

Public Opinion, Public Policy and Democracy

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Thesis Submitted to the Department of Public Administration, University of
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Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “Public Opinion, Public Policy and Democracy” was carried out by Nilufar Banu. Registration No. 29, Session 2001-2002 for the fulfillment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the Department of Public Administration, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh.

This work carried out under my supervision and the style and contents of the thesis have been approved and recommended for the award of Ph.D degree.

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Preface and Acknowledgement

This is a study on the role of public opinion polling and democratic governance. It consists of ten major chapters. Chapter I discusses certain issues in democracy, describes public opinion polling and briefly looks at the history of public opinion research. Chapter II is on literature review. Chapter III outlines the purpose of the study and the methodology used in conducting it. This is followed by a discussion of some major problems in Bangladesh in the context of democratic governance (Chapter IV). Chapter V contains an application of public opinion research on social attitudes in Bangladesh and other selected countries; results obtained have been analyzed comparatively across the countries. Chapter VI is about women's employment in Bangladesh again using results of surveys conducted. In this chapter, it has been sought to assess the reaction of the common people to the idea of women's employment. Chapter VII contains people's perceptions as to why they vote for women as their local representatives. Chapter VIII is on public opinion research and governance and policy making in democratic Bangladesh. Chapter IX is on corruption in Bangladesh as perceived by the people. Contents of the chapter (X) is public opinion and national election. The final Chapter (XI) is public opinion and public policy, the key findings and concluding remarks.

The study suggests that opinion polling is indeed a useful tool in providing a framework for the integration of people's views on their concerns and expectations and democratic governance. The government and politicians can use the results of scientifically generated opinion polling results in modifying their stances on national and local issues, while the people can make their opinions on issues of concern to them known to all concerned.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS: PUBLIC OPINION PUBLIC POLICY AND DEMOCRACY

Concept of Democracy

From ancient times some people have conceived of a political system in which the members regard one another as political equals, are collectively sovereign, and possess all the capacities, resources, and institutions they need in order to govern themselves.¹

The history of democracy and is perhaps as old as the history of human evolution itself. Over the countries, the nature and contents of democracy underwent periodic transformation in tune with changing times and varying circumstances. Yet, all through, the inherent strength of democracy as a way of life remained unchanged. Representative institutions and participatory democracy had been founded in the city state of Greece. The Greeks first brought democratic transformation, from the idea and practice of rule by the few to the idea and practice of rule by the many².

Democracy is a system of government has now evolved as one in which the people could exercise the governing power through representatives periodically elected by themselves. Its institutional expressions are the equal right of all to vote and stand as candidates for periodical elections, equal eligibility for executive and judicial office, and freedom of speech, publication and association. These rights provide the opportunities for political participation, for choosing rules and deciding the general lines of their policy.³

Democracy is, then, government by the people ie. by the people's elected representatives. In practice, it means government by the representatives of a majority of the people.⁴

Democracy as a system of government has re-asserted its necessity in several parts of the world where other systems and methods had been tried out. This new thrust of democratic experiments have brought into sharper focus the creation of parliamentary institutions for further promoting the cause of representative democracy. The problem faced by parliamentarians vary from country to country, people to people, region to region; yet, issues of human rights are more or less similar irrespective of difference in political systems and socio-economic backgrounds.

1. Dahl A Robert – Democracy and its Critics.

2. Editor, Jain C-K – Triumph of democracy. An overview of world parliaments.

3. Editor, Pruthi Raj and Sharma – Democracy and women

4. Arblaster Anthony – Democracy

The success of parliamentary polity depends upon the harmonious functioning of integral organs such as the legislature, the executive, the judiciary, the bureaucracy, political parties, the press and last but not the least a vigilant public⁵.

Function of the State Organs

The Legislature

The Legislature is a multifunctional institution of people's representatives and the policy formulation organ of the state. It also ensures the accountability of the executive and the bureaucracy for the benefit of the people. The Legislature can play a meaningful role in channeling the creative potential and energy of the people in a positive direction. The legislature being a dynamic institution should keep pace with the changing needs of the time. For example, terrorism or drug menace, or environmental degradation which were not that acute problems earlier, are now seriously affecting societies around the world. Such social and national problems need to be addressed by legislative measure.

The executive and the Bureaucracy

In a parliamentary polity, the executive and the bureaucracy work together for the development of the nation and for the welfare of the people. The executive and the bureaucracy give substance to a legislative measures. The bureaucracy aid and advise the Ministers in the formulation of legislative measures. The bureaucrats are responsible for the implementation of the laws enacted at the grassroot level. They have a dual responsibility, viz. maintenance of law and order and ensuring development.

Political Parties

Political parties have to play a very important role in the protection and promotion of parliamentary democracy. While the party (parties) in power is (are) entrusted with the responsibility of running the government, the political parties, who are out of power, are like shadow governments. They should, therefore, be prepared to execute and implement their alternative plan of action as and when they come to power. The overall interest of the nation should be the prime consideration.

A spirit of tolerance and mutual accommodation, therefore, is yet another requisite of parliamentary democracy. A parliamentary polity pre-ordains cooperative co-existence. Rather, the democratic spirit demands large heartedness on the part of the majority towards the minority.

In a parliamentary polity, the opposition is given equal importance. The opposition's role is to oppose and criticize but criticisms should be healthy; constructive and within the parameters

⁵ . Editor Jain C.K. – Triumph of Democracy. An Overview of World Parliaments.

of established practices and conventions. Decency and decorum have to be maintained. In a parliamentary polity, issues are to be sorted out in the public fora; whether it is in the parliament or on the floors of local government and through debate, discussion and deliberations. Consensus and cooperation should be the motto.

The Press

The press is another pillar of parliamentary democracy. The press should play the role of catalyst keeping a close eye on the activities of different organs of the Government. In the interest of the nation and in the interest of parliamentary democracy, the press should represent events objectively and dispassionately without fear or favour. The press also disseminates governments' policies and priorities to the public. In this way, there is a two-way communication between the government and the people. In a parliamentary polity the press has some promotive and educative role and this is their social responsibility. Press should enlighten and educate the public of the virtues of democracy which will go a long way in strengthening parliamentary institutions.

The Judiciary

The role of the judiciary in a parliamentary system is like that of the referee in a game. It is through the judiciary that the rule of law is preserved. An independent and fearless judiciary is indeed the hallmark of parliamentary democracy. However, while interpreting the laws the judiciary should not be hamstrung by rigidity. They should go by both the letter and spirit of the laws and have a social philosophy.

The People

It is the people who safeguard the ideals and institutions of parliamentary democracy. Now, the adage goes eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. Recent events in different parts of the world have mostly demonstrated strong common sense of the people to change the governments and the system of government that failed to deliver the goods.

The challenge before parliamentary democracy today is how to cope with the rising hopes and aspirations of the people. In the developing world, this has also brought about considerable stresses and strains on the political system. When the political system fails to cope with the rising expectations of the people, it results in chaos, confusion and disorder. This also affects the process of economic development. Without economic development, no government can achieve the confidence of the mass of the people. The need of the hour, therefore, is to strengthen democratic institutions and to show respect to public opinion and the wishes and aspirations of people, and to take necessary steps toward fulfilling them. Most of the political leaders make pronouncements alluding to various desires and expectations of the people. Usually these statements are not based on an assessment of the opinions of the people. In fact,

there is a big gap on what the people want as to various important national issues relating to their lives and living. Opinion polling can minimize the gap.

The case of Bangladesh

Bangladesh has a centuries old history of foreign subjugation, and emerged as an independent nation just over 38 years ago with a democratic political system. But a long military autocracy disrupted the total democratic system of the country. However, a democratic government was reestablished through fair elections in February 1991. After completion of its five years terms, a new democratic government was elected on 12 June 1996, which completed its five-year term and another government was elected in October 2001 and completed their five years terms. After that for political conflict caretaker government guided by military autocracy ruled two years which damaged democracy process again. But understanding peoples pressure and demand, however democratic government takeover the power through fair election on December 2008. All the elections were held under neutral non-party caretaker government and it was agreed that in future all the national elections will be held under a caretaker government. Now, the power mostly vested in the central government and bureaucracy. Local governments have not yet been developed in an effective manner. Democratic institutions have not been established at appropriate levels of society to enable the people to exercise their power in a free and fair manner in a democratic society.

Public Opinion Polling

The basic Idea

In a democratic society, it is important that people should take active interest in public issues. It is also important to create facilities for them to carry out their responsibilities. Public opinion research for generating public's ideas and views on important issues is one way of involving people in the governance process. Opinion poll should encourage people to think about and to take more active interest in social, political and economic matters which affect their lives. On the other hand, the survey results will help governments and local elected bodies to access ideas, opinions, perceptions, views, and desires of the people. This will also assist the government in formulating policies which will reflect opinions of the general people. This interaction between people and the government can help strengthen democracy in the country.

The Concept and a Brief History of Public Opinion Surveys

"The study of public opinion has developed from a glorified kind of fortunetelling into a practical way of learning what the nation thinks." — George Gallup and Saul Rae

Evolution of Public Opinion Survey

The concept of public opinion is central to theories of democratic government. Channels are needed for the formation and expression of public will in a democratic set up. Public opinions properly generated, analyzed and publicized can be an effective check on the activities of the leaders. Through public opinion polls the opinions of people can be generated to serve as an

early warning system, identifying the need to take corrective action in favour of development in the service of the nation and the people. People can express themselves in a simple and effective manner through public opinion surveys on the basis of what they see, hear and feel.

George Gallup founded the American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup Poll) in 1935. In those early years periodic surveys of public opinion were conducted on national sampling basis and features were published in newspapers. Elmo Roper drew cartoons along with market research results commissioned by Fortune Magazine. As a results national polls of public opinion came to be known as the fortune poll. Gradually reporting on public opinion by political reporters became an essential feature of political journalism, especially during election years. Polls also became a useful tool for politicians to use in election campaigns and to influence policy and decision makers.

Public opinion research initially was subject to a lot of criticism. Many social scientists criticized that the assumptions behind public opinion research were wrong. Secondly, social scientists also pointed out that the methods used by pollsters – their sampling techniques, designing of questions and analytical procedures were defective and superficial. Many politicians, political analysts and policymakers and others also suggested that political activities and directions would not be affected by polls.

In 1936, polls conducted by Gallup, Roper and Crossly were acceptable for their correct forecasts of Roosevelt victory in the US presidential election. The next decade, polls gradually earned public acceptance in the USA as a media feature, as a result of the records compiled by some pre-election polls in correctly indicating the winners in presidential and other elections.

However, in 1948, when polls failed to predict Harry Truman's upset victory over Thomas Dewey a crisis loomed, not only regarding public opinion polls but also of all applications of similar survey methods. Credibility of polls and other surveys including commercial marketing research became a major issue, even among the academic community. The Social Science Research Council launched an investigation into the reasons for the failure.

Following that debate, public acceptance of polls remained low until after the 1960 election in which polls made a correct forecast. This correct forecast restored the public confidence in polls. Today, pre-election polling at national, state and local levels in the USA is a significant focus of media sponsored polls.

Public polling has now spread throughout the world, although in the developing world it is not yet very developed everywhere. The results of these polls covering all segments of society can importantly inform decision-making at all levels of government.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on public opinion research and democracy is still rather limited. Five books, the contents of which are relevant to the present work, have been reviewed. The arguments and analyses presented in the books have been summarized. It will be seen, on the whole, that the subjects chosen for this dissertation is a highly potential field in the context of democratic governance in Bangladesh.

I

The book *Public Opinion, Polls, and Democracy* (Westview press published in USA, 1989) deals with topics which are related to the subject matter of my thesis. Author of this book is Irving Crespi who is the former executive Vice President of the Gallup Organization. Irving Crespi says that for enhancing the democratic functions of public opinion polls, what needs to be done ranges from informing the public's understanding of polling methods to reforming the ways in which poll results are reported by the media. This book is also one of few attempts to link technical and philosophical concerns about the ways, means, and ends of polling. Also, showing who uses polls and why, with examples drawn from different interest groups as well as from government and political campaign, it brings out the potential of public opinion polls in promoting dialogues among voters, candidates, and public officials.

Poll results can be considered a “*mandate from the people*” that should be followed by the nation’s leaders because those results represent what the people want— what legislation they favour, what they oppose, and what policy directions they want the government to follow. Now they could turn to the latest poll readings to find out what the public really wants. In this book author claiming that “Democracy is a process of constant thought and action on the part of the citizen” with polls, legislators, educators, experts, and editors, as well as ordinary citizens can have a more reliable measure of the pulse of democracy. Polls also have enriched our understanding of how public opinion functions in the political life. Public opinion polls is associated with a transition in the character and quality of public opinion that is in turn associated with larger societal changes in education and communication system.

Gallup also stresses that, public opinion is not today, as it was then, the opinion of a small and exclusive minority of educated persons enjoying a monopoly of economic and political power. We can add to the insight that public opinion is a historical phenomenon, changing in nature as the sociopolitical context changes, by analyzing the rise of polling as part of a twofold process of political change, one related to populism and the other to mass politics.

Gallup observe that public opinion polling believes in value of every individual's contribution to political life, and in the right of ordinary human beings to have a voice in deciding their fate. Public opinion, in this sense, is the pulse of democracy.

The plan of this book: *Chapter-2* examines as carefully as possible how polls are and are not actually being used as distinct from what pollsters have said about how they are intended to be used. *Chapter-3* evaluates the validity of the methods currently employed by pollsters in relation to the uses to which polls are being put. *Chapter-4* seeks an answer to the question; given the likelihood that public opinion polls will continue to play a prominent role in politics, what can be done to maximize their positive contributions to the political process.

It has been suggested in *Chapter-2* that in representative democracy, public opinion's most direct effect is on election. Any examination of the way public opinion polls are used must start with the role of pre election polls. Pre election polling is based on the belief that it provides accurate measures of how the electorate is tending in its voting intentions. The use of polls as political intelligence is a highly developed activity in the conduct of election campaigns. There are applications : (i) measuring the voting strengths and weaknesses of opposing candidates and the progress of their campaigns (ii) selecting and defining issues on which to campaign, and (iii) selecting candidates to support.

The author informs the readers that polls are also commonly used by advocacy groups when developing their strategies to influence public opinion. Polls have become a widely used information gathering technology that have contributed significantly to the effectiveness of those who seek to manipulate the public. What does not usually appear to have happened is the acceptance by policymakers of polls as a mandate from the people.

What we learn from chapter 3 is briefed in this following paragraph. It has been importantly stated that if the polling method is not correctly understood and applied, it cannot provide us with valid information about public opinion. The polling method depends on sample, timing etc. Any poll depends primarily upon (i) the size of the sample (ii) how certain the pollster wants to be about the results, and (iii) how heterogeneous the population the pollster is sampling happens to be.

It has been pointed out that timing is an even more important factor influencing the accuracy of pre-election polls. If a poll is conducted very close to election day, so that there is little time for preferences to change, such projections may be warranted. Otherwise, there is no reason to assume they will be accurate forecasts of election outcome. Many voters do not have voting intentions in any meaningful sense of the word until those final days before election, and even then their intentions may not be firm.

Another important point raised is that the order in which questions are asked can also affect poll results regarding candidate standings and opinions. A very important aspect of question wording is whether an issue is posed in general or specific terms.

In the case of single versus multiple questions the principle, applied during the 1940s by Louis Guttman, that any one question asked in a survey is a sample of all possible questions that could be asked must also be considered. As Guttman pointed out, there are many different ways of posing an issue, each highlighting a different fact. Thus, no one question can possibly encompass the fullness of opinion on a given issues. Guttman concluded that only by asking a series of questions on an issue and then analyzing the pattern of responses to that series could a valid understanding of public opinion be developed. A biased question would produce a misleading picture of public opinion, but as part of a series of questions it could have considerable analytic value.

In contrast to Guttman's approach, the typical goal in polling has been to develop single questions whose wording is balanced, giving equal weight to both sides of an issue, so as not to bias responses in one direction or another. Answers to such presumably unbiased questions are then interpreted as valid, summary measures of how opinion splits on an issue. The implicit assumption of this practice is that issues have a single core aspect and that public opinion divides in respect to that core aspect. But this is seldom the case.

The author has identified a number of characteristics of public opinion polls that must be considered in any discussion of how and to what extent, polls can make a positive contribution to the nations political life briefly, those are:

The sensitivity of opinion polls to the wording and sequence of questions demonstrates the limited value of using one question, no matter how objective and unbiased it's wording, to investigate and analyze public opinion on an issue.

Public opinion is a dynamic process that changes in reaction to an ever-changing world. To understand public opinion, we must understand how it responds to events and how those responses generate long-term trends in the climate of opinion.

The polls do provide useful information to those who seek to mold and manipulate public opinion is as good an indicator as one could want that polls can tell us something meaningful about public opinion.

Let me more on to Chapter 4, where it is agreed that a creative use of polling that conforms to what is methodologically valid can make a positive contribution to our democratic way of life. By giving policymakers a better understanding of the public's thinking and making them more sensitive to the public's needs and aspiration, public opinion polls can contribute to a more effective democracy.

Democracy exists, it is started, in an ongoing process of public debate about what government should do and how. The most important contribution that polls can make to that process is to introduce the wants and needs of all sectors of the public into that debate as fully and accurately as possible. For this, polls are needed that analyze public opinion, with the results of those analyses objectively reported to the public. Although the news media provide what is probably the most suitable setting for such polls, to date few media sponsored polls measure up to what is needed. Whether the potential of public opinion polls for strengthening democratic government will ever be realized depends largely on the readiness of the news media to make full use of what polls can tell us about public opinion. Failing that, media polls are likely to remain little more than news gimmicks, quasiblebiscites that provide a simplistic, confusing, and distorted understanding of public opinion. At the same time, privately commissioned polls would then continue to add to the ability of politicians and special interests to manipulate the public without any effective countervailing force.

It is conducted that the news media themselves do not constitute a completely neutral political force and in fact are part of the concentration of power in contemporary society.

The author argues that public opinion develops and makes itself felt through communication among members of the general public, special interest groups, and political leaders. Public opinion is a social process in constant flux, always changing in focus, direction, and definitiveness in reaction to both direct personal experience and to the appeals of those who have control or access to mass communication.

If the linkage between public opinion and government is weakened, political unrest may arise, it is suggested. Democratic societies seek to maintain the linkage between public opinion and government through periodic elections. But given the dynamic nature of public opinion, elections can never be more than partial, transitory expression of public opinion. Moreover, public opinion exists in the interstices of an organized polity. It comes to the fore when customary, institutionalized ways of deciding policy do not suffice.

The another contends that polls of public opinion provide a means for tracing the continuous movement of public opinion. In this way, they can help fill in the gap between the results of past election and changing public opinion. Polls can contribute to the maintenance of a strong linkage between the governed and those who govern them that is responsive and responsible to the needs and wants of the body polity.

The ultimate goal of our analysis, the authors states, has been to consider the practices and institutional settings that would lead to a positive role for polls in a democracy. There is a pressing need for a medium through which ordinary citizens can voice their opinions, clearly and without distortion. Although media sponsored polls have not as yet served this need well, they do have a potential for doing so. But that potential will not be realized until and unless the news media conduct polls that are based on a valid understanding of the nature of public opinion and then report them in a way that enhances rather than displaces public debate. In the absence of such a development, the continued and expanded use of polls is more likely to undermine than strengthen democracy. If the news media fulfill the potential, polls will strengthen democracy by stimulating rather than replacing public debate.

Salient points arising from the study include:

- Public opinion poll reflect people’s perspectives
- Public opinion poll can inform the government about people’s take on its policies
- Public opinion develops communication among members of the general public, special interest groups and political leaders.
- Polling can an interacting process between the political authorities and the people, promoting democratic governance
- If the polling method is not correctly understood and applied, it cannot generate valid information about public opinion
- Public opinion is an effective way of forecasting election results
- Timing is a crucial factor in relation to accuracy of pre-election polls
- Public opinion is a dynamic process that changes in relation to an ever changing world
- An important contribution that polls can make to that process is to introduce the views and needs of all sections of the population into that debate as fully and accurately as possible.

II

Another relevant book is '*Polling and the Public' What Every Citizen Should Know* by Herbert Asher (Ohio State University, Literary of Congress, United State of America, year 1992). The author seeks to deal with the relationship between polling and the public. The main objective of this book is to help citizens become wiser consumers of public opinion polls. Because of the prevalence of public opinion polls and their frequent misuse, it is imperative that citizens be able to evaluate critically the various assertions made on the basis of the polls.

In this book there are 9 chapters they are: Chapter 1 explains the types of polls, their importance, and American's varying attitudes toward public opinion research. Chapters 2 through 5 address methodological aspects of polling, such as the problem of non-attitudes, question wording and question order, sampling techniques, and interviewing procedures. Chapters 6 through 8 are more analytical focusing on how the media cover polls, the role of polls in campaigns and elections, and the interpretation of polls. The last chapter considers the place of polls in a democratic polity.

It is contended that the polls are important for the average citizen as well as for the businessperson and potential candidates. The polls today have become a major way in which Americans learn what their fellow citizens are thinking. The substantial media coverage of polls provides citizens with the opportunity to compare their own beliefs with their compatriots' and to learn whether their own views are shared by others. As citizens use the polls in this manner, they need to be aware of the factors that affect the poll results so that they do not accept or reject them too quickly or uncritically.

The another makes the point that polling has become an integral part of political events at the national, state, and local levels. In any major event or decision, poll results are sure to be a part of the news media's coverage and the decision makers' deliberations. He states that polls help politicians to make the decisions, and citizens need to understand the essentials of public opinion polling to follow all aspects of the polls.

It is suggested that public opinion polls are likely to play an ever larger role in political discourse, due to the improved technology of polling, the introduction of courses in methodology in journalism curricula, the wide spread assumption that polls are the best way to measure public opinion, and the belief that public opinion polls are instruments of

democracy since they allow everyone's view to be represented. All these factors ensure that future political debate on issues will be characterized by even greater reliance on the polls.

The book recognizes that major national polls also regularly cover tax reform, social values, foreign policy, the budget deficit and countless other political and non-political topics. Indeed, when an issue or event becomes visible and especially controversial, the public is usually surveyed to assess its reaction.

The most critical factor in making these polls scientific, the author points out, is the careful selection of a sample of respondents, which enables one to generalize from the specific sample to the larger population from which the sample was drawn. It is impossible to interview directly the entire adult population. A representative sample of 1,500 respondents, who have been properly interviewed, makes it possible to make valid statements about the overall population.

An important purpose of the book is to sensitize citizens to the problems and limitations of opinion polling. This book should in no way be construed, the author emphatically says, as a condemnation of public opinion research, rather most of the highly publicized polls as well as the private polls reflect high standards of polling. Indeed, public opinion polling has improved dramatically over the past fifty years in areas such as sampling design, question wording and format, interviewing techniques, and methods of data analysis.

It is outlined in Chapter 2 that to produce an informative and accurate public opinion poll, a researcher must successfully perform several tasks. These include constructing a questionnaire with properly worded and ordered questions, selecting a representative sample, correctly interviewing the respondents in that sample, analyzing the data appropriately, and finally, drawing the correct conclusions. But before any of these tasks can be performed, a fundamental question must be asked: Is the proposed topic of the poll one on which citizens have genuine opinions? If it is, then the topic is suitable for a public opinion survey. But if the topic is so remote from and irrelevant to citizens' concerns that they do not possess real views on it, then any poll on the topic will measure non-attitudes rather than attitudes.

The problem of non-attitudes is one of the simplest yet most perplexing problems in public opinion polling. Unfortunately, it is often very difficult to differentiate between genuine attitude holders and persons merely expressing non-attitudes.

But the problem of non-attitudes remains, he complains, one of the least considered aspects of public opinion polling. Other facts of public opinion research, such as question wording and sampling, receive much more attention, even to the point of being mentioned in television and newspaper reports of results of public opinion polls.

Chapter 3 discusses the wording of questions, and their order and context. But the wording of individual questions is not the only important consideration, a survey after all is a series of questions, and the placement and context of those questions can greatly affect the obtained results.

Citizens are in a better position to evaluate the effects of wording of questions than they are to assess the consequences of question ordering, for a number of reasons. First, much of what is involved in question wording is common sense, people can often sense when a question is worded in a misleading and loaded fashion. More important, when public opinion results are reported, the media often provide the wording of the particular questions. In this way, citizens have the opportunity to form their own judgments about the quality of the question wording. Today reputable pollsters give more attention to effect of context and are more likely to inform the consumers of their polls about the potential consequences of question ordering. Nevertheless, it remains quite easy for the unscrupulous pollster, intent upon generating a preferred response to a particular question, to mislead and manipulate the public by embedding that question in the survey so as to yield the desired answer.

Chapter 4 focuses on various sampling techniques and their advantages and disadvantages. Like sampling techniques, interviewing techniques are extremely important. Chapter 5 explains in detail how different interviewing procedures can affect results. The key points in these chapters are the following:

The aim of a good sampling design is to select a sample that is appropriate for the research topic and within the budget. The key requirement of the sample is that it must enable the researcher to generalize from the sample results to the broader population from which the sample was drawn. Researchers need to be able to select samples that accurately reflect the broader population from which they are drawn. This can be done in a variety of ways, depending on the nature of the respondents, the objective of the research, and the resources available to the investigator.

Different types of sampling design used are: simple random and systematic sampling, probability sampling, stratified sampling, cluster and multistage sampling techniques for telephone interviewing. Sampling is in fact a statistical and scientific procedure.

The purpose of interviewing procedures is to alert the consumer of polls to the potential effects of the interviewing process on poll results. It discusses the methods by which the data are collected including discussions of the advantages and disadvantages of three approaches—mailed questionnaires, telephone interviews, and personal interviews. Secondly, the chapter examines the interview situation itself and a number of factors such as sex, socio-economic status, race and ethnicity of the interviewer, that can affect responses.

The method of interviewing and the actual conduct of the interview measurably affect the responses to a public opinions poll. In most instances, consumers of polls are in a weak position to evaluate these effects, mainly because pollsters provide little information about interviewing procedures. Respondents to personal or telephone polls also should make some mental notes about the skill of the interviewers.

