ordinances or orders of the Chief Executive of the country.

Bangladesh has always been weak local government and strong centre run by the governments instituted without democratic process. Weak local governments have always been viewed favorably by the strong centre. Consequently administrative reforms suffered a chronic unwillingness of the central government to decentralize powers at the local levels through devolutionary process in order to promote and strengthen the local government institutions.

After the departure of the British the local government reforms, so far carried on, were undertaken by the military regimes, not by civilian regimes. In effect, the local

government institutions have been imposed by the military rulers from the centre and like the colonial manner these institutions have been controlled through the officials. Thus historically the relationship between central government and local government has been characterized by bureaucratic dominance and control.

Since the later part of the united Pakistan period when military took over the country an unhealthy trend of using local government institutions for narrow political purpose of ruling power holders has been noticed. So there has been frequent change in the structure of local government with the change in the ruling power at the centre. Due to frequent change, the local government has been suffering from the lack of consistent policy of the government and this in turn, shakes people's confidence about the local government. As a result, the local government institutions, could not develop in the sense that they are perceived by the local people " as organizations providing services that satisfy their needs and as government units over which they have some influence".[1]

Administration system that Bangladesh inherited is commonly described as colonial, because it is rooted in the colonial past. The British rulers provided nomination system in the constitution of local government. Their purpose was

to extent control over the local bodies through nominated members together with officials. With same objective, the nomination system in the constitution of local government has been following in Bangladesh before and after independence. Nomination system, as practised in Bangladesh, is a direct breach of the principle of democracy as well as of local self-government.

The *upazila* scheme of local government was the chronic continuation of the changes in local government system following the change in the ruling power at the centre by military take over in 1982. The distinctive characteristics that marked *upazila* scheme from the previous reforms were elected Chairman, distribution of responsibilities between centre and local government; and subordination of bureaucracy to the democracy. But with regard to political leadership, no change was found. Usually the political leadership of local bodies in Bangladesh circulates among the economically will-to-do people who come from the group of large size land holders. The experience of *upazila* scheme of local government revels the same finding. The UZP Chairmen and members, as our data reveal (*supra* Tables 5.10 and 5.11) belonged to the upper strata of the rural community and a vast majority of rural poor remained outside the *Parishads*. Thus the hold of a few rich people on

the mechanism of local power structure is not a healthy sign for democratic set-up and rural development in the country.

The local government should have personnel of it own to enable it preform functions entrusted to it. But *Upazila Parishad* had no personnel of its own. The officials and staff of the central government were deputed to it to carry out its functions. The officials were accountable to the *Upazila Parishad* for their responsibilities and, at the same time, they were under the control of respective line Ministries for transfer, promotion and discipline. This dual loyalty of the officials, who traditionally enjoyed considerable power over local government created some problem when elected Chairmen took over charges from the UNOs who primarily acted as the Chairmen of the *Upazila Parishads*. Thus a cold war began between the officials and people's representatives, particularly between the Chairmen and the UNOs. But gradually with the passage of time and specially after the second election of UZP Chairmen, the officials in most cases as our observation reveals, adapted themselves to the spirit of democracy.

This, however, does not mean that officials had lost their traditional dominance altogether. On the one hand, as

upazila scheme provided civilian supremacy; on the other hand, it strengthened bureaucracy by posting senior officials at the local levels.

The local government should also have strong financial base of its own not only for effective planning and development , but also for maintaining its autonomy. The present study reveals that though *Upazila Parishad* was given power to generate revenue from several local sources, these sources were encountered with various problems. There was no effective initiative to remove the problems and the *Upazila Parishad* actors, specially the Chairmen showed little interest in raising local revenue properly. So revenue collection of *Upazila Parishsad* remained very low. In the face of meagre revenue collection, the *Parishad* was absolutely dependent on the central government for grants. As the ruling power at the centre uses local government for narrow political purpose, it is more interested in building support in the countrywide than in promoting self reliance at local levels. So a local government which is absolutely dependent on the centre for its finance usually gives its political support to the centre than would be a structure that can exists on its local resource mobilization base. "To

say that the centre has consciously debilitated local authorities and prevented them from raising their own revenues in order to maintain such a dependency would be altogether too much."[2]

Under *upazila* decentralized administration there was no accountability to anyone for resource mobilization, either for raising revenue or for spending it. Similarly there was no requirement for raising revenue locally and also no penalty for not raising revenue as well as not realizing it properly. However, there were rules and regulations for spending the fund granted by the central government. But these were hardly followed. Hence corruptions like nepotism, misuse and misallocation of fund and misappropriation of tender became endemic at the *upazila* levels. So corruption free society as was claimed by General Ershad during the time of introducing decentralization measure was a far cry. This situation, not only hampered the rural development process, but also endangered the growth of sincere and honest leadership at the local levels.

