

**Local Institutions and the Political Space:  
A Study on Political Dynamics in Bangladesh**

*A Thesis*

Submitted to the Department of Sociology, University of Dhaka, for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

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November, 2003

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## DEDICATION

*To my father, Ashed Ali,  
and my mother, Sahina Khatun*

401334



### CERTIFICATE OF SUPERVISION

I hereby certify that the research work incorporated in this thesis entitled **Local Institutions and the Political Space: A Study on Political Dynamics in Bangladesh** has been carried out under my supervision. The thesis has been submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. The thesis has been prepared on the basis of original research work carried out by Mohammad Abul Hossain alone and, to the best of my knowledge, this thesis has not been submitted, either in the same or different form to this or any other University for a degree.

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## DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that the work of this thesis entitled **Local Institutions and the Political Space: A Study on Political Dynamics in Bangladesh** is based on original research conducted by me, except where references have been made to published literature. I have composed this thesis myself and no part of this thesis has been submitted anywhere for a degree.

Dated: Dhaka  
November, 2003

  
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Ph.D. Researcher

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**Mohammad Abul Hossain**

**Dhaka**

**November, 2003**

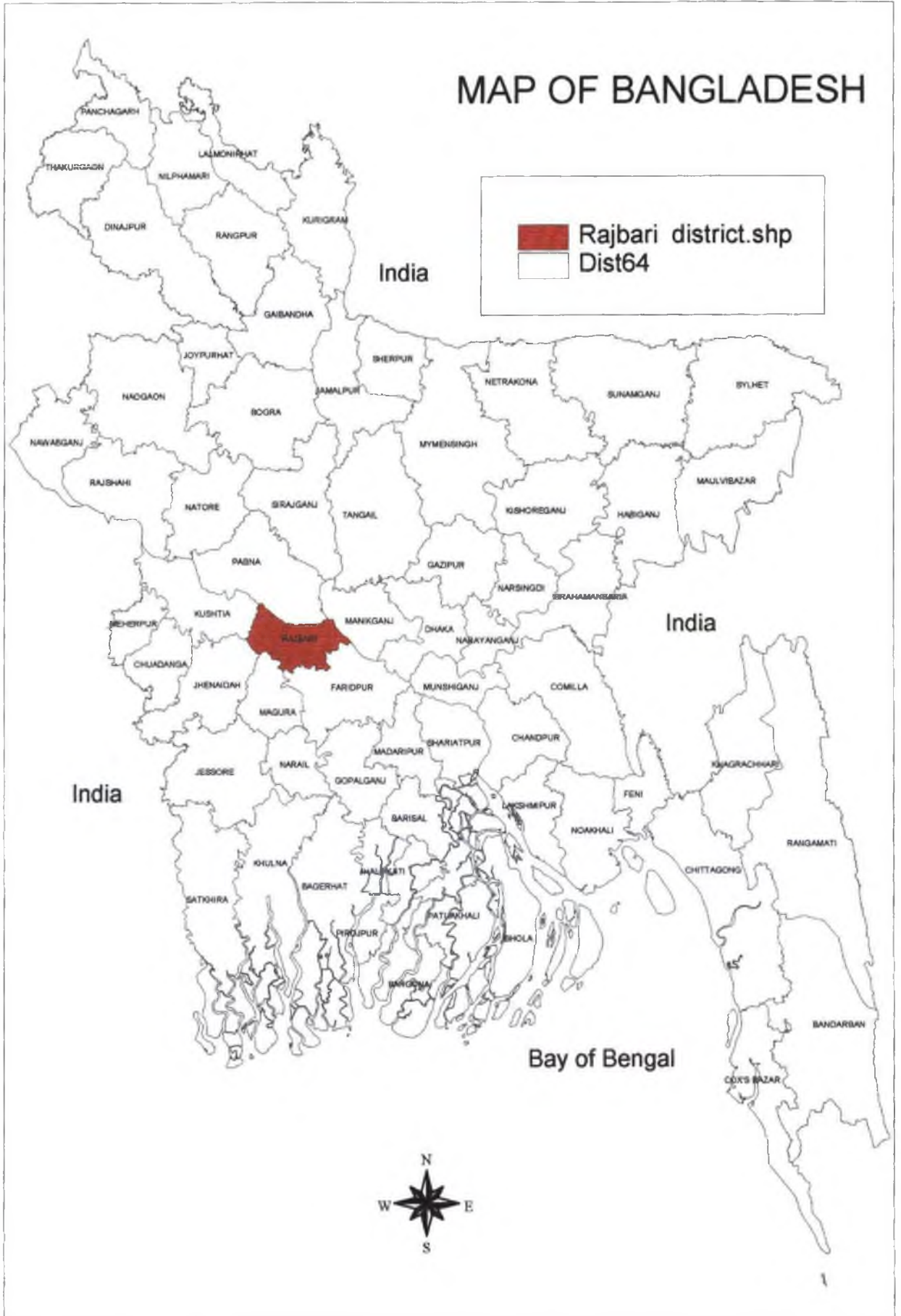
## List of Acronyms

ADB	Annual Development Programme
AL	Awami League
ALRD	Association for Land Reform and Development
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
LGRDC	Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperative
MP	Member of Parliament
OC	Office-in- Charge
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
SP	Superintendent of Police
UNO	Upazila <i>Nirbahi</i> Officer
UP	<i>Union Parishad</i>
UDC	Union Development Committee (A union committee of a NGO)
VGD	Vulnerable Group Development
VGF	Vulnerable Group Feeding

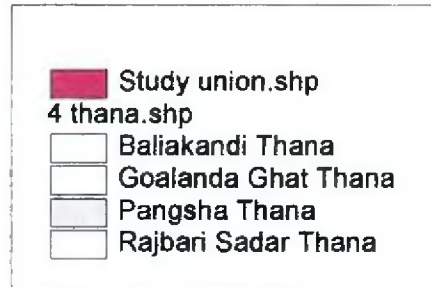
## Glossary

<i>Gusti</i>	- Patrilineage / patrilineal kin group
<i>Hat</i>	-Market in rural area which is held once or twice a week
<i>Khas</i>	- Belonging to government
<i>Madrassa</i>	-An Islamic school
<i>Mondal</i>	- Title of a <i>gusti</i>
<i>Molla</i>	- Title of a <i>gusti</i>
<i>Matbor/matbar</i>	- Informal leader
<i>Para</i>	- Part of a village
<i>Sadar Upazila</i>	- The Upazila at the district headquarters
<i>Samaj</i>	- society/ community or small localized corporate association
<i>Shalish</i>	-Informal arbitration of disputes by the leaders of samaj or community leaders
<i>Shalishkar</i>	- Leaders who undertake administration of informal law and ensures justice in terms of norms and values of the community
<i>Samity/ samiti</i>	-Association
<i>Taka</i>	- Monetary unit of Bangladesh
<i>Union</i>	-Administrative unit below Upazila
<i>Union Parishad (UP)</i>	-Previously known as Union Council and Union Board : local government body at the union level
<i>Upazila</i>	-administrative unit below district, previously known as <i>Thana</i> , also known as Upazila after 1982
<i>Zila</i>	- District

# MAP OF BANGLADESH



## MAP OF RAJBARI DISTRICT Showing Study Union



## CHAPTER 1

### Introductory

“ Local politics – the grassroots politics of society—is the center of democracy. If democratic institutions cannot work here, where can they work? The basic question was asked by Yale’s Robert Dahl over a quarter of a century ago: Who Governs? The question still has not been answered satisfactorily.”

(Bingham and Hedge .1991: 281)

#### 1.0 Introduction

In recent years there has been a growing emphasis on exploring the local political space. Although it has been recognized from the time of Tocqueville, who provided a classic analysis of democracy in his book “Democracy in America” in early 19<sup>th</sup> century, that local level politics is the heart of democracy, there has been very little effort at exploring local politics in developing countries. It is now being increasingly recognized that understanding local level politics is not only important for democratic process, but also for good governance.

Local level politics is a major arena for political socialization and formation of political culture. The nature of conducive interactions to a great extent depends on the pattern of politics at local level. It is widely acknowledged that the patron-clientelistic type machine politics tends to depress conducive interactions. Patron-clientelistic ties across national and local level politics adversely affect the quality of governance of the nation.

It is in this context that the present study focuses on the local level political process in Bangladesh. This study, however, does not deal with complex theoretical issues. It is rather a modest study that focuses on the empirical aspects of local level politics. In understanding the local level political process this study mainly provides empirical data which have been collected from intensive field work carried out in a union (the lowest tier<sup>1</sup> of local government in Bangladesh) situated in the south-western part of Bangladesh. Exploring the local political process, the present study especially looks into the state of the linkages of the local level leaders of the major formal and informal local

institutions. The linkages of the local level leaders covered in the study are basically three-dimensional and upward reaching. The first dimension includes the state of linkages of the local level leaders with the influential political leaders. These are the leaders of different political parties who are holding the leading posts of their respective political parties at the *Upazila* (sub-district), *zila* (district) and even at the national levels. Local MP (Members of Parliament), ex-MP and the ex-upazila chairmen and similar position holders who belong to different political parties are also being counted as influential political leaders. The second dimension includes the linkages of the local level leaders with the government officials or bureaucrats of state administrations. And the third dimension covers the linkages of the local level leaders with the non-resident development-collaborative citizenry. Through these linkages the present study attempts to surface and develop a pattern of interaction on the basis of purposes for which links are made. The interaction pattern leads us to explore how power is exercised in the local political space in one hand, and the multi-dimensional political consequences at the local polity on the other. In such analysis the question of political space is very much related to an area which has not been hitherto explained at any details. This space is the local government and local politics at the lowest level. This is where the question of political space becomes meaningful. The term political space is used differently by different researchers. Lars Engberg-Pedersen viewed that the constraints and opportunities provided by national and sub-national politics and state administration create a political space which delimit the scope of activities that local organizations can undertake (Engberg-Pedersen, 1997). Political space is a 'room for manoeuvre' within democratic practices. It is always a contested space (this view came out from a discussion on 'political space' organized by Power and Participation Research Centre, Dhaka, March 1999).

Indeed, the whole thrust of the present study is to depict the political dynamics at the local level.

### 1.1 Context of the Study

Recent history of Bangladesh poses a number of challenges to traditional understanding of political change. At macro-level, violent changes in governments have done little to



weaken the tradition of bureaucratic rule forged under colonial aegis. At the micro-level, process of social and economic mobilisation shows a surprising vigour opening up new spaces for political participation. The seemingly contradictory tendencies underscore the fact that political change in Bangladesh is far from being a linear process. The interplay of local institutions, local-level power brokers, national political parties and the central bureaucracy shape the unfolding space and its potential for a deepening of democratic roots.

Sociological understanding of the political process is a relative rarity in Bangladesh context. A particular gap in this regard is the interplay of political dynamics at the local level and its interaction with the state. However, there is a larger reason why a study of the local space promises to be particularly illuminating towards an understanding of political change. Both in the economic and the social arena, recent history of Bangladesh shows that notwithstanding macro level stagnation, the micro context has shown **tangible** progresses in different sectors. It is more than likely that the same is true of the political arena. Understanding the potential of the local level is a key analytical and indeed political imperative towards the goal of democratization of Bangladesh society (Rahman, 2002).

Bangladesh has a long tradition of local government and thus also local level politics. In 1885 the Local Self-Government Act was passed by the colonial administration. Already during the British period some changes had been introduced, but the basic elements of a strong Board at district level, and subordinate Board at Union level (consisting of a number of villages) remained unchanged. In the Pakistan period and in independent Bangladesh, local government bodies have undergone many changes in nomenclature. Among the various tiers of local government, Union Parishads have the longest institutional history dating back to 1970. Notwithstanding many limitations in terms of functions, financial and administrative jurisdictions, Union Parishads have been the focal point in the local government system (Rahman, 2002). As a result, local level politics is deeply rooted in the *Union Parishads*. There are arguments that the leaders of the Union Parishads have tended to associate themselves with the political party in power, where many of them changed party affiliations with successive changes of governments. The local councils politics primarily concern squabbles among the local leaders over the

distribution and allocation of development projects to their respective areas (Westergaard, 1996). Why the leaders of the union parishads tended to associate themselves with the political party in power is an important point for inquiry. Beyond the *Union Parishads* and leaders of this institution there are a number of formal and non-formal institutions which are very much parts of local level politics. Such an institution at the village level is the *samaj* (community, which runs under the leadership of a council of elders who have the function of moral arbiters of community life and play an important role in dispute settlements at informal village courts (Bertocci, 1980). The issues of self-governance capacities, their relative strength (if any), their forms and the emergence of new forms, their role in local political dynamics and in shaping political outcomes, all these constitute a set of related research concerns, which are central to the understanding of political change at the local level.

Some current trends and tendencies in the national political arena of Bangladesh are contradictory to democratic values and processes. The use of arms, money and muscle power in politics i.e., the emergence of armed hoodlums and hooligans has added a dangerous dimension to politics. It has now become everyday political tactics to use hoodlums and armed men, to patronize them and give them shelter in order to establish political domination inside the party or in the greater political arena or to neutralize opposition (Salahuddin et al, 1991). A related research concern here relates to national political parties and how they interface with local political dynamics. The task for research is all the more important because the literature in this area is very scarce.

## **1.2 Review of Literature**

There are only a few studies made on the local political processes in Bangladesh and India. The empirical studies so far done by the sociologists and social anthropologists are mainly micro-level village studies. These studies have contributed in understanding the local level politics, though there is a dearth of indepth empirical research data. However, an overview of some important ones of these studies conducted in between 1960 and 2000 have been presented in this section. The objective is to highlight findings of these studies which have a bearing on the present study. These studies also provide a guideline

for a clear understanding of the problems of the present study. Below the studies have been reviewed briefly:

**Paul R. Brass** (1994) conducted his study in the Indian states in the 1980s. He aimed to explore the linkages between national power and local politics. The objectives of his study were: (i) to explore the centre–state relations (ii) to examine the district and local level politics and (iii) to investigate the linkages between national power and local politics. With regards to centre–state relations Brass observed that the offices and institutions of the state government have increasingly been turned into instruments for implementing the will of the central government leadership, especially in the post-Nehru period (p.144). Brass observed similar processes at work in the district and local politics. Ruling parties in the state governments have thus allowed district and local institutions of self-government to decline, or have limited their powers, or have even frequently superseded them altogether in order to maintain tighter control over local systems of patronage and to establish stable bases of local support.

While discussing the characteristics of local politics, Brass emphasized factional bases of district politics, especially in the Congress dominated areas. Factionalism involved pervasive struggle to gain and retain control of the multiple political resources in the district (p. 144). Brass identified three inter-connected factors to explain the persistent and pervasive factionalism:

i. The overwhelming heterogeneity of Indian society and the distinctiveness, and corporate character of some of its most important social units, particularly caste, clan and lineage groups: Most political leaders who come up from the localities and districts must have roots in these little societies which they can not afford to neglect in one hand, and on the other hand they must ally with other similarly situated persons with different roots in order to build a political coalition broad enough to capture power in significant arenas, which are usually more extensive than the areas in which one's own group is dominant.

ii. The persistence of the peasant family farm: Several brothers may share land and other resources and may market their produces together. These family farms are part of broader peasant cultivating communities of caste or clan or tribal groups whose members

exchange labor, credit, resources, and marriage patterns. Sons of such local peasant communities who enter politics expect the support of their communities and are expected to take care of their needs when they achieve local power and influence. Another force favoring the persistence of local factional conflicts is the existence of large illegal land holdings on the remnants of great landed estates. To retain such a base requires political influence.

iii. Inter-level linkage from top to bottom: Inter-level linkages from the top to the bottom of India's federal parliamentary system that sustains pervasive factionalism in the state and district level politics. The efforts of faction leaders at the state level to gain control destabilize local politics.

Brass identified these three factors as powerful forces for promoting instability and pervasive factionalism at both the district and state levels. As to the linkages between national power and local politics, Brass observed that direct linkages between the centre and the localities were uncommon in most of the Indian states. Rather, linkages were indirect, mediated by and through the state Congress' organizations and governments. 'Direct populist appeals by the national leader to the local populations have replaced the old mediating linkages of state and district factional and caste networks' (P.146). But in the case of Uttar Pradesh, the central leadership are compelled to become involved directly in relationships with the influential local leaders without the mediation of the state leaders or state and local party organization. He argued that in Uttar Pradesh the local structure of power independent of government and party organization persisted. 'Where such local structures of power are no longer effective and where the Congress and its opposition lack permanent organizations or reliable support bases, criminal gangs have in many places filled the political space' (P.147).

**A.K.M. Aminul Islam's**, *A Bangladesh Village: Conflict and Cohesion* (1974) is one of the vital anthropological studies on rural Bangladesh conducted in the late 1950s. He did his fieldwork between 1954-56 in a fictitious village called *Badarpur*, situated within six miles of port-town Narayanganj only sixteen miles from Dhaka.

Islam aimed to identify changes in the local level politics. He explored three types of brokers, i.e. the rural leaderships in his study area, who function in *Badarpur* to link the village with the outside world, and to bring about change at the local level politics. The first type used kinship as an instrument for access to the power structures. According to Islam, the Permanent Settlement Act (1793) and the Bengal Tenancy Act (1885) mainly created the economic bases for the emergence of such leadership.

The second category of brokers, village leaders, according to Islam, are the Moulvis/Mollahs (priests and religious scholars). Islam wrote that, these leaders were appointed from the local or neighbouring villages on the basis of their religious knowledges. Although the importance of these religious leaders had been reduced greatly, nevertheless 'to the illiterate villagers of Badarpur the prestige of the Moulvis and Mollahs was very high' (p.97). Islam termed them as cultural brokers who does not necessarily cause change in the village.

Brokers of the third type are the political party agents, students from the city, mass organization leaders, etc. They can also get support of the other types of brokers to translate the national issues and make them relevant to villagers' way of life. According to Islam, these brokers exert their influence and power to help villagers in taking decisions as to which side they should vote for (p.161). Islam noted that these brokers gradually emerged as modern formal leaders, in the union councils, and most of them originated from the traditional families (economically well-to-do families in the rural areas who comprise village leaderships).

Kirsten Westergaard's study, *Boringram: An Economic and Social Analysis of a Village in Bangladesh* (1985), provides a brief description of the power structure and local politics of Boringram (a fictitious name of the village she studied) located in Sherpur thana of Bogra district. She conducted her fieldwork in 1975/76. Westergaard found that the *Samaj* of Boringram was broken into two factions in 1970. Earlier there was only one *samaj* in Boringram. Ultimately there were four factions in the village. Factionalism undermined the community solidarity. The factional solidarity was also fragile as clients often changed patrons. All *gusti* members did not belong to the same faction and thus factionalism also undermined the corporate solidarity of the lineage.

Factionalism had adverse effect upon formal/electoral politics at the local level. It also had negative consequences upon the local cooperative organization making it totally non-functional.

**Westergaard and Hossain** (2000) re-studied the village, *Boringram*, in the middle of the 1990s. In the midst of fieldwork for the re-study the Union Parishad elections took place in December 1997. Westergaard and Hossain studied the Union Parishad election of their study village through an indepth study that showed the dynamics of local level politics.

They found that the Union Parishad, being the most recurrent local government body, it is at this level that local politics beyond the village level take place. In the Union to which *Boringram* belongs there are three influential families who have for decades competed for the chairmanship of the Union Parishad. One is the family of the old village headman of *Boringram*. The headman of *Boringram* was chairman of the Union Board/Council during the British and the Pakistan periods, and his third son (the “Boringram chairman”) has been chairman for two terms since the independence of Bangladesh. He was an unsuccessful chairman candidate in the previous (1992) Union Parishad election. In addition, one of the chairmen during the Pakistan period was bonded with the old headman’s family by marriage.