Chapter 6 examines how the media report the polls. The key points made are summarized below. Since Americans learn about polls primarily through the mass media (print and electronic) how the media report polls greatly influences public opinion. This is particularly interesting in the case of high visibility national polls, because the medium that reports the polls also has responsibility for conducting them.

This chapter evaluates the media's reporting of public opinion polls and concludes by considering the numerous problems inherent in media sponsored polls. It is rightly pointed out that the media's role in public opinion polling is essentially twofold: to inform the public of poll results and to sponsor polls.

If poll sponsors recognize both the uses and limitations of polls, the relationship also can be very beneficial and informative to citizens. After all, the ability to ascertain public opinion in a timely and accurate fashion on matters of civic importance is an amazing accomplishment. But pollsters and the media need to provide their audiences with sufficient information about how the poll was conducted so that people can make informed judgments.

Information must also be presented about question wording and question ordering, factors that can have much effect on the responses. Even more important than describing the technical details of polls, the media should conscientiously ensure that the substance of their stories accurately reflects the polling data.

Chapter 7 describes various types and uses of polls that are common in relation to election campaigns, in which candidates and parties often attempt to use polls for purposes other than

research and to manipulate media coverage of them. It also covers the role of polling during the US presidential primary season and general election and how and why polls can go wrong in making election predictions. The chapter concludes with a speculative analysis of how polls may affect the way citizens vote.

The differences among the many kinds of election polls are less a matter of methodology than a function of the purposes for which they have been conducted. Some of the candidate and party-sponsored polls, such as tracking surveys, may remain private tools of the campaign; and media generated surveys, such as exit polls, often become topics of public controversy. It is important for consumers of public opinion polls to be aware of the different kinds of surveys and what they can tell about elections.

As chapter 8 explains, the analysis of poll results is more an art than a science, affording many opportunities for manipulative interpretation and dissemination of poll results in order to sway public opinion.

Analyzing and interpreting data are not always an objective process, but instead entail a high degree of subjectivity and judgment. Subjectivity in most situations does not mean deliberate bias or distortion, but simply professional judgments about the importance and relevance of information. Certainly, news organizations' interpretations of their polls are generally done in an objective and unbiased fashion. But biases can slip in, sometimes unintentionally and sometimes deliberately, as may occur when an organization has sponsored polls to promote a particular position. This chapter presents several brief case studies that illustrate the judgmental aspect of analyzing and interpretation poll results. As the summary makes clear, many factors affect the data reported by the media, even when the readers or viewers are not given information about them. The interpretation of poll data can be a highly subjective enterprise that is affected by the perspective and the intentions of the investigator. Public opinion polling is a complex activity subject to many influences that can alter the substantive results. Consumers of opinion polls should take care to examine them in a critical and questioning fashion.

Chapter 9 ties together the various themes, offers suggestions about better utilization of polls, and discusses the effects of polls on the American polity.

It is suggested that public opinion polls are an equally integral and unavoidable part of American society today. Public opinion polling is a contemporary manifestation of classical democratic theory. It emphasizes the ability of the rational and wise citizen to make informed judgments on the major issues of the day. Political organizations that can demonstrate that public opinion is on their side enjoy an advantage as they promote their ends. News organizations also have become enamored of the polls.

As the technology of polling has been continually refined, upgraded, and made more available, the ability to sponsor and conduct polls has spread to many institutions and organizations throughout American society.

Indeed, as is argued, polls are a meaningful way for citizens to participate in society and to become informed about the relationship between the decisions of government and the opinions of the citizenry. As more organizations conduct polls and disseminate their results in order to inform and to sway public opinion, citizens should become wary consumers, sensitive to those factors that can affect poll results. A watchful user can find poll results highly useful in the context of understanding the thinking of the citizens on the issues concerned, as public opinion polls provide us with a mechanism for knowing what our fellow citizens think and believe. If the polls can accurately measure the underlying details and values of the citizenry, then we no longer have to be at the mercy of unrepresentative views that mistakenly are thought of as the majority voice. The polls can tell us a lot about ourselves, and this self-knowledge may foster a healthier and more open political debate.

The book has sought to remove the discontents of public opinion research with a view to helping the consumer come to terms with the polls. Only then can citizens master the polls rather than be mastered by them, it has been contended.

Salient points arising from the study include:

- The polls today have become a major way in which Americans learn what their fellow citizen are thinking.
- The substantial media coverage of polls provides citizens with the opportunity to compare their own beliefs with their compatriots.
- Another point is that polling has become an integral part of political events at the national, state, and local levels.
- Polls help politicians to make up their minds about decisions to be made
- The most critical factor in making these polls scientific, as the author points out, is the careful selection of a sample of respondents. A representative sample of 1,500 respondents, who have been properly interviewed, makes it possible to make valid statements about the overall population.
- Wording of individual questions is not the only important consideration, a series of questions and the placement and context of those questions can greatly affect the obtained results.
- Polls are a meaningful way for citizens to participate in society and to become informed about the relationship between the decisions of government and the opinions of the citizenry.

III

The next book reviewed is *Polls and the Awareness of Public Opinion* by Leo Bogart, (the State University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1985). This book addresses the question of how the widespread use and acceptance of polls, not only say, in choosing a president but in the formation of policy has transformed public debate and changed the relationship of leaders to their constituencies.

This book is divided in 8 parts. It uses the following quote from Abraham Lincoln “Public opinion is everything with it nothing can fail. Without it nothing can succeed.” Abraham Lincoln as a point of difference. Some of the key ideas and analyses presented in the book are summarized below:

The books relate this story. In July 1945 General Leslie Groves, head of the Manhattan Project, asked Arthur Compton, a nuclear physicist, to do “an opinion poll among those who know what is going on”. The resulting survey was conducted among 150 staff members of the Chicago laboratory that had produced the first atomic weapon. They have had private thoughts about what to do with the bomb, but they had not been involved in the discussion at higher levels. The poll was their first encounter with the problem. Poll results was that “there were a few who preferred not to use the bomb at all, but 87 percent voted for its military use, at least if after other means were tried, this was found necessary to bring surrender”. The term ‘military use’ in retrospect carries unmistakable and horrifying implications. But included in the 87 percent were 46 percent who said, ‘Give a military demonstration in Japan to be followed by a renewed opportunity for surrender before full use of the weapon is employed, and an additional 26 percent who said, give an experimental demonstration in this country with representatives of Japan present, followed by a new opportunity for surrender before full use of the weapon is employed.’ The poll results were turned over to War Secretary Henry L. Stimson five days before the bomb burst over Hiroshima. It seems unlikely that this survey could have had much influence on Harry Truman. Of more than passing interest are both the use of the opinion polling method in arriving at so momentous a decision and the vulnerability of that method to debatable and perhaps distorted interpretations of the results.

Today, opinion surveys, professional and amateur, are an integral part of decision-making in politics as well as business. When polls make politicians self-conscious about the views they express, they constrict the areas of public debate. Vladimir K. Zworykin, a renowned electronics expert, suggests that ‘modern technology makes it possible to give the people the

ability to communicate their wishes and opinions to the government with a directness and immediate comparable with that realized at present only in the opposite direction'.

Opinion surveys have become a mechanism through which the public becomes sensitized to its own needs and self conscious about its own collective stance. For this to take place the communications media must take poll results seriously, not only as news item but as guidelines for news judgments and as subjects of editorial comment.

Polling is associated in most people's mind with the prediction of election results. It is at election time that polls become a dominant subject in the popular culture-a favorite source of newspaper cartoonists and television comedians. The fundamental principle of statistical sampling, the basis of polling, seems to be hard for many people to understand. Indeed 45 percent of the public does not think a survey based on 2000 interviewers can be accurate. But that's not correct scientifically speaking.

Part II of this book is on opinion research and public policy. This part is concerned with Leadership and Public Opinion, defining priorities and the opinion constituency. Public opinion is strongly responsive to leadership, and poll results must be interpreted accordingly.

A leader is in a position to define a situation in a way that may bring his followers to act as he desires. But there are usually limits to his powers. When his directives appear to conflict with an accepted norm-for instance not only may his specific orders be ignored, his fundamental authority may be questioned. The leader's supremacy in the eyes of the majority depends on the assumption that he embodies the consensus.

What has high priority for an individual reflects what he identifies with his own group interests. But people are often mistaken in the social role or group identity they assume as most expressive of their interests and loyalties. They are prone to fall back on the symbolic reference points of the past, rather than to recognize what is best for them in the future. A survey of 1,000 Boston homeowners, many of them with incomes at the poverty level, found that only 9 percent defined "The urban crisis" in terms of jobs, and only 18 percent raised such issues as housing, transportation, pollution, and urban renewal. Instead the phrase was identified primarily with crime, violence, youthful rebellion, and racial tension.

One of the functions of opinion research is to distinguish the views of different constituencies within a population. The pollsters and the media that report their findings have to judge what

the relevant constituencies want. Here public opinion research can have an important influence on the formation of public opinion.

Part III of this book is on the Movement of Opinion. In this part, the writer has discussed public opinion trends and opinion in Vietnam as a case study.

It has transpired in the Vietnam case that the real consequences of public opinion may run far deeper than the surface reactions. No issue in American politics since slavery and the civil war has aroused as much dissemination as Vietnam war. Nor has any public issue involved greater complexities of judgment in interpreting information, in predicting the consequences of possible actions, and in balancing political pragmatism and idealism, justification of official policies, wishful thinking and bandwagon psychology. The survey of public opinion on Vietnam may have had considerable effect in causing a simple-minded polarization of the population as 'Hawks' and 'Doves'. However, survey results offer reflections of the complex evolution and convolution of thought.

Growing opposition to the war became the focal point for strong organized political movement that carried their concern over into more fundamental question about American's social structure, its values, and its economic priorities. Thus the war itself became a critical incident in the evaluation of public opinion on a host of other issues. This illustrates how public opinion on any subject of significance is always inseparable from the whole gamut of prevailing ideas.

Part IV of this book is on 'How Opinions Change'. This part is concerned with. information, opinion and action, persuasion, debate and discussion, and changing opinions.

Political opinion surveys sometimes ask people to indicate on a scale how strongly they hold the opinions they express. Such responses are at least a step in the direction of distinguishing passionate convictions from casual inclinations. But people with certain personality traits are more likely than others to give the extreme responses. This means that measurements of the intensity of opinion sometimes tell more about how temperamental attributes are distributed within a population than about the importance of the issue for the public. The results may be subjects of debate and discussion. If surveys are undertaken at certain intervals and a period of time changes in overall opinions can be captured. Access to additional information may strengthen or cause changes in the opinion held at one point of time.

No attempt at persuasion can be meaningful unless it is channeled to encourage a specific action. And no amount of persuasion can move people to act on behalf of abstract causes unless the action to which they are urged are clearly specified and within their reasonable capacities. Persuasion may be useful in the case of advertisements promoting sale of specific products. Survey results will help design the contents and thrust of an advertisement.

Persuasion, debate and discussion can also help people avoid what is unpleasant and bad e.g. drug. However, there is a limit to the success of attempts at persuasion.

In a democratic society, there are no sanctions against a changed opinion. But a person who has publicly changed his mind inevitably seeks out the evidence which confirms that he has done so wisely, and the very fact that he has changed must become an example to others. Public opinion survey results in that context may be helpful to such a person.

Part V of this book is on 'Ambiguous opinions'. In this part writer has talked about the causes of inconsistency and private opinions and public roles. Contradictory opinions can be traced to the multiple roles which individuals assume in different situations. They can also be detected in the collective movements of political temper. Public issues are created by a clash of views reported in or initiated by the mass media. It is through this interplay of reportage and argument that people come to formulate opinions on the many subjects that lie beyond the scope of their personal experience.

Public opinion surveys often reveal a contradiction between people's opinion's about what is right and good and proper and their personal willingness to do something to support their beliefs. In the course of the 1968 election in America, only one person in five agreed, and over half disagreed with the proposition that 'taking part in protest meetings or marches that are permitted by the local authorities', was one of the proper 'ways for people to show their disapproval or disagreement with government policies and actions'. But in reality, it is unlikely that a majority would cheerfully renounce the right of protest for themselves.

Total consistency of belief, experience, and action is as rare within a society as it is within an individual. For many reasons, people think, speak, and act differently on different occasions. Individual outlooks change not only with time, but with the need to adapt to circumstances. One responds to specific situations in terms of predispositions which may lead them to totally difference courses of behavior. Every conflict of motives, judgments, values and allegiances

leads to its own characteristic synthesis or resolution which, once arrived at, serves as a precedent to be justified.

As to private opinions and public role, public decisions taking private opinions into consideration is a democratic norm. Public opinion research is one way of useful way of glue rating public opinion on important national issues.

Part VI talks about unheard opinions and feedback.

The writer suggests that only a fraction of mankind lives under political systems in which opinions can be formed through open debate, and in which published polls offer instant feedback on the state of the changing mood. But in no part of the world, and under no form of government, are people's opinions without interest for those who rule and lead them. But free generation of public opinion though public opinion surveys is possible in those countries where surveys are permitted. By definition, an authorization regime bans open polls, a free press, and other indications of the popular will. It therefore can claim majority support in the absence of contradictory evidence.

The essence of public opinion is the clash of opposing thoughts and of differing interpretations of the same political phenomena. It is therefore difficult to visualize political 'public opinion' in any country where people cannot freely speak their minds or consult more than a single source of news.

In spite of all resistance, polling has inevitably come into use in many countries around the world.

In concluding, it has been emphasized that when, opinion polls done badly then it can be troublesome and even misleading but when done well they can be very useful as basis for action. But it is important that systematic surveys are conducted to lift awareness of public beyond the realm of conjecture.

Political questions are clearly of much more wider significances than the questions relating consumer choice. The average individual has no control over political decisions, or over the problems that they represent, except within the framework of collective social action. Regular opinion may help bring public opinion to bear on political decisions.

It is only through action that public opinion can influence course of evolution. But the translation of opinion into action requires a combination of strong motivation and the sense that action can have meaningful consequences.

In a segmented society social problems arise from the inability of the public at large, or of significant sectors of the public, to perceive where their true interests lie and to accept the short-run disagreeable consequences of that recognition. The 'opinions' of the apathetic and the disengaged are not to be equated with those of a public that recognizes its stake in the issues under discussion and its accountability for the consequences of the policies it favors. Opinion research forces this kind of awareness by illuminating the differences in values and goals among different sections of society. This makes polls a factor in the political process rather than merely an account of it.

Salient points arising from the study include:

- Polls make politicians self-conscious about the views they express, and help them select the key areas of public debate
- Opinion polls have become a mechanism through which the members of the public become sensitized to the needs of the people and as to how to approach them
- Communications media must take poll results seriously not only as news items but as guidelines for news, judgments to be made about issues, and as subjects of editorial comments
- Public opinion research is one useful way of generating public opinion on important national issues.
- The average individual has no control over political decisions, or over the problems that they represent, except within the framework of collective social action. Regular opinion surveys may help bring public opinion to bear on political decisions.

IV

'Human Beliefs and Values' (a cross cultural source book based on the 1999-2002 values survey) is edited by Ronald Inglehart, Miguel Basáñez, Jaime Díez-Medrano, Loek Halman and Ruud Luijkx. (Sigio Veintiuno editor, printed and made in Mexico, 2004). Despite regional blocks and UN fora, cultural diversity among the peoples of the world remains great, as this book demonstrates. What people believe and value and what they want out of life varies from country to country.

The growing globalization of the world makes it increasingly important to understand this cultural diversity. People with widely varying beliefs and values can live together and work together productively, but for this to happen, it is crucial to understand and appreciate their distinctive worldviews.

This book provides the reader with rich insight into the basic values and attitudes of the peoples of more than 80 societies on all six continents. It reflects the outcome of the combined efforts of a network of social scientists from all these so and more societies. It examines what people believe and value concerning politics, economics, religion, sexual behaviour, gender roles, family values, communal identities, civic engagement and ethical concerns, and such issues as environmental protection, scientific progress and technological development and human happiness.

Human beliefs and values are valuable tools for understanding how social, political, economic and cultural attitudes differ from one society to another and how they are changing, with economic and technological development. It provides a wealth of data that will be useful to social scientists, journalists, business executives and policy makers working in an increasingly global context.

The 1999-2001 values surveys were carried out in Bangladesh, also. This source book enables the reader to compare the responses to hundreds of questions across societies from all over the world covering the full spectrum of economic, political and cultural variation. It also enables the reader to examine the differences between the responses of men and women in each society, and to examine generational differences, and differences linked with education and income, and according to whether the respondent has 'Materialist', 'Mixed', or 'Post materialist' values. And it makes it possible to examine the changes that took place from 1990 to 2000, for the countries that were surveyed at both times. Finally, editors show the relative ranking of each society, in response to each question.

This book mainly focuses on the results from the 2000 wave of surveys, but it also permits the reader to examine changes that took place from 1990 to 2000, for those countries that were surveyed at both times. The second set of columns in this table compares the results from 1990 with the results from 2000. The values surveys have expanded their coverage steadily from one wave to the next, so data are available for a considerably larger number of societies in 2000 than in 1990.

The third set of columns in sample table A006 compares the responses given by men and women. It reveals an interesting point, despite trends toward gender equality in many aspect of life, women remain more religious than men. The age differences shown in the next set of columns of this table are also interesting. Although everyone has heard anecdotes to the effect that people get more religious as they age, but there was no support for this claim. It is true in some countries but not in others. Overall, the young are about as likely to say that religion is very important in their lives as are the old. There is no universal tendency for the old to be more religious than the young.

The more educated and the higher income groups tend to place less emphasis on religion than the less educated and lower income groups, as the sample table indicates. But this pattern mainly applies to advanced industrial societies.

There is evidence of an intergenerational shift from materialist to post materialist values as priorities in advanced industrial societies, as a result of rising levels of existential security. Post materialists take survival for granted, they are less likely to rely on religion for reassurance in the face of insecurity. On the whole, post materialists place significantly less emphasis on religion than do materialists- but this applies mainly to post industrial societies. In low-income societies, post materialists generally are a very small minority, and their numbers may be too small to provide reliable figures.

The breakdowns presented in this sourcebook were chosen because they capture some of the most important and most theoretically interesting bases of variation. These reflect the concerns of modernization theory, a body of social thought that has been influential throughout the past two centuries. Modernization theory has been controversial since its inception, and the values surveys provide a massive body of new evidence with which to test its claims. Economic development seems to make a great deal of difference in what people value and believe. Though economic development tends to push socio-cultural change in a predictable direction, each society remains unique. This reflects the facts that cultural variation reflects the entire historical experience of given peoples, including political, social, technological, geographic, and other factors, and not just economic influences.

Salient points arising from the study include:

- Human beliefs and values are valuable tools for understanding how social, political, economic and cultural attitudes differ from one society to another and how they are changing.
- From this study, the reader can see the differences between the responses of men and women in each society, generational of differences, and differences linked with education and income.
- The values surveys have expanded their coverage of countries steadily from one wave to the next, so data are available for a considerably larger number of societies in 2000 than in 1990.

V

The last book included is **British and European Social Attitudes** edited by Roger Jowell, John Cwice, Alison Park, Lindsay Brook (Ashgale publishing Limited, England 1998) This book takes stock of how people face challenges posed by national identity. It has sought to interpret the social, moral, political and economic attitudes of the people of Britain, Germany, Spain, and Sweden, while embracing the European convention of Human Rights and envisioning common currency, passport and free movement across borders. This study in particular, emphasizes British public attitudes towards other EU nations. Understandably, belongingness to a particular nation in respect of birth, citizenship, residence, language and a feeling of national identity are important factors in all countries.

This is an important study that reports the findings of properly designed public opinion surveys on social attitudes in different EU countries. The findings can be very useful towards strengthening cooperation and integration.

The issues addressed include the following:

1. National Identity and National Pride
2. Partner, Parent, Worker: Family and Gender Roles
3. What People Expect from the State: Plus CA Change
4. Commitment to the Welfare State
5. The Rewards of Work
6. The Greening of Europe
7. The End of Materialism
8. East Meets West
9. How Britain Views the EU

It may be useful to note here some key findings of the last issue just mentioned i.e. How Britain views the EU. The issue of European integration has never been a stable political issue in UK. Its nature and significance have changed markedly over the years. There were steady increases in British public acceptance of EU membership from early 1980's until 1991, with less than 50 percent support in 1983, rising to over 75 percent support by 1991. This is a reflection of the increasing awareness regarding benefits derivable from integration.

The strength of the link between public support for British membership of the EU and British adaptation of a single European currency has increased over the years as awareness increased

about benefits to be derived. The people had been asked whether they thought that closer links with the EU would give Britain more or less influence in the world and whether they thought it would make Britain stronger or weaker economically. Many people thought that closer links with the EU would give Britain more influence in the world (30%) than those who thought the opposite (15%); similarly a third thought that closer links with the EU would make Britain stronger economically while only a fifth thought the opposite.

There is a link between attitudes to integration and concern over the possible threat that it might pose to cultural traditions. Some people's opposition to the EU relates to attitudes towards the preservation of cultural and national identity.

Considering the EU and political partnership, it transpires that parties seek both to form opinion and, if they wish to be electorally successful, to respond to public attitudes and preferences.

Salient points arising from the study include:

- In sum, the study has highlighted the link between attitudes to integration as well as the concerns over the possible threat that it might pose to cultural traditions.

Chapter III

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Purpose of the Study

The present study is an attempt to review of the role of public opinion research as an effective tool in promoting purposeful interaction between the governing process and the people, thereby strengthening the democratic transition process.

Specific Objectives of the Study are:

- * to analyze people's responses to important national policy questions;
- * to examine how can generation of public opinions through opinion polling help public policy making process in the country in the evolving democratic setting;
- * to know what really people are thinking about governance process;
- * to assess the government's interest about and reaction to public desires.

Methodology of the Study

There is no tradition of public opinion research in Bangladesh. Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) began conducting such surveys in a systematic manner since early 1995. So far 14 national and 8 specific area surveys on a wide range of social, economic, political issues have been conducted; and more such surveys will be conducted in future. Data generated by source of these surveys will be used to review how public opinion polls can serve the cause of public policy making and democratic transition. Some other institutions have also been conducting such surveys from time to time. Use of relevant public opinion data generated by these institutions, if available, will also be made. Public opinion data from other countries, e.g. from the Philippines where public opinion research is fairly well established, may also be used, as available and relevant.

The methodology used in public opinion surveys conducted by the BUP is as follows.

The respondents are picked from among voting age men and women, applying a multistage random sampling procedure. The predetermined sample size is first distributed between urban and rural areas on the basis of rural and urban population distribution, giving a slightly higher weightage to the urban areas to reflect the fact that awareness is relatively more widespread in the urban areas. The rural sub-sample is then distributed to divisions and districts according to population. One thana is chosen from each district randomly and, then, two unions from

each of those thanas and two villages from each selected union are picked randomly. The respondents are then randomly identified from those villages. The urban sub-sample is also distributed to various urban areas according to population and, then, the respondents are randomly selected for interview. Care is taken to ensure an appropriate representation of men and women. However, the experience has been that because of shyness and relatively lower awareness on the part of some women, male representation in a sample has tended to be somewhat higher than in the population in the surveys so far conducted. Only one respondent is interviewed from each household. The respondents include men and women from various professions such as people in government and private services, teachers, business people, politicians, lawyers, doctors, engineers, industrial labourers, day labourers, farmers and farm workers, housewives, and students.

Before launching a survey, the questionnaire(s) is (are) pretested, interviewing a number of men and women belonging to various professions in both urban and rural areas and is (are) then adjusted on the basis of the results obtained. During the field work a back-check is conducted. In the surveys so far conducted the coverage of back-check has been between 10-25 per cent.

Some Other Institutions in Bangladesh which have Conducted Opinion Surveys Occasionally

In most of the developed countries public opinion poll has become an integral part of the political process at the national and local levels. In making major decisions regarding important national issues poll results are often used as a measuring scale. The poll results on various major political issues, including performance of uncombined elected officials and contestants in elections, are regularly published through news media and are reviewed and discussed by commentators as well as by the concerned people. There is a large number of organizations, which conduct opinion polls all over the world, mainly in western world.

In Southeast Asia including Bangladesh, there are some organizations which conduct such surveys. In Asia, Philippines is a leading in respect of well developed polling culture, covering all sorts of major, particularly political, issues including critical and sensitive ones. In that country, political leaders, judiciary, environmental specialists, and anti corruption bureau are using polling results to develop and rearrange their policies and action programme for the greater interest of the people. In India, opinion polls are conducted mainly at the time of their elections at different levels. Some TV channels also conduct polls on different social and economic issues and telecast the results.

In Bangladesh history of opinion polling is very new. It started in 1991. In that year, the BUP conducted a survey on possible parliamentary results only. Since then some of the organizations have conducted opinion polls on different social economic and political issues

from time to time. However, as noted earlier, the BUP has been conducting such surveys on a wide range of issues since then.

There are many organizations from around the world in the membership of “World Association for Public Opinion Research”: The BUP has been a member of this Association. Some of the well known organizations include the Gallup Organization, Princeton; University Center for Social and Urban Research, Pittsburgh, Swedish Gallup, Sweden; and Social Weather Stations, Inc., Philippines; The Indian Institute of Public Opinion Pvt. Ltd., India; Gallup A/S Denmark; and Gallup Finland Ltd., Finland.

In Bangladesh, the organizations, other than the BUP, which have conducted public opinion surveys include: Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), Multidisciplinary Action Research Centre (MARC), Centre for Sustainable Development (CFSD), Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS), Democracy Watch, University Research Corporation, Transparency International (TI). TI has been regularly conducting surveys but only on corruption.

Newspapers also conduct opinion polls and regularly publish the results. But these surveys are on voluntary basis, from among the readers of the particular papers; and the samples are not scientifically selected. These results are the opinions of the people who strongly feel that they should express their opinions on particular subjects identified by newspapers. Hence, these opinion polling results are not representative and cannot be used as a basis for decision making.