Decentralized planning is one of the main thrust of decentralization. But planning at the *upazila* level was neglected from the very beginning. Decentralized planning requires a strong team to be at work to prepare such plan. It was stipulated in the Guidelines issued by the Planning

Commission that Five Year Plan and Annual Development Programme would be prepared by the *Upazila Parishad* but mechanism for setting up such planning team was not provided in it. Secondly, no model plan book was supplied by the government to the *Upazila Parishad* as was supplied to the former *Thana Parishad*. However the *Upazila Parishad* was advised to follow the earlier *thana* plan book. But as the *thana* plan book was confined to the Rural Works Programmes only, it was not so much helpful in preparing *upazila* plan which covered all socio-economic and infrastructural activities. As a result, no *Upazila Parishad* could prepare its own Five Year Plan. In the absence of Five Year Plan, *Upazila* Annual Development Programme was prepared in a piecemeal fashion.

In preparing the *Upazila* Annual Development Programme, the *Upazila Parishad* was required to follow instructions issued by the government in the matter of selection of projects, allocation of funds among various projects and in the execution of projects. But these were followed more in breach than in observance. The block allocation of development grant was generally divided union wise. The UP Chairmen by virtue of being representative members of the *Upazila Parishad* would submit the lists of projects covering the share of their fund. Majority of these scheme were of the nature of physical infrastructure. The lists of projects

proposed were generally approved by the *Upazila Parishad* in its meeting without proper examination. Thus one may say that the plans of projects were formulated not so much on the basis of local needs and resources, but on the bargaining powers of UP Chairmen in the *Upazila Parishad*.

People's participation in development activities undertaken by *Upazila Parishad* was found to be almost nil. Because the common people were not involved in any stage of development planning process. They came to know about the projects at the stage of implementation and their participation in this stage was limited to hired labour. Of the reasons responsible for this, two are most important. First the procedure and mechanism adopted by *Upazila Parishad* in undertaking development projects provided little scope of people's participation in genuine sense. Second, the rural poor are not conscious of the importance of their participation in development process due to illiteracy and extreme poverty.

Thus under *upazila* scheme the vast majority of rural poor were kept completely dark about development planning process at the local levels. In fact, the planning functions at the *upazila* level were the responsibility of either politicians or civil servants or both. Hence the selection of development projects and implementation were influenced

by the rural elites who had close relation with them. As a result *upazila* level development process had not benefitted the majority poor. The benefit went to further enrich the well-to do.

8.2. Recommendations

A. Maintenance of Democratic Political Process

Local government, organized on the spirit of devolution, is a sub-system of greater political system of the country. It has roots in democracy. Without democratic set-up at the national level, local government institutions can not grow and develop in the real sense. Fortunately democratic government has established at the national level of Bangladesh recently. Now political leaders of the country, both from the ruling party and opposition, should remain united on one issue that democratic political process of the country be maintained at any cost, so that authoritarian rule like 1975 or military intervention in politics may not take place. But unfortunately in the past political leaders of the country never agreed on this issue and in one way or another some of them helped the military whenever they took over the reins of the government.

B. Constitutional Guarantee and National Consensus

In a democratic country the local government is generally a legal entity derived either from the constitution or an Act of Parliament. But constitutional guarantee is not a substitute for public esteem for local government. " Nevertheless constitutional recognition can be helpful and is an indicator of the position enjoyed by local government in the body politic of the country."[3] In many countries including India and Pakistan the local government bodies have constitutional recognition. In the original constitution of Bangladesh (1972), the local government was accorded a high status and dealt with elaborately. But the provisions relating to the local government were abolished in 1975, when one party authoritarian rule was promulgated under the Fourth Amendment of the constitution. However, the abolished provisions were revived by the present democratic government with effect from September 18, 1991 on which the Twelfth Amendment of the constitution was made. Now as per the provisions of the constitution there are two requirements for local government. First, local government is to be constituted in all administrative units and second, it is entrusted to a body composed of elected persons.