A second family is that of the incumbent Union Parishad chairman at the time of the 1997 election. His father had been a member of the Union Council in the Pakistani period. The third influential family also held the chairmanship for two generations - in the Pakistan period as well as in independent Bangladesh. This influential family in the Union joined the Awami League during the Liberation struggle, and the head of the family was appointed Relief Chairman just after independence. His son was elected chairman once after the independence, but he did not belong to a political party.

During the December 1997 election, eight candidates vied for the post of Union Parishad chairman, almost all from the landed or well-to-do section of the population. Those include the incumbent chairman, and one person from the third traditional chairman family as well as a newcomer who had a lot of money.

Three persons in the village, *Boringram*, had filled nomination papers for running as member candidates for the Union Parishad. The villagers were interested in getting a *Boringram* person elected as member, and they were afraid that their votes might be split among the three candidates, and none of them would be elected. Therefore a meeting was called in the premise of a big mosque of the village, and in the presence of the various *samaj* leaders they decided to select one member candidate only. The other two candidates withdrew their nominations.

The person selected at the meeting was, Abu, a son of the Boringram chairman. A grand son of the old headmen of Boringram opposed Abu's candidature for member, and his son openly campaigned for another member candidate. Although Abu and his family support the BNP, an influential Awami League person in the Upazila who used to live in the study village also strongly supported Abu, as he felt it was important for the village to get a member elected.

There were four women candidates for the one seat in wards Nos. 1, 2 and 3. Three different groups from the village worked in favour of three women candidates. However, there was no woman candidate from the *Boringram* village.

Abu, the 'village' candidate for a member seat won from the seat in Ward No. 2. The chairman candidate who was favoured by most of the people in the village - Nabi, their 'regional' candidate - also won.

From these findings, Westergaard and Hossain argued that the economic and political power of the dominant families was linked to the traditional institution of the *samaj*.

**M.A. Mannan's** study, *Rural Leadership and Its Emerging Pattern in Bangladesh* (1972), is primarily based on a literature review of rural leadership in Bangladesh. Some information were also collected by interviewing a few co-operative managers in Comilla. The study attempted to analyse different types of rural leaders. Mannan noted significant changes in the leadership pattern in rural Bangladesh. The traditional leaders were losing ground. New leaders were emerging and taking up many of the functions of the old leaders. The emergence of the new leaders was facilitated by the migration of Hindu rural potentates after 1947, the abolition of the *zamindari* system in 1950 and the spread

of education. The educated young men were taking up new leadership positions. Mannan also found a blend of old and new leadership in the cooperatives. These new organizational forms fostered a spirit of harmony and co-operation.

**A.K.H. Zehadul Karim** (1987) made an anthropological study on the pattern of rural leadership and power structure. He did his fieldwork in two villages called Gopalhati and Dhananjery in Puthia Union of Rajshahi district in 1984-1985. Karim found the *samaj* as the informal village social organisation where traditional power is interplayed between *pradhans* and *paramaniks* (title of the leaders, also indicates the title of gusties) The leadership of the *samaj* is provided by the *pradhan* and they are assisted by *paramaniks*. The leadership of *samaj* normally comes from demographically larger lineage having large landholdings. The real political power of *samaj* leaders is demonstrated in settling disputes between members of the *samaj*.

Karim also noted a change in patterns of leadership in the villages. Declining importance of traditional institutions and the ascendance of modern institutions, for example the Union Parishad, backed by the state were the causes behind the change in pattern of leadership. The new source of power, as Karim noted in his study villages, was the control over government-sponsored programmes and projects. The formal leaders representing the Union Parishad and cooperatives were in charge of these resources. The new formal leaders were usually male and younger kins of the traditional leaders (p. 240). Karim meant that education had given strength to the younger members of the traditional lineage in getting access to the modern institutions.

The study of **Atiur Rahman** titled *Rural power structure: A Study of the Local Level Leaders in Bangladesh* (1981) is based on a research project of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) conducted in 1978. The major objective of this research was to understand the socio-economic background of the local level leaders.

According to Rahman, the primary economic strength and social status of these leaders depend on the extent of land ownership. However, land ownership is not enough to attain UP leadership. Education is also an important factor for attaining leadership where education has a direct correlation with land ownership patterns.



Rahman also finds that the UP leaders have close links with the administration and non-agricultural sources of income. Control over land, linkage with administration and non-agricultural sources of income are three important variables to get access to the rural power structure. Rahman also noted that links with national politics and links with relatives residing in towns are important variables which help rural influentials get access to the formal power structure.

**Dalem Ch. Barman's** *Emerging Leadership Patterns in Rural Bangladesh* (1988) is one of the promising studies focussing on the changing pattern of rural leadership and processes at the local level. Barman conducted this research as a part of his Ph.D. thesis work. He conducted an in-depth fieldwork during 1980-81 in a village called *Sinba* in Dhaka district.

Barman located two types of sources of power – internal and external to the village. The internal sources of power include landownership pattern, traditional institutions (family, lineage, kinship etc.). The external sources include local government bodies, different cooperatives, linkage with police and administration, dealership, service, branches of national political parties.

Barman observed that there are few leaders in his study village who took active part in politics to get popularity and prominence. On the other hand a good number of persons of the village are connected with the Upazila level government officials. The persons who maintain linkages with these officials enjoy much respect from the rest of the villagers (p.84).

He also differentiates between old and new sources of power. The leadership of the traditional institutions falls within the first category. The control over modern institutions linked to the running of the state at the local level generates new type of power. Barman further note that the rural power structure becomes fully visible when factions come into play and also during the election of Union Parishad. The most powerful leaders have the capability of enjoying support of both traditional and new power holders. He also observed the emergence of a new type of young, educated leaders in this village.

Barman argued that “owing to the importance of rural base by the national political parties, rural areas are becoming more and more politicized. Thus the new leaders have to become increasingly political than remaining apolitical like the old leaders” (p.189).

#### **Summing up the review of literature:**

In the context of the above –reviewed literature some observations may be spotlighted about the local level politics of Bangladesh. The observations are as follows:

a. Factionalism is a vivifying feature of local politics. The empirical study of Brass (1994) on local politics and local-centre linkage analyzes how factionalism works in materializing linkages between national power and local politics. The institutions of the state government have increasingly been turned into instruments for implementing the will of the central government leadership especially, in the post-Nehru period. Similar processes are at work in the district and local level politics. Factionalism in local politics involves pervasive struggles to gain control of the multiple political resources. The interconnected factors of pervasive factionalism in Indian politics include the overwhelming heterogeneity of Indian politics, the persistent of the peasant family farm and the inter-level linkages from the top to the bottom. Those factors worked as powerful forces for promoting instability and pervasive factionalism at both the district and state levels. As a result, direct populist appeals by the national leaders to the local populations have replaced the old mediating linkages of state and district factional politics.

b. Local politics is a matter of competitive struggles for influence and power. The traditional institutions, kinship, lineage, *samaj* etc., all work as instruments for access to the power structure. Changes in local level politics are materialized through the educated leadership who have links with the outside world. Factions come into play during the election of the Union Parishad and it has adverse effects upon local level politics.

c. Changes in the patterns of local leadership have occurred due to the presence of modern institutions, for example the Union Parishad, and the state-backed or government-sponsored development programmes that are implemented by those institutions. The formal leaders of the modern formal institutions are younger kins of the

traditional leaders. Education has given strength to the younger members of the traditional lineage in getting access to the modern formal institutions.

d. Linkages of the local leaders with the administration, non-agricultural sources and relatives residing in towns have been seen as important factors to become influentials and get access to the formal power structure. Local level politics is increasingly politicized due to the interests of national political parties, as they, in one hand, are looking for a local vote base, and on the other hand, local formal leaders need the help and assistance of the ruling political party to mobilise grants for local development.

The above review of literature reveals that the number of studies on the local level political processes are quite limited. In fact, very few studies have attempted to deal with the topic, "local level politics", especially so in the case of Bangladesh. Notwithstanding that, the literature reviewed above sheds some lights on local level politics, there are lots of gaps. The gaps can be identified as stated below:

a. From the above review of the major empirical studies it is clear that those studies have sufficiently dealt with the feature of village politics and factionalism but failed to draw the picture of local level political processes. One important reason for this failure seems to be the selection of study unit for the empirical studies. Most of the empirical studies conducted in Bangladesh on local level politics selected 'the village' as the unit of study. It is argued that as a unit of study, 'the village' is too small to study the political processes at the local level. Because the pattern of institutions and leadership at the village level are mostly confined to the traditional and informal. For that reason, perhaps, the anthropologists and sociologists, who have conducted those village studies, had to confine their discussion in village factionalism, traditional leadership and to some extent formal politics at the union level. Most of the studies have dealt with the socio-economic background of local level leaders, sources of power and local power structure. Some studies (for example, Brass's study in the Indian states) dealt with local-centre linkages and termed the 'district' as unit of study for studying local politics. For practical reasons, the district level is too large as a unit of study for local level politics. Because of that Brass's study on local politics did not penetrate the grassroot level politics and thus lacked an exploration of the local level political processes.

b. A few empirical studies (Islam 1974, Barman 1988, Rahman 1981) have discussed the linkages of local level leaders with the outside world, i.e. with the state, political parties etc., in Bangladesh. But those empirical studies did not sufficiently discuss the impacts of the linkages which exist in local level politics. Moreover, the linkages of local level leaders with the administrative hierarchies, influential political leaders and external citizens, and the consequences of such linkages for local level politics were usually missing in the studies reviewed.

c. A union (a grass-root level administrative unit comprised of a few villages) could be an 'ideal unit of study' for studying local level political processes, as there exist a formal local government tier known as the Union Parishad. The Union Parishad can be considered to be a centre for local level politics and development as it comprises a democratically elected body responsible for local development. And there is no doubt that lots of interactions of the union level leaders with the political leaders, government officials and the outside world could be observed if the union would be 'a unit of study' for studying local level political processes. But the studies reviewed above seldom choose 'the union' as a unit of study.

d. The mode and pattern of interactions of the local level leaders with administrative hierarchies, who represent the state at Upazila, district and central levels, and the outcomes of those interactions in the local level politics were usually missing in the studies reviewed. There was also missing an examination of the role of the external citizenry and their contributions to local level politics and development. Whereas those aspects have enormous potentialities in strengthening local level political processes.

e. Multiple purposes of interactions between local level leaders and the influential political leaders at Upazila, district and central levels, and the consequences of those interactions at the local level politics were also insufficiently dealt with in the studies reviewed. Moreover, issues relating to local governance and local justice were neither addressed. But the fact is that issues of local governance and local justice have an immense importance in the dynamics of local level politics. Interference of government officials over Union Parishad's development programmes and projects and the influence and interference of Member of Parliaments including the leaders of ruling political party over the activities of Union Parishads are also issues of local governance and local level

politics. But these issues were mostly absent in the studies reviewed whereas those should have been seen as an essential part of local level political processes. Without examining those important issues, the present state of local governance and local autonomy, which are the core points of local level political processes, can not be properly assessed.

In sum, the review of literature provides some understandings of the local level political process but leaves critical gaps and questions to be answered. The present research has drawn the insights generated so far but has sought to go beyond by posing local level politics as its main subject of enquiry. In doing so it has sought to engage with the methodological and conceptual limitations of village studies and elaborated union as a more appropriate unit for the study of local political dynamics.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to explore the dynamics of the political process at the local level in Bangladesh.

The specific objectives are:

- to examine leadership patterns at the local level;
- to investigate the socio-economic and political background of the local level leaders;
- to identify the types of linkages and interaction patterns between the local level leaders and the influential political leaders;
- to explore the types of linkages and interaction patterns between the local level leaders and the administrative hierarchies or different levels' key government officials (administrative executives) ;
- to investigate the linkages and interaction patterns between the local level leaders and the non-resident development-collaborative citizenry (people who have their origin in the locality, the union under study, but have been residing in the different towns and cities of Bangladesh and also abroad for their involvement in service, business etc.);
- to examine the consequences of the local level political process.

#### 1.4 Propositions

This study seeks to understand the dynamics of local level politics through its incorporation within national politics and the pattern of interactions among political and other leaders. This study is mainly an empirical study and has been based upon the following propositions:

1. National politics significantly influences local level politics.
2. Leaders of political parties at district level control politics at Upazila and union level through patron-client relationships. Again political leaders at the Upazila level control politics at the union level. The political leaders at the Upazila or district levels normally act as patrons and the union level leaders are their clientele.
3. Within the competitive political space the political leaders need to assert their supremacy by being able to attract resources and provide services to their clients. But the local leaders are dependent on the *Upazila* and district administration and the *Upazila* and district level leaders for these facilities. It leads to collusion among these three types of actors, local level leaders, Upazila and district level political leaders and *Upazila* and district administration, which very often leads to the formation of patron-client relationships. The Upazila and district administration tend to channel developmental resources and various services to the local level, partly out of their own interest to receive bribes, partly under the direction of higher-level leaders of the party/parties in power.
4. The local level leaders influence the local administration through *tadbir* that strengthened through patronage from the higher-level leaders and through bribes.
5. This collusive partnership among higher-level leaders, local level leaders and the local administration distorts the distribution of development resources and disrupts the governance process at the local level.
6. The local level leaders often contribute to good governance through their roles in the local *shalish* institution.

## 1.5 Methodology of the Study

This study has used both participant observation and survey as key methods for this study. Any single method is not sufficient for such a complex study. So this study has combined both qualitative and quantitative methods. A key technique was participant observation through which the researcher observed the political process and interviewed with leaders at local, regional and national levels.

In-depth interviews and FGDs (Focused Group Discussion) were also used to collect data. In addition to this, the survey method (Annexure –1: questionnaire) was used to collect data from local level leaders.

### 1.5.1 Selected Categories of Samples

The social survey was conducted among the local level leaders. The sample for this survey comes from five categories of local level leaders. These are the Local government, Political, Religious, Social and the Economic leaders. The sampling technique was both purposive and stratified random. First, a list of the names of local level leaders in each category was drawn. From this list proportionate samples were drawn randomly. The table below shows the sample size and categories.

Table –1: Selected categories of leaders and sample size

Selected Categories	Number of Samples
1. Local Government	28
2. Political	10
3. Religious	12
4. Social	21
5. Economic	03
<b>Total Sample ( 1-5):</b>	<b>74</b>

Details of the categories of local level leaders are illustrated below:

### Leaders under Local Government Category

The local level leaders belonging to the Local Government category include the existing UP chairman and members, former UP chairmen and members, and the runner-up chairmen and members candidates who contested in the immediate past Union Parishad election held in 1997. Female samples, covering all the mentioned sub-categories, have also been taken from the reserved UP member seats for women. For selecting the sample of male and female UP members of the union under study, random sampling technique has been applied. The UP chairman was purposively included in the sample.

Besides, six existing male (out of nine) and two female (out of three) UP members were selected randomly. Apart from the existing UP chairman and members, one former chairman (out of three), six male members (out of eighteen) and three female members (out of nine) were selected randomly. In the same category, runners-up (in the UP elections held in 1997) for UP chairman candidate, male and female member candidates were also included for interviews. From the runner-up group, the runner-up UP chairman has been selected without using any sample selecting technique. The six male runner-up members (out of nine, one from each ward) and two female members (out of three, one from each three wards) were selected using the same technique.

### Leaders under Political Category

Here the sample was drawn from the list of the political leaders who belonged to the executive committees of the union branches of the political parties. The political leaders in the union under study mainly belong to the Bangladesh Awami League (AL), the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the Jatiya Party (JP) and the Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh (Jamaat). The list of political leaders included a total of 104 leaders (AL-31, BNP-31, JP-21, and Jamaat-21) under the existing four political parties of the union



under study. A total of 10 political leaders from the 4 political Parties (AL-3, BNP-3, JP-2, and Jamaat-2) were finally selected randomly.

#### Leaders under Religious Category

The Religious category covers mosque committee leaders and *madrasa* (an Islamic school) committee leaders. A list of 126 leaders (mosque committee-93, *madrasa* committee – 33) of this category were prepared. It should be mentioned that a mosque committee generally consists of a six-member committee. From the investigation we have found that only a three-member mosque committee is functional. The president, the secretary and the cashier are important members of the mosque committee. We have taken those three members from each mosque committee as sample. The total number of mosques in the union under study is 31. We have found 3 *madrasa* (Islamic school) committees in the union under study. Each *madrasa* committee consists of 11 members. We found that all the members of the *madrasa* committees play a vital role in the committees. So, we have included all the members of these 3 *madrasa* committees for sampling. From the list, a total of 9 leaders from the mosque committees and 3 leaders from the *madrasa* committees were finally selected randomly.

#### Social Leaders

Social category covers NGO leaders, *Samaj* (an informal institution at the village level) leaders and the leaders of secondary school managing committee. A list of 219 leaders (NGO-60, *samaj* leader-124 and school managing committee leaders- 35) of this category was prepared. From the list, a total of 21 leaders (NGO-6, *samaj*-12 and school managing committee-3) have been selected randomly.

#### Leaders under Economic Category

Economic category covers *haati* bazar committee leaders. A list of 31 leaders has been prepared. From the list, we have randomly selected 3 leaders.

Table -2: Categories of population and their samplings with proportion

Categories of local level leaders	No. of listed local leaders by categories	No. of leaders for sample
<b>1. Local Government</b>		
1.1.Existing UP chairmen	Chairman =01	Chairman =01
1.2 ,, UP male members	Male members =09	Male members =06
1.3 ,, UP female members	Female members =03	Female member =02
	Total : 13	Total: 09
1.4 Former-UP chairmen	Chairmen = 03	Chairman =01
1.5 ,, UP male members	Male members =18	Male members =06
1.6 ,, UP female members	Female members = 09	Female members =03
	Total: 30	Total: 10
1.7 Runner -up UP chairman	Chairman =01	Chairman =01
1.8 ,, UP male members	Male members =09	Male members =06
1.9 ,, UP female members ( Contested in 1997, UP election)	Female members =03	Female members =02
	Total: 13	Total: 09
<b>All:</b>	<b>=56</b>	<b>=28</b>
<b>2. Political</b> (Union branches of political parties).		
2.1 Bangladesh Awami League	Mizanpur Union committee=31	03
2.2 Bangladesh Nationalist party	Mizanpur Union committee=31	03
2.3 Jatiya Party	Mizanpur Union committee=21	02
2.4 Jamat- e- Islami of Bangladesh	Mizanpur Union committee=21	02
<b>All:</b>	<b>=104</b>	<b>=10</b>
<b>3. Religious</b>		
3.1 Mosque committee leaders ( total 31 mosque committees)	Leaders of mosque committees=93	09 03
3.2 Madrasa committee( total 2 madrasa committees)	Leaders of madrasa committees=33	
<b>All:</b>	<b>= 126</b>	<b>=12</b>
<b>4. Social</b>		
4.1 NGO leaders	NGO leaders =60	
4.2 Village leaders ( <i>samaj</i> leader)	Samaj leaders=124	06
4.3 School managing committee	Leaders of school committees=35	12 03
<b>All:</b>	<b>=219</b>	<b>=21</b>
<b>5. Economic</b>		
5.1. Haat/ bazar committee	Leaders of Haat committees=31	03
<b>All:</b>	<b>=31</b>	<b>=03</b>
<b>TOTAL ( 1-5):</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>74</b>

Note: Selection technique has been carefully done so that overlapping of the selected respondents from a category to another can be avoided.

### **1.5.2 Qualitative Techniques**

The techniques of collecting qualitative information were mainly, participant observation, focused group discussion (FGD), case studies, in-depth interviews with key informants. Focused group discussions and in-depth open-ended interviews were partially recorded and extensive notes were taken (as all situations were not favourable for recording).