Chapter IV

THE MOST PRESSING PROBLEMS IN BANGLADESH

Introduction

After long military autocratic rule in Bangladesh, a democratic governance was reestablished through fair elections under a caretaker government in February 1991. Two parliamentary elections followed in 1996 and 2001, leading to peaceful transfer of power on both occasions. At present, the power is mostly vested in the central government and bureaucracy. Local governments have not so far been developed in an effective way. Democratic institutions have not been established at appropriate levels of society through which the people can exercise their power in a free and fair manner. A culture of following people's opinions and desires by political leaders has not yet been developed. That is, the practice of finding out what legislations the people would favour or oppose and what policy directions they will or won't want is not yet an integral part of our political culture.

It is generally accepted that a democracy, more than any other form of government, must be highly sensitive to public opinion. It is not enough, for a modern democracy, that the people vote, once every few years, to elect the representatives, who would make decisions, on their behalf in-between two elections. Public opinion is something which can be quantified and analyzed for use by all concerned. It is therefore important that for a democracy scientific polling is carried out.

In a democracy, public opinion generating institutions should be an essential part of the institutional arrangement. It is crucial that scientific methodology is used so that the results obtained are democratically representative. The findings should be properly analyzed and presented and responsibly communicated. Naturally the final arbiter of the quality of such surveys could be the scientific community itself. In the US, public polling and social surveys are a major and growing research activity. In Bangladesh, in fact, it has just been begun, but it is important that we carry the process forward, but in proper scientific manner.

For effective democracy it is essential that citizens are actively involved in the governance process through electoral and other means and there are constant interactions between citizens and political leaders. But in Bangladesh it does not work like that. Political leader, treat the people as if they are only voters to elect a government from time to time, while the winning party and bureaucrats are mandated to rule the country as they please.

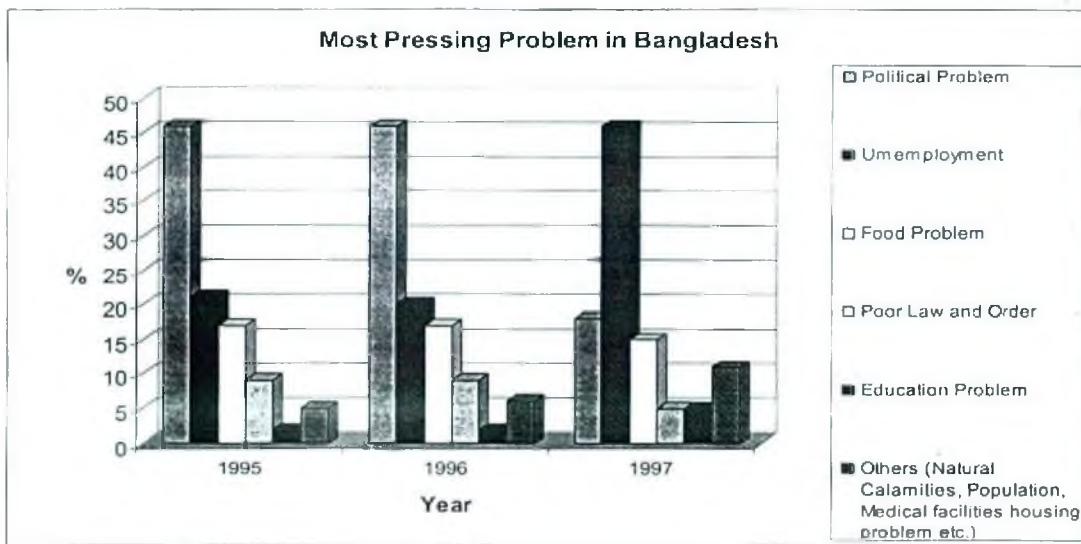
They do not bother much about the people's opinions. They are little concerned about what people want and think. Most of the political leaders make pronouncements alluding to various desires and expectations of the people, but usually such statements are not based on an assessment of the opinions of the people. In fact, there is a big gap between what the government does and what the people want in relation to various important national issues concerning their lives and living. Only opinion polls can create a basis by generating and putting in public domain the opinions, and expectations of the people to minimize the gap. Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) has been collecting data on people's opinions, perceptions and expectations on important national issues. These data and analyses should serve a useful purpose by informing, assisting and strengthening national policy making process. Indeed, people's participation is an essential aspect of a democratic order. The people can secure their rights and fulfil their responsibilities by expressing their opinions. The government and various political parties can shape their policies and programmes, by taking into account scientifically generated opinions, perceptions and expectations of the people.

Survey Results

For every country, there are problems and prospects and successes and failures. Realities however differ from country to country and also from time to time in the same country. The reasons behind a particular situation include the level of development and socio-economic processes in vogue. In Bangladesh there has never been serious efforts to find out the pressing problems faced by the people of the country, as viewed by the people themselves. Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) conducted a national survey in December 1995 to identify the pressing problems facing country, as perceived by the country. This survey was based on a nationwide sample of 1,826 drawn from voting age people. This pre-determined sample was distributed between urban and rural areas in proportion to population and the respondents were selected using the methodology outlined in chapter 2.

In the 1995 survey, the people identified political unrest (46.0) as the most pressing problem in the country. The repressive actions by the government and hartals by the oppositions over a length of time previous to the time of the survey had brought the country to a state of economic and social disruptions and dislocations. According to 21 percent of the respondents employment was the second most pressing problem. Food problem was identified as the next important issue (17.0%), followed poor law and order (9.0%). (See Figure 1)

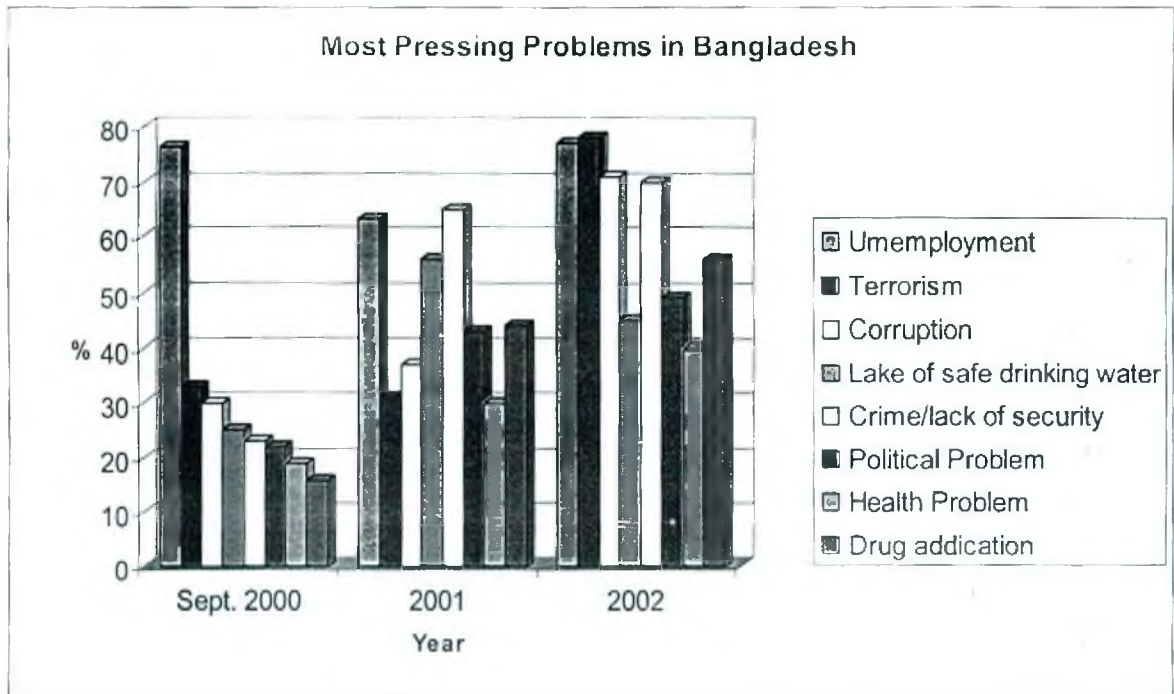
Figure 1



Similar pattern was found in a similar survey conducted in 1996. However, another survey conducted in 1997, revealed a different picture. In late 1997, national parliamentary elections were held and a new government came to the power. As a result political problems became less critical as the new government and the new parliament started functioning. These developments was clearly reflected in people's opinions. In 1997, people identified unemployment as the most pressing problem (46.0), followed by political and food access problems in this order. It stands to reason that with the national elections over, people start thinking about their problems relating to their economic and social conditions, as reflected in their responses. Bangladeshi politicians and policy makers would do well to respond to people's opinions such as those expressed in the 1997 survey and may be different in intensity or kind at other times, regarding the circumstances of their life and living through appropriate policies and action programmes in order that a stable society can be established. This will be to the benefit of all, including the politicians.

In fact, the surveys conducted in 2000 and 2001, new issues were identified. The results highlighted such new problems as terrorism, corruption, crime and lack of security health problems, and access to drinking water in addition unemployment and political problems.

Figure 2



Source: BUP survey

Looking at Figures I and II together, it can be seen that unemployment is the most pressing problem in Bangladesh. But, employment generation was never a major focus under the long period of military rule, and also since the reestablishment of democratic governance in 1991. Market economy paradigm began to be vigorously promoted in about 1991 and unemployment remained unrecognized in practice as a serious problem confronting the country so that no serious policy and planning programming for employment generation has been undertaken. The neglect in practice of employment generation efforts has persisted up to the present time. It is the ordinary people who suffer from unemployment the most and it has been identified as such by people. According to I PRSP- P⁶, unemployment (including underemployment) runs at such a high rate as 40 per cent.

⁶ Ministry of Finance, Government of Bangladesh. Bangladesh: A National Strategy of Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction, April 2002 (This document is known as Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP)

Other problems have been arising from time to time. For example, readymade garments industry (RMG), which employs a million and half persons, largely women, suffered a setback following terrorist attack on American Trade Centre (Twin Tower) in 2001 and the following disruptions in American readymade garments market. It did recover since then, but it is now under strain, although it is still holding its own, following the withdrawal of quota system in the American market in January 2005.

Given the strong public opinions expressed regarding the seriousness of the unemployment problem, backed up data from other sources, it is the government's solemn responsibility to address the problem effectively. Otherwise poverty will persist widely and eventually there may be social problems. Clearly, therefore, public opinion research generates a basis for a strong democratic response to people's predicaments, as perceived by the people themselves on the basis of the circumstances they face.

Indeed, over 60 million people (45% of the total population) are poor and over 30 million extremely poor in Bangladesh, and a basic reason is unemployment and underemployment⁷. Hence a major policy and programme focus is called for in order to generate employment on a sustainable basis, particularly because poverty reduction is the most important national goal.

In promoting sustainable employment, productivity improvement needs to be emphasized, for which, in turn, due emphasis, needs to be given to improvement in managerial skills infrastructural development, improvement market access, with appropriate actions taken. While the private sector has an important role to play in this context, it is the state's responsibility to create necessary environment and provide effective institutional support?

Figure 2 highlights a number of major social problems such as crime, lack of security, drug addiction, socio-economic inequality, terrorism, toll collection/extortion, declining moral values, unethical business practices.

The problem of crime/lack of security mentioned by a high proportion of respondents (65%) was indicative of people facing a major emerging national crisis. Since then, the situation has

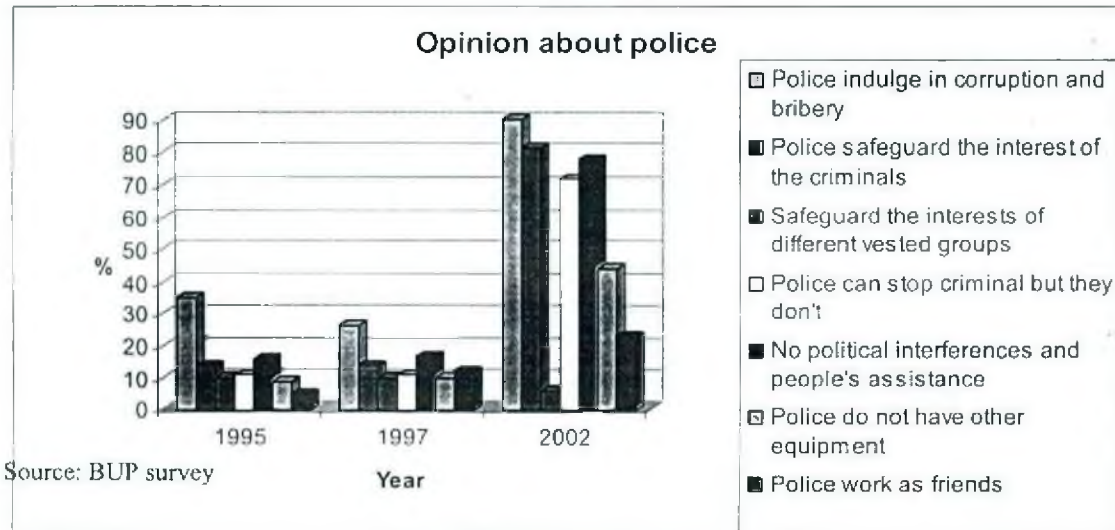
⁷ Q K Ahmad, *Poverty and Education* with particular reference to Bangladesh. Campe. Dhaka, July 2005.

terribly deteriorated. In the absence of prospect for finding suitable employment, students feel frustrated. Some take to drugs. Others allow themselves to be recruited by godfathers or the crime lords, to front for them and many turn into hardened criminals. Side by side, misguided people have been getting involved in perpetrating violence in the name of Islam, although Islam does not sanction such violence. Altogether the country is caught in a major quagmire now. If the earlier signs clearly demonstrated by our survey were taken seriously by the government, it should have been possible to prevent the situation from deteriorating the way it has.

Another important reason for the increasing crime is political crisis and it becomes more acute during the period of election. Political crisis was reported by 46 percent and 43 percent of the respondents in the election years of 1996 and 2001 respectively (Figures 1 and 2). When political confrontations increase other social problems also increase side by side, with criminal activities increasing a lot. The police cannot often tackle the situation. Some people also believe that some police personnel abate such crimes and assist the criminals, of course for a consideration in the bribes. It is also the case that there are a lot of political interferences. This twin problems of corruption and political interference have rendered police much less effective than they should be as revealed by a national survey conducted in 1995 on the police force (Figure 3). In this survey, 35 per cent of the respondents said that police could not become friends of the people, because they do not look after people's interests, rather they indulge in corruption and bribery. Another 16 per cent opined that even if the police personnel wanted to, they would not be able to solve all the problems. Appropriate government policies, no political interference and people's assistance are required to establish social justice. Some 14 per cent said that police often safeguard the interest of the criminals more than those of the ordinary people. In their opinion police did so because they had financial dealings with the criminals. In this connection, another 11 per cent said that police could stop criminal activities and violence if they really wanted so, but they never acted like that. Again police also safeguard the interests of different vested interest groups, suggested by another 10 percent. Only 9 percent spoke in favour of police with sympathy; they said that police did not have enough vehicles and arms and ammunition and the arms they possess are old models, which are not adequate to fight criminals. Also, they have suggested that police receive grossly inadequate salaries in relation to their

responsibilities and the hard work they perform. Only 5 per cent believed that police work as friends of the people. The survey results clearly indicate that the police have a very negative image in society. But the government has not taken proper steps to modernize the facilities provided to the police force, control corruption and bribery among the members of the force, and stop political interference with their work. In fact, the Government often uses the police in its favour to safeguard its political interest.

Figure 3



According to newspaper reports, in 1995 during 50-day period from 23 August to 10 October 1995⁸ at least eight violent incidents including sexual assaults occurred in which members of the police force were directly involved. These include killing of a young girl, Yasmin, on 23 August 1995; sexual violence against two other girls and harassment of four women. This however, created a reaction even within the police department. As reported in newspapers, one police officer expressed his opinion saying many police officers were not serious in their duties and disrespectful to law. Moreover, some politicians use members of the police force in their own interest; the wrong doers and performers of criminal acts remain untouched, given that they are protected by their powerful godfathers. Given such political support, the members of the police force who are thus involved are not afraid to commit unlawful and violent acts. In this connection it may be mentioned that in the March 1995 BUP Opinion survey, a large proportion of the respondents expressed the opinion that bribe and corruption were important factors influencing police behavior and, hence, police cannot be a friend of the people. Some respondents also said that if police were not used by the government in protecting/enhancing their interest, the involvement of police personnel in corruption and unlawful activities should abate. In that case, political/governmental supervision over the

⁸. Daily Ittefaq and Daily Sangbad

police would be more effective, thereby checking more effectively corruption and bribery among the members of the police force.

But, there has been no change in the practice of governmental use of the force in furtherance of its interests, regardless of whether that is legal or illegal, no effective measures have been taken to check corruption and bribery among the members of the police force, and not much has been done to modernize the police force. Hence, the force has been becoming increasingly ineffective, and ever more corrupt. Recent surveys of Transparency International Bangladesh confirm this⁹. In fact, members of the police force are found to be involved in mugging, stealing, dacoity, and even killing.

The accentuating problem of violence is well known and the surveys reported in this dissertation provided early warning about the emerging situation, but no heed was paid. The problem was never addressed seriously and, at present, it is engulfing the whole country and threatening the future of the country. One basic issue in addressing the problem of violence has been and is the political game of trading blames.

In the Yasmin murder case, an attempt was made to give a political twist to the dastardly sexual assault and killing. But, most of the respondents knew about the killing from newspapers. It was suggested by 88 per cent of the respondents that members of the police were involved in many wrong doings but their involvement in the sexual assault and killing of Yasmin was the most heinous act committed by police. A large majority of the respondents (82 per cent) expressed deep concern regarding this heinous act of some policemen. Some 74 per cent became extremely unnerved that police, with the assistance of local administration, tried to establish that the girl was of bad character. The view was expressed by 77 per cent that it was urgently necessary to dismiss corrupt and dishonest members of the police force. If the very people who are responsible for maintaining law and order break the laws, they must be given the punishment that they deserve under the prevailing legal provisions.

It is urgent that all concerned rise to the occasion to save the country from disintegration under the weight of ever increasing and debilitating violence. Of course, the government has the pre-eminent role in this context.

⁹. Survey on corruption in Bangladesh, survey conducted by Transparency International – Bangladesh, July 1997.

Chapter V

BANGLADESH SOCIAL ATTITUDES COMPARED WITH OTHER COUNTRIES

Introduction

What is national identity? It has to do with belonging to a state and a culture, which we can claim to be our own, as distinct from others who do not belong to the same state and culture. National identity is, therefore, roughly equivalent to citizenship. A modern state not only issues a passport to its citizen when they want to travel outside state boundaries, but more fundamentally it symbolizes their political identity. The modern state requires that its citizens adhere to its constitution and laws and hold allegiance to it, and even die for it if and when that may become necessary to protect it from outside aggression. However, we do not often seriously think of and talk about our 'national identity'. It is perhaps when there is a political conflict, or war with another country or during an international sporting contest that people become conscious of their national identity and take pride in it and act as appropriate (e.g. fight in the war, play a game if a player or support it whatever way possible).

The components of national identity may evolve over a period of time, partly rooted in past history and partly modern. Bangladesh, national identity, for instance, is based on a series of fragments of history: Liberation war, Language movement, the building of democracy and so on. Most of the time national identity is a passive characteristic but it can come to the fore quickly at times of conflict and in the case of Bangladesh it flourished during the Liberation War in 1971.

But, there has been long historical build-up, at least since the language movement started in 1948 and took a violent turn in 1952. Following that, the process evolved through stages leading successively to the demand for justice, self-governance, and finally Independence and the Liberation War.

What characteristics make it click with the people that they are unique in certain respects compared to people belonging to other nationalities? People's behaviour patterns reflecting those characteristics are in fact complex. Not much understanding exists in this regard in Bangladesh. The BUP conducted a national identity survey in 1996 to find out how people of Bangladesh view their national identity.

Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) is a member of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), which coordinates international survey on key social issues, including national identity¹⁰. These surveys are carried out using the same methodology and same questionnaire (only modified in one respect or another if the reality in a particular country is known to be absolutely different from others). The ISSP implemented a national identity module in 1995-96 many countries, both developing and developed.

In this chapter, use is made of data generated by the above survey in Bangladesh and several other countries to review national differences and similarities in three key respects, national identity, national pride, and attitudes towards others.

Four countries have been included in this analysis, two from Europe (Britain and Spain) and two from South and South East Asia (Bangladesh and Philippines). A question may arise: why these four? Largely because they encompass a range of factors likely to be of relevance to our analysis. Bangladesh and Philippines have long colonial experience. Britain and Spain have quite different historical and cultural experiences, with social democratic and industrial credentials. Britain, in particular, also was a strong and worldwide colonial power.

With the British colonial rule ending in 1947 after 250 years, Pakistan and India got Independence from Great Britain. Bangladesh, then called East Pakistan, was a part of Pakistan. It was in 1971 that Bangladesh achieved Independence through Liberation War and separated from Pakistan. Democratic governance in Bangladesh was interrupted by long military rule. Democracy was restored in 1991, and parliamentary system of governance was adopted. Data generated by the survey on national identity in relation to social, moral,

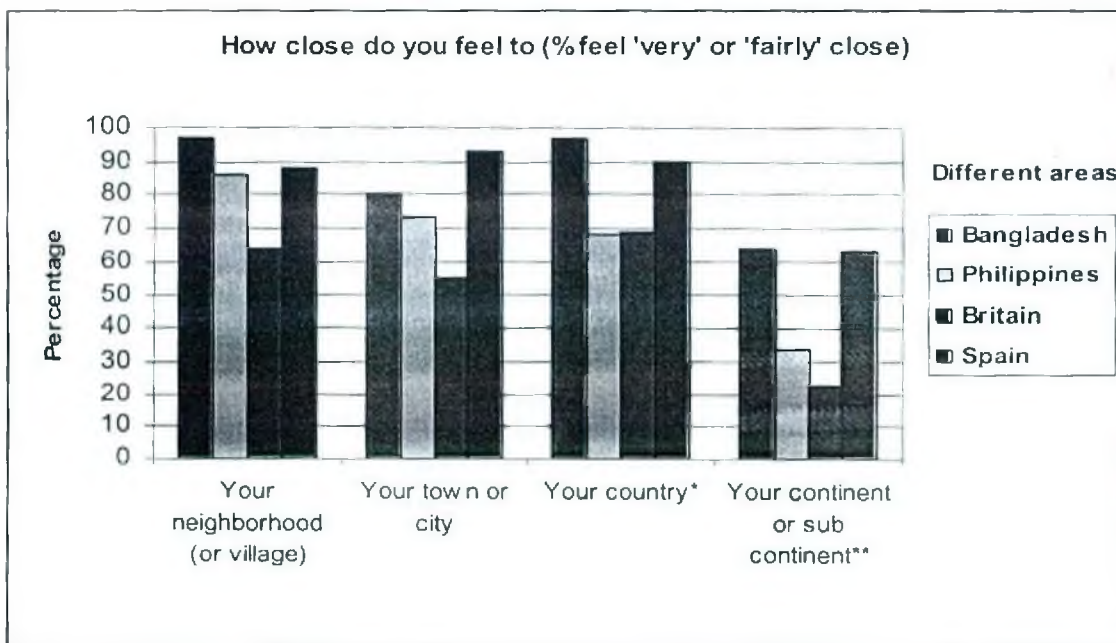
¹⁰. A working group of representatives from a small number of the participating countries is given the task of drafting each year's module. The members of ISSP, then meet and at a plenary of all members and finalize the questionnaire.

political and economic attitudes of the people of Bangladesh are described and interpreted below, and compared with those of the other selected countries.

Feeling of Attachment to Own Areas of Living and Wider Contexts

In search of national identity, the attachment of the people to their neighbourhood or village, town or city, country, and the continent or subcontinent is looked into, using data generated by the above mentioned surveys conducted in the four selected countries. Respondents were asked to express how close they felt to the different territorial areas. As Figure 1, Table 1 show, Bangladesh feel closest to both their villages (97%) and the country (97%), followed successively to the city (80%), and sub-continent (64%). Compared to other countries British attachment to all the areas is relatively low. Higher association than in Bangladesh with respect to the city has been found in Spain (93%) which is much lower in Philippines (68%) and Britain (55%). After Bangladesh, the highest association with the village (neighbourhood) exists in Spain (88%), followed by the Philippines (86%) and Britain (64%). Compared to the Philippines (34%) and Britain (22%), larger proportions of the respondents in Bangladesh (64%) and Spain (63%) feel closer to their subcontinent.

Figure 1
Feeling of Attachment to Different Areas



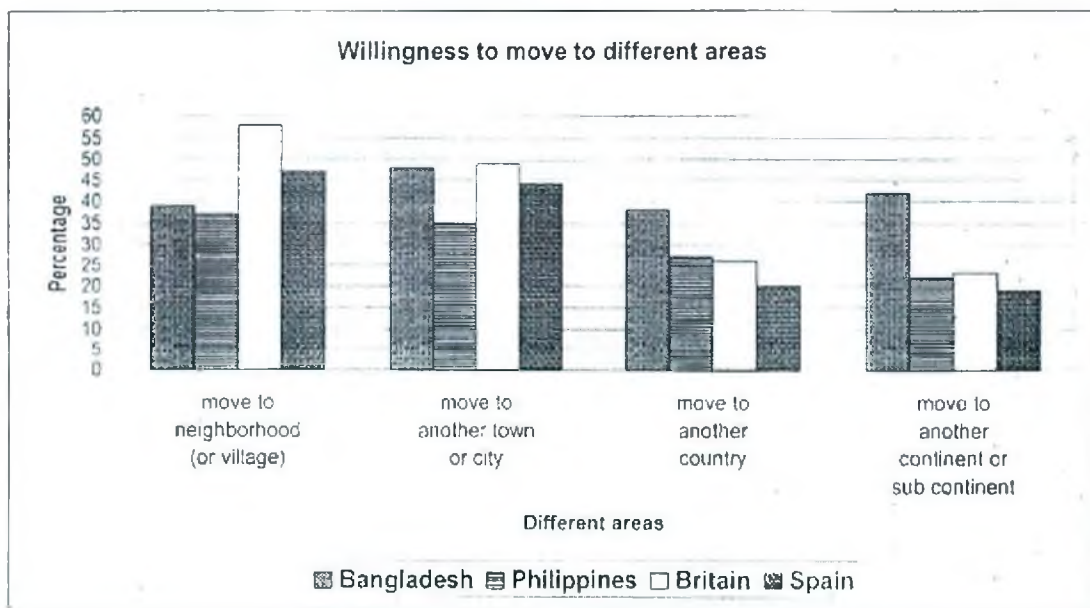
* The country was specified in each case as follows: Bangladesh, Philippines, Britain, Spain.