But mere constitutional cover for local government is not enough in a country like Bangladesh where constitution is frequently amended and suspended. Hence there must be

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national consensus among the different power holders and their contenders regarding the central political set-up and within that set-up the role that local government bodies are required to play, Fortunately, there has been recently a national consensus on the central political set-up. Like the central political set-up, national consensus is also essential on the local government institutions. But yet no national consensus has emerged on this issue. Moreover, there is a confusion as to the levels at which local government bodies are to be constituted. Because Article 59 of the constitution stipulates that "local government in every administrative unit of the Republic shall be entrusted to bodies composed of persons elected in accordance with law."[5] Administrative unit" has been defined in the Article 152 (1) of the constitution as a district or other area designated by law as an " administrative unit" for the purpose of the Article 59 of the constitution.[6] Thus according to the constitutions only district is an administrative unit where local government with the meaning of Article 59 is required to be constituted. But union which has a long experience in local government since the period of the British rule and also *thana/upazila* which has also experience in local government since the later part of the united pakistan period, have no constitutional recognition as administrative units. So local government bodies that are functioning at these two levels are not according to the

sense of the Article 59 and hence they may be altered, reorganized and restructured. It is therefore, necessary to have a national consensus whether the *thana/upazila* and union are administrative units and this has to be incorporated in the constitution. In other words, the future of local government bodies. based on national consensus. should be organized with the laws of the constitution and not by ordinance like the past.

C. Proposed Local Government:
   Four Tier System

In local government, tier system means the institutions of local government at different levels are pyramidal in structure. The higher tier is the controlling and funding authority for the lower tier. Historically Bangladesh has tier system in rural local government since the introduction of the Local Self Government Act of 1985. However, the number of tier differed at different times and this issue is still unsolved. The present democratic government instituted a Commission, known as the Local Government Structure Review Commission 1991, which proposed for two tier system of rural local government, viz., Union *Parishad* and *Zila Parishad* (Appendix-V).

We propose for four tier system of rural local government in Bangladesh. At the top *Zila Parishad* at the district level and at the bottom *Palli* (Rural) *Parishad* at the ward level. In between *Zila Parishad* and *Palli Parishad* there will be *Thana/Upazila Parishad* at the *thana/upazila* level and Union *Parishad* at the union level.

The *Palli Parishad* will consist of ten members elected by the voters of entire ward. Of the ten members two must be women, two farmers and two farm labourers/labourers. The UP members elected from the ward will attend the meetings of *Palli Parishad* and they will chair the *Palli Parishad* by rotation. The Union *Parishad* will consist of one Chairman, nine members equally taken from three wards and three women members, one from each ward. The Chairman will be elected by the voters of entire union and the members by the voters of respective ward. The women members will be elected by the elected UP members.

The *Thana/Upazila Parishad* will consist of an elected Chairman, the UP Chairmen within the *thana/upazila*, the Chairman of the *Pourashava* if any or a commissioner of the *Pourashava* to be nominated by the Chairman and three women members. The Chairman will be elected directly by the voters

of entre *thana/upazila* and women members will be elected by the UP Chairmen. The officials working at the *thana/upazila* level will be non-voting members of the *Parishad.*

The *Zila Parishad* will consist of a Chairman, the Chairmen of the TP/UZP within the district and three women members. The Chairman of *Zila Parishad* will be elected by the voters of entire district and he will be given the status of the State Minister.The woman members will be elected by the Chairmen of TP/UZP. The officials working at the district level will be non-voting members of the *Zila Parishad.*

Justification of Four Tier System

As per the provision of the Bangladesh constitution the institution of local government body is essential at all the administrative units. The constitution has recognized district as administrative unit and hence local government is a mandatory at the district level. Moreover, the district has a long experience in local government. The district local government has been quite active and effective in planning, executing and maintaining rural roads network and other facilities including health and education. Because each district has established administrative network since the British period. Although union and *thana/upazila* are not administrative units in the sense of the constitution, the

local government bodies at these two levels have became integral parts of local government system in the country. The Union *Parishad*, variously known as Union Board and Union Council, has a long history in the local democracy of the country. It is only the local government body which has been functioning without break and with democratic set-up.