A total of 21 in-depth case studies were also done to explore the local level political process. The case studies include a few recent incidents, events, political and development related issues in which local level leaders, local institutions, political parties and the state administration were playing vital roles. To grasp the case studies, we made a guideline incorporating the points of enquiry and persons involved in the incidents. Moreover, notes from key informant and focused group discussions have been used as part of the guidelines for the case studies to map out the factual portrait of each case study. We conducted focused group discussions with respondents in each of the following groups: Teachers, political activists, NGO workers, male and female NGO groups, youth groups, elderly persons, students, businessmen and UP leaders. The focused group discussions were mainly centered on the local level political process.

### **1.5.3 Duration of Field work**

Several trips were made to the district and informal discussions were held with the elders and local leaders for selecting the study area and samples. A trip to the selected area was also made for pre-testing the schedule. The field work of the study began in mid-June 2001 and ended in mid-January 2002. Some follow-up visits to the study area were also made in early 2003 to get a fresh picture of some political events relevant to the present study. The field work was completed in around eight months between June 2001 to January 2002.

#### **1.5.4 Data Processing**

Collected data has been processed by using computer package SPSS. Tabular form has been followed to present the results. Frequencies, averages, percentages are thus presented.

### **1.6 Unit of Study and Area Selection**

#### **1.6.1 The Union as the Unit of Study**

Though the study of Bengal / Indian villages bears a century- long tradition, still some sociologists and anthropologists entertain doubts about the sociological relevance of the choice of a single village or a few villages as the unit(s) of study. Dumont and Pocock, for example, after a detailed review of the existing literature on village studies conclude: “much of the material presented by the contributors of this volume suggests in fact the inadequacy of the village as a unit of study” (Dumont and Pocock, 1959: 25). They deny the villages as any sociological existence. The second objection about the village study is mainly put forward by the economists. Their arguments are that in a vast country like India, a study of one village or a few villages is insignificant in terms of any theoretical generalization. But Srinivas (1975) does not fully agree to the arguments. He categorically denies the objections – “an obvious objection to the study of a single village is its inability to inform us about the country as a whole. In one sense the truth of this statement is obvious but in another sense it is not true. It is of course absurd to try and generalize on rural India from the study of a single village, but if it is remembered that in spite of its bewildering diversity, there are certain broad regional and even national similarities in India, even that study can be productive of knowledge and insights which could be translated into hypothesis and leads in future research. It also gives some ideas of the quality of village life” (Srinivas, 1975: 1392-93).

Keeping the debate in mind, it can be argued that Srinivas's argument is quite reasonable. The village can invariably be a unit of study; it is not wise to deny the village as a unit of study and its sociological existence. But it is also true that the village as a unit of study has its limitations in studying some sociological contexts. And particularly, its limitation can be assessed in studying the political process at the local level. In the villages there are a number of primordial institutions, (family, kinship, faction and the like) that can best be accorded for the anthropological investigations and to some extent sociological studies. But in the case of studying political process and the like primordial institutions are not adequately served the purposes. Because village is too small as unit of study in one hand, and on the other hand in studying political process, the role of formal institutions are important which are not centered in the villages. The formal institutions can be found at least at the union level. So, the union level can be an ideal unit of study for studying political processes at the local level. Thus for the present study we have taken a union as the unit of study.

The fundamental reasons behind selecting a union as the unit of study can be argued as follows: (1) Operationally the union can be easily identifiable because of its demarcation for territorial and presence of a most important formal local government tier (Union Parishad). (2) Political dynamics at the local level can best be understood if one takes union as a Unit of Study. And (3) any study promising to deal with the local level politics is needed a 'local', a village is not sufficient to give a sense of a 'local' but a union can give sense as it is comparatively a large unit.

### **1.6.2 Area Selection**

Mizanpur Union of Rajbari Sadar Upazila under Rajbari district of Dhaka division was selected as the area for the present study. This selection was made purposely. Rajbari district is situated almost in the middle of the country. And this district is well connected by roads and rivers. This district is also well-known for different political upheavals. The

researcher is familiar with this area through his other research works undertaken during the last 13 years.

### 1.6.3 The description of the Study Area: District, Upazila and the Union under Study

#### Rajbari District

Rajbari zila (district) is situated between 23° 50' and 23° 55' North latitudes and between 89°19' and 90°50' East longitudes. It is under the division of Dhaka, Bangladesh.

The area which now constitutes Rajbari zila (district) was a subdivision of former Faridpur district. The name of the former subdivision was Goalanda but Rajbari was the headquarter town of Goalanda subdivision (District Gazetteers Faridpur, 1977:365). The reason that all the subdivision level offices were established in Rajbari town, situated at a distance of 9 miles from Goalanda *ghat* (a mooring on the bank of a river), was that the Goalanda *thana* (*sub-district headquarter*) was situated on the bank of the river Padma which was a river erosion prone area. Rajbari emerged as a zila (district) in 1984. The zila has been named as Rajbari after the name of the residence of Raja Surja Kumar which was locally known as *Rajbari* and was located at the present place of the zila headquarter.

Rajbari district is bounded on the north by Pabna district, on the east Manikganj and Faridpur districts, on the south Faridpur district and on the west Magura and Jhenaidaha districts. The total area of the zila is 1118.80 sq.km (431.97 sq miles) of which 107.64 sq.km (41.56 sq miles) is riverine. Rajbari district is about 0.76% of total area of Bangladesh. In respect of area the district ranks 15th among the zilas of Dhaka Division and 56<sup>th</sup> among the 64 zilas of the country (BBS, 1996:1).

**Administrative and other units:** The district headquarter is located in Rajbari town under Sadar upazila. There are 4 Upazilas/ Thanas, 2 municipalities, 42 unions, 796 mauzas and 982 villages in the district. The names of the Upazilas under the district are

as follows: Baliakandi, Goalanda, Pangsha and Rajbari Sadar. Out of the four Upazilas, Pangsha is the largest with an area of 414 sq. km which is 37% of total area of the zila. Goalanda is the smallest with an area 149 sq. km sharing 13% of total area of the zila (BBS, 2002:17).

**Household and Population:** According to the Population Census 1991, the total number of households of Rajbari zila are 147 000 which is 0.76% of total households of the country. Total Population of the zila, according to the census 1991, is 835 000 which is 0.79% of total population of the country. Estimated number of households of the zila is 165 000 in 1996 and the population is 941 000 which is 0.77% of the total population of the country. The percentage of male and female population in the district is: 51.43% male and 48.57% .The rate of literacy for population age group 7 years and above is 39% as against 44.8% of the nation. The density of population is estimated as 840 per sq. km, while 827 per sq. km in the country. Household / family size is 5.7 (decadal and annual growth rates are (-) 5.26% and (-) 0.54%) (BBS, 1996: 18).

#### **Description of Rajbari Sadar Upazila**

Rajbari Sadar Upazila occupies an area of 313.00 sq. km including 46.18 sq. km river. The Upazila/ thana is bounded on the north by Bera and Sujanager thanas of Pabna district, on the east Goalanda ghat Upazila, on the south Madhu Khali and Faridpur Sadar Upazilas of Faridpur district and on the west Pangsha and Baliakandi Upazilas .

The Rajbari Sadar Upazila consists of 14 unions, 1 Paurashava , 203 mauzas, and 212 villages. The names of the 14 Unions under Rajbari sadar Upazila are as follows: 1. Alipur, 2. Banibaha, 3. Barat, 4. Basantapur, 5. Chandani, 6. Dadshi, 7. Khankhanapur, 8. Mizanpur, 9. Mulghar, 10. Panchuria, 11. Ramkantapur, 12. shahid Wahabpur, 13. Sultanpur, and 15. Khandanj (BBS, 1996:110-14).

According to the Population Census 1991 (Census report published in 1996), the total number of households of Rajbari sadar Upazila is 263,555. The numbers of male and female population are 135,624 and 127,931. The decadal and annual growth rates of total population are 19.97% and 1.84%, for the male 20.42% and 1.88%, and for the female 19.50% and 1.80% (BBS, 1996). The numbers of total households are 48,513. Growth rates of the households are: decadal 26.51% and annual 2.38%. According to the census the household/ family size is 5.7 (growth rates of family size decadal (-) 5.26% and annual (-) 0.54%). The rate of literacy for population age group 7 years and above is 25% (decadal growth rate 29.20% and annual 2.60%). The density of population is estimated as 842 per sq. km as compared to 840 per sq. km for the Rajbari district (BBS, 1996:21).

### **Mizanpur Union : The Union under the Present Study**

The union (the lowest tier of local government in Bangladesh) we have selected for the present study is Mizanpur. Above we have given a short description of the District and Upazila in which the union of our study is located. An overview of the Mizanpur union is given below.

Mizanpur union is one of the largest unions, in respect of both area and population, of Rajbari Sadar Upazila in the district of Rajbari. Mizanpur union was created in 1961. At that time, due to river erosion of Padma River, a vast area of Silimpur and Baghmara unions were submerged. Following this experience voices were raised to merge the two unions into one. In consequence a conflict rose between the inhabitants of the previous two Unions in naming. Several meetings were held between the dwellers of Silimpur and Baghmara unions, in the presence of the Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) of Gualanda. But no solution could be reached. Observing the stalemate, the SDO of Gualanda thus proposed a new name, Mizanpur. Stories tell that the SDO's five-year old son's name was Mizan. Every one accepted the new name (Mizanpur Union Parishad office, 2001).

The total area of Mizanpur Union is 12 412 acres (44.45 sq. /km ). There are a total of 37 villages in the Union. Out of the 37 villages, 7 villages are scarcely populated as the



major parts of these villages have been submerged by the river Padma. There is an elected Union Parishad in Mizanpur Union. The Union Parishad comprises 9 wards.

Total Population of Mizanpur Union is 36 380. Out of this figure, the male population is 18 927 and the female population is 17 453. In respect of religion, Muslim population is 35 027 and Hindu population 13 539 (Mizanpur Union Parishad office, 2001). According to the census of 1991 (published in 1996) the household/ family size is 5.8. The rate of literacy for population age group 7 years and above is 25% (decadal growth rate 29.20% and annual 2.60%) (BBS, 1996:15).

Infrastructure: Most of the roads, 78 km, of Mizanpur union are *kutcha* (non-metalled). There is 7 km metalled and 4 km brick road in the union. There is a 9 km long embankment which is also known as Rajbari town protection embankment. A total of 10 villages of the Union has been brought under the electrification net (Mizanpur Union Parishad office, 2001).

Occupational profile: Most of the households are involved in agriculture. Among all the households, agriculture is the occupation of 4 805 households, business 791 households, service 379 households and fishing 153 households (BBS, 1996:15).

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

The study has been arranged in six chapters.

**Chapter I** presents contexts, literature review, objective of the study, propositions, and rationale for selecting a union as the unit of study. This chapter also addresses the methodological issues and the chapter plan of the thesis.

**Chapter II** depicts the origin and development of local institutions in Bangladesh. The historical background and the present scenario of these institutions in the study union are discussed in this chapter.

**Chapter III** deals with an empirical analysis of local level leaders. This chapter is divided into three sections. **Section I** discusses the socio-economic backgrounds of the local level leaders. **Section II** discusses political background of the local level leaders. And **section III** contains family backgrounds of the sample local level leaders.

**Chapter IV** is divided into three sections. **Section I** discusses the linkages and pattern of interaction of the local level leaders with influential political leaders of the Upazila, district and central levels. **Section II** explores the linkages and interaction pattern of the local level leaders with the administrative apparatus. **Section III** discusses the linkages and interaction patterns of the local level leaders with the non-resident development-collaborative citizenry. Extensive case studies relating to local level politics are also covered in this chapter.

**Chapter V** attempts to explore the existing governance and political realities in the local level political process. This chapter is divided into two sections. **Section I** unveils the political and administrative influences over the politics at the local level. **Section II** covers the issues relating to governance and the state of local justice.

The last chapter, **chapter VI**, proposes a conclusion and summarizes the findings.

### **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

Although it is an ethnographic study, it has not been possible to provide all the details of the location and every day life, as the chosen unit of study is the union level. Thus this study has mainly focused upon the political processes and only brings the social context up in the form of case studies. Again although it has used survey method, it has been mainly used to understand the phenomenon of leadership. No effort has been made to capture the perceptions of the citizens. In this sense, the limitation of resources and time have put a limit to the scope of this study. In spite of these limitations, it is my hope that this study will make some modest contributions in terms of use of methodology and useful empirical data in an area which has hardly been studied.

## 1.9 Summing up of the chapter

Who governs and how they govern at the local level, has been a major concern of many social scientists in the North. There has been very little research on this aspect in the South. The review of literature shows that in India and Bangladesh local level politics has hardly been studied in detail because the emphasis has usually been either on village studies or national and regional politics. But it is now being increasingly felt that an adequate understanding of local level politics is necessary for ensuring democracy and good governance in the South.

This study thus makes an attempt to understand local level politics in the union of Mizanpur. It is located in Rajbari Sadar Upazila of Rajbari District which lies almost in the middle of the country. The research uses mixed methods of quantitative and qualitative techniques for conducting the study of local level politics including survey, focused group discussions and in-depth interviews. For the survey, a technique of stratified random sampling was used to select samples from different categories of leaders. A total of 74 leaders were interviewed through a structured questionnaire. Intensive case studies were conducted to capture the process in detail. The data of the study are presented in chapters— three, four and five.

### Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Very recently a move is in the offing to introduce “Gram Sarkar” (village government) which is not a tier of local government but it will serve as an auxiliary to the Union Parishad. *Gram Sarkar* will be set up in each ward (there are nine wards in each Union Parishad). The elected Union Parishad member from each of the wards will head each unit of *Gram Sarkar* while a female elected UP member will be adviser to three units. The 15-member *Gram sarkar* unit will have a tenure of five years. Each unit will have a *Gram Sarkar prodhan* ( chief) and an adviser, while remaining 13 members will be drawn from representatives of women , farmers, VDP ( Village Defense Party) men, general labourers , teachers and businessmen ( The Gram Sarkar Act 2003). However,

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during our field investigation this concept was not in existence, nor was it mooted at that time. Hence no reference to it is made in this dissertation. It may be mentioned that the process of introducing Gram *Sarker* is at as its primary stage and it is also scathingly criticized by various political parties.

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## **CHAPTER 2**

### **The Origin and Development of Local Institutions in Bangladesh**

## CHAPTER 2

### The Origin and Development of Local Institutions in Bangladesh

#### 2.0 Introduction

The term 'Local' has been defined and interpreted in different ways by different scholars. According to the definition set by Conyers, the term local refers to: "...the 'bottom end' of organizational hierarchy, the point at which direct interaction between 'government' and 'people' is most likely to occur. In many countries it might be conveniently identified with the area below the level of 'district' or equivalent administrative unit (Conyers, 1986: 114)." Uphoff argues that there is not a single local level, but rather three geographical and social units (locality, community and group) that make up the concept 'local'. He also argues that the term local has spatial as well as social dimension. The spatial dimension explains local in its geographical meaning while the social aspect of local refers to an extended set of interpersonal relations where people have face-to-face contact and some of shared identity and common interest (Uphoff, 1993:274).

From the above definitions and interpretations it is clear that the term 'local' is not confined to a single meaning or interpretation. However, for the present it will be proper to define the concept 'local' simply as the lowest administrative hierarchy where the first interaction between people and the government, and with the different local level institutions takes place. In the context of Bangladesh the lowest unit of administrative hierarchy is a Union. In the union, there is Union Parishad which is also the lowest or grassroots level tier of local government of Bangladesh.

An institution is a cluster of roles and status design to meet a certain social need, whereas organisations are large secondary groups formed to achieve specific goals. In other words while institutions have a more natural growth, organisations<sup>1</sup> are characterised by a greater degree of human agency (Siddiqui, 2000: 260).

Institutions and organisations at the local level can be classified as formal and the non-formal. Some formal institutions are purely local in character, for example, the Union Parishad, while some are branches of larger entities extending to national level, for example, the Union branch of political parties. The formal institutions in the union under



study include- the Union Parishad, the local branches of political parties, primary and secondary schools, madrasas (Islamic school), registered NGOs, clubs, managing committee of schools, *Haat* and Bazar committees, local extensions of different central government offices etc. On the other hand, the non- formal institutions include family / household, faction (Dal), kinship, *Samaj*, *Gusti* (lineage), *shalish* etc.

It is appropriate to mention here that the present study does not cover all the existing institutions at the local level. The reason is that the focus of the present study is not to study the local institutions, rather it is confined to the political dynamics at the local level. It may not be likely that all the institutions at the local level have political relevance. Keeping in mind the focus of the study, we have made an account of the institutions relevant to politics at the local level. We have already discussed in the previous chapter, how we have categorized the local level institutions and the methodology of selecting the local level leaders for the sample survey from the selected categories.

The main objective of this chapter is to elaborate the structure and origin of the major local institutions included in the study. The discussion below covers both the formal and non-formal major institutions which have existence in the union under study and from which the leaders play role in the local level politics.

## **2.1 The Local Government in Bangladesh**

### Meaning and Importance of Local Government

It is very difficult find a consensus in the definition of the term local government. According to Jackson, the term 'Local Government' is concerned with localities and not with the country as a whole; it must for this reason be subordinate to the national government. The term further implies (as does any other form of Government) some jurisdiction or activity of public nature; it implies also the existence of authorities empowered to exercise that jurisdiction and activity (Jackson, 1960: 11). The simplest meaning of local government is "a government at local level having authority to undertake the power to perform public activities within its territory" (Bhogle, 1977:1). A

local government unit seeks to give opportunities to the people for expression of their opinion in regard to local affairs. It enables them to choose their representatives to take care of local affairs on their behalf. As the nature, constitutions, functions and authority of the local body differs from nation to nation and also from province to province within a nation. According to Duane Lockard, the Local Government is, 'a public organization authorised to decide and administer a large range of public policies within a relatively small territory which is a sub-division of a regional or national government. Local Government is at the bottom of a pyramid of governmental institutions with the national government at the top and intermediate governments (states, regions, and provinces) occupying the middle range' (Lockard, 1968: 451). According to William A. Robson, Local Government may be said to involve the conception of territorial, non-sovereign community possessing the legal right and the necessary organization to regulate its own affairs. This in turn presupposes the existence of a local authority with power to act independently of external control as well as the participation of the local community in the administration of its own affairs. The extent to which these elements are present must, in all cases, be a question of degree' (Robson, 1968: 574).

Shriram Maheshwari defines, "the essential attributes of a local government are, firstly, its statutory status, secondly, its power to raise finance by taxation in the area under its jurisdiction, thirdly, participation of local community in decision making in specified subjects and their administration, fourthly, the freedom to act independently of central control, and lastly, its general purpose in contrast to single-purpose character" (Shriram, 1971:3). Kamal Siddiqui defines local government essentially in terms of five attributes. Firstly, its statutory status; secondly, its power to raise finance by taxation in the area under its jurisdiction; thirdly, participation of the local community in decision making in specified subjects and in administration; fourthly, the freedom to act independently of central control; and lastly, its general purpose, in contrast to the single- purpose character of many autonomous bodies' (Siddiqui, 1995:5). However, it should be borne in mind, that all the above attributes have a derivative and not an independent value, as the powers and functions of a local government are determined and altered by the Act of legislature at the national level.

From the above definitions contributed by the scholars, it is clear that local government is a government of grassroots level. In the context of Bangladesh the Union Parishad is the grassroots level tier of local government. The relation in terms of political behaviour at this level can be examined on the basis of the attributes suggested in these definitions.