** The continent or sub-continent was specified in each case as follows: SAARC, Asia, Europe.

Willingness to Move to Different Places to Improve Work or Living Condition

Asked how willing or unwilling the respondents were in respect of moving to different places for improving their work or living conditions, higher proportions in Britain (58%) and Spain (47%) are willing to move to other neighborhoods for improving their living conditions while comparatively lower proportions of people in the Philippines (37%) and Bangladesh (39%) are willing to move to other neighborhoods. Compared to the other countries the largest proportion of the respondents of Bangladesh (42%) are willing to move to another continental or subcontinent; the proportion is 23% in Britain (22%) in the Philippines and 19% in Spain. Since employment opportunities in Bangladesh are very limited, Bangladeshis are more interested to move to other continents or sub-continents, despite the fact that 97% Bangladeshis feel close to their country. Moving to another town or city is also the highest in Britain (49%), followed by Bangladesh (48%), Spain 44% and Philippines 35%. These findings indicate that significant proportions of the populations of different countries are willing to move to other villages, towns, countries or subcontinent in search of better conditions of living.

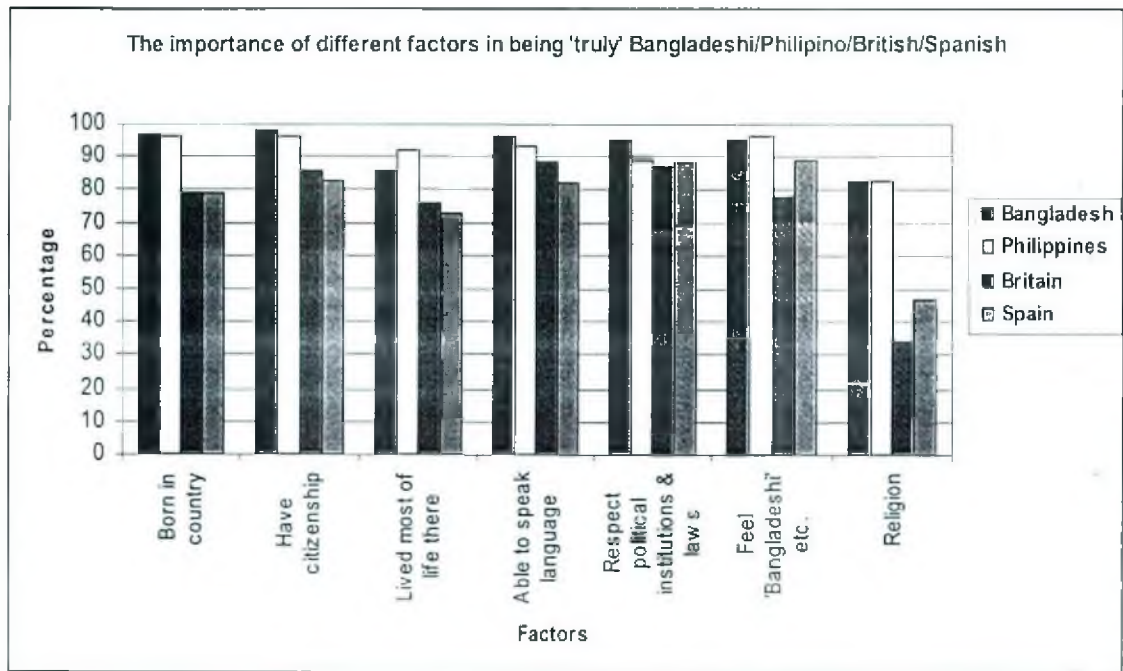
Figure 2



Criteria of National Identity

There are some obvious criteria for defining national identity such as birth, citizenship, residence, and cultural adherence including language, religion, laws and institutions. Keeping these criteria in view, a question was asked as to how important or unimportant the respondents felt being truly Bangladeshi i.e. having their identity as Bangladeshis and the same question was asked in the case of Philippines, Britain and Spain. Figure 3, Table 3 show that Bangladesh and Philippines are alike in stressing the importance of being born in the country, have its citizenship, to live most of life there, to speak the national languages, to respect the country and value the fact that they belong to the country, and follow their religions. More or less similar views have emerged from Spain and Britain also, except that British and Spanish people attach low importance to religion as a source of national identity.

Figure 3
Criteria of National Identity

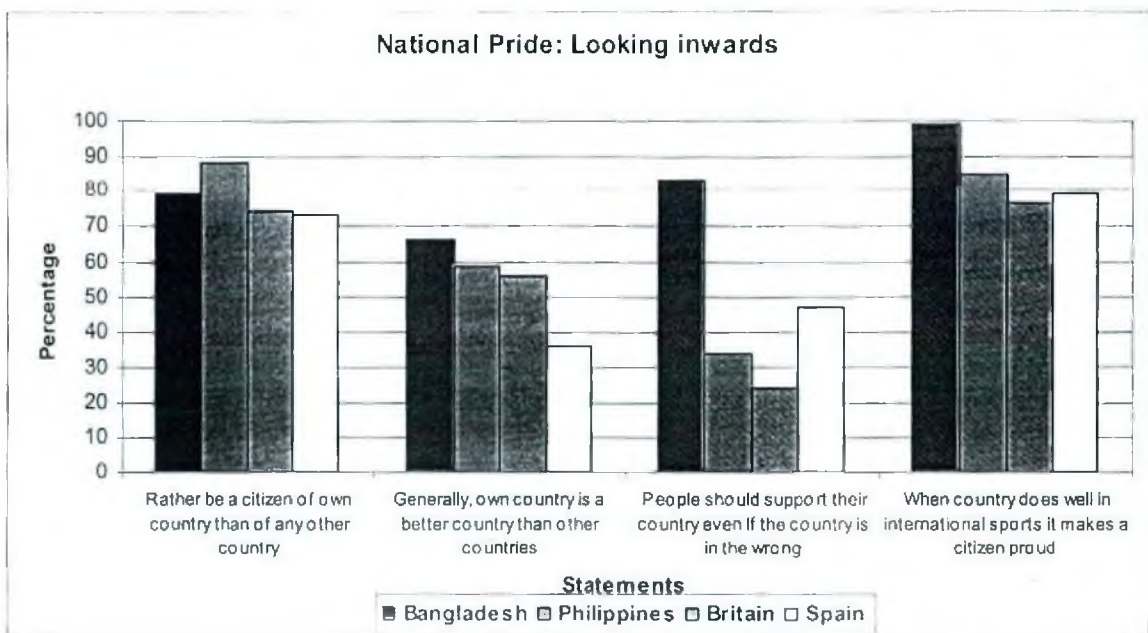


National Pride

To what extent people of different countries differ in their levels of national pride, measured by referring to the criteria making up national identities. The survey results show 79 per cent of the respondents felt proud to be citizens of Bangladesh, while the proportion of the

respondents feeling proud to be citizens of their respective countries is higher at 88 per cent in the Philippines but somewhat lower in Britain (74%) and Spain (73%). It is notable that all the four countries are alike in stressing the importance of being proud when their country does well in international sports. About 47 per cent of the people of Bangladesh and of Spain have indicated that people should support their country even if the country did something wrong. But in Britain only 24 per cent agree to this, while the figure is 34 per cent in the case of Philippines. (Figure 4, Table IV 4).

Figure 4



Pride in National Achievements and Institutions

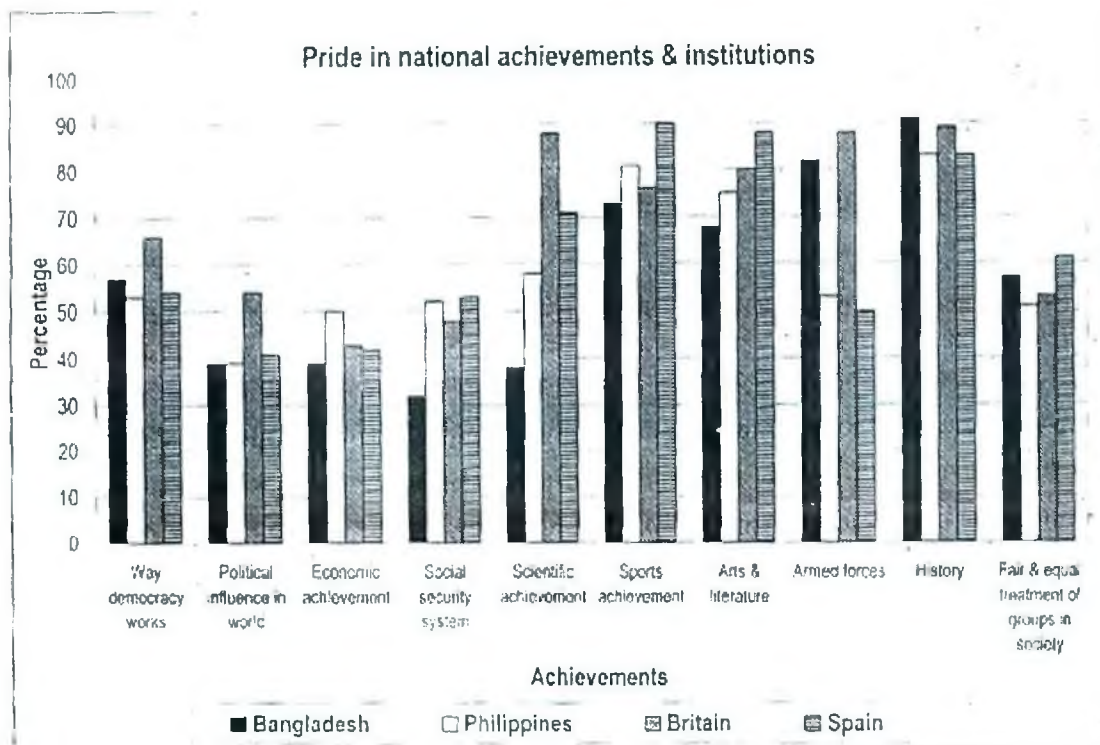
National pride varies from country to country. National pride relates to attachment of the people to their respective countries. Those who feel close to their country display higher level of national pride. To ascertain how proud about their respective countries people might feel questions were asked as to how the people felt regarding national achievements. In (Figure 5, Table IV 5) relevant data have been presented. In respect of pride in their arts and literature, the highest proportion feeling proud has been found in Spain (88%), followed by Britain (80%) the Philippines (75%) and Bangladesh (68%). This picture reflects much higher levels of education and cultural achievements and people's appreciation of those achievements in Britain and Spain and relative backwardness of Bangladesh and the Philippines in these regards. In respect of sports Spain exhibit the highest proportion (90%), followed by the

Philippines (81%), Britain (70%) and Bangladesh (73%). Here also, Bangladesh's score is the lowest, but even then it is quite high.

Pride in their history is high in all the four countries: Bangladesh 91%, Britain 89%, Spain 83% and the Philippines 83%. In this respect, Bangladesh has scored the highest among the four countries, where there are rare historical achievements including language movement and independence war. In these regards, people in general were very much involved and all suffered and achieved together. Obviously, due to these unique achievements, Bangladeshis are very proud of their history.

Obviously, Britain has much more influence in the world, followed by Spain, which is reflected by the responses obtained. In Britain, 54 per cent of the respondents expressed pride in the country's influence in the world, following by 41 per cent in Spain. The proportions are lower in Bangladesh (39%) and the Philippines (39%).

Figure 5



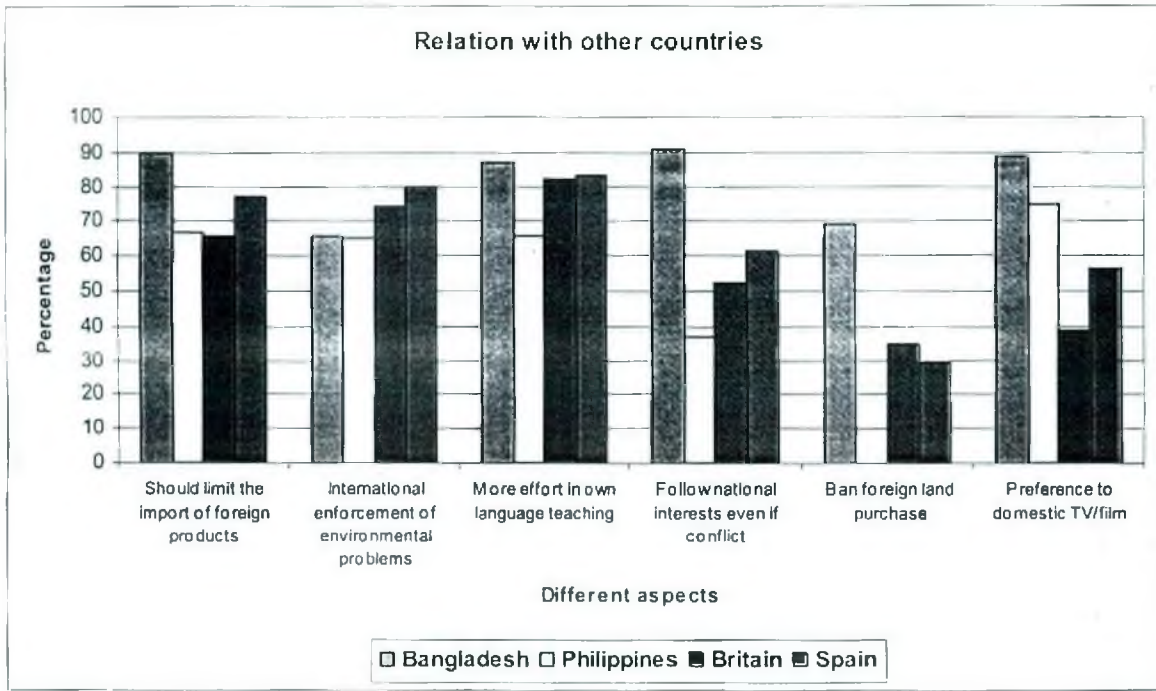
In the field of scientific advancement, understandably Britain leads in relation to people taking pride in their country's achievements (88%) followed by Spain (71%) with the Philippines at a much lower standing (58%) and Bangladesh further down at only 38 per cent. In the area of social security, only 32 per cent of respondents have mentioned that they have something to feel proud about in Bangladesh. Perhaps, they have considered the limited provision of old age pension and some safety net measures (food or cash for work for example) existing in the country. But it is surprising that only 48 per cent of the respondents in Britain have felt proud about social security measures available in their country, Britain is supposed to be a country with a developed social security system. Some 53 per cent of both Spanish and Philippino respondents have indicated their satisfaction in the social security arrangements in their respective countries. The finding in respect of the Philippines in particular seems optimistic. The proportion of the respondents feeling proud in the performance of their economies is rather low at between 39-42 per cent in three of the four countries, while it is 53 per cent in the Philippines. It appears that not much difference has emerged as between the four countries in respect of the performance of their economies, viewing as having except for the Philippines to an extent This is understandable given that satisfaction and expectations are relative concepts, and is based on the baselines.

Relationship with other Countries

An essential aspect of national identity and pride lies in a country's relationship with other countries. National identity and national pride depend on how much a country enjoys equality of sovereign status with other countries and how much is it subject to external influences. Figure 6 and Table IV 6 show that Bangladesh is the most conservative with 90 per cent of all respondents saying that the country should limit foreign imports, followed, in respect of this characteristic, by Spain (about 77%), the Philippines (67%) and Britain (66%). Even in Britain trade protectionism is an important opinion, which is held by two-thirds of the respondents. In the other countries it is more widespread. This is rather antagonistic to the dynamics of the present age of free markets and globalization. But, perhaps people feel that easy importation of foreign goods may hamper domestic production. Also, 91 per cent Bangladeshi respondents have supported the view that national interest should be pursued even if conflict arises, followed by the respondents of Spain (61%), Britain (52%) and the Philippines (37%). The highest proportion (87%) of the respondents in Bangladesh have

said that more effort should be given on language teaching, which is somewhat lower in Spain (83%) and Britain (82%), but much lower in the Philippines (66%).

Figure 6



Cultural protectionism is considered to be a more important factor to protect national heritage. Eighty-nine per cent of Bangladeshi respondents have said that preference should be given to Bangladeshi films in television programmes. The proportion is only 39 per cent in Britain, while it is 75 per cent, in the Philippines and 56 per cent in Spain. Bangladesh also leads the field in relation to banning of purchase of land by foreigners (69%), but it is only 35 per cent in Britain and 29 per cent in Spain.

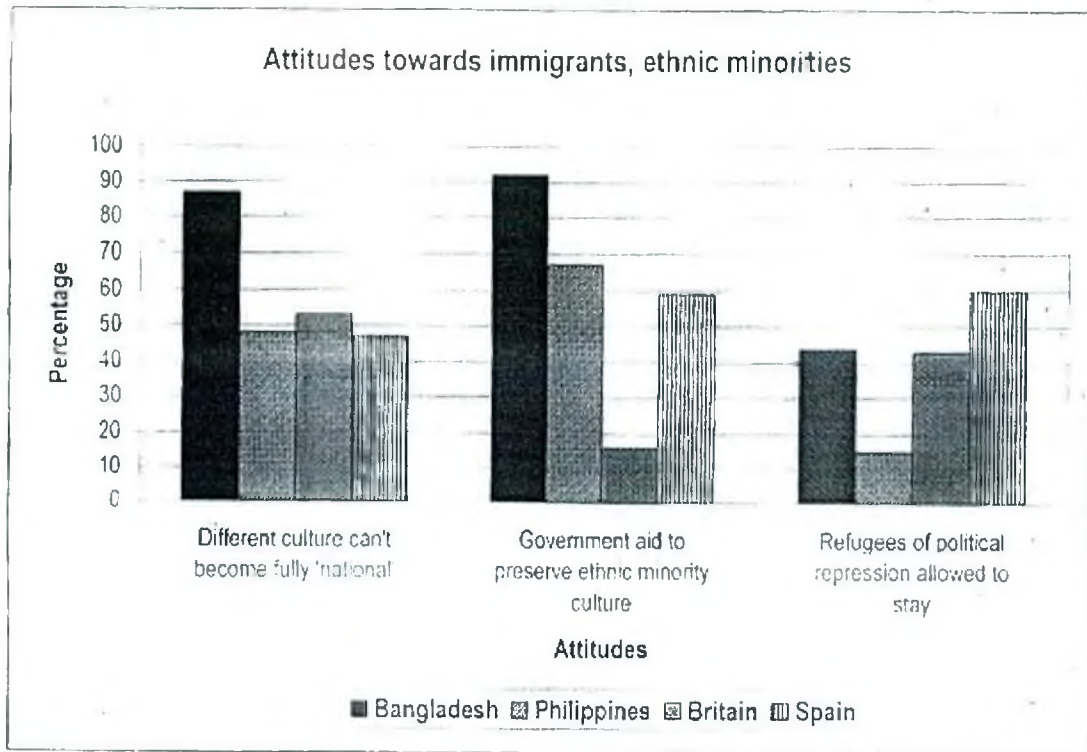
People of Bangladesh appear to be very conservative in protecting their economy, land and culture compared to the other three countries. However, in the context of protecting the environment, the favourable opinion is seen to be lower in Bangladesh compared to Britain and Spain, and about the same as in the Philippines. The people of Bangladesh and the Philippines, which are both developing countries facing environmental hazards of different kinds, should ideally be very concerned about protecting the environment. But, perhaps, awareness regarding environmental hazards and the need to respond to them is not as

widespread in these two countries as is the case in the developed countries of Britain and Spain.

Ethnic Groups and Minorities

Eighty seven per cent of the Bangladeshi respondents have said that full integration of different cultures is not possible, while the proportion holding this view is 53 per cent in Britain, and just under half in Spain and the Philippines. Clearly, Bangladeshis are more conservative compared to the citizens of the other three countries. This may be partly due to low literacy in Bangladesh (where adult to (15 years +) literacy rate is about 45%. Some 92 per cent of Bangladeshi respondents also want the government to help the ethnic minority groups to preserve their culture. While it is alright that they do not forsake their basic traits of culture, it is important that all the citizens feel part of the larger citizenry for a healthy social development in the country. In the Philippines (67%) and Spain (59%) also the majority feel the same way as the Bangladeshis. However, in Britain, only 16 per cent want government assistance to help ethnic minorities to preserve their basic cultural traits. This means that the large majority of British respondents want the ethnic minorities to fend for themselves if they want to preserve their culture. Eighty per cent of the British respondents also believe that all minor ethnic groups should adapt and blend into the larger society and only 20 per cent saying that they should maintain distinct customs and tradition, while, as noted above, a very significant proportion (53%) think that full cultural integration is not possible. There appears to be an ambivalence reflected in these opinions, as expressed.

Figure 7



In Bangladesh full social blending has been advocated by only 40 per cent, while 60 per cent suggested that the ethnic groups should remain their separate customs and traditions, which are broadly consistent with their views that full blending of cultures is not possible and that the government should help maintain ethnic identities. With education spreading, their views may become more moderate. In Spain and the Philippines, the views expressed are divided almost along the middle.

Regarding, hosting refugees (politically oppressed in their countries) the Philippine respondents are most negative (only 15% supporting that they are allowed to stay), and Spain is most liberal (60%) supporting). The Bangladeshi and British respondents hold a similar altitude (with 44% and 43% supporting, respectively). In the past, British tradition was to entertain such refugees rather freely, but obviously it is changing, perhaps large numbers of such refugees having been there already.

Figure 8

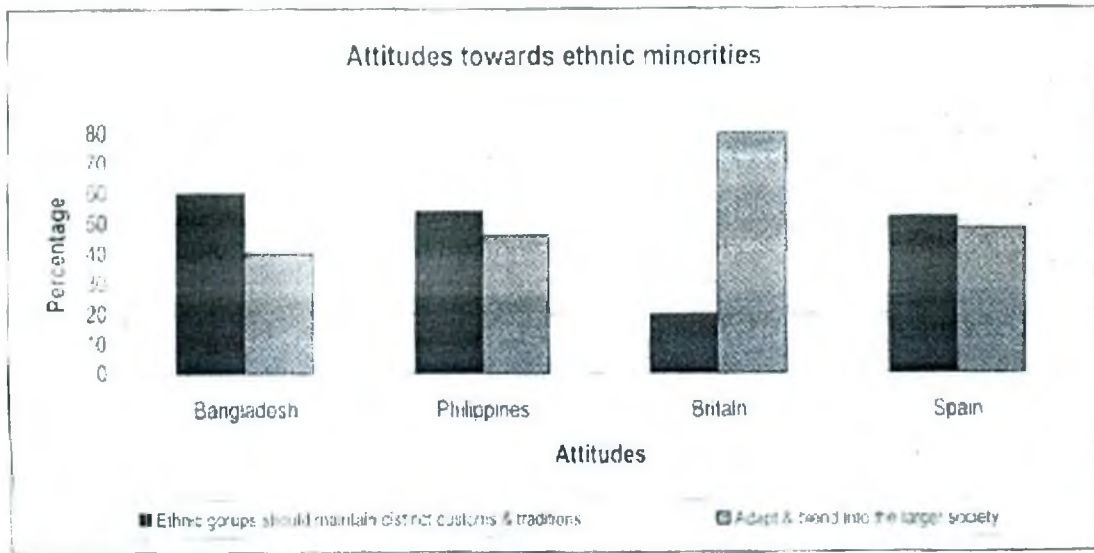


Table V 1

How close do you feel to the indicated geographical entities
(% feeling very or fairly close)

Geographical entity	Bangladesh	Philippines	Britain	Spain
	%	%	%	%
Your neighborhood (or village)	97	86	64	88
Your town or city	80	73	55	93
Your county	97	68	69	90
Your continent or sub continent	64	34	22	63

Table V 2

How willing or unwilling would you be to move to another place as
indicated to seek to improve your work & living conditions
(% 'very' or 'fairly' willing to move)

Geographical area move to	Bangladesh	Philippines	Britain	Spain
	%	%	%	%
Move to another neighborhood	39	37	58	47
Move to another town or city	48	35	49	44
Move to another county	38	27	26	20
Move to another continent or sub continent	42	22	23	19

Table V 3

The importance of different factors making for 'truly'
Bangladeshi / Filipino/ British / Spanish
(% feeling 'very' or 'fairly' important)

Factor	Bangladesh	Philippines	Britain	Spain
	%	%	%	%
Born in the country	97	96	79	79
Have citizenship of the country	98	96	86	83
Lived most of life in the country	86	92	76	73
Able to speak national language (s)	96	93	88	82
Respect political institutions & laws of the nation	95	89	87	88
Feel 'Bangladeshi' etc.	95	96	78	89
Dominant religion	83	83	34	47

Table V 4

National Pride: Looking inwards
(%'very' or 'fairly' agree)

% agree	Bangladesh	Philippines	Britain	Spain
	%	%	%	%
Rather be a citizen of own country than of any other country	79	88	74	73
Generally own country is better than most other countries	66	59	56	36
People should support their country even if the country is in the wrong	83	34	24	47
When country does well in international sports it makes one proud	99	85	76	79

Table V 5

Pride in national achievements
(%'very' or 'fairly' proud)

Achievement	Bangladesh	Philippines	Britain	Spain
	%	%	%	%
Political influence in world	39	39	54	41
Economic achievement	39	50	43	42
Social security system	32	52	48	53
Scientific achievement	38	58	88	71
Sports achievement	73	81	76	90
Arts & literature	68	75	80	88
History	91	83	89	83

Table V 6

Relation with other countries
(% 'very' or 'fairly' agree)

Characteristic	Bangladesh	Philippines	Britain	Spain
	%	%	%	%
Should limit the import of foreign products	90	67	66	77
International enforcement for environmental problem etc.	66	65	74	80
More effort on language teaching	87	66	82	83
Country should pursue its own interests, even if this might lead to conflict	91	37	52	61
Ban foreign land purchase	69	×	35	29
Preference to domestic TV/film	89	75	39	56

Table V 7

Attitudes towards immigration, ethnic minorities
(% 'very' or 'fairly' agree)

% agree	Bangladesh	Philippines	Britain	Spain
	%	%	%	%
Different cultures can't become fully 'national'	87	48	53	47
Government aid to preserve ethnic minority culture	92	67	16	59
Refugees of political repression allowed to stay	44	15	43	60

Table V 8

Attitudes towards ethnic minorities

% agree	Bangladesh	Philippines	Britain	Spain
	%	%	%	%
Ethnic groups should maintain distinct customs & traditions	60	54	20	52
Adapt & blend into the larger society	40	46	80	48

Chapter VI

WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN BANGLADESH

Women constitute half the country's population. It will never be possible to achieve the goal of national development if women remain backward in education and employment. To empower women, education, training and access to credit, technology and other services are needed for them. So empowered, they can meaningfully participate in different areas of productive employment and social sector activities and also in political activities. Democracy calls for all segments of society including women to be active in the electoral and governance processes.