The *Thana* Council, introduced under the basic democracy system and later renamed as *Thana Parishad* and finally *Upazila Parishad* headed by an elected Chairman, has also occupied an important place in the local government system of the country. It can not be denied that *thana* since its conversion into development circle in 1960s and specially after its upgradation into *upazila* it has acquired almost all characteristics of an administrative unit next to district. The various reports of the Committees appointed by the government in different times and also the various studies upheld the need for local government body at the *thana/upazila* level. However, there were many loopholes and failure in the operationalization of *Upazila Parishad*, as we analyzed in the previous chapters, but no criticism was directed towards *thana/upazila* being a seat of local government. The political parties did not oppose the elected local government at *thana/upazila* level. With regard to *upazila* decentralization they argued that as it divides the areas of function at this level between the central

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government and local government, so it is a constitutional issue and it should be decided by the sovereign Parliament, not by the ordinance of the military government. Their opposition became severe when the date for UZP Chairmen election was announced.[6] Perhaps this was mainly, due to the reasons that (i) once the politically elected Chairmen were installed in office, they could be used as an electoral college to elect the Parliament and the President. (ii) The elected Chairmen being completely dependent on development funds from the government, they might align with the government and thus provide a strong political power base for General Ershad at the local level.[7]

The main objective of local government is to provide service to the local people. It is assumed that smaller size of local body, the greater is the efficiency of services rendered. Secondly, the smaller unit of local body ensures effective decentralization and people's participation in general. Thirdly, the smaller local body offers proper forum to the poorer and disadvantageous sections to participate in local decision making process and planning and implementation of development projects. Thus below the union, local government body at the village level cannot be ignored. But the concept of village is an elusive one. Sometime it refers to a ward, sometimes *mouza* (revenue unit) and sometimes *para*. (generally a part of a village).[8] Hence,

the number of villages in the union varies and also the their areas vary greatly from one village to another. Since the identity of village is elusive and the number of villages from one union to another is not uniform, village local government has to be constituted at the ward level. This will create no problem, because the division of a union into three wards is a settled issue. It was settled in 1973 when the Union *Parishad* election of that year was held.

D. Functions of Proposed Local Government

There are two contradictory views on the scope of functions that local government should perform. The first view is that the local government should have limited functions relating to civic amenities only. The second view is that local government is a sub-system of greater political system and hence it cannot be isolated from the larger development process. The second view gained more popularity among the developing countries especially due to recent emphasis on local level planning and people's participation.

But in the case for greater involvement of local government bodies in development functions, there is also danger for their turning into an arm of the central government unless they have capacity in managing development

functions and they can mobilize local resources required for such involvement. So before transferring development functions to the local government bodies in our country, a Commission may be instituted to review the past position and suggest what type of functions should be transferred from the centre and to what level of local government these functions to be transferred? The Commission also will suggest the sources of revenue of the local government bodies and manner of revenue collection.

E. Reduction of Official Dominance

It is often alleged that the officials dominate local government bodies in Bangladesh. The situation is undesirable because it is anti-democratic and leads to centralization under the umbrella of decentralization. However, the situation may be changed by adopting some policies.

Firstly, the controlling/prescribing authority for local government body should be its next higher local government body, not the officials of the government engaged for field administration. Thus the controlling /prescribing authority of *Palli Parishad* will be the Union *Parishad;* for the Union *Parishad* the *Thana/Upazila Parishad;* for the *Thana/Upazila Parishad* the *Zila Parishad;* and for *Zila Parishad* the Local Government Ministry. Secondly, the

incidence of deputation of officials to local government bodies should be reduced gradually and local government services should be created. Thirdly, during deputation period the officials are to be made more responsible to the elected head of the local government body rather to their parent departments.

F. People's Participation

People's participation is considered to be the most important component of development process undertaken by the local government bodies. But due to the structural constraints of these bodies as well the mechanism used for the selection and implementation development projects, as we have seen earlier, majority of the rural people were kept outside the purview of development process. It is thus proposed that local government bodies should develop target group and undertake poverty oriented programmes and projects whose direct beneficiaries will be the rural poor. Such initiative will be helpful in creating the scope of people's participation. "In addition traditional leaders may also be used in the motivational campaign to encourage people's participation in rural community development".[9]

CHAPTER 8

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4. The *Bangladesh Constitution*, Article 59.

5. *Ibid*, Article 152(1).

6. For detailed information about the opposition of the political parties to the *upazila* decentralization see A.M.M Shawkat Ali, 1988, *op.cit.*, pp.62-88.

7. *ibid*, p.63.

8. The detailed discussion on the elusive character of village has been made in Peter Bertoeei," Elusive Village: Social Structure and Community Organisation in Rural East Pakistan (unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Michigan State University, 1970).