#### Union Parishad: The Grassroots Level Tier of Local Government

Union Parishad is the lowest tier of local government covering approximately a population of 25,000. The union-level body has undergone many changes in nomenclature and is currently called Union Parishad. From 1962 these bodies have become fully elective. Among the various tiers of local government, Union Parishads have the longest institutional history dating back to 1870 (Rahman, 2002: 29).

The British colonial rulers in India realized the necessity of rural local institutions in the administration of the country. Accordingly, they passed the Bengal *Chowkidari* Act of 1870. The Act tried to revive the traditional *Panchayat* system. It authorized the District Magistrate to appoint a *Panchayat* at the village level consisting of five members (Siddiqui, 1995:35). The primary function of the *Panchayat* was to appoint village watchmen called '*Chowkidars*' for the maintenance of law and order. The *Panchayat* could also assess and collect taxes from the villagers to pay the salaries of the *Chowkidars*.

#### Lord Ripon's Resolution on Local Self Government

Lord Ripon, the Governor General of British India adopted the famous resolution on local self-government in 1882. The purpose of Ripon's resolution was to give the people of Bengal a substantial interest in, and responsibility for, the administration of their own affairs, and to provide for the establishment of local self- government on a sound and practical basis (Siddiqui, 1995: 35).

In order to give effect to the resolution of Lord Ripon, the Bengal Council passed the Local Self-Government Act of 1885. It provided a three-tier system of local government

for rural areas: (i) a District Board in each district (ii) a Local Board in each sub-division of a district, and (iii) a Union Committee for a group of villages.

According to the Local Government Act of 1885 the District Board was the centerpiece in the local government system and entrusted with extensive powers and responsibilities. A District Board has meant to look after various matters of public interest and utility, such as schools, road and communication, vaccination, hospitals, famine relief, census, holding of fairs and exhibitions, repair and construction of public buildings etc.

Local Boards and Union Committees were made entirely dependent on the District Board. A Local Board had no specific function except to receive repartees from the Union Committees. The Board had no independent authority and source of income. It acted as an agent of the District Board (Huq, 2000: 4).

The Union committees were responsible for the local functions relating to infrastructure such as construction of small-unmetalled roads, primary education, sanitation, upkeep of ponds and tanks and registration of vital statistics. The Union Committee had also the power to raise funds from the villagers.

The Act of 1919 initiated the second major attempt to create a network of self-government bodies in rural Bengal. The Act replaced existing *Chowkidari Panchayats* and Union Committee by a new body called the Union Board (Siddiqui, 1995:38). The new unit had to combine the duties of the *Chowkidari Panchayats* and Union Committees. The primary functions of the Union Board were : (i) supervision of *Chowkidars* (ii) maintenance of sanitation and public health (iii) maintenance of roads, bridges and waterways (iv) establishment and upkeep of schools, dispensaries at its discretion, and (v) supply of information as and when needed by the District Board.

#### Local Government in the Pakistan Period

In 1947 British India was divided into two countries - India and Pakistan. After the partition of India, the government of Pakistan retained the system of District and Union Boards as well as the acts and statutes which governed them.

The Pakistan military staged a coup d'état in 1958 and started a new regime which was in favour of a guided democracy. This regime was to be characterised by authoritarian government at the top and representative government at the local level. A new variety of local government was introduced under the military regime. This new variety of local government was known as 'Basic Democracy' (Huq, 2000: 5).

The Basic Democracies Order (BDO) was promulgated in 1959. The Basic Democracies system covered both rural and urban areas. It had four tiers in the rural areas from bottom to top, these consisted of Union Council, Thana Council, District Council and Divisional Council. Basic Democracy was a bureaucracy – oriented system. There was an obvious difference between the District Board and the District Council. The district Board was an elected body headed by an elected chairman and was theoretically independent of the bureaucracy at the district level. Under the Basic Democracies Order, the District Council was brought under the control of the bureaucracy (Huq, 2000: 6). The Deputy Commissioner-cum-Collector was the ex-officio Chairman of the District Council.

#### Union Parishad

Bangladesh became an independent and sovereign state in 1971. Soon after its emergence Bangladesh President Order No. 7 was promulgated. According to this order, Union Council was renamed as Union Panchayat. In 1973 President Order No. 22 was promulgated. By this order the name of Union Panchayat was changed to Union Parishad. At present the legal basis of the Union Parishad is the Local Government (Union Parishad) Ordinance 1983.

According to an Amendment (1997) of Local Government (Union Parishad) Ordinance 1983, each union is divided into nine wards (There were three wards in a union earlier). A Union Parishad consists of a chairman, nine members (one from each ward), and three women members<sup>2</sup> (each of them represents three wards). The chairman is directly elected by the voters of the entire union and the members by the voters of the concerned ward/wards on the basis of adult franchise. The term of a Union Parishad was three

years. In 1992 an amendment of the LGO 1983 increased it to five years. However, the old Parishad, even after the expiry of its term, could continue to function until the first meeting of the succeeding Parishad.

The permanent employees of the UP are one secretary, four chowkidars (village police) and three *dafadars* (messengers). Both the elected functionaries (chairmen and members) and permanent staff are paid honorarium/salary from the grants provided by the central government.

The ordinance of 1983 divided the functions of Union Parishad into five categories: (a) Civic functions (b) police and defense functions (c) Revenue and general administrative functions (d) Development functions (e) Transferred functions (which may be transferred by the government from time to time). Sub-section 2 of section 30 of the 1983 ordinance lays down that the Union Parishad will, in particular, undertake the following functions:

- i) Maintenance of law and order and rendering of assistance to the administration in the maintenance of law and order; ii) adoption of measures for preventing disorder and smuggling;
- iii) Adoption and implementation of development schemes in the fields of agriculture, forestry, fisheries, livestock, education, health, cottage industries, communication, irrigation and flood protection with a view to increasing economic and social upliftment of the people; iv) promotion of family planning; v) development and use of local resources; vi) protection and maintenance of public property, such as roads, bridges, canals, embankments, telephones and electricity lines; vii) review of development activities undertaken by different agencies at the Union level, and submission of recommendations to the Upazila Parishad in regard to the activities of those agencies; viii) motivation and persuasion of the people to install sanitary latrines; ix) registration of births, deaths, blind people, beggars and destitutes; and, x) conducting of census of all kinds.

## **2.2 Local Branches of Political Parties**

The local branches of national political parties have been playing a vital role in the local level politics. It is surprising to note that there are more than one hundred political parties in Bangladesh but only a few have their branches in the union under the present

study. At first the Awami League (a national political party) formed its union committee at the union under study in early 1970s. The other political parties have formed their branches at the union under study in the 1980s and early 1990s. There are four national political parties which have union branches at the union under study. Some other parties, mainly the Communist Party of Bangladesh and the Workers' Party of Bangladesh have some activists at the union under study. These left activists are guided by their Upazila level party committee leaders as they could not form union branches at the union under study. The local branches of four national political parties in the union under study are: the Awami League, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, the Jamaat-e- *Islami* and the Jatiya Party (Ershad faction).

### 2.2.1 The Awami League (AL)

The East Bengal Awami Muslim League was formed in 1948. The disenchanted Bengali intelligentsia and a good number of political leaders who dissented from Muslim League formed this new political party. Since its inception Awami League relentlessly fought against the then vested interests in the government. The word "Awami" means people and originally it was supposed to be an offshoot of Muslim League which defied the central control of Muslim League by small coterie of Urdu speaking people. Maulana Bhasani was the founder president of East Bengal Awami Muslim League and under his leadership a great movement was launched against the provincial Muslim league as well as the central Pakistan Muslim League. The disenchanted Bengali intelligentsia rallied around this firebrand politician; but the decisive blow to the Muslim League government was given by the student community which abhorred West Pakistan domination through linguistic imperialism. When the then Prime Minister Khaja Najimuddin announced, "Urdu shall be the state language of Pakistan", the entire student community of the then East Bengal roused against it. The Muslim League government preferred to use force against this upsurge and on 21 February, 1952 they opened fire on student procession. This sparked off violent protest of the all sections of people of East Pakistan and the inevitable consequence followed soon thereafter.

In 1954 a general election was held in East Bengal in which Muslim League was routed and the opposition, coalition of political parties who assume the name of Jukta Front

(joint Front), won more than 90% of the seats in Provincial Legislative Assembly. Though Awami League was the biggest partner, the Jukta Front ministry was formed under the leadership of A.K. Fazlul Huq who represented the Krishak Sramik Party (KSP).

But through conspiracy and subtle dealings the Central Government of Pakistan removed the Jukta Front ministry from power in 1955. This was done through an enactment by the then Governor General of Pakistan under the constitutional provision known as 92A. This however could not contain the belligerent attitude of the leaders and masses of East Bengal which compelled to central government to lift 92A in the very same year. In order to appease the people and politicians of East Pakistan, the central government of Pakistan preferred to win over those leaders by a policy of divide and rule. In fact, after the dissolution of Jukta Front ministry the central government at first tried to win over the KSP by giving power of the Provincial government to this party. However, they could not continue for long since they did not have a majority in the provincial Assembly. At the same time, intrigue perpetrated by the central government continued and the Awami League was wooed to share power with the central government at this point.\*\* In this palace conspiracy Hussein Shahid Suhrawardy played the main role on behalf of Awami League. In 1956 Hussein Shahid Suhrawardy was appointed prime minister of Pakistan; provincial government was also given to Awami League with Ataur Rahman Khan as its chief minister. But they could not rule for long. In 1958, Ayub Khan staged a military coup and captured state power. In 1962, in his bid for “civilianizing” his regime, he allowed open politics in Pakistan. By this time, however, the Awami League had directed all its attention towards the problems of former East Pakistan. Soon it took on the task of championing the grievances of former East Pakistan. In 1966, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman formulated a “Six-point Programme” and launched a political movement<sup>3</sup> on the basis of that programme which extensively changed the complexion and directed of Pakistani politics.

In 1969, a mass upsurge toppled the Ayub regime. General Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan took over power from Ayub Khan and promised general elections in the following year. In the general elections of 1970, the Awami League, under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, won a landslide victory. But the Pakistani power wielders most



blatantly denied the Awami League its legitimate claim to form the central government in Pakistan. Instead, they began genocide against the Bengalis on March 25, 1971. The ruling Pakistani military-bureaucratic coterie, egged on by some West Pakistani politicians such as Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and his chums, destroyed the Pakistan that was the process. During the liberation struggle, the Awami League, naturally, was at the forefront and formed the Provisional Government in Mujibnagar<sup>4</sup> on 17 April 1971.

When the Pakistan government freed Sheikh Mujibur Rahman he made a triumphant return to Bangladesh on 10 January 1972. At first, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, became the President of the country; then, he decided to become Prime Minister. The first general election of the independent Bangladesh was held in 1973. Once again, the Awami League won triumphant victory. Politically, the Awami League was firmly lodged in power. But it failed to do anything much about the deteriorating economic condition of war-ravaged Bangladesh. The famine of 1974 and the prevailing lawlessness made things even worse (Mascarenhas, 1986). Consequently, the Awami League began losing its secure political base (Ziring 1992). In a bid to remedy the political malaise, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman initiated the 4<sup>th</sup> amendment to the country's constitution. The amendment enabled him to switch over from the parliamentary form of government to a presidential form and to establish a single-party system, instead of a multi-party system. As a consequence, the Awami League ceased to exist as a political party. As an expression of national unity, a new party was formed called BKSAL. As mentioned earlier, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated in a military coup on 15 August 1975. Thereafter, a fluid political condition prevailed in Bangladesh for about four months. In 1976, when Ziaur Rahman, through the political Party Regulation Order, allowed open politics based on a multi-party system, the Awami League, along with many other political parties, resumed its activities. Since then, the Awami League has never left the centre stage of Bangladesh politics (Khan et al, 1996:46).

### **2.2.2 Bangladesh Nationalist (BNP)**

General Ziaur Rahman (Zia) created the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). Zia came into power through a Sepoy revolution on November 7, 1975. General Ziaur Rahman's rise to power was followed by a number of coups and counter coups in the wake of the

assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (Mujib) on August 15, 1975( Hossain,1988: 18).

### Restoration of Political Order and Emergence of Jatiyatabadi Ganotantrik Dal

Soon after taking power, Zia had told the nation that he was a 'soldier' and not a 'politician', that the regime was 'interim', 'non-partisan' and 'non-political', and that its aim was to restore democracy to the people through free and fair elections. Despite all these, he did not restore power to the political leaders but tried instead to carve out popular support for himself. Meanwhile, an animated debate ensued in Bangladeshi political circles about the restoration of democracy and the free functioning of political parties. It may be observed that in the history of Bangladesh, political parties had played a significant role. So, Zia could not afford to ignore the importance of political parties. On July 28, 1976, the government promulgated the Political Parties Regulation (PPR) under which parties were allowed to function provided they got their programmes approved by the government.

Zia took over the presidency on April 21, 1977. Through a Martial law proclamation, which was subsequently ratified in the form of a fifth amendment of the constitution, he declared certain objectives for the 'republic'. Significantly, he dropped the word 'secularism' from the Bangladesh constitution and entrusted "absolute faith and trust in Almighty Allah". The proclamation stressed Bangladeshi solidarity with the Muslim states. With a view to gaining support from the business community he asserted that there would be no nationalization without compensation. These changes in the policy of the state helped Zia to obtain support from pro-Islamic as well as moderate and rightist groups. He announced that he would seek a popular mandate to remain in power and for his '19 Point Programme' through a referendum. In the referendum, which was held on May 30, 1977, Zia got a massive vote of support (98.88 per cent) which added to his confidence and political stature. There after the Military regime became formally involved in politics. It appears that with the referendum General Zia laid the foundation for his future political career (ibid, 1988: 18).

On February 23, 1978 the formation of Jatiyatabadi Ganotantrik Dal (JAGODAL) was announced in Dhaka. The new party with blessings from Zia had his official backing and also the support of some of the old guard of Bangladesh politics. With the formation of JAGODAL, General Zia did not want to align himself with any of the existing political parties. It was also felt for a while that Zia himself would lead JAGODAL, but he abstained from its membership.

### The Nationalist Front and 1979 President Election

Though Zia had backed the JAGODAL and signed its manifesto, he wanted to carve out a much broader political base for himself. He entered into an electoral alliance with six political parties consisting of the GAGODAL, the NAP,B, the Bangladesh Muslim League (ML), the UPP, the Bangladesh Labour Party (BLP), and the Bangladesh Scheduled Caste Federation (BSCF). He became the Chairman of this alliance and contested the election as its nominee rather than of JAGODAL alone. Zia won a massive victory. The major focus of the Nationalist Front in the election was on General Zia's 19 point socio-economic programme.

The massive victory of 1979 election helped him to launch the Bangladesh Jatiyotabadi Dal (Bangladesh Nationalist Party).

The organizational structure of the Bangladesh Jatiyotabadi Dal is as follows: At the village level it comprises Village Councils and Village Executive Committees, at the union level Union Councils and Union Executive Committees. Town level, Town/Municipal/Ward Councils and Town/Municipal/Ward Executive Committees, City Ward Councils and City Ward Executive Committees, City Thana Councils and City Thana Executive Committees, City Councils and City Executive Committees, and a national Council, a National Executive Council, a Standing National Committee (Khan et al., 1996: 94).

### **2.2.3 The Jamat- e- Islami, Bangladesh**

The Jamat- e- Islami is one of the oldest political parties of the Indian subcontinent. The foundation of Jamaat- e- Islami had been carefully planned by Maududi. During the thirties he had been writing extensively emphasizing the need for an Islamic political

party of a different kind. The Jamaat- e- Islami was founded on 26 August, 1941 at Lahore. Maulana Abdul Ala Maududi was the founding Amir (head) of the Jamaat (Bahadur, 1994 :28)

The Jamaat-e- Islami's ideology had been evolved by its founder Maududi based on his interpretation of the Quran and Sunnah as a complete framework of thought and analysis. The starting point of Maududi's ideology is that Islam is not a jumble of unrelated ideas and incoherent mode of conduct. It is rather an well-ordered system, a consistent whole, resting on clear-cut postulates (Moududi, 1960, p: 133, as referred in Bahadur, 1994, p: 28).

The Jamaat –e- Islami had emerged on the scene at a time when the subcontinent was convulsed with the political crisis created by the second world war, the quit India movement and the Lahore Resolution of the All India Muslim League of march 1940 also called the Pakistan. Moududi had been speaking and writing against the Muslim league's two nations theory for several years. He was fighting on two fronts: On one hand he was arguing against the *Ulama* of the *Jamat al Ulama-e- Hind* who supported the National Congress concept of composite nationalism and on the other hand, he was fighting Muslim League's demand for a separate homeland (Bahadur, 1994: 30).

Once Pakistan came into being Maududi's opposition became a political liability for the Jamaat- e- Islami in Pakistan. The Jamaat- e- Islami after the partition of India in August 1947 was also divided, those who remained in India constituted the Jamaat- e- Islami Hind and those of its members who belonged to Pakistan or had migrated there recognized themselves into the Jamaat- e- Islami, Pakistan. Maududi had also moved to Pakistan (ibid, 1994: 31).

In 1957 one of the party's thirteen administrative divisions was allotted to former East Pakistan and Golam Azam was the lone Bengali representative in the top party hierarchy.

In the election of 1970, all the islamic parties together got one seat from East Bengal in the national Assembly of Pakistan (Khan et al, 1966: 40).

During the War of Liberation of Bangladesh the Jamaat played an extremely anti-liberation role by actively supporting the Pakistan occupation forces. It helped organize

'Peace Committees' whose duty was to help the Pakistan Army with all possible means to root out the Bengali freedom fighters.

After liberation, the Jamaat was banned in Bangladesh. Many of its members were arrested for war crimes (Khan et al, 1966: 41). The *Ameer* (Chief) of the Jamaat-e-Islami of former East Pakistan, Golam Azam, who was staying in West Pakistan when Bangladesh was liberated, was denied citizenship in Bangladesh.

The Jamaat was 'indirectly' rehabilitated in Bangladesh in 1976 when the Chief Martial Law Administrator Justice A.S.M. Sayem, under 'instruction' from Ziaur Rahman, issued the Political Parties Regulations Order on 28 July, 1976 allowing limited party activities. However, the process of rehabilitation started much earlier – on 30 November 1973 – when the government of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared a general amnesty. Taking advantage of this order, and, no doubt with the tacit encouragement of Ziaur Rahman, Maulana Adbur Rahim, the first "Ameer of the Jamaat-e-Islami of former East Pakistan, organized the scattered leaders and workers of the Jamaat, Nezam-e-Islam, Khelafat-i-Rabbani and other religious parties. On 23 October, 1977, these leaders formed a new 'umbrella' party named Islamic Democratic League (IDL). However, very soon the scattered leaders and workers of the Jamaat reunited and decided to restore the original name of their party. Consequently, the Jamaat-e-Islami appeared in the political theatre of Bangladesh as a new political force and Abbas Ali Khan 'unofficially' became its Acting Ameer (Khan et al, 1996: 41).

On 11 July, 1978 Golam Azam returned to Bangladesh with a Pakistani passport and a three months visa to see his ailing mother. In May 1979, under the guidance of Golam Azam, the Jamaat formally resurfaced as a political party. On 10 February, 1980 the Jamaat arranged its first public meeting in Dhaka. During the Ershad regime's so-called 'pro-islamic' policies in early 1980s, the Jamaat expanded its organizational network. Then, in the late 1980s, Golam Azam once again emerged as the 'de facto' Ameer of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh and helped the Jamaat acquire political acceptability and, of course, some kinds of political legitimacy by making the Jamaat an integral part of the anti-Ershad movement. As a result the Jamaat was able to secure 18 seats and received 12.2% of votes in the general elections of 1991. Golam Azam, despite being an alien, was elected as Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh in 1992. This, however, sparked off

such wide and wild criticism as well as demonstrations from the 'pro-liberation' parties that the government of Khaleda Zia had to put him behind bars under the Special Powers Act. Golam Azam spent over a year in the Dhaka Central Jail. The Bangladesh Supreme Court, later, however, on a very 'technical ground', declared him a Bangladesh citizen "by birth" and set him free.