Awareness regarding women's disadvantaged position in economic and social terms has been widening and depressing in Bangladesh. Towards improving their status, there has been an increasing policy focus on women's issues – their education, training, health, access to resources, employment. Both government and non-governmental organizations are involved. Research on women's economic and social circumstances and ways and means through which their status can be improved as well as dissemination of ideas and proposals through publications, seminars, conferences and workshops has been increasing. However, there is still a long way to go before an acceptable level of improvement in women's status could be achieved.

In a national survey conducted by Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) in June-July 1995, the issue of women's employment was included. Relevant data are presented in Tables V.1, V.2 and V.3

In that survey, we sought to assess the reaction of the common people to the idea of women's employment. To the question whether women should come forward into the work area side by side with men, 83 per cent of the respondents supported the idea that women should work in productive and income generating activities. The proportion of women supporting the idea is about 90 per cent, while it is 10 percentage points lower at 80 per cent for men. The pattern

of support does not vary much between rural and urban areas. Clearly, the traditional view that there is cultural opposition to women working outside home is no longer valid.

Of those who supported women's gainful employment, 36 per cent are of the view that it would make the family financially better off, 23 per cent think that the right to work apply to men and women alike in accordance with their capabilities and choice, 18 per cent have said that when women earn their status improves in the family and in society, and 13 per cent are of the view that women at work would give an added fillip to the country's development process since it is women who make up about half the population. The survey results show a widespread support, not only among women but also among men in both rural and urban areas, for women's employment in various sectors of the economy and society. From these opinions it is clear that there is wide public support for women's role in productive employment and for very pertinent reasons. What is now needed is the creation of opportunities, for which the primary responsibility lies with the government.

A small proportion of all respondents, a mere 9 per cent, who expressed their opinion against women's productive employment, have said that they should observe purda (53%) and should look after the home and family (30%), and that, if women work children will not be brought up properly. (Table V.3). Fortunately, the proportion of the respondents in this category is tiny so that the social outlook is overwhelmingly in favour of gender balance

STATISTICAL TABLES

June-Jul 1995 National Survey

Sample Size: 2161

Rural 72 %; Urban 28%

Male 56%; Female 44%

All figures in the Tables are in % of the respondents who answered the particular questions.

Table VI. 1

How do you view women's employment in productive and income-generating activity (self-employment and salaried work)?

	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
Favourably	80	90	85	77	89	82	78	89	83
So-so	11	7	9	11	6	9	11	7	9
In disfavour	9	3	6	12	5	9	11	4	8

Table VI. 2

Why do you think it's good for women to be productively and gainfully employed?

	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
Both men and women have the right to work as per capability and choice	25	25	25	21	24	22	22	24	23
An income makes for women's better status in the family and in society	15	17	16	16	21	18	16	20	18
The family is better off with women's income added	32	30	31	39	37	38	37	35	36
Educational opportunities for the children will increase	3	1	2	4	3	3	3	2	3
Instead of feeling like a burden women will start thinking of themselves as a valued member of the family	5	9	7	3	3	3	3	5	4
Most employment requires an education, hence women will be keen on educating themselves	2	5	3	2	3	2	2	3	3
Women being half of the population, their employment will hasten national development	17	14	16	16	9	13	16	10	13
No opinion	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	1

Table VI. 3

Why do you think it's bad for women to be productively and gainfully employed?
 (This question was put to those who did not support women's employment)

	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
Women should look after the home and family	43	29	41	26	32	28	30	32	30
Work out-side the home will go against "purdah"	40	71	46	52	58	53	49	61	52
Children will not be properly brought up	7	-	5	16	10	14	14	8	12
Misc.	10	-	8	7	-	4	7	-	6

Chapter VII

PEOPLE'S PERCEPTIONS AS TO WHY THEY VOTE FOR WOMEN AS THEIR LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

Introduction

Bangladesh is a country of about 140 million people, of whom about half are women. Over 75 per cent of the population lives in the rural areas. Women's status in Bangladesh remains much lower compared to men. The progress of women in Bangladesh is hindered by the persisting traditional social attitudes, emanating from and perpetuated by male domination. Women have thus remained excluded from decision making and effective political participation. Their potentialities largely remain unrecognized and their contributions are often overlooked. Generally, women are assigned secondary roles, because usually women's roles are assigned and their contribution assessed and interpreted by men. Social, economic, cultural, and political factors are all stacked against women.

Generally, in Bangladesh, one requires huge amounts of money to participate in politics, especially electoral politics. Therefore, only people with access to adequate financial resources can enter the political arena. Women in Bangladesh in general do not even earn incomes. An important reason for women not entering politics in larger numbers is, indeed, their economic weakness.

They are also educationally backward; and socio-cultural factors militate against their participation in active politics. The male dominated society discourages women's involvement in activities outside of their homes. Their assigned primary role is child bearing and rearing and home making. Therefore, till their children are grown up, they find it difficult, if not impossible, to devote themselves to other activities that make substantial demands on their time. In some cases, it is found that women join politics after the death of their politician husbands or fathers to carry on the family tradition as it were.

Since the liberation of the country in 1971, several general elections have been held but few women have participated in the electoral contests. The political parties do not normally

nominate female candidates. A few women have been elected parliament members, but they are generally from families with political background and/or from higher income groups.

Women, thus, remain backward in politics for lack of finance, low literacy, social barriers, and lack of interest on the part of political parties to nominate women candidates.

However, in recent years, women have been making some progress towards overcoming the obstacles. Female education in the country has been improving; and women are also, in larger numbers, joining income earning pursuits, particularly in teaching, readymade garments industry, and micro enterprises. The Government has taken various measures to upgrade women's status in Bangladesh. It is realized that without contribution from half of the population, nation building and economic upliftment cannot be achieved. The Government has taken legal and procedural steps to involve women in local level activities including local government bodies. Entry into the political arena by women needs to be encouraged at the local level first. Local bodies are subsystems of the National Government; hence women's involvement and representation on these bodies are vital from the point of view of women's progress in politics.

In the Union Parishad election held in 1997 people of the rural areas elected 20 women chairmen and 110 women members of Union Parishads, where contestants included both men and women, in addition to the 12,828 women members elected from reserved seats. The post of Union Parishad chairman is very important. In the past, a male candidate was always chosen for this post. But the situation is obviously changing. This survey was conducted in 2000 to find out the reasons why the people elected women to positions of Union Parishad chairmen and members. In order to address attitudinal problems in this regard, it is important to know people's perceptions about women leadership, particularly at the local level. It is also important to find out how women representatives were working and to what extent their performance was appreciated by the general public.

The specific objectives of the study were to

- understand the nature of the changing attitudes and thin kings of the people concerning women candidates;
- why people voted for women candidates;

- what was the difference, in their view, between male and female candidates;
- how women leaders were doing their jobs, i.e. how efficient they were in carrying out their responsibilities;
- how honest they were; and
- what make them good leaders if that was the case.

Methodology

The survey respondents were voters from the unions where women chairmen and members were elected having competed against men. The unions were thus selected purposively. The respondents were picked randomly. A structured questionnaire was administered, which was finalized after the draft has been pre-tested in one of the unions. The survey was conducted during August-September 2000. The filled-in questionnaires were edited as a measure of quality control.

Analysis of the Survey Findings

Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents

In order to understand the background of the respondents which is important from the point of judging the nature of the results obtained, socio-economic characteristics of the respondents is briefly reviewed. Clearly, as shown below, they represent the population quite well in terms of their socio-economic characteristics.

Age Distribution. Of the total respondents, all from the rural areas, 50 per cent are men and 50 per cent women. Age distribution of the respondents is shown in Table VI 1. Since the minimum age for voting is 18 years, the respondents include all age groups above 18 years.

Marital Status. Table VII 2 shows that 86 per cent of the respondents are married, 11 per cent unmarried, and three per cent others.

Educational Status. Table VII 3 shows the educational status of the respondents. Some 32 per cent are illiterate. The national illiteracy rate is about 40 per cent. The sample, therefore, includes a slightly higher proportion of literate people. This is probably because of a tendency for a literate person, if there be one in a household, to come forward as the respondent.

Regarding educational attainment, it is found that 24 per cent of the respondents have completed primary education, 21 per cent above primary but below 10th class, 18 per cent have completed Secondary School Certificate (SSC) or Higher School Certificate (HSC), but below graduation (e.g. BA) level and five per cent have obtained graduate or post-graduate degrees.

Occupation. Of the female respondents, 86 per cent are housewives and 5 per cent students. Of the male respondents, 34 per cent are mainly farmers, followed by businessmen (16 per cent), agricultural labourers (12 per cent), students (9 per cent), and day labourers (5 per cent). Other occupations, each pursued by few respondents, include government employment, private sector employment, teaching, business, industrial labour, day labour, politics, medical practice, etc. These professions account for 23 per cent of both males and females, but mostly males (Table VII 4).

The Survey Results

Knowledge about Local Government Structure

Following the 1991 parliamentary elections, the upazilla-focused local government system was abolished but an alternative system was not put in place until 1996 when another round of parliamentary elections was held. The government elected in 1996 introduced a four-tier local government system at village, union, upazilla, and zilla levels. All the four bodies were to be constituted through direct vote of the people. In different tiers of local government, three out of 12 elected members were to be women, who would be elected directly by the people. Up to the time of the survey, only union level elections had been held.

This survey sought to find out people's awareness about the structure of the local government. Asked as to what they knew about the local government structure, a majority (53 per cent) of the respondents indicated that they had no knowledge about it, while 45 per cent said they did. Men (52 per cent) were found to be somewhat better informed than women (38 per cent). (Table VII 5.)

The level of education makes a big difference in this context. While only 22 per cent of the illiterate respondents knew about the local government structure the proportion rises to 42 per

cent among those who studied up to Class V, and then successively to 48 per cent (among those between classes V and X), 78 per cent (SSC to below BA), and to 84 per cent (BA+). (Table VII 6)

Knowledge about Union Parishad

Knowledge about the Union Parishad was found to be relatively more widespread compared to knowledge about the whole local government structure. This is expected as a union level body has always been in existence, while the local government structure changed again and again in the past. Moreover, only union level elections were held under the newly evolving local government structure. Asked if they knew how many members constitute a Union Parishad, 65 per cent answered correctly (Table VII 7). Here also, education is an important factor as most of those who answered correctly were literate with the proportion increasing as the educational level increased, while two-thirds of the illiterate respondents did know (Table VII 8).

It emerged that some 69 per cent knew that there were three women to be elected to the Union Parishad (Table VII 9). Here also education is a key factor. Most of those who knew about this were literate with the proportion increasing as the educational level increased, and about 59 per cent of those who didn't were illiterate (Table VII 10). Asked as to how the women members were elected, 87 per cent correctly said that they were elected through direct vote (Table VII 11). It emerged that many of those who did not know that there were three reserved seats for women were aware that women were elected through direct vote. Asked if they knew that women could contest against men in any seat they chose in addition, to the reserved seats for them, 86 per cent correctly said that they could (Table VII 12). It seems that since Union Parishad elections had been held recently (1997), people became aware about these provisions.

Quality of Women Candidates

In Bangladesh, both men and women have an equal right to participate in politics. But just as society is male dominated so is politics in this country. A change has slowly been occurring regarding women's participation in economic and social pursuits. Over the past decade or so women have been coming forward to take active part in politics. Many have also been gaining

the confidence of the people. In this section, reasons behind the success of a number of women candidates in the Union Parishad elections in 1997 are discussed.

The survey revealed that 14 per cent of all respondents suggested that women candidates were very good indeed, while 48 per cent found them good, 29 per cent average, three per cent not good, and six per cent offered no comment (Table VII 13). It is interesting that a majority (55 per cent) of illiterate respondents spoke positively about women leadership (Table VII 14). Obviously, people's mindset and values have been changing in favour of improvement in women's status.

In response to a question as to whether it is good or bad for women to compete against men, 85 per cent said it was all right, with only 12 per cent saying it was not a good step and 3 per cent refraining from answering the question (Table VII 15). Here also, a majority (78 per cent) of the illiterate respondents supported this view (Table VII 16).

As to the reasons why the respondents said it was good for women to compete against men, 62 per cent remarked that women could highlight their problems easily and strongly, followed by 58 per cent who said that, through this process, women could establish their self-respect. Some 51 per cent said that women could perform as well as men, 48 per cent said that this process would help women's empowerment, 47 per cent said that direct election would give strong encouragement to women members to participate in local government work, and 42 per cent believed that direct election would build up people's confidence in women as leaders. This was a multiple choice question. (Table VII 17.)

Once again, regardless of whether the respondents were literate or illiterate, they responded positively concerning women leadership.

Of those respondents who did not support that women should compete against male candidates, some 88 per cent (49 per cent strongly) pointed out various problems that women could face during an election campaign. Some 78 per cent (19 per cent strongly) said that our male dominated society creates obstacles for women candidates, and 71 per cent said (14 per cent strongly) that female candidates face financial problems in fighting direct elections. (Table VII 18.)

From the above findings it is clear that the political landscape has been changing towards increasing women representation and is accepted by males. This is a major social change in a traditionally male dominated society. The research conducted has brought out this positive social orientation taking place. Achieving gender balance in economic, social and political fields is today a important social goal. Bangladesh, as revealed by the survey, is making progress, albeit slowly, in this regard in the political arena.

Background of the Women Candidates

On the question of the women candidates for the posts they had contested and won, 82 per cent of the respondents agreed that the elected women members were eligible for the posts, with 14 per cent answering negatively, and four per cent preferring not to respond. (Table VII 19.)

On the main factor behind their success, it was their honesty as indicated by 34 per cent of the respondents, followed, in importance, by their social work (24 per cent), their involvement in local development (20 per cent), their work for rooting out violence against women (11 per cent), and their efforts towards women's self-employment (10 per cent). (Table VII 20.) Clearly, women candidates had to their credit achievements that helped them secure support from the voters. And it is also important to note that there has been a change in the mindset of the people, particularly men, to recognize that women can provide effective leadership.

Of the 14 per cent of the respondents who thought women candidates were not eligible, 27 per cent said, in support of their opinion, that the women candidates were dependent on their respective husband's help, 19 per cent said they did not have leadership qualities and 19 per cent said they did not understand the work involved. Their remarks reflect the continued traditional mode of thinking in this society. Another statement made to the effect that women candidates did not have the education to run the office properly is partly true, and highlights the importance of education in the task of carrying out the responsibility of public office. Although pointed out by only a few respondents, an important factor that deters women from seeking public office is that they are not financially capable. It is important to reiterate that only 14 per cent of the respondents found women unsuitable for holding elected positions in Union Parishads for one reason or another. (Table VII 21.) Although women are constrained by tradition and financial and other limitations to enter the political arena, the few who

manage to enter often make their mark. This finding is surely encouraging from the point of a move towards a more gender-balanced and, hence, healthy society. The policy makers would do well to take lessons from these findings and provide facilities such that women can overcome financial and traveling difficulties in carrying out their election campaign. This should indeed be done as an affirmative action for a reasonably long time to create a conducive environment in which women can work in political and other fields shoulder to shoulder with men in creating a better society for all, men and women and rich and poor

Qualifications Needed for Women to Succeed in Union Parishad Elections

Participation of women in active politics remains limited in Bangladesh, particularly so in rural areas. The constraints include traditional socio-cultural barriers against women's involvement in activities outside their homes. Males often do not support women's involvement in politics. Society is more critical about women's mistakes. Women cannot wholeheartedly devote themselves to the work involved in public office because of their 'assigned' responsibilities of home making and child bearing and rearing. Sometimes it is found that a woman stands as a candidate in the event of her husband's or father's death to utilize the political image of the deceased leader. Although a change is taking place, women's participation in politics remains limited. For women to really become active in politics, they should be involved in such activities as addressing political meetings, campaigning in elections, and assuming leadership positions in political mobilization processes.

To make more and more women conscious of their rights, those women who have made it to an extent should encourage others both by word and deed to be involved in social, economic, and political activities in local areas. Through participation in social and economic organizations at local levels, women as an organized group can bring pressure to bear on political decisions of the government.

Queried on what qualifications are required for women to become candidates at the local level, it was suggested by the respondents that a female candidate should have a minimum level of education to understand the work involved, interest in social work, self confidence, and the courage to perform her responsibilities honestly. She should also be able to make public speeches. A female candidate should have a minimum level of education to understand

the work involved, said 99 per cent of the respondents (87 per cent saying this is most essential); she should possess courage to work honestly as that will be appreciated by people (suggested by 99 per cent altogether; by 72 per cent strongly); she should be involved in social work (99 per cent; 70 per cent); she should have self confidence (98 per cent; 65 per cent); and she should also have the ability to address public meetings (91 per cent; 54 per cent). In order that women can acquire education and the other qualities mentioned, they need opportunities for education and leadership training and a facilitating social environment. (Table VII 22.)

Although there has been significant improvement in female education in Bangladesh, adult (11 years +) female, even male adult literacy is highly unsatisfactory. The gender ratio among students at the secondary level is in favour of girls at 52:48. At the primary level girls are still somewhat behind at 48% to 52 % for boys. At the tertiary level girls are well behind boys. Also, at the primary and secondary levels in particular, the quality of education is extremely low. It is low at higher levels as well. Adult women, particularly in rural areas, therefore, still suffer from educational backwardness in terms of lack of education or poor quality of education. The other qualities required by women, also by men one would suspect, as revealed by the survey can be imparted to women only through quality education and training. Clearly, it is the felt need of the people also, as reflected in the survey findings, that to facilitate improvement is leadership qualities of women, proper education and training arrangements should be created. The survey, therefore, has highlighted what needs to be done to enhance leadership abilities among women, particularly rural women, to enable them to participate in the governance process more effectively, thereby helping to improve gender balance in the political and governance arena.

Measures that May be Taken to Motivate Local Women to Become Good Candidates

A programme focusing on bringing about attitudinal changes is needed to create a general awareness in the society to help women raise their self confidence. An attitudinal change on the part of women in favour of participating in public life should be encouraged so that women in larger numbers come forward to take active part in political activities. For women to be actively involved in politics, they need to organize themselves and should be

encouraged and financially assisted by political parties, women's social organizations, and their families.

Asked for their suggestions as to the steps that may be taken to help women become ideal candidates for Union Parishad positions, most of the respondents (98 per cent; 81 per cent saying that this is most important) placed emphasis on training for leadership development. Other measures suggested are: they should acquire proper education (97 per cent; 77 per cent), work efficiency and good relationship with members of the public (97 per cent; 66 per cent), and necessary experience enabling them to work with people (98 per cent; 62 per cent) (Table VII 23).

Do Women Benefit by Competing in the Union Parishad Elections?

To win is of course the best; but even if a candidate loses she has moved a small step forward simply by contesting the elections. Through this first step into active politics, women candidates have started to acquire knowledge about leadership, public relations, social work etc. They may become motivated as a result and will try to raise their ability and standing by embarking on learning and training processes. They will become more and more involved in local problem identification and solving activities and will, therefore, increase their support amongst local people.

Some 85 per cent of the respondents said that women candidates had certainly benefited in terms of acquiring leadership experiences, contact with people, social participation and so on, through participation in Union Parishad elections. Eleven per cent said they did not think so, with four per cent preferring not to answer the question. (Table VII 24). Asked about the way they benefited, 97 per cent of the respondents (59 per cent strongly) suggested that women's self-confidence would increase; also 97 per cent (56 per cent strongly) suggested that women would have a chance to highlight their problems. About 94 per cent (54 per cent strongly) thought, they would now understand the administrative and development processes, about which they had but little knowledge before. Also, 96 per cent (47 per cent strongly) were of the opinion that women's social status would increase, and again 96 per cent (45 per cent strongly) believed that women's political awareness would increase. Clearly it has been

widely held that participation in Union Parishad elections improved the status of women in society and their participation in governance. (Table VII 25.)

The few who thought women would not benefit by participating in the elections were asked as to why this should be so. Seventy eight per cent of those respondents said (43 per cent strongly), that in a male-dominated society women's work would not be given proper weight and so they would be frustrated; and in the opinion of 76 per cent (35 per cent holding the view strongly), the male dominated society would create problems in their way and they would therefore be in trouble (Table VII 26). Some of those respondents felt that women could not be neutral and government officials like upazilla nirbahi officers and deputy commissioners would not give much importance to women members and as a result, women chairmen would not be able to help people at their times of need. But, the holders of this view are very small in number. In a traditional society like Bangladesh's, empowerment of women is a relatively new development. However, social views and values are changing in a major way and women should be able to overcome the bottlenecks, given willingness and perseverance on their part. Clearly, these findings are very relevant in the context of moving towards a gender balanced society. The finding that, even men widely support women's political progress is heartening that traditional male-domination is weakening in favour of a more healthy socio-political transformation.

Problems Faced During Election Time

In Bangladesh, as noted above, women are becoming increasingly interested in taking active part in politics, but there are social, cultural, and economic barriers hindering their progress in politics. Male political leaders at times do not support women. In this survey, an attempt was made to identify the problems faced by women in their political work. Asked whether women faced any problems in their political work, only 20 per cent of the respondents said that women did face problems, while 77 per cent said that they did not face any significant problems. This is rather surprising, but of course the situation had been improving in recent years, and more and more women were coming forward to join politics. (Table VII 27)

The next question to the 20 per cent who said women faced problems relate to the types of problems faced. The problems mentioned include: campaigning by women is not easily accepted by society, women cannot move freely, they face financial constraint, and certain

religious groups create problems for them (Table VII 28). It was suggested that women needed to be assisted economically and morally by political parties, women's organizations, and individuals. Although the situation is improving, there is still a long way to go.

Asked as to what might be done to overcome the problems faced, of those who said women faced problems, 39 per cent said that they had some suggestions to make and 44 per cent had no idea, while 17 per cent refrained from responding to this question (Table VII 29). Most of those who had suggestions to offer agreed that the changed structure of the Union Parishad would be helpful in removing the obstacles. (Table VII 30.)

Asked if they thought that, if all tiers of local government were established and worked properly, local development would gain momentum, 90 per cent of the respondents said it would, with only two per cent holding a negative opinion and only one per cent refraining from responding (Table VII 31). On the question as to whether poor people would benefit if local government at the Union and other levels were established properly, 97 per cent of the respondents said that they believed that the poor would benefit (Table VII 32). If the proposed local government system was fully established and worked properly, would women benefit? Almost all the respondents (97 per cent) believed that women would benefit as a result (Table VII 33).

The structure of the local government system that was then designed appeared to be widely believed to be pro-local development, pro-poor, and pro-women. In so far as women are concerned, their participation in the local government bodies was ensured by that system.

Asked how the poor, particularly women, would benefit from the local government system, 79 per cent of the respondents believed that these groups of people would get justice, 71 per cent believed they would have access to education and development facilities, and 68 per cent believed that the local problems would be addressed on a priority basis. Some 22 per cent also said these groups could receive assistance for improving their living conditions. Some respondents also suggested that the local government might take up the cause of establishing equal wages for equal work regardless of the sex of the worker. (Table VII 34.)

Clearly, the emphasis is on effective democratic local government. The survey results show that people in general strongly feel that effective local government can mobilize local people, including women, for local development, women will come forward more and more to join governance processes and participate in the electoral process; the poverty problem can be more effectively addressed at the local level. These are compelling reasons as perceived by the people, who are the source of all political power in the country according to the country's constitution for establishing effective democratic local government. But successive governments have experimented with different structures of local government, without properly establishing it. Currently, there is little local governance, let alone its being effective.

Political and Social Background of Women Members

Some questions were asked about the political background of the families of the women members in order to understand whether the women who had joined active politics as freshers or had some political background and whether people knew about that. Fifty six per cent of the respondents said that the elected women members themselves and/or other members of their families had in the past (i.e. before they contested elections) been involved in local politics and were in touch with local administration. Thirty five per cent said that, as far as they knew, women members were not previously in touch with local administration or involved in local politics, and nine per cent offered no answer to this question. (Table VII 35.)

Of those who said that the women candidates came with some political background, 76 per cent said that their husbands had been or were at the time of the survey, in active politics. Some mentioned that fathers and brothers of the women members were involved in politics. (Table VII 36.)

It has been ascertained from the women members themselves that a large majority of them had come with family political background. Hence, the perception of the people were broadly correct.

Family background has clearly been an important factor behind women joining politics, which is in the fitness of things in that one is better off having some first hand knowledge about such an involved activity as politics before getting involved in it. However, for a

healthy political process, everybody should have equal opportunity, whether they have family background or not, to participate in any profession including politics. It is necessary, therefore, to work towards creating such a socio-political environment, supported by a proper educational system.

The Changing Environment

Traditionally, men occupied the position of Union Parishad chairmen. Women could not discuss their personal problems with them. In fact, they could not often go to the Parishad office to express their concerns. The picture was found to be changing.