9. Lutful Hoq Choudhury 1987, *op.cit.*, p.86.

APPENDICES

Appendix - I

Phases of Upgradation of Thanas into Upazilas

Phases	Dates			Number of thanas upgraded
First Phase	7 November	1982		45
Second Phase	15 December	1982		55
Third Phase	24 March	1983		55
Fourth Phase	15 April	1983		57
Fifth Phase	2 July	1983		51
Sixth Phase	1 August	1983		47
Seventh Phase	14 September	1983		50
Eight Phase	7 November	1983		37

				397

Ninth Phase	1 December	1983		18
Tenth Phase	1 February	1984		45

				63

Appendix - II

Illustrative List of Regulatory and Major Development Functions Retained by the Government

1. Civil and Criminal judiciary

2. Administration and Management of central revenue like Income Tax, Customs and Excise, Land Revenue, Land Tax, etc.

3. Maintenance of Law and Order

4. Registration

5. Maintenance of essential supplies including food

6. Generation and distribution of electric power

7. Irrigation schemes involving more than one District

8. Technical education and education above Primary Level, viz. agricultural, engineering, medical, education, etc. High School, College and University education

9. Modernised District Hospitals and hospitals attached to the Medical Colleges

10. Research organisations like Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (C.S.I.R.) Laboratories

11. Large scale seed multiplication and dairy farms

12. Large scale industries

13. Inter-district and Inter-upazila means of communication, viz, posts, telegraph, telephones, railways, mechanically propelled road and inland water transport, highways, civil aviation, ports and shipping

14. Flood control and development of water resources

15. Marine fishing

16. Mining and mineral development

17. Compilation of national statistics

Appendix - III

Taxes, Rates, Tolls and Fees which were to be levied by Union Parishad

1. Tax on the annual value of buildings and lands or a union rate to be levied inn the prescribed manner.

2. Tax on hearths.

3. Tax on the transfer of immovable property.

4. Tax on the import of good for consumption, use or sale in a local area.

5. Tax on the export of goods from local area.

6. Tax on professions trades and callings

7. Tax on birth, marriages and feasts.

8. Tax on advertisements.

9. Tax on cinemas, dramatic and theatrical shows, and other entertainments and amusements.

10. Tax on animals.

11. Tax on vehicles (other than motor vehicles), including carts and bicycles and all kinds of boats.

12. Tolls on roads,bridges and ferries.

13. Lighting rate.

14. Drainage rate.

15. Rate for the remuneration of village police.

16. Rate for the execution of any works of public utility.

17. Conservancy rate.

18. Rate for the provision of water works or the supply of water.

19. Fees on applications for erection and re-erection of buildings.

20. School fees in respect of schools established or

20. School fees in respect of schools established or maintained by local *parishad*.

21. Fees for the use of benefits derived from any work of public utility maintained by a local *parishad*.

22. Fees at fairs, agricultural shows ,industrial exhibitions, tournaments and other public gatherings.

23. Fees for markets.

24. Fees for licenses sanctions and permits granted by a local *parishad*.

25. Fees for specific services rendered by a local *parishad*.

26. Fees for the slaughtering of animals.

27. Any other tax which the government is empowered to levy.

28. A specific community tax on the adult males for the construction of public work of general utility for the inhabitants of the local area concerned, unless the local parishad concerned exempts any person involved of doing voluntary labour or having it done on his behalf.

Source: The Local Government Ordinance 1976. "The Fourth Schedule".

Appendix – IV

Upazila Project Proforma

1. Name of Project :

2. Implementing Agency:

3. Nature, purpose, importance and justification:

4. Total cost and annual phasing:

5. Major physical items of work with estimated cost:

                                        Quantity   Cost
   (a) land:
   (b) Labour:
   (c) Materials:
         (i)   Bricks:
         (ii) Cement:
         (iii) Steel:
         (iv) other items:
   (d) Transportation:
   (e) Land Development:
   (f) Others:

6. Implementation Period:
   (a) Date of Commencement:
   (b) Date of Completion:

7. Location of the Project:

8. Source of Financing:
   (a) Government:
   (b) Local contribution:
   (c) Others:

9. Modes of Implementation : contract/otherwise

10. Manpower Requirement:
   (a) Skilled:
   (b) Unskilled:

11. Arrangement for maintenance of project work or facilities after completion:
   (i)   Annual requirement of staff and their training:
   (ii) Annual requirement of spares and consumable and other materials for maintenance and repairs:
   (iii) Annual recurring cost:
   (iv) Proposed mode of financing the recurring cost and securing the necessary manpower and skills:

12. Is there a similar project of the national government or regional body in the Upazila? If so, the reason for undertaking the proposed project may be indicated.