As things stand today, the Jamat-e-Islami, Bangladesh has not only assumed its original name and got its Ameer back at the helm, but it has also revived all its old policies and action programmes.

Beyond the centre, the Jamat-e-Islami Bangladesh has its organizations in the, Zila Upazila/Thana and Union/Municipal levels. (Khan et al: 1996:43)

#### **2.2.4 Jatiya Party (JP)**

General Hossain Mohammad Ershad is the founder of Jatiya Party. Jatiya Party was formed in 1986. The background of forming Jatiya Party was as follows: Ershad overthrew the somewhat fragile government of a relatively powerless President Abdus Sattar on 23 March, 1982. Earlier, when Ziaur Rahman was assassinated under mysterious circumstances during a tour of Chittagong and the Hill Tract area on 30 May 1981, president Sattar played no 'mean' role while fulfilling his 'constitutional obligation' as the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces in the tense and strained situation prevailing at that time in the country. He also cannot be accused of being 'ungenerous' in extending his supportive hand to the Acting President Abdus Sattar. But, the manifested generosity of this 'soft-spoken' General soon turned into, at best, a 'courteous overlordship' for Abdus Sattar, when he blatantly encroached upon the authority of the Acting President (Khan et al, 1996: 96). It is possible that the story behind the killing of Ziaur Rahman will never come out because the alleged plotter of the assassination of Ziaur Rahman, General M.A. Manzoor, was also killed in shadowy circumstances soon after he was captured, and his, accomplices' were executed within a short time, after a 'camera trial' in a military tribunal. Keen observers of Bangladesh politics believe that General Manzoor was used as a pawn in the whole episode and that some very powerful

officials of the top brass of the Bangladesh Army might have been involved in the whole process (Khan et al, 1996: 97).

After ruling the country as a Martial Law Administrator for little more than a year, on 17 March 1983, Ershad slowly initiated a 'civilianization' process with the announcement of a 18-point programme for 'economic emancipation', which very much resembled the 19-point programme of Ziaur Rahman in terms of its style and format ( Khan et al, 1996: 98). A week after this announcement, Ershad all on a sudden made it known that he was going to allow "in-door politics' in the country from 1 April 1983. In the mean time, he started inciting some 'over ambitious' but seemingly 'frustrated' politicians from different political parties to join hands with him with the promise that, in his civilian rule, he would appoint them in places – both in his government and in his party hierarchy – appropriate to their 'status'. Within a few weeks, he arranged undisclosed meetings with different leaders from various political parties. The included Aaur Rahman Khan, Badruddin Ahmed Siddiki, Tofazzal Ali, Dr. Alim al Razee, Shah Moazzem Hossain, Azizul Hoque, Maulana Abdul Matin, Kazi Zafar Ahmed, Captain (Rtd.) Abdul Halim Chowdhury, Abu Naser Khan Bhasani, Shafiqul Gani Sapan. Then, on 27 November 1983, he launched a new party, named the Bangladesh Jatiyotabadi Janata Dal (the Bangladesh Nationalist Peoples' Party) (Khan et al, 1996: 97).

Later keeping in mind the forthcoming elections and campaign issues On August, 1985, Ershad formed a Jatiya Front. Ershad's Janadal became the leading partner of the Front. Others who joined the Front were Kazi Zafar Ahmed and Mostafa Jamal Haider from the United People's Party (Zafar faction), Anwar Zahid and Sirajul Hossain Khan of Ganatantrik Party, Badruddin Ahmed Siddiki, Razia Fayeze and Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury of the Bangladesh Muslim League (Siddiki-Yusuf faction), Sultan Ahmed Chowdhury from the Bangladesh Jatiyotabadi Dal (Shah Aziz faction) and Sardar Amjad Hossain from BAKSAL (Razzak-Mahiuddin). Then, once again, consistent with his policy of slip-sliding away, on 1 January 1986, Ershad announced the formation of the Jatiya Party (National Party) and dissolved the Jatiya Front (Khan et al, 1996: 98).

It would be useful at this point to outline the salient features of the Jatiya Party Constitution. Its organizational structure comprises Ward Executive Committees (at village and town levels), Union Executive Committees, Thana Executive Committees (at city levels), Upazila Executive Committees, Municipal Executive Committees, City Executive Committees, Zila Executive Committees, a Central Working Committee, a National Executive Council, A Presidium and a National Council (Khan et al, 1996: 99).

### **2.3 Village *Samaj* (a traditional/ informal institution)**

The term *samaj* came from Sanskrit where it means people/organization (Arefeen, 1986: 105). Traditionally, the most important social institution in rural Muslim Bengali society is the *samaj*, meaning community and which is a symbolic and institutional reference for the political and religious community. It is under the leadership of a council of elders who have the function of moral arbiters of community life and who play an important role in dispute settlements at informal village courts (*shalish*) (Westergaard and Hossain, 1999:187). Bertocci (1980) has argued that *samaj* “as a cultural model of solidarity (it) takes concrete shape in rural Bangladesh as the statement of the power domains of the economically and politically dominant families and their members”. The function of the *Samaj* (literally meaning society) has been regulation of two aspects of village life, namely personal/social conduct of its members in accordance with religious/caste injunctions, and practices connected with socio-religious festivals, rites, customs, etc. (Siddiqui, 2000: 284).

### **2.4 Non- government Organisation (NGO)**

Non-government organizations (NGOs) working in the rural areas of Bangladesh have become in recent times an important area to investigate. NGOs are seen very close to grassroots people and have become part of local level politics. Their role and performance in local political dynamics is pertinent to look into. A short history on how NGOs have emerged in Bangladesh is needed to introduce. Prior to independence in 1971, only a few NGOs operated in the then East Pakistan, now known as Bangladesh. After the liberation war of 1971, the NGOs emerged on a large scale to undertake relief and rehabilitation activities to mitigate the sufferings of the war-torn people. This charity



and welfare orientation in NGOs continued till 1974. Thereafter, they undertook integrated community development programmes, hoping that an improvement in the quality of life of the poor would be occurred automatically with the overall development of the community. However, such development efforts failed to achieve the desired goals owing to structural constraints imposed by the existing socio-economic and political systems (Ahmed et al, 1991: 375). Lessons learnt from the field- operations and insights drawn from the in-depth studies on the social dynamics of power- relations in development subsequently paved the way towards a transition into a new orientation- participatory development. This new orientation envisaged a development strategy focussed on a specific target group- the rural poor.

NGO- (Non-government organization), as a terminology may be used to include any institution or organization outside the government, and as such, may also include political parties, private and commercial enterprises, academic institutions, youth organizations even sports clubs, etc. But in practice this terminology is used to refer to all such organizations and institutions registered with the Government under the Voluntary Social Welfare Agencies (Registration and control) Ordinance of 1961 and the foreign donation (Voluntary activities) Regulation Ordinance of 1978 (Ahamed et al, 1991: 373).

As has been discussed, in Bangladesh most of the NGOs are working with the poor and their main focus is poverty alleviation through various support services ranging from micro credit, income generation, health etc. Besides the support services, some NGOs have made efforts to mobilize the poor on the issues of democracy and human rights, including social and legal justice. These NGOs can be termed as “radical NGOs” (Westergaard, 1996:47). These NGOs are active in some places of Bangladesh. They are dealing with many important issues, such as, self-reliant organization, skill development, collective action and mobilization on social issues, female suppression, misappropriation of resources, and *khas* land (government land which is supposed to distribute to the landless). In the recent years they have also participated in the local bodies (Union Parishad elections).

## 2.5 The Origin and Development of the Formal and Informal Institutions in the area under study

### Union Parishad in the Union under the Present Study

The name of the union, which is selected for the empirical data for the present study, is Mizanpur. It is one of the 14 unions of the Rajbari sadar upazila under the district of Rajbari, Bangladesh. It is also one of the biggest unions, in respect of its area and population, of Rajbari sadar upazila. Total area of the union is 12412 acres. Total number of villages is 37 in the union. Of the 37 villages, 7 villages are less populated as maximum most parts of these villages have undergone in the river Padma. River erosion is a perennial phenomenon in Mizanpur union. Almost every year, in rainy season, some of its land goes to River Padma.

The present Mizanpur Union Parishad was established in 1961. From the history of the Mizanpur Union Parishad it is known that before 1961 the present Mizanpur union area was under the Silimpur Union Council. In 1961 the Silimpur Union Council and part of the nearby Baghmara Union Council were merged to form a new Union Council. The question of forming a new union was raised when almost half of the villages of both Silimpur and Baghmara underwent to the River Padma. During the merging process a conflict on naming was emerged between the inhabitants of the two unions. The inhabitants of Silimpur union were rigid to keep the old name and the inhabitants of Baghmara union too took the same stand. To solve the dispute after several meetings, a big meeting was arranged in which the Sub- Divisional Officer (SDO) of Gualanda Sub-Division<sup>5</sup> was present. The meeting passed several hours without any solution. Finally the SDO himself proposed a name. The SDO with an introduction proposed that his five year- old son's name is Mizan, he would like to propose the new of the Union council to be Mizanpur. Everyone attended the meeting accepted the SDO's proposals. And, thus the name of the new Union Council was settled as Mizanpur Union<sup>6</sup>. It is worthwhile to mention here that generally the names of the Union Parishads are taken from the names of a village under the respected union.

The present structure of Union Parishad is 1 chairman and 12 members, all directly elected by voters of the union. Among the members 9 elected from 9 wards, one from

each ward and 3 women elected from 9 wards, one from each 3 wards. Its permanent employees included 1 secretary, 4 *chowkidars* (village police) and 3 *dafadars* (messengers).

#### Development Projects and Programmes

Mizanpur Union Parishad is implementing different projects and programmes mainly based on the allocation central government. Major projects and programmes are associated with the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, and Ministry of Social Affairs. Common projects and programmes are called ADP (Annual Development Programme) funded (both cash and food) projects. These Projects are: Food for Work, Test Relief, General Relief, Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF), Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) and health, education and communication related projects.

#### Local Branches of the Political Parties in the Union under Study

##### The Awami League

The present Rajbari district was a sub-division of Faridpur district until 1984. The name of the sub-division was Gualanda. In 1984, the Gualanda sub-division upgraded into a district and renamed as Rajbari district. The Awami League formed its sub-division level committee at Rajbari in 1952. The Rajbari thana branch of the Awami League was also formed in the same year.

The Mizanpur union committee of the Awami League was formed in 1959. At that time it was called Silimpur union branch of Awami League. The present Mizanpur Union, the union under study, was under the Silimpur Union. In 1961, the Mizanpur union was established. Since then the local branch of Awami League is existing in the union under study. At present the executive committee of Mizanpur Union branch of Awami League consists of 31 members.

### The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)

In 1979, BNP Gualanda sub-division (Now Rajbari district) committee was formed. Rajbari thana committee of BNP was formed in 1984. Mizanpur union committee of BNP was formed in 1995. Since then the union branch, in the union under study, of BNP is continuing on.

### The Jamat-e- Islami Bangladesh

The Gualanda sub-division branch of Jamat-e-Islami was formed in 1960s. The leaders of the then Jamat-e-Islami of Gualanda sub-division branch worked as collaborator of the Pakistani army during the liberation war in 1971. The Mizanpur union branch of Jamat-e-Islami was formed in 1996 just a couple of days ahead of the 7th national parliamentary election. At present the executive committee of Mizanpur Union branch of Jamat-e-Islami Bangladesh comprises 21 leaders.

### The Jatiya Party

A convenor committee of Jatiyotabadi Janata Dal was formed in 1984 in Rajbari district. The Jatiya Party Rajbari district committee was formed in 1986. Rajbari sadar Upazila branch of Jatiya Party was also formed in the same year, in 1986. The president of the Jatiya Party Rajbari district branch was contested in the national election held in 1986 and was elected from the Rajbari constituency-1. Rajbari constituency –1 comprises two upazilas, namely the Rajbari sadar and Gualanda upazila.

The Mizanpur Union branch of Jatiya Party was formed in 1991. And since then the branch is continuing without any breaking.

### Village Samaj

*Samaj* is found as an old and traditional institution in every villages of the union under study. There are about 2 or 3 *samaj* in a village, which is a very common. *Samaj* leaders of the villages of Mizanpur Union observe the general functions, viz dispute resolution and religious ceremonials. Moreover *samaj* as an institution plays some sorts of political role in the union of our study.

### Non- government Organisations (NGOs) in the union under the present Study

There are about fifty small, middle and big NGOs working in Rajbari district. A few of them are national, the others can be termed as local and regional. At the study union, activities of six registered NGOs (annexure - 2) are observed. These are: BRAC, KKS, VPKA, Sangjog, Samata and Grameen Bank. We have found only one NGO in Rajbari district and also in the study union which has relevance for the present study. It is Samata, a regional NGO. In Rajbari, only Samata is actively working on the issues of social mobilizations and politics. The other NGOs of Rajbari district are mainly working in the poor with their micro- credit programmes. Below is an overview of Samata.

The historical formation of Samata is rooted in the post liberation war of Bangladesh like most of the NGO working in the country. In 1976, some freedom fighters and local youths of the village of Bishnupur, Khetupara Union under Santhia Upazila, formed a youth club and occasionally involved in small scale and temporary relief efforts. In course of time they have set up a development organization, which followed many of the aims and objectives of the community development programmes (infrastructure development and emergency relief) dispersed throughout the country at that time. It was also realized-many of the weaknesses of the same initiatives that most of the benefits of the projects were reaped by the rich and middle farmers. As a result of the evaluation of this work a decision was taken to start new initiatives, which would focus exclusively on the landless poor of the area. *Samata*, in Bengali means equality, symbolized both the spirit and philosophy of the new organization, which sought to challenge the prevalent rural power structure, which systematically disenfranchised the poor.

However, after its registration with the development of Social Welfare in 1983, Samata's development activities were given national and international prominence as a result of its struggle to capture over 973 acres of *khas* land (land under the ownership of government) situated in the nearby Gugudaha Bel. This area of *khas* land was important material resource, which was illegally captured by certain local influential persons. However, as per the existing land law, these should have been given to the landless poor. As such, it

was perfectly reflected and further strengthened the power relations which governed the lives of the landless poor. Although the government laws awarded such a way that the same laws were easily manipulated in their favour.

The struggle to capture this khas land became significant for number of reasons. First of all, it was realized that if the poor could be organized and united, they had sufficient strength to actually change power structures and resist the threats, violence and political maneuverings of those who opposed change. This was an important source of encouragement to other groups of poor peasants in Bangladesh. Secondly, in response to the struggle in which Samata was engaged, an NGO Coordination Council for Land Reform was established in 1987. This was an effect the first major NGO forum (and the predecessor to the present Association for Land Reform and Development – ALRD) which brought together like-minded organizations in an attempt to deal with a specific issue. Finally, the work of Samata brought to light, a particular development methodology, the logic of which offers crucial insights into current development practice and theory (Samata annual Report, 2001).

#### Activities and Core Programme

Samata runs four core programmes for establishing their rights of the grassroots people with major emphasis on capacity building of the landless through unity, social mobilization and empowerment of the grassroots people through establishment of their basic rights. The major components are: Land Rights, Democratization, Gender Activities and Net working.

Samata started its activities in Rajbari on January, 2000. They started to organize the landless of Mizanpur union in the same year. We find, during our field visits in 2001, a total of 60 Samata organized landless samities (committees) in Mizanpur Union. The members of about 60% landless samities are women and each samity (committee) has on average 20 members. Besides, currently Samata in Mizanpur Union has about 10 village Development Committees (VDCs) and 1 Union Development committee (UDC).

Samata has also formed two “Women Action Committee”(WAC) in Mizanpur Union. Main function of WAC includes empower the female and develop gender relation in the

villages. WAC is now playing a vital role in the villages to protect female from any kind of tortures and violence.

## 2.6 Conclusion

Union Parishad as a formal institution has its long history since the British time in Bangal. Though there are many major and small political parties in Bangladesh, the union of our study includes only the major political parties, mainly the right-wing political parties and a fundamental Islamic party. These are - the Awami League, the Bangladesh Nationalist party, the Jamaat-e- Islami Bangladesh and the Jatiya Party. The Awami League played vital role in the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971, while the Jamaat-e-Islami worked as anti-liberation force. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party and the Jatiya Party originated in the 1970s and 1980s. The informal institutions in the study union, for example *samaj*, seem as old as the Bangladesh rural society.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> For the present study, we have used these two terms, institution and organization, interchangeably.

<sup>2</sup> The provision of reserved seats for the women in the UP was introduced in 1973, but there was no provision of direct election for the reserved seats. They were elected by the UP chairman and members i.e., they were elected indirectly not through adult franchise of union.

\*\* Hussein Shahid Suhrawardy ,who came from West Bengal in 1950, joined Awami League and thereafter he had instituted a party in West Pakistan with the name “ Zinnah Muslim League” . However it did not create any ripple in West Pakistan. But it ensured Hussein Shahid Suhrawardy a respectable position in Awami League of East Bangal . Towards the end of 1955 when the ban on political parties was lifted the Awami Muslim League in a convention dropped the word ‘Muslim’ and became Awami League.

<sup>3</sup> The Awami League started advocating a separate identity for former East Pakistan. It also drew the attention of the people of this region to the domination and subjugation of former East Pakistan by the West Pakistan-based ruling elite (Sobhan 1992).

<sup>4</sup> Since Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was in prison in West Pakistan, Syed Nazrul Islam, a senior Vice President of the Party was appointed the Acting President of the government in exile formed to serve the case of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The General Secretary of the Party, Tajuddin Ahmed became the Prime Minister. The same government took over the charge of the country after it was liberated from the Pakistani occupation forces on 16 December 1971.

<sup>5</sup> Gualanda sub- division was under the district of Faridpur. In 1984 under the decentralization programme of the then government all the sub- divisions turned into zilas (district). Gualanda sub-division also upgraded into a zila (district) but with a new name Rajbari. Since 1984, Gualanda is upazila of Rajbari zila.

<sup>6</sup> the information on naming the study union have been collected through several discussions with the existing UP chairman and members and also from the knowledgeable and respected elders of Mizanpur Union Parishad.

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## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Socio-economic and Political Background of the Local Leaders**

## CHAPTER 3

### Socio-economic and Political Background of the Local Leaders

#### 3.0 Introduction

The socio- economic and political backgrounds of the local level leaders are extremely important in understanding their behavioral pattern, environment, and thought structure. Moreover, socio- economic status of leaders can be used to ascertain their position in the hierarchy of the social system on the one hand, and on the other, the changing socio-economic status of leaders. Thus it may be adopted as an index to the changing power structure within the social system (Jervis, 1976:28).

We define here the local level leaders as the key position holders of the different formal and informal or non-formal institutions operating in the union under the present study. The leaders of the formal institutions include the leaders of Union Parishad, union branches of political party leaders and Non Government Organization (NGO) leaders. The leaders of the informal or non-formal institutions include the leaders of the village *samaj*, mosque committees etc. We conceive here the local level leaders as a blend of both formal and informal institutional leaders of the union. Henceforth, we have classified the local institutions into five categories: The local government, political, religious, social and the economic. The leaders belong to the above mentioned institutions have been perceived as the local level leaders in the study.

The present chapter covers some of the socio- economic and political status encountered by the sample respondents. The chapter consists of three sections: Section I includes mainly socio- economic status such as age distribution, marital and religious status, level of education, occupation, family composition, land ownership pattern and income level of the local level leaders.