As mentioned earlier, in 1997, 20 women were elected as Union Parishad chairmen and 110 as Union Parishad members, successfully contesting against men, and that 12,828 women members were elected to the reserved seats. Women were happier now as they could easily go to the women chairmen and members and discuss with them the issues they felt strongly about or were concerned with. Asked if they thought women would benefit if women were elected to different tiers of the local government, 88 per cent of the respondents including men and women said that they would. Only nine per cent were of the opinion that women would not benefit, while three per cent offered no comment (Table VII 37). These results indicate that there is strong support for women leadership.

On the performance of the women Union Parishad chairmen and members in relation to their commitments, 78 per cent said their performance was satisfactory; not satisfactory, said only 19 per cent; and poor, said just two per cent (Table VII 38). These findings are positive in relation to women's participation in local governance. As more and more women join the ranks of chairmen and members of local government institutions, their work environment should improve and so should their performance. It emerges that women can work side by side with men in improving local governance and promoting local development in an improved gender-balanced environment.

Opposition from Religious Leaders

In response to a question, 86 per cent of the respondents said that, as far as they knew, women candidates did not face any serious problems created by religious leaders, while 12 per cent

said they did, and two per cent offered no answer to this question (Table VII 39). This finding would indicate that while people of Bangladesh are religious, they are not dogmatic.

The small proportion of the respondents who said women candidates faced problems created by religious leaders were asked about the nature of those problems; each respondent was asked to point out one problem created by the religious leaders, which, in his/her opinion, was most serious. According to 70 per cent of the respondents, the religious leaders in trying to dissuade women from contesting elections, expressed the opinion that *sharia* did not support women's candidature for political positions and leadership; and, according to 11 per cent, they were concerned about *pardah* rules being dishonoured as women moved and worked outside of their homes. Another 11 per cent said that religious leaders actively campaigned saying that women were not eligible for leadership. About 4 per cent said that religious leaders sought to disrupt election campaigning by women, two per cent said that religious leaders in fact threatened women candidates and the members of their families. (Table VII 40.)

Those who said that religious leaders did not create any problems for the women candidates were asked if they (the religious leaders) extended any cooperation to the candidates. About 82 per cent of these respondents said that, while they (the religious leaders) did not create any problems, they also did not help the women candidates and 18 per cent said the religious leaders in fact helped them. Asked as to how did they help the candidates, it was stated by 61 per cent (of the 18 per cent) that they campaigned in favour of women candidates, followed by such opinions that they voted for women candidates, encouraged people to vote for women candidates, and helped women candidates in their campaigns ((Tables VII 41 and VII 42).

Jingoism in the name of Islam, but certainly not sanctioned by Islam, is now spreading throughout the country. This a serious menace and unless rooted out it can shatter the whole social fabric and the progress of women in outdoor activities, certainly in politics, may be seriously jeopardized.

Comparative Acceptability of Men and Women as Elected Members

Given that traditionally men were chairmen and members of union parishads, women's causes remained neglected in the schemes of local administration. About half the population of

Bangladesh is female. Neglecting half the population, no country can develop properly. There is now a strong awareness regarding women's causes within and outside the government in Bangladesh. Hence, women's issues are now being given stronger emphasis than before. Before the 1997 Union Parishad elections, women's representation in Union Parishads was negligible but in that election, their representation made a major thrust forward.

On the question of acceptability to both male and female respondents, male members scored 34 per cent very good and 50 per cent average, while female members scored 46 per cent very good and 38 per cent average. Good and average together come to 84 per cent in both cases, i.e. for both male and female members. However, female members were somewhat ahead as they have been found to be very good by 46 per cent against 34 per cent for men. This is surely encouraging. (Table VII 43.)

It is to be noted that 25 per cent of the male respondents ranked female members as very good and 57 placed them as average (as against the corresponding proportions for male members being 44 and 42 per cent). Thus, while 86 per cent of the male respondents ranked male members in very good and average categories together, almost the same proportion (82 per cent) ranked female members similarly. This is indicative of increasing acceptance of female participation in politics by the male members of society as well.

Types of Assistance Women Candidates Seek from Members of the Public

To understand how elected women relate to the members of the public it was asked: on which matters elected women members sought suggestions and assistance from the local people. The respondents were asked to give their views as to what was the most important thing the women members did in this context. A majority (54 per cent) of the respondents said that they sought suggestions from the people on matters relating to women's literacy programmes. This indicates that the elected women members were genuinely interested in promoting women's education. Another 12 per cent said that they took help from the people in connection with social work, six per cent said that they took help from the people to solve social problems, five per cent said that they took advice as to how to develop the locality, four per cent said they sought help during the distribution of relief, four per cent said that they enlisted people's advice on matters concerning construction of roads and public buildings, and one per cent

said they consulted people as to how the dowry system could be eliminated. Other issues on which they consulted local people include extending and improving electricity supply, improving the social status of women, and creation of job opportunities. (Table VII 44.)

These results indicate that women members have good intentions and try to work with the local people to solve local problems. This provides yet another indication that women's participation in local politics and their joining local political leadership through elections is a good thing for local development and in relation to people's participation is local socio-economic transformation processes.

Comparative Performance of Male and Female Members

To a question on the comparative performance of male and female members, 22 per cent of the respondents said that women were doing comparatively better, while 44 per cent put them at par with their male counterparts. However, according to 28 per cent, female members were not doing as well as the male members and, in the opinion of three per cent, female members were doing much worse. On balance, therefore, the women members, as viewed by the respondents, were somewhat behind their male counterparts in terms of performance. But given that they are newly inducted, it can be said that they were doing alright. (Table VII 45.) As they would gather more experience and the reality of women in politics becomes more and more established and widespread, they should be able to consolidate their position in the course of time.

Honesty and Sincerity

In Bangladesh now corruption is all pervasive and honesty is a rare trait. Honesty of the female members were therefore sought to be investigated. On the question of honesty, the opinion of 65 per cent of the respondents has been that women members were, in general, relatively more honest than male members. According to 28 per cent of the respondents, male members were relatively more honest. About 7 per cent refrained from giving their opinion on this issue (Table VII 46.) These results suggest that in terms of honesty, women members are, as perceived by the respondents, relatively more honest. If this examples of women Union Parishad members are followed by others, there will be a thrust forward in relation to a more honest public administration in the country.

Why People Elected Women Members

The last question asked was as to why people voted for and elected women members. Their honesty was cited by 55 per cent of the respondents as the main reason why people voted for women candidates. Other reasons cited included a desire for change (14 per cent), reduction of male monopoly (11 per cent), improvement of the chance of promotion of women's employment (9 per cent), they can articulate the problems of rural women better (7 per cent), and they may ensure justice for rural women (4 per cent). (Table VII 47.) These are indeed, very good traits for public representatives to possess in the contest of making governance more effective.

Conclusion

Considering all the questions and answers discussed above, it can be said that:

- Women candidates are getting increasingly accepted by the general people, including by men
- A view is widely held, as has emerged, that women members are generally honest, seek to work with the people, and perform fairly well.
- Try to work for the good of the ordinary people, particularly women.
- They still face many hurdles to break the shackles of the traditional male-dominated society, but the survey results indicate that progress has been taking place and gathering momentum to break out of the traditional male-dominated society.
- Clearly, increased women's participation in local governance will not only increase gender balance in local governance but will also help shape a more effective, honest local governance for the benefit of all concerned.

STATISTICAL TABLES

Table VII 1

Age distribution of respondents
(% of respondents)

Age group	Male	Female	Total
18-20 years	7	7	7
21-30 years	27	41	34
31-40 years	31	37	34
41-56 years	27	14	20
57+ years	8	2	5
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 2

Marital status of respondents
(% of respondents)

Marital status	Male	Female	Total
Married	83	89	86
Unmarried	16	6	11
Divorced	0	1	0
Widower	1	1	1
Widow		4	2
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 3

Educational qualification of respondents
(% of respondents)

Educational level	Male	Female	Total
Illiterate	24	40	32
Upto V	23	26	24
V to below X	21	20	21
S.S.C. to below B.A.	24	12	18
B.A. and above	8	3	5
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 4

Occupational distribution of respondents
(% of respondents)

Occupation	Male	Female	Total
Govt. employees	3	1	2
Private employees	4	1	3
Govt. teachers	2	1	2
Private teachers	2	2	2
Businessmen	16	0	8
Industrial labourers	3	1	2
Day labourers	5	0	3
Politicians	2	1	1
Lawyers	0	0	0
Doctors	1	-	1
Engineers	0	-	0
Journalists	0	-	0
Farmers	34	1	18
Agri-labourers	12	1	6
Students	9	5	7
Housewives	0	86	43
Unemployees	5	1	3
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 5

Do you know about local government structure?
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Yes	52	38	45
No	46	60	53
No answer	1	2	2
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 6

Educational distribution of those who know about the
local government structure
(% of respondents by educational level)

Response	Illiterate	Up to V below	V to X below	SSC to below BA	BA+	Total
Yes	22	42	48	78	84	45
No	77	56	48	21	13	53
No answer	1	2	4	1	3	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table VII 7

Do you know how many members are there in the Union Parishad?
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Yes	77	54	65
No	23	46	35
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 8

Educational levels of those who know how many members there are in a Union Parishad
(% of respondents by educational level)

Response	Illiterate	Up to V below	V to X below	SSC to below BA	BA+	Total
Yes	37	67	77	92	95	65
No	63	33	23	8	5	35
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table VII 9

Do you know how many reserved seats are there for women in a Union Parishad?
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Know	76	62	69
Don't know	22	37	30
No response	1	1	1
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 10

Educational levels of those who know that there are three
reserved seats for women in a Union Parishad
(% of respondents by educational level)

Response	Illiterate	Up to V below	V to X below	SSC to below BA	BA+	Total
Yes	41	70	84	93	98	69
No	58	28	15	7	2	30
No answer	1	1	2	-	-	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table VII 11

Knowledge about the election process of women members in the reserved seats
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
By direct election	91	83	87
Don't know	8	15	11
No response	1	3	2
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 12

Do you know women candidates can compete against men
in seats other than those reserved for them?
(% of respondent)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Yes	90	81	86
No	10	19	14
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 13

Comments on the quality of elected women members
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Very good	12	16	14
Good	48	49	48
Average	33	25	29
Not good	4	3	3
Can't say	4	8	6
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 14

Distribution of respondents commenting on the leadership quality of women by educational level
(% of respondents by educational level)

Response	Illiterate	Up to V below	V to X below	SSC to below BA	BA+	Total
Very good	10	16	17	14	22	14
Good	55	41	50	48	33	48
Average	24	35	27	29	38	29
Not good	2	3	2	6	6	3
Can't say	9	6	4	3	-	6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table VII 15

Is it good or bad for women to compete against male members?
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Yes, good	81	90	85
No	17	7	12
No answer	2	4	3
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 16

Distribution of respondents commenting on whether it is good or bad for women to compete against men, by educational level
(% of respondents by educational level)

Response	Illiterate	Up to V below	V to X below	SSC to below BA	BA+	Total
Yes	78	87	87	92	90	85
No	17	11	11	7	10	12
No answer	5	2	1	2	-	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table VII 17

Why do you think that competing against male candidates is correct?
 (Asked to those who said it was correct for women to compete against men)
 (% of relevant respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
<u>i. Through this process women could establish their self-respect</u>			
Agree strongly	55	61	58
Agree	42	36	39
Don't agree	2	0	1
Don't know	1	3	2
Total	100	100	100
<u>ii. Direct election will build up people's confidence in women as leaders</u>			
Agree strongly	37	46	42
Agree	61	50	55
Don't agree	1	1	1
Don't know	2	3	2
Total	100	100	100
<u>iii. Direct election will give strong support to women members to participate in local government work</u>			
Agree strongly	44	51	47
Agree	53	45	48
Don't agree	2	1	2
Don't know	2	3	3
Total	100	100	100
<u>iv. Women members could perform as well as male members</u>			
Agree strongly	46	56	51
Agree	49	40	44
Don't agree	3	2	2
Don't know	2	2	2
Total	100	100	100
<u>v. Women members could highlight the local problems easily and strongly</u>			
Agree strongly	58	66	62
Agree	38	31	34
Don't agree	2	1	2
Don't know	2	2	2
Total	100	100	100
<u>vi. This system will help promote women's empowerment</u>			
Agree strongly	46	51	48
Agree	50	43	46
Don't agree	1	1	1
Don't know	3	5	4
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 18

Why do people think that competing against male candidates is not correct?
(asked to those respondents who expressed this view)
(% of relevant respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
<u>i. Male dominated society could create obstacles for women to compete against men</u>			
Agree strongly	23	10	19
Agree	60	56	59
Don't agree	11	12	11
Don't know	7	22	11
Total	100	100	100
<u>ii. Female members will face economic problems during direct election</u>			
Agree strongly	15	10	14
Agree	55	61	57
Don't agree	21	10	18
Don't know	9	20	12
Total	100	100	100
<u>iii. Women will face problems during campaign</u>			
Agree strongly	55	34	49
Agree	37	46	39
Don't agree	4	5	4
Don't know	5	15	8
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 19

Do you think the women who contested the elections
and won are eligible candidates?
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Yes	78	86	82
No	18	9	14
Don't know	4	4	4
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 20

Factors that helped women candidates to win
(% of respondents)

Factor	Male	Female	Total
Honesty	35	34	34
Welfare work	24	24	24
Cooperation in local development	21	20	20
Effort for women's self-employment	10	11	10
Stand against violence			
Against women	11	11	11
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 21

Reasons why women candidates were not eligible as candidates
(asked to the 14 per cent of all respondents who thought women were not eligible candidates)
(% of relevant respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Depends on husband's help	28	26	27
No leadership quality	17	25	19
They do not understand work	18	20	19
No experience of social work	9	6	8
Doubt about honesty and neutrality	5	8	6
Lack of proper education	19	12	17
Economically not solvent	4	3	4
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 22

What are the qualifications needed for women to succeed in Union Parishad elections?
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
<u>i. Minimum education to understand the work involved</u>			
Very much needed	86	89	87
Needed	13	11	12
Not so needed	0		0
Can't say	1	1	1
Total	100	100	100
<u>ii. Ability to make public speeches</u>			
Very much needed	52	56	54
Needed	42	37	39
Not so needed	5	5	5
Can't say	1	2	2
Total	100	100	100
<u>iii. Involvement in social welfare activities</u>			
Very much needed	69	72	70
Needed	31	27	29
Not so needed	0		0
Can't say	0	2	1
Total	100	100	100
<u>iv. Self confidence</u>			
Very much needed	65	66	65
Needed	34	32	33
Not so needed	1	1	1
Can't say	1	1	1
Total	100	100	100
<u>v. Courage to perform responsibilities honestly</u>			
Very much needed	71	73	72
Needed	28	25	27
Not so needed	0	0	0
Can't say	0	1	1
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 23

Measures that may be taken to motivate local women to become good candidates
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
<u>i. Training for leadership development</u>			
Most needed	80	81	81
Needed	18	15	17
Not needed	0	0	0
Don't know	2	3	2
Total	100	100	100
<u>ii. Work efficiency and good public relations</u>			
Most needed	59	64	62
Needed	39	32	36
Not needed	0	1	0
Don't know	2	4	3
Total	100	100	100
<u>iii. Gathering of experience to work with members of the public</u>			
Most needed	64	68	66
Needed	34	28	31
Not needed	1	1	1
Don't know	1	4	3
Total	100	100	100
<u>iv. Attainment of proper education</u>			
Most needed	75	78	77
Needed	22	18	20
Don't know	3	4	3
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 24

Do you think women benefit by contesting in Union Parishad elections?
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Yes	81	88	85
No	14	8	11
Don't know	5	4	4
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 25

How do women benefit by participating in Union Parishad elections?
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
<u>i. Their self confidence increases</u>			
Agree strongly	54	64	59
Agree	43	33	38
Don't agree	1	1	1
Don't know	1	2	2
Total	100	100	100
<u>ii. Their political ability increases</u>			
Agree strongly	39	51	45
Agree	57	45	51
Don't agree	2	2	2
Don't know	2	2	2
Total	100	100	100
<u>iii. Their ability to highlight problems increases</u>			
Agree strongly	50	61	56
Agree	47	35	41
Don't agree	3	1	2
Don't know	1	3	2
Total	100	100	100
<u>iv. Their social status increases</u>			
Agree strongly	40	53	47
Agree	56	42	49
Don't agree	3	3	3
Don't know	2	2	2
Total	100	100	100
<u>v. They can understand the administrative and development processes about which they knew little generally</u>			
Agree strongly	49	59	54
Agree	46	35	40
Don't agree	2	1	2
Don't know	2	5	4
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 26

Why would women not benefit from participation in Union Parishad elections?
 (asked to those respondents who said women candidates would not benefit)
 (% of relevant respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
i. In a male dominated society women's work is not valued properly			
Agree strongly	41	47	43
Agree	38	35	37
Don't agree	14	6	11
Don't know	7	12	9
Total	100	100	100
ii. Male dominated society may create problems, and women candidates will be in trouble as a result			
Agree strongly	31	43	35
Agree	47	31	41
Don't agree	14	12	13
Don't know	8	14	10
Total			

Table VII 27

Do you think women candidates faced problems during elections?
 (% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Yes	20	20	20
No	77	77	77
Don't know	3	3	3
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 28

What types of problems women candidates faced during election time?
 (asked to the 20 per cent of all respondents who said women candidates faced problems)
 (% of relevant respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
<u>i. Campaigning by women is not easily accepted by society</u>			
Agree strongly	59	55	57
Agree	37	39	38
Don't agree	3	1	2
Can't say	1	5	3
Total	100	100	100
<u>ii. Women cannot move freely</u>			
Agree strongly	60	50	55
Agree	34	37	36
Don't agree	5	8	7
Can't say	1	5	3
Total	100	100	100
<u>iii. Women face financial constraints</u>			
Agree strongly	37	45	41
Agree	27	27	27
Don't agree	24	23	23
Can't say	12	6	9
Total	100	100	100
<u>iv. Women are hindered by religious groups</u>			
Agree strongly	38	49	43
Agree	27	13	20
Don't agree	29	29	29
Can't say	6	8	7
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 29

Do you have suggestions as to how the election-related problems faced by women may be overcome?
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Yes	45	34	39
No	40	49	44
No answer	15	18	17
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 30

Do you think the new local government structure would be helpful in removing some of the problems faced by women candidates?
(asked those who said they had suggestions to offer)
(% of relevant respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Yes	97	93	95
No	2	2	2
No answer	2	5	3
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 31

Do you think if local government is established and works properly, local development will get a momentum?
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Yes	97	97	97
No	2	2	2
No answer	2	1	1
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 32

Will poor people benefit if local government is established and works properly?
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Yes	97	98	97
No	2	1	1
No answer	1	2	1
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 33

Will women benefit if the local government system is established and works properly?
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Yes	97	98	97
No	2	1	2
No answer	1	1	1
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 34

How will be the poor, particularly women, benefit from the new system of local government?

(asked to those, i.e. 97 per cent of respondents who said the poor, particularly women, would benefit)
(% of relevant respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
<u>i. Poor people, particularly women, will get real justice</u>			
Agree strongly	76	82	79
Agree	23	17	20
Don't agree	1	1	1
Don't know	1	1	1
Total	100	100	100
<u>ii. Local problems will be addressed on a priority basis</u>			
Agree strongly	63	72	68
Agree	35	25	30
Don't agree	1	1	1
Don't know	1	2	1
Total	100	100	100
<u>iii. Poor people, particularly women, will have access to education and development facilities</u>			
Agree strongly	67	75	71
Agree	31	22	27
Don't agree	1	0	0
Don't know	2	3	2
Total	100	100	100
<u>iv. The poor, particularly women, may receive assistance for improving their living conditions</u>			
Agree strongly	21	23	22
Agree	12	7	10
Don't agree	0	0	0
Don't know	66	70	68
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 35

Had elected women members or any of their family members been involved in local politics before they contested elections?
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Yes	61	51	56
No	31	39	35
No answer	8	10	9
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 36

Which family members (in terms of relationship with the women members) were involved in politics?
(asked to those who replied in the affirmative as reported in Table 35)
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Husband	77	75	76
Father	14	17	16
Brother	7	6	7
Uncle	1	1	1
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 37

Do you think society will benefit through election of women in different tiers of the local government?
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Yes	85	92	88
No	13	5	9
No answer	3	3	3
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 38

Performance of the elected women chairmen and members
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Highly satisfactory	3	7	5
Satisfactory	71	76	73
Not satisfactory	22	15	19
Poor	4	1	2
No answer	1	1	1
Total	100	100	100

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Table VII 39

Have women candidates faced any problems created by religious groups?
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Yes	12	12	12
No	87	86	86
No answer	2	2	2
Total	100	100	100

ঢাকা
বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
গ্রন্থাগার

Table VII 40

What type of problems did the religious leaders create for women candidates?
 (asked to 12 per cent of all respondents, who said the religious leaders created problems)
 (% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Sharia law does not support women leadership	76	67	71
Purdah system will be dishonoured	16	7	11
Religious leaders sought to disrupt campaigning by women candidates	1	7	4
Women are not eligible for leadership	7	15	11
Women candidates and their family members were threatened	-	4	2
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 41

While the religious leaders did not create any problems for women candidates, did they extend any cooperation to them?
 (asked to 86 per cent of all respondents, who said religious leaders did not create problems for women candidates)
 (% of relevant respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Yes	19	17	18
No	81	83	82
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 42

What type of cooperation did the religious leaders extend to women candidates campaigns?
(asked to those who said the religious leaders extended cooperation)
(% of relevant respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Campaigned in favour of women candidates	66	54	61
Encouraged people to vote for women candidates	27	28	27
Helped women candidates in campaigns	7	16	12
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 43

Comparative acceptability of men and women as elected members
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
<u>i. Acceptability of male members</u>			
Very good	44	25	34
Average	42	57	50
Not so good	11	11	11
Very bad	1	2	1
Can't say	3	5	4
Total	100	100	100
<u>i. Acceptability of female members</u>			
Very good	38	55	46
Average	43	33	38
Not so good	16	7	11
Very bad	1	0	1
Can't say	3	4	4
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 44

Types of assistance/advice women members seek from members of the public
(% of respondents)

Assistance/Advice Sought	Male	Female	Total
For literacy programmes	48	61	54
For social work	13	10	12
For solving social problems	7	4	6
As to how to develop the locality	7	3	5
During the distribution of relief	5	3	4
During construction of roads and public buildings	5	2	4
As regards steps to eliminate the dowry system	1	1	1
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 45

Comparative performance of male and female members
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Women are doing better comparatively	22	23	22
Women are doing the same as men	41	47	44
Women are not doing as well as men	31	26	28
Women are doing much worse	4	2	3
Can't say	2	2	2
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 46

Comparative honesty and sincerity of male and female members
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
Female members are comparatively more honest	55	76	65
Male member are comparatively more honest	37	19	28
Can't say	8	5	7
Total	100	100	100

Table VII 47

Reasons why people elected women members
(% of respondents)

Response	Male	Female	Total
For their honesty	52	58	55
To reduce monopoly of male members	11	11	11
For change	18	10	14
They can articulate the problems of rural women	7	7	7
They may promote women's employment	7	11	9
Women will get justice	4	4	4
They will create more opportunity of education for women	1	0	1
Total	100	100	100

Chapter VIII

GOVERNANCE AND POLICY MAKING IN DEMOCRATIC BANGLADESH

It was expected that Bangladesh would make steady progress towards the establishment of a true democratic order, following the overthrow of the autocratic rule in December 1990. But, the country now faces serious political uncertainties because such actions as suppression of opposition, not listening to the views of those who do not conform to those of the rulers and, moreover, creating impediments and problems for them etc. taken as major political weapons by the elected government.

Public opinion research is a practical way of learning what the nation thinks about the political developments and practices in the country. Specifically it is important how the elected representatives relate to the people and their concerns, once they are elected. Also in a democratic country dialogue is necessary between the ruling and the opposition parties for properly managing the country's affairs, particularly with respect to the major problems faced. In fact, the main opposition party in a democratic country always works as a shadow govt. But, in Bangladesh this is not so. Once elected, the ruling party totally forgets that people are the supreme authority. The government, thus, often disregards the opinions and views of other political parties. Also, the opposition parties do not always work as opposition parties should in a functioning democracy. So, one hears a lot of mutual blaming by the ruling and opposition parties.

How Bangladesh has been shaping up in the fields of economics, religion and politics? Have there been democratic practices followed? Or, dogmatism or fundamentalism of one sort or another has been in practice? In order to ascertain how people viewed these issues a number of relevant questions were asked in a national survey conducted in March 1995. The survey methodology used was the same as explained in chapter II. The total number of nationally representative sample in this survey was 1,826.

• Crespi Irving – Public Opinion, Polls and Democracy

In any country, the economic policies should be formulated with reference to its socio-economic realities. Asked if, instead of that being the case, the policy regime in a country was based on a particular ideology and implemented without regard to the wishes of the people, would that not be a kind of economic dogmatism or fundamentalism, 93.2 percent of the respondents expressed the view that it would be (Table VIII. 1). The proportion saying this has been the highest among urban males (97.2%) and the lowest among rural females (89.2%). But, it is the overwhelming majority among both males and females in both urban and rural areas.

Table VIII. 1

Economic policies of a country should be determined on the basis of the country's socio-economic realities and factor endowments. But, if the policies are instead dogmatically dependent on a particular set of rules and ideas, would you call it an imposition, a kind of fundamentalism?

	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
Yes	97.2	94.0	95.8	94.5	89.2	92.2	95.3	90.6	93.2
No	2.8	6.0	4.2	5.5	10.8	7.8	4.7	9.4	6.8

Table VIII. 2

Do you think there is such an imposition (as indicated in question in Table VIII.1) in respect of economic policy making in Bangladesh currently?

	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
Yes	82.4	81.5	82.0	76.0	71.0	73.8	77.8	74.0	76.1
No	17.6	18.5	18.0	24.0	29.0	26.2	22.2	26.0	23.9

In the opinion of over 76 percent of the respondents such a dogmatic approach to economic policy making and management prevails in Bangladesh. This view is more prevalent among men compared to women and in urban areas compared to rural areas. It is the age of

privatization, deregulation and globalization. The whole process is to be led by the private sector and markets. Obviously, in this arrangement, those who have access to resources and to policy making bodies, prosper while those who have no such access remain deprived. In the divided society in Bangladesh, only a small proportion of the population belong to the economic elite class, while the large majority is deprived. People of Bangladesh are clearly aware of the practical implications of the free market approach dogmatically followed in the country. Thus, three-fourths and more of the respondents diagnosed that an economic dogmatism was ruling in Bangladesh.