13. What other complementary investments by the *Upazila Parishad* or national government are necessary for deriving full benefit out of the proposed investment?

14. Does the Project require acquisition of land ? If so what arrangements have been made for land acquisition for the project.

15. Estimated/expected benefit due to implementation of the project:
    (a) In terms of money:
    (b) In terms of employment:
    (c) Socio-economic well-being (please describe):
    (d) Estimated benefit/ cost ratio:

16. How did the Project idea originated?

17. Has any survey/study been made before initiating the project?

18. Does the project strictly adhere to the guidelines for undertaking development schemes by the *Upazila Parishad* ?

Signature of the Sponsoring Authority

Source: Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Planning Commission, Guidelines for *Upazila Parishads*, July 1983 (Dhaka: BGP, 1983).

Appendix – V

Local Government System Proposed by the Local Government Structure Review Commission 1991

The present government of Bangladesh issued a Notification on November 24, 1991 according to which the Local Government Structure Review Commission was constituted. The Commission was headed by the Information Minister, Barrister Nazmul Huda and consisting of 14 members. Later 3 members were coopted. The Commission recommended the two tier system of rural local government. The two tier system proposed by the Commission are Union *Parishad* and *Zila Parishad*. A Union *Parishad* will consist of one Chairman, nine members and three women members. For the purpose of nine members a union will be rearranged into nine wards, each of which will send one elected member to the Union *Parishad*. The Chairman and three women members will be elected by the voters of entire union, provided that a ward will not send more than one woman member. The Commission suggested to integrate the Union *Parishad* with villages and accordingly it recommended for constituting a *Gram Shava* (Village Assembly) at the union level. Ten persons elected by direct votes from each and every village under a union will collectively form the *Gram Shava*. Of ten elected persons, two must be women, two farmers and two farm labourers/labourers.

Both Union *Parishad* and *Gram Shava will have a 5 years tenure. The UP Chairman will chair the Gram Shava* and the presence of UP members in its meeting is essential. *Gram Shava* will sit at least twice a year, approve the annual budget and development projects of Union *Parishad* and review its performance. The *Gram Shava* will also have power to remove UP Chairman and/or UP member, if required, by two-thirds majority vote. There will also be a *Gram Unnayan* Committee (Village Development Committee) at the ward level.

The *Zila Parishad* proposed by the Commission of 1991 is not a body elected by direct votes. Each *thana* within a district will send two representatives to the *Zila Parishad* elected by the UP Chairmen and members in that *thana*. The UP Chairmen and members in a district will also elect three women members for the *Zila Parishad*. The Chairman of the *Zila Parishad* will be elected by an electoral college consisting of the members of all *Gram shavas* and UP Chairmen and members in the district. The *Zila parishad* will have a 5 year term. The Chairman of a *Zila Parishad* may be removed by two-thirds majority vote of the members if required. The Chairmen of the Municipalities within the district and, if required, the officials working at the district level will attend the meetings of *Zila parishad*. The MPs within the district will act as the advisors to the *Zila Parishad*.

The Commission instituted in 1991 did not recognize *thana* for the unit of local government. It considered *thana* a coordinating unit and proposed *a Thana Unnayan* and *Samannoy* Committee (Thana Development and Coordinating Committee). Its stated purpose will be the coordination between the Union *Parishads* and *thana* administration and also between Union *Parishads* and *Zila Parishad*. The Committee will have a elected Chairman. The UP Chairmen within the *thana* will be its ex-officio members. All UP members in the *thana* will elect three women members for the Committee. The officials working at the *thana* level will be members of this Committee without voting power. The MPs in the *thana* will be advisors to the Committee. The Committee must act according to the advice of the MPs. The *Thana Nirbahi* Officer (TNO) and Deputy Commissioner will act as the secretaries to the *Thana Unnayan* Committee and *Zila Parishad* respectively.

The commission of 1991 did not recommend major chances in the local government for the urban areas, i.e. for *Pourashavas* (Municipalities) and City Corporations, It simply suggested the direct election for the Mayors of City Corporations; and also for the election of three women members by the commissioners and increase of the wards in the municipal areas on the basis of its population.

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