Section II deals with political background of the sample respondents. Political background of the respondents mainly covers background of student politics of the local

level leaders, participation in the local government elections and state of political party affiliations.

Section III contains family background of the sample respondents. It also covers state of education, main occupation of the respondents' fathers. Further, this section covers the participation of respondents' fathers as candidates in the local government elections.

## **Section I**

### **3.1 Socio- economic Status of the Local Level Leaders**

Socio- economic variables are very important to measure the social and economic status of the local level leaders. Following tables and discussions encompass mainly the important socio- economic variables, such as age distribution, marital and religious status, level of education, occupation, family composition, land ownership pattern and income level of the local level leaders.

#### **3.1.1: Age Structure**

Age is an important variable in any study of the socio- economic characteristics of a population. The data on age have been classified into four cohorts: 25-34 years, 35-49 years, 50-64 years and 65 plus years.

Table 4.1.1 presents the age structure of the sampled local level leaders in the union under study. The table reveals that most of the local level leaders (43.2%) in the union under study belongs to the age group (35-49), followed by the age group (50-64) by 31%. The table also reveals that the local level leaders within the age range of 35 –49 years dominate the existing local level leadership. The study also finds that most of the leaders in the religious category (58.3%) belong to the upper age group (50-64), while most of the leaders in the local government (57%), political (40.4%), social (38%) and economic category (66.7%) belong to the age group (35-49). Thus it is clear that religious leadership belongs to the aged while the leadership of other categories mostly belong to middle age groups.

Table -3.1.1: Age Structure of the local level leaders

Category of Respondents	Percent of respondents under different age group			
	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Local Government N=28	7.1 (2)	57.1 (16)	25.0 (7)	10.7 (3)
Political N=10	30.0 (3)	40.0 (4)	20.0 (2)	10.0 (1)
Religious N=12	16.7 (2)	16.7 (2)	58.3 (7)	8.3 (1)
Social N=21	19.0 (4)	38.1 (8)	28.6 (6)	14.3 (3)
Economic N=3	(-)	66.7 (2)	33.3 (1)	(-)
Total N=74	14.9 (11)	43.2 (32)	31.1 (23)	10.8 (8)

Source: Field Survey, 2001-2002

Note: Figures in the parentheses represent the number of respondents. (-) indicates not appeared.

### 3.1.2: Marital Status, Sex and Religion

Sex, marital and religious status of the local level leaders in the union under study are presented in the table 3.1.2. It appears that local level leadership is basically male dominated. The table shows (table 3.1.2) that about 85 % of the local level leaders are male while only 15% are female. Category wise distribution shows that there are 25% female leaders who belong to the local government category and 19 % in the social category. Women leadership under the category of political, religious and economic is not found in the union under study (see table 3.1.2).

It should be mentioned that that the reasons behind the poor representation of women leaders in the local institutions and in general in the local level politics are multifarious. One argument is that, in the national politics very few women are involved with the political parties. For the same reason, representation of women in the local or the union branches of political parties is very insignificant. We have not found a single woman in

the union branches of national political party committees of the union under study. Secondly, leaders belonging to the religious category are mainly the leaders of the mosque and *madrassa* (Islamic school) committees. It is relevant to mention here that Bengali Muslim society does not approve women as the leader in the religious institutions. We have not found women leaders in the economic category as well at the local level in the union under study. The cause behind the absence of women leaders in the economic category may be the same as earlier categories. But it is found that about 25% of leaders of local government category are women. The inclusion of women leaders in the local level politics is a recent trend. The reason behind the existence of women leadership in this category is that a provision of direct election of the women members for reserved seats was introduced by an amendment in 1997(Previously the women UP members for reserved seats used to be either nominated or indirectly elected). As a result a large number of women have been contesting in the Union Parishad elections for the posts of UP member. Provision for direct election for reserved seats of women members in the Union Parishad has created a political space for the women leadership at the local level politics. It can be mentioned here that Union Parishad elections are generally held every five years. In the social category of the leaders in the union under study we have found 19% women leaders, who have mainly emerged from the NGO organized groups in the union under study (See table 3.1.2).

Marital status of the local level leaders reveals that almost all of the respondents are married (89.2%) followed by a few who are divorced or widowed (8.11%); a very negligible percent (2.7%) of the local level leaders are unmarried.

Bangladesh is a Muslim dominated country (about 88 % of the total population are Muslims) and that is also reflected in religious status of the local level leaders in the union under study. The study shows that nearly cent percent (98.6%) of the leaders under specified categories are Muslims by religion (See table 3.1.2).

Table - 3.1.2: Percent of leaders by Sex, marital status and religion

Category of Respondents	Sex		Marital status			Religion	
	Male	Female	Married	Unmarried	Divorced /widowed	Muslim	Hindu
Local Government N=28	75.0 (21)	25.0 (7)	85.7 (24)	(-)	14.29 (4)	100.0 (28)	(-)
Political N=10	100.0 (10)	(-)	100.0 (10)	(-)	(-)	100.0 (10)	(-)
Religious N=12	100.0 (12)	(-)	83.3 (10)	16.7 (2)	(-)	100.0 (12)	(-)
Social N=21	81.0 (17)	19.0 (4)	90.5 (19)	(-)	9.5 (2)	95.2 (20)	4.8 (1)
Economic N=3	100.0 (3)	(-)	100.0 (3)	(-)	(-)	100.0 (3)	(-)
Total N=74	85.1 (63)	14.9 (11)	89.2 (66)	2.7 (2)	8.11 (6)	98.6 (73)	1.4 (1)

Source: Field Survey, 2001-2002

Note: Figures in the brackets indicate the numbers of respondents. (-) indicates not appeared.

### 3.1.3: Education Level

Education is one of the key variables to appraise the social background and position of the local level leadership. The data of the present study shows that most of the local level leaders are educated. Altogether 85% of the local level leaders have had formal education. In regard to formal educational level of the respondents, this study reveals that the local level leaders with secondary level education emerge as the dominating group (32.4%) followed by SSC (Secondary School Certificate) (20.3%), HSC (Higher



Secondary Certificate) (12.2%) and graduation or post graduation (12.2%) (See table 4.1.3). Only 14.9 % local level leaders have no education in the formal sense. However, our field investigations reveal that most of the local level leaders who have been counted in the 'no education'<sup>1</sup> category can read and write with difficulties. It is interesting that the percentage of respondents having primary education (Class one to five) is very small (only 8.1%). To assess the changes in educational background of the local level leaders it is worthwhile to mention here that in a union level study of Bangladesh, conducted in the late 70's, Rahman found that 81.82% of the Union Parishad leaders had schooling upto secondary. Only 6.82 and 3.03 percent leaders had graduate and postgraduate degrees (Rahman, 1979: 87). Our study also corroborates Rahman's findings. In fact with the passage of time not a very significant difference occurred at this level though much has been said in governmental statistics about the spread of education.

Table- 3.1.3: Education level of the local level leaders

Category of Respondents	Education level					
	No education	Primary	Secondary	SSC pass	HSC pass	Graduation/ Post graduation
Local Government N=28	10.7 (3)	10.7 (3)	46.4 (13)	21.4 (6)	7.1 (2)	3.6 (1)
Political N=10	(-)	(-)	30.0 (3)	40.0 (4)	(-)	30.0 (3)
Religious N=12	25.0 (3)	(-)	25.0 (3)	16.7 (2)	16.7 (2)	16.7 (2)
Social N=21	23.8 (5)	14.3 (3)	14.3 (3)	14.3 (3)	19.0 (4)	14.3 (3)
Economic N=3	(-)	(-)	66.7 (2)	(-)	33.3 (1)	(-)
Total N=74	14.9 (11)	8.1 (6)	32.4 (24)	20.3 (15)	12.2 (9)	12.2 (9)

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002

Notes:

1. Figures in the brackets indicate the numbers of respondents. (-) Indicates not appeared.
2. Primary level education covers classes one to five; secondary level covers classes six to ten. SSC passed indicates the persons who have got secondary school certificates and HSC passed indicates the persons who have got higher secondary school certificates from the different educational boards of Bangladesh

### **3.1.4: Occupational Structure**

Occupation of a local level leader is important in determining his social position. Our investigation of the occupational profile of local level leaders shows that agriculture is the principal occupation of 43.2% leaders and secondary occupation of 35% leaders. Besides, business is found as the principal occupation of 29.7% leaders, service 16.2% leaders and teaching 5.4 leaders. Our investigation also shows that business is the secondary occupation of 23% leaders, service 1.4% leaders and teaching 2.7% leaders (See table 3.1.4). It may be relevant to mention here that a study on local leadership conducted in the late 1980s in a Bangladeshi village (Barman, 1988:142) showed that agriculture was the principal occupation of 77.3 % leaders, business 6.8% and service 13.6% leaders.

The present study shows that agriculture as a principal occupation is dominating the occupational pattern of the local level leaders. But it is also clear in the present study that the dominance of agriculture as a principal occupation of local level leaders is sharply decreasing compared to findings of the research conducted in the early decades. Instead, the non-farm occupation, particularly the 'business' (29.7%), has been steadily increasing as the principal occupation. Recent changes occurring in the occupational pattern of local level leaders do however shows that agriculture is still a dominating occupation for the leaders of the local government category (53.6%). But the most significant trend is that the non- farm occupations i.e. business, service and teaching (46.4%) are increasingly taking leadership in the Union Parishad (See table 3.1.4).

The occupational pattern of local level leaders under political category also shows a distinguishing feature: about 60% of the leaders in this category have reported that their principal occupation is business and only 20% reported agriculture (See table 3.1.4). This trend also indicates that more and more politics at the union level are being dominated by business personnel which is already manifested at the national level. The occupational

profile of MP (Member of Parliament) candidates shows that 76% of them are involved in non-farm occupations (PPRC Election Research Series, 1996).

Table- 3.1.4: Principal and secondary occupations of the local level leaders

Category of Respondents	Occupation of the respondents ( in percent)									
	Agriculture		Business		Service		Teaching		Others	
	Prin.	Secon	Prin.	Seco n	Prin	Secon	Prin	Seco n	Prin.	Secon.
Local Government N=28	53.6 (15)	32.1 (9)	25.0 (7)	17.9 (5)	17.9 (5)	(-)	3.6 (1)	(-)	(-)	21.4 (6)
Political N=10	20.0 (2)	50.0 (5)	60.0 (6)	30.0 (3)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	20.0 (2)	10.0 (1)
Religious N=12	50.0 (6)	41.7 (5)	16.7 (2)	25.0 (3)	33.3 (4)	(-)	(-)	8.3 (1)	(-)	(-)
Social N=21	42.9 (9)	23.8 (5)	19.0 (4)	28.6 (6)	14.3 (3)	(-)	14.3 (3)	4.8 (1)	9.5 (2)	19.0 (4)
Economic N=3	(-)	66.7 (2)	100.0 (3)	(-)	(-)	33.3 (1)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)
Total N=74	43.2 (32)	35.1 (26)	29.7 (22)	23.0 (17)	16.2 (12)	1.4 (1)	5.4 (4)	2.7 (2)	5.4 (4)	14.9 (11)

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002

Notes:

1. Figures in the brackets indicate the numbers of respondents. (-) Indicates not appeared
2. Others for the principal occupation include Lawyers, *mohuri* (Lawyer's assistant) and surveyors, and for the secondary occupation include fish cultivators, surveyors, village doctor and NGO activist.

#### 4.1.5: Family Structure

Family<sup>2</sup> serves as a significant base for leadership. It is the smallest core unit where socialization process of an individual begins. Originating as a biological and reproductive association, it has gradually become the most prominent social institutions. Family provides emotional, social and financial security to its members. Without a family the individual is unprotected and isolated a prey to every form of aggregation, exploitation, and even humiliation (Lewis, 1960). Family refers to a group of individuals united by

marriage, kinship or adoption, constituting a household called *Paribar* interacting in roles of husband and wife, father and mother, sons and daughters, brother and sister.

On the basis of the depth of generation of the members, family can be classified as nuclear and joint families. “Nuclear family”(or “Elementary”, “Simple”, or “Basic”) is most frequently used to refer to a group consisting of a man, a woman, and their socially recognized children. A joint family exists when “two or more lineally related kinsfolk of the same sex, their spouses and offsprings, occupy a single homestead and are jointly subject to the same authority or single head.” An example would be a group consisting of a man and his wife with their married sons and their wives and children (International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences).

Using the criterion laid down above the present study covers the family structure of the selected local level leaders. Table 4.1.5 includes the information of average family size by family type.

Table 3.1.5 shows that the average family size of the local level leaders is 7.2, which is higher than our national average family size 5.3 (BBS, 1995-96). Among five groups of the local level leaders, as we have categorized the leaders for the present study, average family size of the leaders under religious category is highest (8.0) followed by social category (7.67). It is noted here that reaction to adopt family planning methods for a small family size may be the cause of holding larger family size by the leaders under religious and social categories.

The table also shows the type of families of the local level leaders. The present study reveals that 51.4% families are nuclear by type and 48.6% are joint families. The average family size of nuclear families is 5.00 and the joint families 9.53. Among all groups the

percentage of joint families is the highest (60%) in the leaders under the political category followed by the social category (about 57%). Average size of joint family is very high (10.67%) in the local level leaders under the religious category.

Table-4.1.5: Family structure of the local level leaders

Category of Respondents	Number of persons and average family size		Family type and average family size			
	Number of persons	Average family size	Nuclear family (%)	Joint family (%)	Average size of nuclear family	Average size of joint family
Local Government N=28	193	6.89	57.1 (16)	42.9 (12)	4.88	9.58
Political N=10	66	6.50	40.0 (4)	60.0 (6)	5.00	7.50
Religious N=12	96	8.00	50.0 (6)	50.0 (6)	5.33	10.67
Social N=21	161	7.67	42.9 (9)	57.1 (12)	4.67	9.92
Economic N=3	18	6.00	100.0 (3)	(-)	6.00	(-)
Total N=74	533	7.20	51.4 (38)	48.6 (36)	5.00	9.53

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate the numbers of family. (-) indicates not appeared.

### 3.1.6: Landownership and Income

Land, being the principal means of production, plays an important role as a basis of local level leadership. It gives its holders economic security and works as a symbol of prestige. The ownership and control over land gives one ample scope to exert one's will on others. Control over land or land ownership has also been found, in many studies (Barman, 1988:142), to have positive relationship with the leadership position.

Income<sup>3</sup> from land and other sources determines one's economic position in a society. It has been observed in many studies (Chaudhary, 1981:44; Stepanek, 1979:109) that there has been a distinct relationship between income and leadership position.

The following table (table 3.1.6) presents the average landholding size and average yearly income of the sampled local level leaders.

**Landholding:** Our data shows that most of the respondents (59.4%) belong to the landholding group of upto 1.00 and 1.01-2.50 acres. The table also shows that about 15% of the local leaders belong to the landholding group between 2.51-4.50 acres, followed by 8.1 % between 4.51-7.50, 12.2% between 7.51-12.50 and only 5.4 % owned 12.51 and above acres of land (see table 3.1.6).

**Income:** It is very difficult to assess actual income of the local level leaders. It is generally argued that people remain very reluctant to disclose or report their exact income for fear of taxation. Besides, they do not generally keep record of their income from different sources. In spite of all these limitations, we have collected information regarding their income from the local level leaders themselves. This study covers only some major sources of income such as, agriculture, business, teaching and service. As such the figures may be overestimated or underestimated. Nevertheless we have tried to be as accurate as possible. Our data reveals that the average yearly income of local level leaders is 96,495.00 taka. It is noted that average yearly income per household in Bangladesh is 52,392.00 Taka (BBS, 1995-96). Category-wise average income distribution data of respondents shows that the yearly average income for the leaders of

the local government category is 1,04,877.00 taka, while yearly income for the political category, 76,987.00 taka, for the religious 94,815.00 taka, for the social 95,173.00 taka and for the economic category leaders is 99,266.00 taka (see table 3.1.6).

Table – 3.1.6: The average landholding size and level of income of the local level leaders

Category of Respondents	Landholdings ( in acres)	Income (in taka)
Local Government N=28	3.85	104877.00
Political N=10	2.81	76987.00
Religious N=12	3.72	94815.00
Social N=21	4.82	95173.00
Economic N=3	3.14	99266.00
Total N=74	3.93	96495.00

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002

## Section II

### 3.2 Political Background of the Local Level Leaders

#### 3.2.1: Student Politics

Student politics in Bangladesh is characterized as a part of national politics. Indeed the student organizations in Bangladesh are the student wings of different political parties bearing the same ideologies as of the main political parties and controlled by the central committees of their concerned parties. The members of the student organisations are

generally the students of different educational institutions. Almost all the student organisations have central committees as well as the local branches or local committees. Local branches student organisations are being formed in the district, Upazila and even in the union level. Moreover, committees or the branches of different student organizations are also found in the high schools, colleges and universities.

In our investigation of the leadership background of the local level leaders in the union under study we have tried to explore the involvement of the leaders in student politics during their student life. The table 3.2.1 offers to the view of involvement status and different student organizations in which the local level leaders were involved.

The table shows that about 27% of sampled local level leaders got involved in student politics during their school or college days. The table also shows the highest involvement (70.0%) among the leaders under political category of the local leaders. The second highest (66.7%) is found among the leaders under the economic category and the lowest percentage (9.5%) is found among the leaders under the social category.

Information regarding the student organizations shows that 70% of the local level leaders had been involved with the *Chhatra League* (the student front of Bangladesh Awami League). About 15% were involved with the Left party's student fronts, mainly with the *Chhatra Union* and the *Chhatra Moitry* (the student wings of Bangladesher Communist Party and Bangladesh worker's Party). About 10% of the local level leaders got involved with JCD (Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal), the student wing of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and only 5 % had involvement with the *Chhatra Sibir* (the student wing



of the Jamaat- e- Islami, Bangladesh). It may be mentioning that Jamaat-e- Islami background does not necessarily lead to religious leadership.

Table –3.2.1: Background of student politics of the local level leaders

Category of Respondents	Involvement status		Students organization			
	Involved	Not involved	Chatra League	JCD	Left student fronts	Chatra Shibir
Local Government N=28	21.4 (6)	78.6 (22)	83.3 (5)	16.67 (1)	(-)	(-)
Political N=10	70.0 (7)	30.0 (3)	28.6 (2)	14.3 (1)	42.9 (3)	14.3 (1)
Religious N=12	25.0 (3)	75.0 (9)	100.0 (3)	(-)	(-)	(-)
Social N=21	9.5 (2)	90.5 (19)	100.0 (2)	(-)	(-)	(-)
Economic N=3	66.7 (2)	33.3 (1)	100.0 (2)	(-)	(-)	(-)
All N=74	27.03 (20)	72.97 (54)	70.0 (14)	10.0 (2)	15.0 (3)	5.0 (1)

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002

Note: Figures in the brackets indicate the number of respondents. (-) Indicates not appeared. Percentages have been calculated on the basis of the respondents who reported their involvement in student politics.

### 3.2.2: Local Leaders' Participation in Union Parishad Elections

Union Parishad is the lowest tier of local government of Bangladesh. Development activities at the local level generally takes place through the activities of Union Parishads. The chairman and the members of Union Parishad are elected directly by adult franchise. Generally Union Parishad elections are held once in five years. Local level leaders are recognized elites in the union under study. They participate in the Union Parishad elections to get formal recognition of their leadership at the union. The table below presents the state of participation of the local level leaders in the Union Parishad elections. Table 3.2.2 reveals that 43.2% of the local level leaders, from all categories, have participated in the local government elections. The table also shows that among the

respondents participating in the local government elections, about 13% have vied for the post of UP chairman and 91 % for the UP members.