People also have expressed their opinions as to how economic progress can be achieved in Bangladesh. It has been suggested by 45 percent of the respondents that for economic development of the country it is necessary to set up more industries and to design and implement policies aimed at increasing productive employment. Another important element is adoption of policies aimed at raising production, particularly in industries, and marketing of the products (26%). A mixed approach has been advocated by a fifth of the total respondents. But the ongoing market economy approach has been supported by only 8.4 per cent of the respondents, which is consistent with the opinion (expressed under the preceding question) of the large majority of the respondents that the ongoing approach is dogmatic it does not take into account people's wishes and interests.

Table VIII. 3

What do you think are the ways of achieving economic progress in Bangladesh?

	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
By taking steps to establish more industries and create more productive employment opportunities	35.1	39.6	37.1	46.5	50.8	48.4	43.2	47.5	45.1
By adopting policies aimed at raising production, particularly in industries and marketing of the products	28.4	26.2	27.5	24.4	26.9	25.5	25.5	26.7	26.0
By following a mixed economy approach	25.3	25.8	25.5	20.3	16.1	18.5	21.7	19.0	20.5
Through market economy	11.2	8.4	10.0	8.9	6.1	7.7	9.5	6.8	8.4

Regarding politics, a question was asked as to whether it should be viewed as political fundamentalism if a particular political party considers its policies, ideas and ideology to be the best that all should accept them, and that the country should be run accordingly without any regard to the opinions of others. An affirmative answer has been given by about 93 percent of the respondents. This view is held by almost a similar proportion of respondents in urban and rural areas as well as among men and women. It is the opinion of about 78 percent of the respondents that such is the case in Bangladesh currently. In urban areas this view is more prevalent among women compared to men.

Table VIII. 4

If a political party thinks that its policies are appropriate to the exclusion of all other opinions so that the country must be run in accordance with its policies only, then would you say that this attitude is an imposition, a kind of political fundamentalism

	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
Yes	91.0	94.0	92.3	93.2	92.7	93.0	92.5	93.1	92.8
No	9.0	6.0	7.7	6.8	7.3	7.0	7.5	6.9	7.2

Table VIII. 5

Do you think such a party based attitude prevails in Bangladesh in relation to the management of the country's affairs?

	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
Yes	77.2	83.2	79.8	80.1	74.0	77.7	79.3	77.1	78.3
No	22.8	16.8	20.2	19.9	25.4	22.3	20.7	22.9	21.7

Asked as to what might be the result when the country is run on such party line the responses given are that the country will not benefit much while the party interests will be served (59.2%), the plight of the people will not improve (18.6%), there would be inter-party chashes (11.9%), and the overall social condition may in fact deteriorate (7.5%).

Table VIII. 6

If the country is run in accordance with such a party attitude, what do you think will be the outcome?

	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
Party interests served, the country will not benefit much	62.4	53.9	58.5	62.2	56.0	59.6	62.3	55.3	59.2
Little or no benefit will accrue to the people at large	14.5	23.8	18.8	17.4	20.0	18.5	16.6	21.2	18.6
Political conflicts will increase	12.2	13.5	12.8	11.2	11.1	11.2	11.5	11.8	11.6
Overall social condition will deteriorate	8.1	6.2	7.2	6.7	8.9	7.7	7.1	8.1	7.5
No comment	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.4	4.0	3.1	2.5	3.6	3.0

On the question of religious fundamentalism, it is the opinion of over 81 percent of the respondents that religion must not be used to serve political purpose. This result can be interpreted to clearly indicate that the respondents are against using religion in politics.

In the opinion of 98 percent of the respondents, women's education cannot be anti-religious. Further, political activities in religious institutions or religious functions are not supported by 89 percent.

Table VIII. 7

Do you think women's education is anit-religious?

	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
Yes	2.1	2.6	2.3	2.5	1.9	2.2	2.4	2.1	2.2
No	97.9	97.4	97.7	97.5	98.1	97.8	97.6	97.9	97.8

Political awareness of the Bangladeshi people

In general people of Bangladesh are politically conscious, from rudimentary to high levels. Those who are more aware about politics can and do read newspapers, listen to radio and TV news and press conferences and take part in political activities. There are two major political parties in Bangladesh and most of MPs in all three parliament so far elected, have been from these two parties.

To know about the peoples political awareness, among on other issues, BUP ran an opinion poll in 1995 December. In that survey, several questions in socio-economic and political awareness and voting practices were asked concerning the involvement of the respondents in social and political activities of the country over the past 2-3 years, it has emerged that about 64 percent cast their vote in one or more elections such as pourasava and union council elections, 8.7 percent tried to pursue others to vote for particular parties, and 6.7 percent were involved in party political work and 14.2 percent participated in mobilizing funds during natural disasters. It appears from these responses that people at large participate in social and political activities wherever there are opportunities.

In July 1995, another survey was conducted to collect information from people about their knowledge on voting and politics. On a question regarding the usefulness of parliamentary election, 60 percent of the respondents said that the destiny of the nation would improve as a result of parliamentary elections, while 39 percent said that elections would not improve the lot of the people. Of those whose opinion was in favour of elections, about 58 percent said that through the electoral process people would be able to choose the best party which would work for the betterment of the people's lives, while about 21 percent mentioned that the

electoral exercise would force the political parties to actually understand that people are the source of all political power. Another 19 percent felt that political parties would become more sensitive and would give more consideration to people's welfare if they face elections every five years.

Table VIII 8

Did you vote in the 1991 parliamentary elections?

	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
Yes	67.1	55.9	62.3	66.2	51.0	60.2	66.5	52.2	60.9
No	32.9	44.1	37.6	33.8	49.0	39.8	33.5	47.5	39.1

Of those who said that elections are not helpful toward an improvement of the people's lot, about 60 percent said that the people did not get any benefit from the past parliamentary elections; it only benefited the political parties. According to 20 percent, political parties often give words but seldom keep them.

Those who voted in parliamentary elections were asked them if they had voted for the party they liked or on a person to person basis? In 1991 elections, about 61 of those who informed that they had voted for their chosen party.

When asked as to what characteristics would they consider a good candidate should process about 32 percent suggested that they should be educated and knowledgably, about 31 percent would like them to be personally honest, impartial and of good character, and about 21 percent felt that they should have political experience.

Table VIII. 9

What qualities would you look for in a candidate for election?

	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
Experience in politics is a must	25.2	21.0	23.3	21.1	18.4	19.9	22.2	19.1	20.9
Experience of working with the people	11.4	8.6	10.2	10.1	10.9	10.4	10.4	10.3	10.4
The candidate should be above agreed and bias and a person of character	30.3	32.6	31.3	29.6	31.0	30.2	29.8	31.4	30.5
The candidate should be politically committed	2.7	4.1	3.3	5.0	2.4	3.9	4.4	2.9	3.7
Must be educated and knowledgeable	28.8	33.0	30.7	23.8	35.9	34.1	31.7	35.1	33.2
Misc.	1.5	0.7	1.2	0.9	0.7	0.8	1.1	0.7	0.9
No opinion	-	-	-	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.4

When asked about the qualifications of candidates, about 80 percent said that they could not support the attitude of political parties in accepting within their folds people who suddenly became rich and giving them an opportunity to participate in parliamentary elections. Asked why they would not support this, about 45 percent said such people are self-seeking, and when elected they only promote their own interest and do not work for the country. About 23 percent suggested that, after being elected, they give more attention to recoup the huge amounts of money that they spend in electioneering.

Table VIII. 10

Should political parties endorse those persons as politicians who
have amassed fortunes in various ways?

	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
Yes	4.5	3.4	4.0	5.2	6.3	5.6	5.0	5.5	5.2
No	86.2	83.9	85.2	84.0	69.3	77.7	84.6	73.5	79.8
No opinion	9.3	12.7	10.8	10.9	24.4	16.7	10.4	21.1	15.0

Table VIII.11

If your answer is, "No", what are your reasons?

	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
These opportunists will serve and swell their won interests only; the country won't gain anything	42.9	42.0	42.5	47.8	42.5	45.8	46.4	42.4	44.8
Those who get elected by spending a lot of money later busy themselves, more than anything else, with pursuits to recover the money spent; so they prove to be of no service to the people	22.3	21.9	22.1	21.0	25.9	22.9	21.3	24.6	22.6
One cannot acquire skill in any occupation or profession just like that; so having money only cannot make a politician of one overnight	14.6	14.7	14.7	11.7	10.6	11.3	12.5	11.9	12.3
The existing opportunity for people with black money to get elected is a reason for violence for violence and terrorism in society	10.8	13.4	11.9	9.5	8.6	9.2	9.8	10.2	10.0
Such candidates have no links with the people and so they do not have the capability to take up people-oriented work	8.0	6.3	7.2	7.3	9.3	8.1	7.5	8.3	7.8
Misc.	1.4	1.8	1.6	2.7	3.0	2.8	2.3	2.6	2.4

Policy

Democracy in Bangladesh is rather new, only about 15 years did. Public opinions do not yet find their way in a concerted manner to inform and influence public policy making in the country. A political culture is not yet established for the politicians to be sensitive to public opinions. People are treated as if they should elect the representatives, who would work as they please without regard to public opinions. Indeed political parties are the key players in democratic governance. While the party in power is responsible for running the government, the opposition parties are like shadow government. They will raise alternative voices as appropriate in the interest of the nation and the people. The government should consider those views and conduct appropriate debates with the opposition before policies and action programmes are finalized. Both have important roles to play. In this process the overall interest of the nation should be the prime consideration. A spirit of tolerance and mutual accommodation, therefore, is yet another requisite of parliamentary democracy. The opposition's role is to oppose and criticize as seen by them to be appropriate. Criticisms should not be for the sake of opposition. Debates between the government and the opposition should be healthy, constructive and within the parameters of established practices and convention. Decency and decorum have to be maintained. But in Bangladesh the picture is different. Neither the government nor the opposition parties maintain democratic practices and decorum. Moreover, ruling and opposition parties maintain distance from each other so that an environment for both to work together is virtually absent. The main opposition the current and the previous parliament tended to remain out of parliament for long periods while the government failed to create conducive environment for the main opposition to make its contributions effectively in parliament.

Regarding policies and their implementation our concern is whether or not officials perform their public tasks properly. Or do they act improperly for personal benefits, whether officials manipulate voters under political motivation, whether police overlook crimes in return for a bribe, whether a housing inspector ignore unsafe buildings in return for a favour, and so on?

Public opinion polling can paint out the people's desire and thinking about government and its functioning including the problem therein, but it is up to the government to take those findings into account in the context of policy making and policy implementation with a view to improving the situation. Public opinions, generated through opinion surveys, are now

widely used around the world by governments, politicians, businesses, and others working in the public domain towards designing and putting in place the best ways forward. In Bangladesh, this is yet no so. Neither the government nor the opposition uses even available public opinion survey results, let alone others. As a result, the practice of scientific generation of public opinions is not flourishing. If a government has the intention to serve the people and not the political party in power, it should give due emphases on people's opinion, and encourage scientific generation and presentation of data and information on various relevant issues.

Chapter IX

CORRUPTION IN BANGLADESH

Experience in different countries show that public opinion plays a vital role in policy making and establishing interrelationship between people. Opinions, perceptions and expectations of the people on various important national issues revealed in such a survey and prepared in an appropriate manner should serve a very useful purpose by informing, assisting and strengthening national policy making processes. Indeed, people's participation is an essential aspect of a democratic order. People can seek to secure their rights and fulfill their responsibilities in a democratic disposition by expressing their opinions, perceptions and expectations in such a manner that data and information are reliable and available to all concerned. Indeed, the government and the various political parties can benefit, as they shape their policies and programmes, by taking into account scientifically generated opinions, perceptions and expectations of the people.

8.1 1997 BUP Survey

In April 1997 the BUP conducted a public opinion survey on corruption in various government departments branches of Bangladesh. This study was conducted in 60 districts, and a total sample of 2197, drawn from among voting-age people through multi-stage random sampling procedure as explained in the introductory chapter, were interviewed. This number was distributed between urban and rural areas as follows: 28 per cent urban and 72 per cent rural. From each district one thana, then two unions from that thana, and then two villages from those two unions were selected randomly. The respondents were then randomly picked from those villages. The urban sub-sample was proportionally distributed to various urban centres and then the respondents were randomly selected for interview. Of those who have been interviewed in rural areas, men account for 54 per cent and women 46 per cent. For urban areas, these percentages were 53 per cent and 47 per cent respectively. Only one respondent was interviewed from each household.

Corruption is a global phenomenon varying in magnitude and methods. In Bangladesh, corruption is pervasive and is a major obstacle to the development of the country. It was expected that Bangladesh would make steady progress towards the establishment of a

democratic order following the overthrow of the autocratic rule in December 1990. But, the country faced ever increasing corruption. This survey included several questions on the state of corruption in the country.

Asked as to ‘how important an obstacle is corruption for the development of the country’? Eighty three per cent of the respondents said that corruption was a major obstacle, and 62 per cent suggested that government officials (political and bureaucratic) were mainly responsible for corruption and bribery in the country. Sixty-nine per cent also believed that corrupt government officials are a threat for the country’s; future prospects.

Table IX A

Corruption in Government institutions

Government department	Highly Corrupt			Corrupt			Corruption Free			No Reply		
	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
Police department	82	83	83	13	10	12	2	2	2	2	5	3
Customs department	83	73	78	12	16	13	3	7	5	3	4	3
Income Tax department	66	61	64	25	27	26	5	8	6	4	4	4
Secretariat as a whole	38	32	35	46	47	47	12	16	14	4	6	5
Judiciary	28	25	27	59	56	57	11	15	13	3	4	4

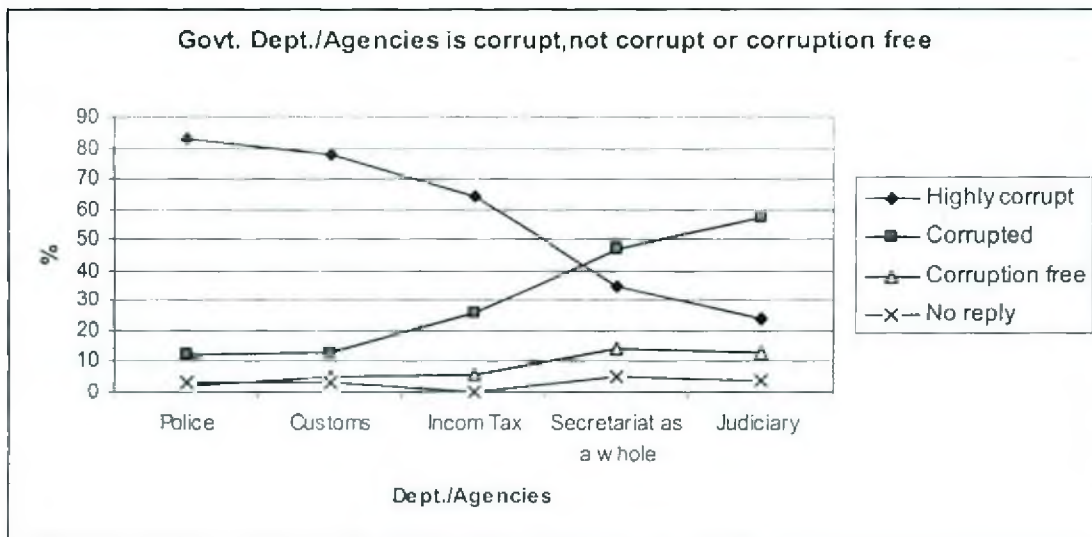
Source: BUP survey 1997

The next question related to the prevalence of corruption in different government departments. According to the perceptions of the people, generated through the survey, the following are the five most corrupt departments: Police, Customs, Income tax, Secretariat as a whole, and Lower Judiciary. The police has been suggested to be the most corrupted department. About 83 per cent of the respondents said that the police department was highly corrupt and another 12 per cent said it was corrupt. Only 2 per cent said that the police department was corruption free. Customs department has been found to be the second most corrupt department, with 78 per cent indicating it to be highly corrupt. Only 5 per cent said it was corruption free. Income tax was in the third position as a highly corrupt department, only

6 per cent saying it is corruption free. Secretariat as a whole was in the fourth position, and Lower Judiciary came last in the highly corrupt category (Table IX A and Figure A).

When the rankings of highly corrupt and corrupt are combined, one can see that in the opinion of 95 per cent of the respondents the police department is corrupt, followed by customs department (91 per cent) income tax department (90 per cent) Lower Judiciary (84 per cent) and secretariat as a whole (82 per cent).

Figure A



Obviously, this is not limited to the bureaucracy. Elected officials may also be involved, and even corruption in the private sector may have implications for public policy making and implementation.

One may ask why may one bother about corruption? It has always been present in human exchange, and there does not seem to be much one can do about it. The answer to this is twofold. First, the effects of corruption are horrid, and it is not something society should tolerate. While it does surely exist everywhere, it is worse in some places than in others.

Surely there are things one can do about it. The worst cost of corruption may be lack of faith and disregard for the rule of law that widespread corruption breeds. This can also contribute

to broader political instability. Corruptions reduce both economic growth and the benefits we get from the governmental services.

Asked as to how the corrupt government officials should be dealt with, 54 per cent said that if government officials were found to be corrupt they should be sacked immediately. About 80 per cent expressed the opinion that any one found to be corrupt at any time should never been given a high government position. Clearly people want that corrupt officials must be severely dealt with. A democratic government should take serious note of the people's opinions and suggestions in dealing with corruption

8.2 A Recent Survey on Corruption by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB)

TIB has been conducting surveys on corruption in the country for several years. The results of the TIB survey in 2004 give more recent perspectives on corruption of the country, which we consider below. It is seen that, in general, situation has worsened since 1997 when BUP conducted its survey, the results of which have been reported above.

8.2.1 Methodology

This survey included nine government service sectors: education, health, land administration, police, Judiciary, power sector, local government, relief bank and pension.

Sample size of this national survey was 3,000 households. Out of 3,000 households, 2,001 (70 per cent) were taken from rural areas and 900 (30 per cent) from urban areas. The six administrative divisions were divided into rural and urban for sampling purposes.

First 120 cluster areas/villages were selected on a random sampling basis, which are spread over 55 districts. Though 23.31 of the population is urban, 30 per cent of the sample households were taken from urban areas, considering that urban population are more educated and play a grater role in modern economic activities.

8.2.2 Background of the Respondents

In this household survey, 67.3 per cent of the respondents are male and 32.7 per cent female, 13.5 per cent illiterate, and 26 per cent able to sign their name; 24 per cent passed SSC and 6 per cent HSC, and 7.9 per cent B.A or B.SC, while 23 per cent completed primary education.

Of the respondents the profession of 33 per cent profession is agriculture, 23 per cent business, 12 per cent service, and 11 per cent sale of labour.

8.2.3 Survey Results

Education Sector

The focus was to find out corruption involved in the admission procedure, collection of different types of unauthorized donation and fees, and also in giving school scholarships.

From the survey results, it has been observed that in a year over 40 per cent of the students admitted in different government and private primary schools have paid, on average, Tk. 209 for admission purpose. Rural respondents paid, on average, Tk. 95; and urban respondents Tk. 628. On the other hand, 43 per cent of the students of secondary schools paid, on average, Tk. 719 as donation for admission purpose; rural respondents Tk. 269 and urban respondents Tk. 1,920. (Table IX 1 and 2)

At the primary level, 32.4 per cent of the students admitted paid Tk.40 per person to be admitted and included in the scholarship programmes. At the secondary level, 22 per cent of the students paid Tk. 45 each for enrolment and inclusion in the scholarship programmes

Of those who got scholarships, about 5 per cent complained that they were getting less than the amount fixed by the government. On the other hand, 38 per cent of the students, complained that they were getting less than what government has fixed. At the primary level, teachers take subscription and fees from nine sectors. This survey shows student at the primary level pay Tk. 58 as unauthorized fees in a year.

It has been observed that the teachers offer private tuition to their own students. Thus, 16 per cent of the students at the primary level receive private coaching on payment from their own teachers. The percentage is 36.4 per cent at the secondary level, 41 per cent in colleges and 32.0 per cent at the university level. The highest proportion of the 42 per cent is in engineering, medical, and technical colleges.

The survey report concluded that, in the survey year, an amount of about Tk. 54 crore 65 lakh was collected under various heads at primary level as subscription fees. Moreover, about Tk.

3 crore 43 lakh was taken as bribe for inclusion of the concerned students in the scholarship programmes. At the secondary level, about 2 crore 57 lakh taka was collected for the same purpose. Under various heads, a total of about taka 60 crore 65 lakh was collected in the survey year at primary and secondary levels.

Table IX 1

Percentage of students paying donation for admission purpose

Level of education	%		
	Village	City	Total
Primary school	39.7	43.0	40.4
Secondary school	44.9	37.8	42.7
College	38.9	33.8	37.3

Source: TIB survey 2004

Table IX 2

Amount of donation for admission per student

Level of education	Amount (Tk)		
	Village	City	Total
Primary school	95	628	209
Secondary school	269	1920	719
College	722	1538	1031

Source: TIB survey 2004

Table IX 3

Percentage of sampled students taking private tuition from their won teachers

Educational institutions	%
Primary school	16.4
Kindergarten	25.3
Secondary school	36.4
College	41.2
University	32.0
Madrasha	17.4
Engineering/Technical/Medical college	41.7
Others	09.0
Average	21.7

Source: TIB survey 2004

Table IX 4

Donation paid to primary schools

Donation	Percentage of sampled students who paid	Amount of donation student
1st term examination	94.28	17.60
2 nd term examination	93.72	17.37
Annual examination	56.45	16.00
Free books	40.87	11.32
Annual sports	34.00	11.52
Milad	22.67	08.59
Refreshment for education affair	02.13	07.59
Class promotion	05.02	21.43
Others	15.57	28.27
Total	99.56	58.26

Source: TIB survey 2004

Health Issues

In this survey information on bribes 'paid for medical tests, treatment and operations in public hospitals to hospital authorities, doctors or other concerned persons. It was found that, in the survey year, about 65 per cent of the households surveyed went to government hospitals to receive treatment. Of the respondents, 29.4 per cent paid Tk. 60 each every time to doctors for outdoor attention, which is illegal, consisting of 33 per cent in rural areas and 21 per cent in urban areas. About 20 per cent out of those who received treatment as in patients in public hospitals paid, on an average, Tk. 478 each to doctors. About 24 per cent of the respondents in rural areas paid Tk. 513 each to receive treatment as in patients in a hospital, while about 14 per cent of the urban respondents paid Tk. 365 each for the same purpose.

Some 37 per cent of those who underwent operations in public hospitals paid, on an average, Tk. 1,420 to doctors, which is illegal. In rural areas about 40 per cent of the respondents paid, on an average, Tk. 266 to doctors for this purpose while, in urban areas, 33 per cent paid Tk. 3,412 each, on average, to doctors for the same purpose.

Of the respondents who had to be x-rayed in public hospitals, during the year, 57 per cent paid, on an average, Tk. 516 each to the doctors, which is illegal. Sixty per cent of those who had to have their urine, stool and blood examined in public hospitals paid, on an average, Tk. 410 each in addition to the official rates. In rural areas 68 per cent paid Tk. 231 each and, in urban area, 47 per cent paid Tk. 844 each to public hospitals, to have their urine, stool or blood examined.

Of those who received treatment in public hospital 94 per cent had to buy medicine from the market. Also, 14 per cent had to buy medicines from pharmacies nominated by doctors and 21 per cent were advised to go doctors' personal chambers for consultation.

This survey shows that huge amounts of illegal money are taken by the hospitals/doctors from patients. An estimated Tk. 30 crore from indoor patients, approximately Tk. 15 crore 79 lakh from outdoor patients during the survey year, about 21 crore from those who had to undergo operation, Tk. 14 crore 6 lakh from patients who received x-ray service, and Tk. 32 crore 90 lakh from patients who had their urine, stool and blood examined. Thus, the public hospitals collected illegal money of approximately Tk. 113 crore 75 lakh during the survey year.

Table IX 5

Bribe given to doctors to receive outdoor treatment

Area	Percentage of outdoor patients in the sample	Amount of money
Village	33.0	57
City	21.0	71
Total	29.4	60

Source: TIB survey 2004

Table IX 6

Bribe given to doctors to receive treatment as inpatient

Area	Percentage of inpatient respondents	Amount of money
Village	24.0	513
City	14.0	365
Total	20.0	478

Source: TIB survey 2004

Table IX 7

Bribe given in connection with operations

Area	Percentage of operated upon respondents	Amount of money
Village	40.0	266
City	33.0	3412
Total	37.0	1420

Source: TIB survey 2004

Table IX 8

Bribe paid for X-rays to be done

Area	Percentage of X-rayed respondents	Amount of money
Village	60.0	432
City	53.0	648
Total	57.0	516

Source: TIB survey 2004

Land Administration

This survey tried to collect information on corruption involved in registration and mutation of land and in getting lease of government land. It revealed that about 16 per cent of the respondent households registered land in the survey year, about 3 per cent completed mutation of land, about 5 per cent had their land surveyed about 16 per cent took out different types of documents, and about 4 per cent conducted transactions with government officials to obtain khas land.

Of those households which have registered land within one year, about 97 per cent paid on an average Tk. 3,713 more in 'fees' on top of the government fixed rate, 81 per cent of the land purchasers paid bribes for registration through deed writers, about 7 per cent through registrar and 4 per cent through staff members of the sub-registrar's office. About 52 per cent of the concerned households showed lower price of land than the actual price in their deeds during registration. This tendency of showing lower price is greater in villages than in cities. Households, which declared lower price, on average, showed 41 per cent lower price than the market price. Of those who got their land mutated, about 88 per cent paid Tk. 2,047, on average, as bribe to respective offices. About 83 per cent of those who had their land surveyed gave Tk. 2,370, on average, as bribe. Of those who have withdrawn documents about 85 per cent had to pay larger amounts than the fees fixed by the government. Of those who had surveyed government land for leasing purpose, about 40 per cent paid Tk. 9,575 each, on average, as bribe.

Survey analysis shows that about 1,454 crore and 54 lakh taka has been collected from households in connection with land for registration purpose during the previous year. In respect of mutation, the amount collected has been Tk. 136 crore 81 lakh. On account of surveys of government land, about Tk. 369 crore 67 lakh has been collected.

Table IX 9

Bribe paid in connection with land registration

Area	Percentage concerned respondents who paid bribe	Amount of money paid in bribe, on average
Village	97.3	3,072
City	95.0	6,319
Total	97.0	3,713

Source: TIB survey 2004

Table IX 10

Lower than the actual price of the land shown in the deed

Area	Percentage of concerned respondents who showed lower price	Percentage difference between lower price shown from the actual price
Village	53.0	39.0
City	51.0	47.0
Total	52.0	41.0

Source: TIB survey 2004

Table IX 11

Bribe given for mutation

Area	Percentage of concerned respondents who paid bribe during mutation	Amount of bribe paid for mutation, on average
Village	89.0	1,570
City	86.0	2,887
Total	88.0	2,047

Source: TIB survey 2004

Table IX 12

Bribe given during land survey

Area	Percentage of relevant respondent who paid bribe	Amount paid, on average
Village	82.0	1917
City	88.0	490
Total	83.0	2370

Source: TIB survey 2004

Police Administration

This survey tried to generate data on the type of corruption involved in receiving police service. It has been found that 3.13 per cent of the households registered criminal dairy with police station in the survey year, 4 per cent recorded IFR and about 11 per cent established contact with police station for their connection with criminal activities.

About 91 per cent of the relevant respondent households, on average, paid Tk. 939 as bribe to police stations for general dairy (CID). In rural areas, 94 per cent paid Tk. 1,121 and in urban areas 88 per cent paid Tk. 778 as bribe, on average.

Ninety two per cent of households who recorded FIR with police stations had to pay in bribe Tk. 2,430, on average. In rural areas, about 93 per cent paid Tk. 2,521 and, on the other hand, 91 per cent paid Tk. 2,222 as bribe, on average.

Among those respondents who took clearance certificates from police, about 80 per cent had to pay, on average, Tk. 881 as bribe. In rural areas 78 per cent paid Tk. 1,228 and in the urban areas, 82.5 per cent paid Tk. 550, on average, respectively as bribe. Survey shows from that out of the persons involved in criminal activities, about 71 per cent paid Tk. 5,718 as bribe, on average. These people paid bribe to avoid arrest, to get their names omitted from charge sheet or to avoid torcher.

About 56 per cent of those who paid bribe admitted that they have paid bribes through duty officers, 18 per cent to investigating officers and 13 per cent directly to officers in charge.

To sum up, it is found that for FIR Tk. 227 crore 13 lakh for GD purpose 76 crore 61 lakh and for police clearance Tk.93 crore have been taken as bribe by police from general people as bribe during the previous year. Also from persons involved in criminal activities police took 1,134 crore 30 lakh. For these four purposes, the police department collected Tk. 1,531 crore, as bribe, over the year.

Table IX 13

Bribe for general diary

Area	Percentage of relevant respondents paying bribes for GD.	Amount bribe for GD per respondent
Village	94.0	1,121
City	88.0	778
Total	91.0	939

Source: TIB survey 2004

Table IX 14

Bribe for FIR

Area	Percentage of relevant households who paid bribes for FIR	Amount of bribe for FIR per respondent
Village	93.0	2,521
City	91.0	2,222
Total	92.0	2,430

Source: TIB survey 2004

Table IX 15

Bribe for police clearance

Area	Percentage of relevant households who paid bribe for police clearance	Amount of bribe for police clearance per respondent
Village	78.0	1,228
City	82.5	550
Total	80.0	881

Source: TIB survey 2004

Table IX 16

Bribe given to opponents

Area	Percentage of relevant households who paid bribe	Amount of bribe per respondent
Village	68.0	6,415
City	76.0	4,565
Total	71.0	5,718

Source: TIB survey 2004

Table IX 17

Bribe acceptors

Bribe acceptors	Percentage of bribe acceptors		
	Village	City	Total
Duty officer	50.0	67.0	56.5
Investigation officer	17.7	19.6	18.5
OC	17.1	05.9	12.7
Broker	08.9	02.0	06.2

Source: TIB survey 2004

Judiciary

In this survey, information was collected on types of corruption people face to receive services from lower courts, information on level of corruption and persons involved. The percentage of the respondent households seeking justice in lower courts as complainants has been found to be 7.9 per cent and, on the other hand, 9.7 per cent appeared as opponents. Among complainant households, 66 per cent paid, on an average, Tk. 6,135 as bribe. Among the complainants, about 32 per cent paid bribe to staff and officials, 14 per cent paid to magistrates and 7 per cent directly to PP.

Of the respondents who were opponents about 65 per cent paid Tk. 7,728 as bribe, on average. Opponents in rural areas (63 per cent) paid Tk. 8,572 and, in urban areas, 68 per cent paid Tk. 6,178 as bribe, on average. Among the opponents about 38 per cent paid bribe to staff and officials, 13 per cent to magistrates, 7 per cent to pp and 6 per cent directly to Judges.

It is seen that those who (complainants and opponents) were involved in cases in lower courts have paid huge amounts as bribe to staff and officials of those courts. For example, staff and officials involved in lower courts have taken Tk. 812 crore 49 lakh from compliments and about Tk. 1,229 crore 61 lakh from opponents as bribes during the year.

Table IX 18

Bribe in lower courts paid by complainants

Area	Percentage relevant households who paid bribes	Average amount of bribe, on average
Village	64.38	7,558
City	68.57	6,977
Total	65.70	7,370

Source: TIB survey 2004

Table IX 19

Bribe paid by opponents in the lower court

Area	Percentage of relevant households who paid bribe	Average amount of bribe
Village	63.10	8,572
City	67.33	6,178
Total	64.58	7,728

Source: TIB survey 2004

Bank

This survey reflects corruption involved in getting loan from government and private banks. About 24 per cent of the respondent households took loan in the year, out of whom about 93 per cent from government banks and 7.5 per cent from private banks.

Those received loans from government banks got the fund after 108 days, while people got loans within 30 days from private banks. Those who received loans from government banks went 5 times to the respective banks and those who received loans from private banks went 4 times to the banks.

About 58 per cent of the loan applicants paid bribe. Sixty one per cent of the loan applicants to government bank paid bribe, while 15 per cent of loan applicants to private banks paid bribe. Those, who have paid bribe to banks for loans, on an average, paid Tk.1,975 as bribe. The amount is Tk. 1,764 in the case of government banks and Tk. 12,200 in the case of private banks. About 43 per cent of those respondents who paid bribe paid it directly to bank high officials, while 21 per cent to bank staff, 15 per cent to bank managers and about 24 per cent through middlemen (Brokers). Those who have obtained loans from government and private banks have paid approximately Tk. 246 crore and 44 lakh as bribe in the year.

Table IX 20

Bribe acceptors in the Bank

Bribe acceptors	Percentage of respondents paying bribes		
	Village	City	Total
Branch Manager	12.0	23.0	15.0
Officer	42.0	47.0	43.0
Staff	21.0	21.0	21.0
Broker	28.0	13.0	24.0
Others	04.0	04.0	04.0

Source: TIB survey 2004

Taxation Report

This survey results show types of corruption and persons involved in this department. Survey indicates that 1.8 per cent the respondent households paid income tax in the year, 10.67 per cent paid holding tax, and 3.6 per cent tax for transports. Of those the who paid taxes 49 per cent paid, on average, a bribe Tk. 7,487. Bribe was given for fixation of a lower amount of tax. About 9.4 per cent of those paying holding tax paid, on average, Tk.1,538 as bribe, and 14 per cent of those paid transport tax paid, on average, Tk. 3,166 as bribe.

Table IX 21

Bribe given for fixation of lower tax

Area	Percentage of the respondents paying bribe	Amount of bribe paid, on average
Village	48.39	3500
City	50.00	12914
Total	49.05	7487

Source: TIB survey 2004

Table IX 22

Bribe given for holding tax to be fixed at lower level/rate

Area	Percentage of respondents paying bribe	Amount of bribe paid, on average (Tk.)
Village	9.0	1726
City	10.0	1208
Total	9.0	1538

Source: TIB survey 2004

Table IX 23

Bribe given in connection with transport tax

Nature	Village	City	Total
Percentage of respondents paying bribe	15.0	11.0	14.0
Amount of bribe	2026	6300	3166

Source: TIB survey 2004

Electricity

Largest service sector in Bangladesh is electricity sector. The government is incurring a huge loss every year in this sector. This survey reflects the types of corruption, which are mainly faced and the involvement of the users and types of corruption. Survey indicates that about 59.5 per cent of the respondent households have electricity connections. Eighty three per cent of the users taking electricity from REB, 38 per cent from PWD, 7 per cent from Desha, and one per cent from DESCO.

Survey indicates that 10.4 per cent of the users have been using electricity for 3 years on average, from unauthorized connection; 10.2 per cent of rural users for 3 years 4 months and 11 per cent of the urban users for 2 years and one month.

Among legal electricity connection holders, about 12 per cent have installed electric meter. Of those who have taken electric meter, 70.4 per cent paid Tk.1,174 as bribe, on average. The amount of bribe paid Tk.530 and Tk.1,522 respectively for connection and the meter when electricity is taken from PWDB. Over four per cent households have paid, on an average, Tk. 1,445 as bribe to arrange a lower (then actual) meter reading.

To sum up, the survey results show that those who are involved in providing new connections collected approximate Tk.104 crore and 16 lakh as bribe and for reducing electricity bill they collected about Tk. 65 crore as bribe over the year.

Table IX 24

Percentage of respondent' with illegal electricity connection

Area	Percentage of respondents illegally using electricity	Per month use of illegal Electricity (Tk.)
Village	10.2	39.50
City	10.9	25.02
Total	10.4	35.14

Source: TIB survey 2004

Table IX 25

Bribe given to reduce meter reading

Area	Percentage respondents paying bribed to meter readers	Amount of bribe, on average (Tk.)
Village	4.0	1850
City	4.8	598
Total	4.3	1445

Source: TIB survey 2004

Local Government: Arbitration and Relief. Union Parishad and municipality are the two wings of local Government. This survey shows 15.5 per cent respondent households faced arbitration during the previous year in relation (i.e. 2004) to land, loan recovery, and disputes. About 46 per cent households were affected during last flood, but only 35 per cent flood affected households were enlisted for government relief.

Concerning Corruption in the Context of Asking for Arbitration, fifty five per cent out of those who have faced arbitration, have complained about corruption. About 26 per cent of those who attended arbitration had to give, on average, Tk. 4,035 as bribe. In rural areas this amount is Tk. 4,048 and, in urban areas, Tk. 3,892. This survey indicates that the representatives of local government collected about Tk. 413 crore during the previous year, as bribe.

Irregularities in Relief Distribution. This survey shows 46 per cent of the households were affected during the last major flood in 2004. Of those who were affected, only 35 per cent were enlisted for government relief. Three per cent of the households had to give bribe for relief enrollment and 12 per cent had to seek assistance of their influential relatives for enrollment. Out of those households listed for relief, about 39 per cent informed that every time they received, on average, 2.85 kg less than that sanctioned by the government. In rural areas, 44 per cent of the households received 3.5 kg and, in urban areas, 30 per cent of the households received 1.89 kg, on average, less than that of government-sanctioned quantity. In sum, this survey shows that about Tk. 68 lakh was collected as bribe at the time for enrolment for relief.

Pension. This survey indicated obstacles and hazards a personer faces to receive pension. Seventy one per cent of those who received pension had to pay, on average, Tk. 8,000. The amount in rural and urban areas is almost same. Those who have received pension had to wait for about 9 months after their retirement. About Tk. 82 crore has been collected in the year from those who received pension.

Bribe: Comparative Picture of Different Service Oriented Sectors. This survey conducted research on 9 sectors. This survey reflects how much people gave in bribe to receive 25 types of services out of the 9 sectors under review here. Among all the services received from the government the highest bribe being paid has been to register land. Within a year about 97 per cent of the concerned households paid bribes for land registration. The amount of bribe paid to receive government relief collection is the lowest at 3 per cent.

This survey shows that to receive the 25 services previous various government sectors people paid approximately Tk. 6,746 crore in bribe during the year (prior to the this survey). This means that a citizen of Bangladesh paid, on an average, Tk. 485 as bribe. Out of these, the office relating to land, police personnel located in police stations, and officials engaged and employed in lower courts and those who act as intermediates have collected the huge amounts of bribe.

Chapter X

PUBLIC OPINION AND NATIONAL ELECTION

Public opinion research in Bangladesh is new but in most of the developed countries public opinion poll has become an integral part of the political process at the national and local levels. In making major decisions regarding important national issues poll results are often used as a measuring scale. In public opinion surveys, there must be a scientific methodology. In our country sometimes newspapers also conduct opinion polls and publish the results but the samples are not scientifically selected. The results are the opinions of the people who strongly feel that they should express their opinions on particular subjects identified by newspapers. Hence these opinion polling results are not representative and cannot be used as a basis for decision making. Let us consider the results of opinion taking in this process published on 22 December 2008 by a weekly news paper, shown bellow. The results given are in terms of number of seats different political parties may win.

Table – 1: Projection to be Published in weekly Shirsho Khabor

Division	Total Seats (No.s)	Seats projected won by different parties					
		BNP	Awami League	Jatiyo Party	Jamat	Others	Close competition
Rajshai	72	24	23	13	3	-	9
Khulna	36	10	18	-	6	-	2
Barisal	21	5	14	1	1	-	-
Dhaka	94	22	53	1	-	4	14
Sylhet	19	3	14	-	-	-	2
Chittagong	57	27	22	-	-	3	5
Total	299	91	144	15	10	7	32

The methodology used has not been explained. Their projections are highly different from the actual election results (Table-2). This observation remains valid even if all the 32 seats which were suggested to be in close competition were assigned to Awami League.

- Asher Herbert – Polling and the Public
- Leo Bogart – Polls and the Awareness of Public Opinion.

Table-2
Actual Results of December 2008 parliamentary elections

Division	Awami League	BNP	Jatiyo Party	Jamat	Individual & Others	Total
Rajshai	50	7	14	0	1	72
Khulna	31	2	2	0	1	36
Barisal	16	2	2	0	1	21
Dhaka	88	-	5	-	1	94
Sylhet	17	-	2	-	-	19
Chittagong	33	18	2	2	2	57
Total	235	29	27	2	6	299

We conducted a survey in 2001, one month before the parliamentary election of that year. The results in terms of % of votes that may be secured by different political parties of that survey are shown in Table – 3.

Table-3

Positions of the political parties in 13 constituencies of Dhaka District
(Survey Period: 7-15 September 2001 and also after election result)

Dhaka District	Awami League % of votes		BNP (Alliance) % of votes		Jatiyo Party % of votes		No comment
	My survey result	Actual Election result	My survey result	Actual Election result	My survey result	Actual Election result	
Dhaka - 1	29	48	38	51	1	-	32
Dhaka - 2	43	49	48	59	1	-	8
Dhaka - 3	33	34	35	66	1	-	31
Dhaka - 4	47	45	29	55	7	-	17
Dhaka - 5	47	44	35	56	3	-	15
Dhaka - 6	49	43	28	57	2	-	21
Dhaka - 7	38	44	25	56	1	-	36
Dhaka - 8	44	49	21	50	3	-	32
Dhaka - 9	55	41	35	59	7	-	3
Dhaka - 10	-	42	-	58	-	-	-
Dhaka - 11	28	46	13	54	1	-	58
Dhaka - 12	32	41	40	59	-	-	28
Dhaka - 13	30	42	30	58	1	-	39
Total	37	44	29	57	2	-	32

The results indicated that BNP would do very well. With the undecided voters apparently voting for BNP, all 13 of the Dhaka seats went to BNP. At that time Awami League's election campaign was not strong enough and they could not influence the undecided voters.

Opinion poll helps the governing process as a useful tool. It is important to realize that the undecided portion of the public may change their mind at the last moment. So a political party cannot be absolutely sure that they are going to win. If political parties use a opinion poll taken one week before the election at least, they could get a closer picture and may change or intensify tactics to their advantage.

Chapter XI

PUBLIC OPINION AND PUBLIC POLICY

After liberation, a democratic government was in place only for 4 years. A long military autocracy disrupted the total democratic system of the country. In February 1991, through fair elections democracy government was reestablished. So we can say democracy in Bangladesh is rather new. Public opinion poll started in Bangladesh in the year of 1994-95, It is also a new process for the policymaker. A political culture is not yet established for the politicians to be sensitive to public opinions.

Political parties are the key players in democratic governance. So if they do not have any faith in public opinion, we cannot see how can they adequately respond to people's needs and aspirations.

Public opinion research is a practical way of learning what the nation thinks about the political developments and practices in the country. When public opinion research started in Bangladesh, political parties did not have much idea about it and hence, had little faith in it. But when they found that internationally inspired surveys identified Bangladesh as the most corrupt country, they saw the value of public opinion research a little. The establishment of the Anticorruption Commission by the BNP government was to a large extent, in recognition of national and international opinion on the glaring corruption in the country. The Commission was not based on a real conviction, that's why there are problems relating to its functioning. But, during the two years of emergency period (2007 and 2008), lot of corruption was exposed. And this is what the first public opinion research conducted in 1994 revealed.

It transpires that political parties now take into account public opinion on corruption. For example, based on public desire, the government is now taking steps to improve the image of police as well as to increase their facilities so that they are enabled to perform their duties properly. Public opinion in favour of improvement in women's status and formulation of Women Advancement Policy is being taken into account by the government. It appears from pronouncements made by ministers that an appropriate women development policy will be adopted soon.

Finally, the government or a political party will do well to realize the importance of public opinion. Public's right is not only to cast votes, they are in fact the custodians of democracy and their opinions, if appreciated, could help the political parties get closer to people and can provide guidelines for policy-making. People can point out which is a good policy and which is bad. They can suggest the way the government or a political party may follow to take care of their (the people's) problems. If they ignore public opinion, they will be detached from the people. And that's not good for their political future, and certainly bad for the country.

Key Findings and Conclusions

1. The objective of the thesis have been to identify the role of public opinion research as an effective tool in promoting purposeful interactions between the governing process and the people, thereby strengthening democracy or the democratic transition process as the case may be.
 - ✓ Public opinion polling is a simple system through which people can express, their opinions on political developments and other national issues in a free and fair manner.
 - ✓ Public opinion is something which can be quantified and analyzed for use by all concerned.
 - ✓ For effective democracy it is essential that citizens are actively involved in the governance process. Public opinion is such a system through which people can involve themselves in the governance process.
 - ✓ Opinion polls can create a basis, by generating and putting in public domain the opinions of the people on their expectations for minimizing the gaps between people's perspectives and government policies and actions.
2. The people can seek to secure their rights on the one hand, and fulfill their responsibilities in a democratic set-up by expressing their opinions.
 - ✓ The government and various political parties can shape their policies, by taking into account scientifically generated opinions, perceptions and expectations of the people. The government and the opposition can use the opinions of the people as to their performance and policies as early warning in relation to shaping their policies and programme.
 - ✓ Public opinion polls can identify the corrupt sectors of the government and also can help the government to control corruption.
 - ✓ Public opinion polls can also be very useful to government agencies in planning information and outreach programmes by assessing the people's awareness and understanding of social problems. The results of the Public opinion polls can influence decision making in every part of society and at all levels of governments.
3. The analyses of public opinion survey results presented in this study are based on several nationally representative sample surveys conducted in Bangladesh by Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) in recent years in which the present has been actively involved. Similar survey results from other countries such as the Philippines and the UK have also been used on a limited scale for purposes of comparism.
4. The methodology used in the surveys is a multistage random sampling procedure, with the households as the ultimate units.

- ✓ The sample size varies from 1500 to 2500 in the different surveys. The range is standard for a public opinion survey, used by, for example Gallop Polls, International Social Survey Programme and World Values Surveys etc.
 - ✓ The predetermined sample size in the BUP survey was first distributed between urban and rural areas on the basis of rural and urban population distribution, giving a slightly higher weightage to the urban areas to reflect that awareness is relatively more widespread in the urban areas, and rural and urban household picked following an appropriate procedure. One respondent was interviewed from each household ensuring appropriate male and female representation usually alternately.
5. The field investigators, field supervisors, and quality control officers were thoroughly trained by BUP before they were sent to the field. Close supervision was carried out by the core research team members. The filled up questionnaires were checked and re-checked. In some cases, filled-up questionnaires were rejected for various reasons and in those cases re-surveys were conducted.
 6. Summaries of the main findings have been provided at the end of each chapter. Some key findings and conclusions are highlighted below.
 7. The concept of public opinion is central to democratic governance. Democracy needs channels for the formulation and expression of public will, that may keep an effective checks on leaders. The purpose of public opinion polls is to generate opinions of the people, which provide early warnings to the politicians both in government and outside. They may accordingly adjust their policy stances. The opinion polling is a simple way of people's opinions to be expressed in view of the things that agitate their minds.
 8. Since Liberation up to the present time, it has been seen that no government has tried to systematically find out the opinions of the citizens as to the most pressing problems faced. On this broad subject, Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) conducted a national survey in December 1995-96. In that survey (1995-96), the people identified political unrest as the most pressing problem in the country. At that time the political scene was tumultuous as the government and the political opposition were engaged in confrontational politics. Another survey was conducted in 1997 from which a different picture emerged. Between 1995 to 1997, parliamentary elections were held and a new government came to the power. In the first year of the new government, confrontational politics subsided. In 1997, people identified unemployment as the most pressing problem. A survey in 2001 revealed that the most pressing problems faced included crime/lack of security, which dramatically increased in that year.
 9. Another survey conducted in 1995 was on the police force. Every country has their own police forces who work for maintaining law and order in their respective societies. Main work of the police force is to maintain law and order and to safeguard the interest of the public against criminals. In Bangladesh, the picture is different.

Most of the people interviewed believe that the police personnel are related with the crime and have connections with the criminals. In this survey, 55 percent of the respondents have said that police could not become friends of the people because they do not look after people's interests; rather they indulge themselves in corruption and often have financial collusion with the criminals.

10. National building could be so much easier if people are committed. But, in this context, national identity is an important consideration. There are some obvious criteria defining national identity such as birth, citizenship, residence, and cultural adherence including language, religion, and laws and institutions etc. To assess this, different questions were asked: how important or unimportant a person feels for being truly Bangladeshi. The same questions were asked in similar survey in the Philippines, UK and Spain. The national identity may evolve over a period of time, partly rooted in past history and partly modern. Bangladeshi national identity, for instance, is based on a series of historical events, Liberation war, language movement, the building of democracy and so on. Most of the time national identity is a passive characteristic; but it can come to the fore quickly at times of conflict and in the case of Bangladesh it flourished during the Liberation war in 1971.
11. Women constitute half the country's population. It will never be possible to achieve the goal of national development if women remain backward in education and employment. To empower women, education, training, and access to credit, technology and other services need to be made available to them. Thus empowered, they can meaningfully participate in different areas of productive employment and social sector activities and also in political activities. Democracy calls for all segments of society including women to be active in electoral and governance processes.

A survey was conducted by Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) in June-July 1995. In that survey, it was sought to assess the reaction of the common people to the idea of women's employment. The survey results show a widespread support, not only among women but also among men in both rural and urban areas for women's employment in various sectors of the economy and society.
12. Women's disadvantaged position in economic and social terms has remained depressing in Bangladesh. This is so despite the fact that, towards improving their status, there has been an increasing policy focus on women's issues, their education, training, health, access to resources and employment. Both government and non-governmental organizations are involved in these efforts. However, there remain a long way to go before an acceptable level of improvement in women's status is achieved.
13. The progress of women in Bangladesh is hindered by the persisting traditional social attitudes, emanating from and perpetuated by male domination. Women have thus remained excluded from decision making and effective political participation. Their potentialities largely remain unrecognized and their contributions are often overlooked. Generally, women are assigned secondary roles, because usually women's

roles are assigned and their contribution assessed and interpreted by men. Social, cultural and political factors are all stacked against women. Generally, in Bangladesh, one requires a huge amount of money to participate in politics, especially electoral politics. Therefore, only people with access to adequate financial resources can enter the political arena. Women in Bangladesh in general do not even earn incomes. An important reason for women not entering politics in large numbers is, indeed, their economic weakness. They are also educationally backward, and socio-cultural factors militate against their participation in active politics.

Since the liberation of the country in 1971, several elections have been held but few women have participated in the electoral contests. The political parties do not normally nominate female candidates. A few women have been elected parliament members, but they are generally from families with political background or from higher income groups.

Women, thus, remain in background in politics for lack of finance, low literacy, social barriers, and lack of interest on the part of political parties to nominate women candidates. However, in recent years, women have been making some progress towards overcoming the obstacles.

In the union parishad elections held in 1997 people of the rural areas elected 20 women chairmen and 110 women members to union parishads, where contestants included both men and women, in addition to the 12,828 women members elected from reserved seats. The post of Union Parishad Chairman is very important. In the past, a male candidate was always chosen for this post. But the situation has obviously changed, even if slightly. In order to address attitudinal problems in this regard, it is important to know people's perceptions about women leadership, particularly at the local level.

Considering all the questions and answers it can be said that

- ✓ women candidates are getting increasingly accepted by the general people, including by men;
- ✓ a view is widely held, as has emerged, that women members are generally honest, seek to work with the people, and perform fairly well; and try to work for the good of the ordinary people, particularly women;
- ✓ but, they still face many hurdles to break the shackles of traditional male-dominated society, although progress has been made; and
- ✓ clearly, increased women's participation in local governance will not only increase gender balance in local governance but will also help shape a more effective, honest local governance for the benefit of all concerned.

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