Category – wise distribution of local leaders show that all the local level leaders under the category of local government have participated in the local government elections. The study also finds that 30% of the local level leaders under the political category and about 5% of the leaders under the social category have participated in the local government elections. Leaders under the religious and economic categories are not found participating in the Union Parishad elections.

Table –3.2.2: Local leaders ever participating in the Union Parishad elections.

Category of Respondents	UP elections		Participated for the chairman and member posts	
	Participated	Not participated	Chairman post	Member post
Local Government N=28	100.0 (28)	(-)	14.3 (4)	89.3 (25)
Political N=10	30.0 (3)	70.0 (7)	(-)	100.0 (3)
Religious N=12	(-)	100.0 (12)	(-)	(-)
Social N=21	4.8 (1)	95.2 (20)	(-)	100.0 (1)
Economic N=3	(-)	100.0 (3)	(-)	(-)
Total N=74	43.2 (32)	56.8 (42)	12.5 (4)	90.63 (29)

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002

Notes:

1. Figures in the parentheses indicate the number of respondent. (-) Indicates not appeared.
2. Percentages for the posts of chairmen and members have been calculated on the basis of the respondents who have participated in the UP elections. One respondent has reported his participation both for the chairman and member posts.
3. Local government elections stand for the elections in different tiers, such as Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad elections, of local government bodies. But here leaders interviewed have reported that they have participated in the Union Parishad elections only.
4. One of the respondents has participated in both chairman and membership posts.

### **3.2.3: Political Affiliations of Local Level Leaders**

Political parties are the established formal institutions. It may be mentioned here that all of the local level leaders do not belong to the political parties though they are politically conscious. In fact all of them have the experience on the role of political parties in the major political movements. It is worthwhile to mention that villagers had organized themselves against the dictatorial regime of Ayub Khan and contributed to the liberation movement. The political history of the country is the history of mass movements for the restoration of democracy, for the greater autonomy and, finally for a separate homeland for the Bangalees. In all these major movements national political parties naturally turned their attention to the mobilization of the overwhelming rural population. Local –based organisation is, thus, essential in order to achieve a mass- base for political parties.

Political parties are, thus, an integral part of the local level political process. As we have mentioned earlier that all the local leaders are not involved with the political parties but they are conscious of politics. Be that as it may, how many local leaders, of the union under study, are directly involved with the political parties is an important question for proper understanding of the political background of the local level leaders.

We have tried here to explore not only the political affiliations of the local level leaders but also to find the level of leadership of the local level leaders through their involvement in different political party committees. Moreover the local level leaders who are not directly affiliated with the political parties but act as supporters are also explored.

The table 3.2.3 shows the state of political party affiliations of local level leaders and table 3.2.3.1 presents the party membership position of local level leaders in the different political party committees.

Table 3.2.3 shows that 52.7% of the local level leaders have their membership with different political parties, 39.2% are supporters and only a few, 8.1% are not affiliated with the political parties. The table also reveals that all the leaders under the political and economic categories have their formal memberships with the political parties.

Political Party-wise distribution of memberships of the local leaders presents that among the party members 46.2 % are associated with the Awami League followed by Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) 36 %, Jamaat- e- Islami Bangladesh 10.3%, and Jatiya Party (Ershad faction) 7.7%. The table also shows that a majority (82%) of the local level leaders supports two major political parties, the Awami League (AL) and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). Our data also shows that about 40% of the local level leaders have no direct involvement with any political party but have tacit support for different political parties. These local level leaders are generally termed as supporters of different political parties. Among the supporters, 41.4% support Awami League, 48.3% Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), 7.7% Jatiya Party (Ershad faction), and 3.4% support Jamaat-e- Islami Bangladesh (see table 3.2.3).

Table – 3.2.3: Local level leaders' political party affiliation, supporters and memberships status by different political parties

Category of respondents	Party affiliation status			Local leaders political affiliation by major parties							
	Mem-ber	Supp-orter	No Affili-ation	AL		BNP		Jammat		JP	
				Mem	Sup	Mem	Sup	Mem	Sup	Mem	Sup
Local Government N=28	57.1 (16)	42.9 (12)	(-)	43.8 (7)	41.7 (5)	50.0 (8)	50.0 (6)	(-)	(-)	6.2 (1)	8.3 (1)
political N=10	100.0 (10)	(-)	(-)	30.0 (3)	(-)	30.0 (3)	(-)	20.0 (2)	(-)	20.0 (2)	(-)
Religious N=12	25.0 (3)	50.0 (6)	25.0 (3)	(-)	33.3 (2)	33.3 (1)	50.0 (3)	66.7 (2)	16.7 (1)	(-)	(-)
Social N=21	33.3 (7)	52.4 (11)	14.3 (3)	71.4 (5)	45.5 (5)	28.6 (2)	45.5 (5)	(-)	(-)	(-)	9.0 (1)
Economic N=3	100.0 (3)	(-)	(-)	100.0 (3)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)
Total N=74	52.7 (39)	39.2 (29)	8.1 (6)	46.2 (18)	41.4 (12)	35.9 (14)	48.3 (14)	10.3 (4)	3.4 (1)	7.7 (3)	6.9 (2)

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002

Notes: 1. Figures in the brackets indicate the number of the respondents. (-) indicates not appeared.

2. Percentages, for political party members and supporters, have been calculated on the basis of the respondents who responded as members or supporters of the political parties.

It appears from the above table (Table 3.2.3) that local level leaders tend to affiliate themselves with either of the two big political parties for their own convenience such as getting benefits from the party if it goes to power.

### 3.2.3.1: Local Level Leaders' Level of Party Membership

Table 3.2.3.1 presents the level of party membership of leaders at local level in various tiers. The table shows that 97.4% of the local level leaders are the members of Union level political party committee followed by 48.7% Upazila committee and only 15.4% are the members of District committee. It may be noted from the information that union level leaders have more space to be a member of the Upazila level party committees. And they have also a little scope to be a member of district level party committees.

Table –3.2.3.1: Local level leaders' political affiliation by different levels

(Multiple responses)

Category of Respondents	Membership by different levels		
	Union committee	Upazila committee	District committee
Local Government N=16	93.75 (15)	31.25 (5)	12.5 (2)
Political N=10	100.0 (10)	100.0 (10)	20.0 (2)
Religious N=3	100.0 (3)	(-)	(-)
Social N=7	100.0 (7)	28.6 (2)	28.6 (2)
Economic N=3	100.0 (3)	66.7 (2)	(-)
All N=39	97.4 (38)	48.7 (19)	15.4 (6)

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002

Notes: 1. Figures in the brackets indicate the number of respondents; (-) indicates not appeared.

2. Responses may be multiple because one leader may be the member of more than one party committee.

3. Percentages have been calculated on the basis of respondents who have their political party memberships.

Data from table 3.2.3.1 clearly demonstrates the pattern of memberships of union level leaders with political parties. 53% of the local leaders have direct membership which transcends beyond the main level. Almost 49% of them are committee members of their parties at Upazila level while 15% are members of the district committees. Thus a close bond exists between the union politics and politics at the higher levels.

#### **3.2.4: Changing Political Affiliations**

A common phenomenon of the local leaders is that they frequently change their political affiliation. There have been a number of grounds for which the local level leaders change their political party affiliations. The following table details the causes behind the changing political party affiliation of the local level leaders.

Table 3.2.4 shows that the highest percentage of respondents (36.8%) have one time or other changed their earlier political affiliation due to decreasing popularity or deteriorating image of the previous party to which they belonged. The other reasons which have been found as their cause for changing political affiliations are as follows:

Conflict and factional politics among the party leaders (about 16% respondents have changed their earlier political parties for this reason). Besides, a total of 15.8% respondents have reported that the cause behind changing their political affiliation is deprivation from political benefits. 15.8% reported their inclination to be a member of the party in power which was the cause of changing political party affiliation. And an equal percentage (15.8%) of the local level leaders report that they have been suppressed by their foregone upper committee leaders.

Table 3.2.4: Main causes of changing political party of the local level leaders

(Multiple responses)

Category of respondents	Main causes of changing political party				
	Conflict among the party leaders	Deprivation from political benefit	Decreasing popularity & party image	Inclination to be a member of party in power	Suppressing by the leaders of the foregone party
Local Government N=9	(-)	22.2 (2)	33.3 (3)	22.2 (2)	22.2 (2)
Political N=7	(-)	14.3 (1)	57.1 (4)	14.3 (1)	14.3 (1)
Religious N= 1	100.0 (1)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)
Social N=2	100.0 (2)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)
Economic N=0	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)
total N=19	15.8 (3)	15.8 (3)	36.8 (7)	15.8 (3)	15.8 (3)

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002

Notes: 1. Figures in the brackets include the number of respondents. (-) indicates not appeared.

2. Percentages have been calculated on the basis of the respondents who have changed their previous political party. 3. It is worthwhile to note here that about 49% of the respondents, among the respondents who have memberships with the different political parties, have changed their political party.

Analysing the facts contained in table 3.2.4 reveals that about 50% of the local level leaders change their political affiliation. It may be mentioned that the five causes mentioned in the table for changing affiliations three are most prominent; namely deprivation of political benefits from previous political party, decreasing popularity of the image of previous political party and inclination to be a member of the party in power at the national level. In fact on close scrutiny it is found that the last one is the real cause while other causes are mentioned as rationalization for their freakish behaviour. However in terms of the local politics it is extremely important since belonging to opposition will not fetch them any money or resources for development activities of the union (which may also be the source of their own financial benefits).

## Section III

### 3.3 Family Experience of Politics of the Local Level Leaders

Family background refers here the family level traditional background of the local level leaders. More specifically, family background, as we have perceived for the present study, is the socio- economic and political background of the fathers of the local level leaders only. Such background may be important to determine the roots of leadership of local level leaders.

The following discussion covers the scenario of the family backgrounds of the local level leaders.

#### 3.3.1: Education Level of the Fathers of local level leaders

Family education mainly fathers' education is a very important indicator to determine the family background of the local level leaders.

Table (table 3.3.1) shows that most of the fathers of the local level leaders (40.5%) have no education at all. 27% have secondary school level education, 17.5 % have primary education, 10.8% passed secondary school certificate, 1.4% have higher secondary school certificate degree and only 2.7% have a graduation or post graduation degree (see table 3.3.1).

Education by category of the local leaders shows that the highest percentage of educated fathers (80 %) belongs to the leaders under the political category and the highest percentage fathers (66.7%) having no education belongs to the leaders under the economic category (See table 3.3.1).

Comparison between the education levels of the local level leaders and their fathers shows that the percentage of 'no education' is higher (40.5%) among fathers then that of their sons / daughters (14.9%), the local level leaders. Among the fathers, secondary level education is the dominant feature (27%). It is very interesting the same education



level is also the dominant feature (32.4%) among their sons who are our respondents, the local level leaders (see table 3.1.3 and table 3.3.1). It is also seen that the percentage of college level education, i. e. SSC and HSC, of fathers is very small (12.2%) compare with the same level education of local level leaders (32.4%). A few fathers (2.7%) have been found having graduation or post- graduation while 12.2% of the present generation of local level leaders have graduate or post-graduate education (see tables 3.1.3 and 3.3.1).

Table – 3.3.1: Education level of the fathers of the local level leaders

Category of respondents	Education of the fathers of local level leaders					
	No education	Primary (1-5)	Secondary (6-10)	SSC Pass	HSC Pass	Graduation /Post Graduation
Local government N=28	42.8 (12)	21.4 (6)	25.0 (7)	7.1 (2)	(-)	3.6 (1)
Political N=10	20.0 (2)	10.0 (1)	50.0 (5)	10.0 (1)	(-)	10.0 (1)
Religious N=12	50.0 (6)	8.3 (1)	16.7 (2)	25.0 (3)	(-)	(-)
Social N=21	42.8 (9)	19.0 (4)	28.6 (6)	4.8 (1)	4.8 (1)	(-)
Economic N=3	33.3 (1)	33.3 (1)	(-)	33.3 (1)	(-)	(-)
Total N=74	40.5 (30)	17.5 (13)	27.0 (20)	10.8 (8)	1.4 (1)	2.7 (2)

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002.

Note: Figures in the brackets indicate the number of respondents as well as the number of fathers. (-) Indicates not appeared.

It is interesting to note that while the fathers of the political leadership has considerable educational background, the economic leaders have lesser academics strength or achievement of their fathers. This is possibly the result of the traditional apathy of the merchant and business class for education. On the other hand with the improvement of roads and communications, and establishment of educational institutions in the locality political leadership is mostly going in the hands of more educated section. It may also be the cause that in order to communicate with the upper level leadership educational

qualifications is a very strong instrument to achieve their goals. Thus education is becomes more or less a means of the achieving of leadership.

### 3.3.2: Occupations of the Fathers of the Local Level Leaders

The occupational patterns of the fathers of the local leaders have been shown in the table below. In this table it is found that the occupations of the fathers of 62.2% of the local level leaders happened to be agriculture; 10.8% had business; 23% had service; and only 4% had teaching.

Category- wise distribution of local leaders shows that except the fathers under the political category, most of the fathers under the categories of local government, religious, social and economic had agriculture as their principal occupation. The principal occupations of the fathers of the local leaders under the political category revealed 20% agriculture, 30% business, 40% service and 10% teaching (see table 3.3. 2)

Table –3.3.2: Principal occupations of the fathers of local level leaders

Category of respondents	Principal occupations			
	Agriculture	Business	Service	Teaching
Local Government N=28	67.9 (19)	10.7 (3)	17.9 (5)	3.6 (1)
Political N=10	20.0 (2)	30.0 (3)	40.0 (4)	10.0 (1)
Religious N=12	75.0 (9)	(-)	25.0 (3)	(-)
Social N=21	61.9 (13)	9.5 (2)	23.8 (5)	4.8 (1)
Economic N=3	100.0 (3)	(-)	(-)	(-)
Total N=74	62.2 (46)	10.8 (8)	23.0 (17)	4.1 (3)

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002.

Note: Figures in the brackets indicate the number of respondents as well as the number of fathers. (-) Indicates not appeared.

This table shows the transition of occupational pursuits of local level leaders. While 62% of parents have agriculture as their principal occupation, the present generation of

leaders have only 43% as agriculture as their principal occupation. This gradual shift is indicative of the changing pattern of economy as well as of leadership.

### 3.3.3 Participation in UP Elections by Fathers

As to whether fathers of the local level leaders ever participated in the UP elections, the study shows an interesting feature of local politics. Table 3.3.3 shows that 43.2% of the fathers of the local level leaders have at one time or other participated in the Union Parishad elections. Of them, 37.5% have participated in the UP elections for the post of chairmen and 62.5% for the post of UP members.

Category-wise distribution reveals that about 43% of the fathers of the local level leaders under the local government category- 60% of the political, 33.3% of the religious, 38% of the social and 66.7% of the economic category leaders' fathers participated in the UP elections. From this information we can assess the status of fathers of the local level leaders.

Table-3.3.3: Nature of participation of fathers of local level leaders in the UP elections by the contested posts

Category of respondents	Whether participated in UP elections		Participated for the UP chairman and member posts	
	Participated	Not participated	UP chairman post	UP member post
Local Government N=28	42.9 (12)	57.1 (16)	33.3 (4)	66.7 (8)
Political N=10	60.0 (6)	40.0 (4)	50.0 (3)	50.0 (3)
Religious N=12	33.3 (4)	66.7 (8)	25.0 (1)	75.0 (3)
Social N=21	38.0 (8)	61.9 (13)	50.0 (4)	50.0 (4)
Economic N=3	66.7 (2)	33.3 (1)	(-)	100.0 (2)
Total N=74	43.2 (32)	56.8 (42)	37.5 (12)	62.5 (20)

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002

Notes:

1. Figures in the brackets indicate the number of respondents as well as the number of fathers.
2. (-) Indicates not appeared.
3. Percentages, for the chairman and member posts, have been calculated on the basis of the respondents who have reported their fathers participated in the UP elections.

From this information we can make some observations on local politics. The percentage of fathers contesting for the posts of chairmen and members of the Union Parishad is the same percentage as the leaders of different categories competing for the post of chairmen or members. This is indicative of a strong traditional bond in local level politics.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

Socio-economic and political background of the local level leaders shows that most of the local level leaders (43.2%) belong to the age group 35 to 49 years. The data on sex shows that male dominates the local level leadership. This is quite natural for any traditional society. Data on marital status finds that most of the local level leaders (about 90%) are married. Similar information is also found in regard to religious status of the respondents that almost cent percent are Muslims. Educational level of the local level leaders gives an insight into the changes in leadership pattern at local level. It is found that educated leaders (about 85%) cover the local leadership space and most of them (about 35%) are having less than secondary level education. Few are also found (12.2%) having graduate and postgraduate level education. Information on occupational profile of the local level leaders reveals that agriculture is still dominating though non-farming occupations, such as business, teaching and service, are gradually emerging as principal occupations (about 57%) of leaders. Land ownership pattern shows that an average 4.0 acres of land owned by the local level leaders. Major sources of income are found as farming, business and service.

More than fifty percent of the local level leaders are found involved to the national political parties. The remaining local level leaders are not found involved directly, but they are very much conscious of politics. Information supports that majority of the local level leaders have had their political party membership with the two major political parties—the Awami League and the Bangladesh nationalist party. Changing political party affiliation of the local level leaders is also found as a common phenomenon. The

analysis of these data in this chapter reveals that a sharp traditional bond is still dominant in local level politics and elections. However a shift in occupation and a general dominance of agricultural background is covering a new space in politics.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> 'No education' indicates here -not having any formal education from any institutions. Some respondents have reported that they can read and write a little in Bengali. We have also counted them in 'no education' criteria as they have no formal education.

<sup>2</sup> Family, as we perceive here, is equivalent to household or *khana*.

<sup>3</sup> The term income has been used here to refer the yearly gross income of respondents' household.

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## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Political Dynamics at the Local Level: Linkages and Connections**

## CHAPTER 4

### Political Dynamics at the Local Level: Linkages and Connections

#### 4.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter the details of the socio-economic and political background of local level leaders were discussed. It provides extensive data on who governs at the local level. In this chapter we will try to find out the linkages of the local level leaders with the Upazila, district and national level leaders, along with the administration.

Political dynamics at the local level in this study indicates how local level leaders interact with each other on different local political issues. Local political issues mainly include development of the locality, democratic practice, conflict resolutions and competition for leadership. Issue of development has a wider meaning; for the present study the term development is used to determine the development at local level, mainly related to infrastructure and also issues relating to governance. Most part of the infrastructure-related development at local level is executed by the *Union Parishads*. The local initiatives are also important in this regard, mainly in the area of developing schools, madrasas (Islamic schools), mosques etc. The local level leaders are engaged in dealing with the local political issues. To deal with the local political issues, factors like competition, cohesion and conflict among the local level leaders do frequently come to the fore. Moreover, the political influence over different local issues and the influence of State have complicated the political space at local level.

For all the above mentioned reasons, the local level leaders need to maintain linkage with the persons who hold some kinds of power in political arena, in administrative or in the space of civil society. Through the linkages of the local level leaders with the persons who hold power and prestige in different strata, we attempt to explore the local political processes at the local level.

Local political dynamics, it is also observed, encompass the use exercise of power<sup>1</sup> and influence. Here, to make the terms, 'power' and 'influence', operational we consider them as relational concepts. How power and influences are exercised in the local polity, what are the impacts of these influences, and how are local polity coping



with it to ease tensions – are related concerns in the present chapter are to be investigated. Against this backdrop, we have attempted to unveil the political process at the local level through the existing linkages of the local level leaders with the influential political leaders, important government officials and the non-resident development-collaborative citizenry outside the locality.

The linkages of the local level leaders with the groups and persons mentioned above are important. What are the modes of linkages and what are the outcomes of such linkages – are the analytical imperatives to be incorporated in this chapter. In this chapter, we have looked into the manners of being linked i.e. the mode of linkages and the core consequences of interactions<sup>2</sup>. It may be noted that this chapter is mostly based on empirical observations by case studies and some quantitative data gathered from questionnaire.

#### State and Dimensions of Linkages Performed by the Local Level leaders: An Overview

Discussion on local level political processes become comprehensive, if it is seen in regard to different types of linkages performed by the local level leaders. Generally, linkages are observed among the structures, for example, linkage between Union Parishad and the Upazila Parishad. But the present study does not directly find the linkages in the structures. On the contrary it finds linkages among the persons or groups of persons; for example, linkage of local level leaders with the influential political leaders of Upazila level political parties, which, in turn, is the linkage between lower and upper structures. In this study we are mainly looking into the linkages of local level leaders with an objective to find out the purposes, for which links are made and the consequent interaction pattern. One question may come at this point that, who is maintaining linkage with whom? Is it a reciprocal linkage? One may argue that local level leaders are maintaining linkages with influential political leaders for their own interests. One can also argue that key government officials are maintaining linkages with local level leaders for their self-interests. It may also be argued that the linkages are made for the interests of both sides. However, it is noted here that for the present study, we find that the linkages are mainly made from the side of the local level leaders to the upper levels and though there have been mutual interests in all cases.

We have seen three types of linkages of the local level leaders. These are as follows:

Linkages of the local level leaders with the influential political leaders

Who are the influential political leaders? Why are they influential? These two questions we have asked our respondents in order to perceive their notion of influential political leaders. It is noted here that out of the total sample of local level leaders, 85% have reported their linkages with the influential political leaders. We have perceived their (local leaders) perceptions on assessing the influential political leaders. First, the influential political leaders as perceived by the respondents, are those who have memberships on the executive committees of different political parties beyond the union branches of political party committees. Second, the political personalities who may or may not belong to the executive committees of political parties but have positions to influence in many ways are also influential political leaders, for example, the Member of Parliament (MP), chairmen of *paurashavas* (Municipal committee) and so on. They are influential political leaders as they can take necessary political decisions for their respective parties, they can intervene in any incident in their respective constituencies and they have been respected as political elites by quite a number of people. Moreover, they are honored as political leaders by government administration and officials so much as they can influence the government administration in some cases, which includes prominently influence over police administration.

In fact we have tried to find out how and why the local level leaders are linked with the influential political leaders of the Upazila, district and national levels, and what are the consequences of such interactions in the local political processes.

### Linkages of the local level leaders with the key government officials

The key government officials represent the state. The UNO, Officer-in- Charge (OC), Project Implementation Officer (PIO) and Upazila Engineer are the key government officials at the Upazila level. At the district level the key government officials include the Deputy Commissioner (DC), Superintendent of Police (SP) and some other important government officials. Linkages of the local level leaders with the district administration, mainly with the Deputy Commissioner (DC) and Superintendent of Police (SP), and with some central level bureaucrats have also been investigated. Considering the importance of the Upazila administration as vital development centre, linkages of local level leaders (union level leaders) have been investigated with most of the key government officials of the Upazila administration.

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### Linkages of the local level leaders with the non- resident development-collaborative citizenry

The non-resident development-collaborative citizenry are those people, who have roots in the union under study and are now residing in different places out side the locality. They are basically non-political but some of them have political ambition. The range of these non- resident development-collaborative citizenry covers the people who are residing in the Upazila headquarter (Upazila level towns), small towns (district level towns) and major cities (divisional towns and the capital city) of Bangladesh. This category also includes the people who are residing abroad in connection with services, business or any other occupations. With regard to the occupational profile of the non-resident development-collaborative citizenry, as reported by the local level leaders (the respondents), cover business, private and government service, professionals, i.e. lawyers, teachers, journalists and like. The non- resident development- collaborative citizens have a spontaneous connection with the local level leaders. The reason behind the spontaneous connection is that they were born in same villages of union under the present study. Further they have many relatives still residing in the villages. In fact the local level leaders have an easy access to these people.

The present chapter is divided into three sections. Section –I discusses the linkages and pattern of interactions of the local level leaders with the influential political

leaders. Section –II explores the state of linkages and pattern of interactions of the local level leaders with the key government officials. And, section –III explores the state of linkages and pattern of interactions of the local level leaders with non-resident development -collaborative citizenry.

## Section –I

### 4.1. Linkages of Local Level Leaders with Influential Political Leaders

#### 4.1.1: Political Identity of Influential Political Leaders

Table 4.1.1 below presents a vivid picture of the influential political leaders along with their respective political parties as reported by the respondents. The number of influential political leaders shown in the table are sum total of Upazila, district and national level influential political leaders, with whom the local level leaders are linked. It is noted here that the number of influential leaders shown in the table is not an absolute number. It is a cumulative figure, as *one* influential political leader has been repeatedly reported by the respondents.

The respondents, the local level leaders, have reported that they are linked with the influential leaders of five political parties. These five political parties as mentioned are: the Awami League (AL), the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the Jatiya Party (Ershad), the Jamat-e- Islami Bangladesh and the Left parties<sup>3</sup>. The table (table 4.1.1) clearly shows that most of the influential political leaders belong to either of the two big political parties, the Awami League (52%) and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (35%). It should be noted that during the time of survey, particularly for this section, the Awami League and subsequently the interim government (for three months) were in the government. The Awami League came to power and Sheikh Hasina became Prime Minister through a marginal victory in the 7<sup>th</sup> parliamentary election held in 1996. After successful completion of its five-year term, the Awami League left the office and the interim government headed by Justice Latifur Rahman ascended the power for three months only to conduct the 8<sup>th</sup> parliamentary election.

It is worthwhile to mention here that the time (In mid June 2001) we had started our fieldwork the Awami League (AL) was the party in power and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was the main opposition. In the 8<sup>th</sup> parliamentary election, held in October 2001, 4-party alliance led by BNP won and formed the government.

Table 4.1.1: Distribution of influential political leaders by political parties linked with the respondents in percent

Category of respondents	Influential leaders by political party					All
	Jamaat	JP	AL	BNP	Left Parties	
Local Government N=24	0.6 (1)	5.9 (10)	51.8 (88)	38.9 (66)	2.9 (5)	100.0 (170)
Political N=10	8.5 (7)	12.2 (10)	51.2 (42)	15.9 (23)	(-)	100.0 (82)
Religious N=10	11.1 (6)	7.4 (4)	33.3 (18)	48.2 (26)	(-)	100.0 (54)
Social N=17	0.9 (1)	7.1 (8)	57.5 (65)	32.6 (38)	0.9 (1)	100.0 (113)
Economic N=3	(-)	(-)	88.8 (16)	5.6 (1)	5.6 (1)	100.0 18
All N=64	3.4 (15)	7.3 (32)	52.4 (229)	35.2 (154)	1.6 (7)	100.0 (437)

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002.

Note: Figures in brackets are numbers of influential political leaders with whom the local level leaders are linked. These figures are calculated cumulatively.

#### 4.1.2: Leadership Level of Influential Political Party Leaders

The following table describes the location of leadership of the influential leaders. Looking at the levels of leadership of the influential political leaders, findings show an interesting picture: around 58% influential political leaders are the leaders of Upazila level, 38% district level and only about 4% are central level leaders (see table 4.1.2). It means that most of the local level leaders interact with the influential political leaders who have leadership at the Upazila level. Linkages with the district level influential political leaders are also seen prominent. Linkage of local level leaders with the influential national level political leaders is found very insignificant. It's a very low percentage (about 4%) as shown in the table. This indicates that the

union's influence in national politics is peripheral and mostly through the intermediate upper levels.

Table 4.1.2: Distribution of influential political leaders by levels linked with respondents in percent

category of respondents	Levels by linked leaders			Total
	Upazila	District	Central	
Local Government N=24	58.2 (99)	39.4 (67)	2.4 (4)	100.0 (170)
Political N=10	52.4 (43)	40.2 (33)	7.3 (6)	100.0 (82)
Religious N=10	64.8 (35)	35.2 (19)	(-)	100.0 (54)
Social N=17	59.3 (67)	37.2 (42)	3.5 (4)	100.0 (113)
Economic N=3	50.0 (9)	38.9 (7)	11.1 (2)	100.0 (18)
Total N=64	57.9 (253)	38.4 (168)	3.7 (16)	100.0 (437)

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002

Note: The number of influential political leaders reported by the local level leaders have shown in the brackets. The reported influential leaders may overlap as one influential leader repeatedly reported by the respondents in many cases.

#### 4.1.3: Purpose for which links are made with the influential political leaders

The preceding illustration testifies that there have been strong links of the local level leaders with the influential political leaders of different levels. Why these links and what are the forms of link or what are the bases of interactions between the local level leaders and the influential political leaders, are crucial indicators to unfold the nature for an interaction patterns in the union under study.

We have already mentioned earlier that among the local level leaders interviewed about 85% have reported that they maintain links with the influential political party leaders of Upazila, district and national level. And it is also found that most of the local level leaders reported their linkages with the Upazila and district level political leaders. Only a few have reported their linkages with influential national level political party leaders. The findings reveal that local level leaders frequently interact with the Upazila level political leaders and thereafter with the district level leaders.

The prime questions are now why the local level leaders need to make link with the influential political leaders, what are the main and specific purposes and what are the outcomes of such linkages. In exploring the answers to these questions, we have been informed a wide range of causes for which links are made. In collecting the quantitative information, on the purposes for which local level leaders maintain link with the influential political leaders, we preferred multiple responses.

Purposes for which local level leaders perform linkages with the influential political leaders are (see also table 4.1.3) discussed below:

#### Linkages with the influential political leaders for Personal interest

It is found that the local level leaders interact with about 33% of the influential political leaders for their personal interests (Table 4.1.3).

Local level leaders have some friends and relations or even distant relations, who have positions as influential political leaders at the Upazila, district and at the national level. They (local level leaders) keep close connections with them to gain some personal benefits. Personal benefits related interactions between the local level leaders and the influential political leaders have been found as a strong pattern. This type of interaction encompasses, loan from different national banks, admission for the children good schooling, better health service or invitations to different social occasions for gaining prestige and position. The influential political leaders can help the local level leaders to obtain such benefits. Through linkages with the political leaders, the local level leaders also help their relatives and neighbour to get the some sort of benefits. We are also informed that the personal benefits related interactions are excluded from monetary benefits and these are not strictly personal, as neighbour and relatives of the local level leaders have also been benefited from this.

#### Linkages with the influential political leaders for political interest

Table 4.1.3 shows that the local level leaders interact with about 33% of the influential political leaders for 'political interest'.

We have found in the profiles of the local level leaders that a good number of them are involved in party politics. Four major political parties, namely the Awami League, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Jatiya Party,

are very active in the union under this study. In relation to their involvement with different political parties, they frequently interact with the influential political leaders for 'political interest'. There are manifold political interests; the prime interest includes political meetings, rally, leadership selections, organizational matters, faction, local and national elections. These specific purposes, relating to organizational matters are more important for the political interest of the local level leaders. To become a top-ranking leader at the union level i.e. at the local level one has to come close to the influential political leaders of Upazila and district levels. Similarly, for establishing a self-image one gets support in the local elections of the leaders of upper level; also to become leaders of Upazila and district level political party committees.

#### Linkages with the influential political leaders for local interest

Table 4.1.3 finds that the local level leaders interact with 46.2% of the influential political leaders for local interest. 'Local interest' is found, *inter alia*, as one of the important causes for which local level leaders keep up link with the influential political leaders. It is observed that community level demands mainly tend towards the development and maintenance of community life such as education, law and order and so on. Local leadership wants to address the development-oriented demands raised by the local people. Development funds, at least for infrastructure, come from concerned ministries, and the influential political leaders mainly the leaders of the political party in power, of Upazila, district and national levels can play important roles in pursuing the local demands to the authorities concerned. Local development may be hindered if the Local leaderships abstain from the interactions with the influential political leaders. Keeping the local interest in mind local level leaders maintain connections with the influential political leaders as strongly as possible. Needless to say that the strength of these interactions enhances the popularity of the local leaders.

A case study (case study- 1) in regard to interactions for local interest is given below (Box 1).



**Box 1**

## Case study- 1

***Nonoformal links with the influential political leaders for local interest***

*Abdul Majed, 55, a village leader of Sonakanda and also the Head Master of Surjonagar Govt. Primary School maintains non-formal link with about half a dozen of influential political leaders at the Upazial and district levels. Abul Majed is very respected by the people of his village and the nearby villages. He is not directly involved in any political party. As a government schoolteacher, he cannot involve in direct politics, Majed informed this researcher. But he supports BNP. Majed has good relationship with both the AL and BNP influential leaders. The leaders know that he is interested to talk about the development of his village rather than the politics, a Awami League leader of Rajbari sadar Upazila informed this.*

*Abdul Majed met MP Kazi Keramat Ali several times for the development work of mosque, graveyard of his own village and received an allocation of 1 ton wheat for each purpose in the early 2001. It is noted that Kazi Keramat Ali was elected MP in 1996 national election, and was defeated in the 8<sup>th</sup> parliamentary election held on October 1, 2001. Majed also lobbied for financial grant for the development of his school. The MP recommended this and he got a donation of Taka 20,000 for making furniture for the school.*

*Moreover, Abdul Majed maintains a good relationship with the chairman of Rajbari municipality and also with the new MP Ali Newaz Mahmud Khayam, elected in October 2001 from Rajbari – I constituency. Abdul Majed applied to the MP for sinking a tube-well at his school and the MP arranged that.*

*Note: Information for the above case study have been collected from villagers of Sonakanda village under Mizanpur union, local leaders and Abdul Majed.*

### Linkages with the influential political leaders for supremacy in exercising political power

It is found that the local level leaders interact with 36.2% of the influential political leaders for attaining ‘supremacy in exercising political power’ (Table 4.1.3).

‘Supremacy in exercising political power’ by the local level leaders in the local level politics is also found as an important interaction pattern of the local level leaders with the influential political leaders. This competition for supremacy is not only for

positions in Union Parishad but also in the different institutions, for example religious, social and cultural, where local level leaders may exercise their powers. Thus there exists competition and conflict among them for different kinds of interests. To play their role effectively in this power game local level leaders need to maintain relations with the influential political leaders at the upper levels. The influential political leaders at the upper levels also want to influence local politics for their own aggrandizement. In this way these leaders keep connections with the state i.e., Upazila and District administration. Moreover, seeking protection from police harassment, influencing police to harass rivals, influencing cancellation of bail for rivals, influencing the court for bail of offenders, lobbying for getting access to the Union Parishad development projects – all these specific interactions are under the pattern of ‘Supremacy in exercising political power’.

The case study below (case study-2) related to ‘supremacy in exercising political power’ has depicted how local level politics is interfered by the national level political parties and how different roles are played in union politics.

## Case study –2

### ***Stories Behind the Story: Evidences of Exercising Political Power and Local Politics***

#### ***i. Conflict between two gusties (Lineage) for economic interests and union politics over a haat***

*The Molla and the Mondol are two influential gusties of the two neighbouring villages named Dayalnagar and Kalinagar of Mizanpur union. It is known that in the late 1950s some of the localities of Dhalarchar union at the Bera thana under Pabna district had been devoured by the river Padma. The original residences of the Mollas and the Mondols had been at those localities. After the destruction of their homestead by the river erosion, 4 families of the Molla gusti had migrated to Kalinagar village of Mizanpur union and settled there. And for the same reason, 2 families of the Mondol gusti had migrated from Dhalarchar union to a village named Dayalnagar, adjacent to Kalinagar village.*

*The Surjonagar haat (Village market) is very important since there is no other big haat under the union. Moreover, Surjonagar is the centre of Mizanpur union (name of the union under study) as the Union Parishad office, the oldest secondary high school of Mizanpur union, one primary school and a health centre are located in Surjonagar. It is also very important place*

for the railway station called 'Surjonagar Railway Station'. Seven trains of the routes of Poradah-Rajbari, Khulna-Rajbari and Parbatipur-Rajbari halt at this station.

Surjonagar haat was founded in 1962. Since then on, two haats assemble each week on Saturday and Wednesday. One of the Mondols set a grocer's shop at the haat in 1964 and continued business. Just after that two of the Mollas set jointly another shop at the haat. The rivalries ensued. The rivalries between two gusties ensued while the Mondol businessmen was contemplating the shop and the business run by the Mollas as their business rivals. In 1992, a group of 13 young men led by the Mondol shop owners looted the shop owned by the Mollas. Four were caught with the looted materials. The owners of the shop, one Molla, filed a case accusing the 13 Mondols and 4 of them were awarded one-year imprisonment.

It is also informed that both Mondol and Molla gusties in their effort to overpower each other tried to strengthen themselves and developed contacts with the outlawed political parties. Both the gusties started to develop contacts with activists of the outlawed political parties sometimes in 1995. In the year 1995, Mizanpur Union Branch of BNP was launched. The eldest leader of Molla gusti, Majed Molla, 60, was made president of Mizanpur Union Branch of BNP. Two nephews of Majed Molla (Majed Molla's sisters' sons) were leaders of the East Bengal Communist Party (an outlawed party). After Majed Molla's joining to BNP, his nephews started work for BNP in the daylight, and at night they acted for the East Bengal Communist Party. Thus in Mizanpur union, the East Bengal Communist Party became a strength for BNP. On the other hand, some young men of Mondol gusti and their relatives, the AL activists and leaders, developed relationships with the East Bengal Sarbohara party (an outlawed party). Thus the East Bengal Sarbohara Party begets for the Mizanpur Union AL. It should be noted here that the activities of the outlawed political parties (East Bengal Sarbohara Party, and East Bengal Communist Party) were discerned in the north villages of Mizanpur union, in the chars (shoal: land rising out of the bed of river) of the river Padma. It was informed that in 1995 two-rivalry gusties' politics turned into political party politics, Mondols for the AL and Mollas for the BNP. And because of their connections with the outlawed political party activists of both Mondal and Molla leaders of AL and BNP drew extra attention to the AL and BNP leaders of Rajbari Sadar Upazila and district. Since then, Surjonagar became the hub of political party politics of Mizanpur union.

## **ii. Rivalry on auction of haat pops up the political affiliations**

The auction of Surjonagar haat was launched in 1992. Since then auction has been conducted by the Mizanpur Union Parishad. It is to be mentioned that the current UP chairman, Mr. Kobir, of Mizanpur Union Parishad was elected twice in 1992 and 1997. He

came from a traditional family background. His father, Hossain, was elected 3 terms chairman of Mizanpur Union Parishad. He had been a very renowned UP chairman though he supported Muslim League. After 1991 National election BNP won and formed the government at the national level. At the Rajbari constituency-1, under which Mizanpur union is located, AL MP candidate, Keramat kazi was elected an MP. In 1992, Kobir chairman joined the BNP and was recruited as an executive committee member of Rajbari Sadar Upazila branch of the BNP. Before 1992 Kobir had no political party affiliations though he was an activist of Jatiyatahadi Chatra Dal, the student wing of the BNP, while he was a college student in the 1980s.

After elected as UP chairman, Kobir had maintained a good relationship with MP of Rajbari constituency-1. It was informed that Kalu Mondol had a warm relationship with Kobir chairman. When auction of Surjonagar haat started in 1992, Kalu Mondol, in liaison with the UP chairman bought the auction of the haat for a token money only. Kalu Mondol did same thing up to the year 1997 without any interruptions.

### **iii. UP election 1997: Emergence of a new trend**

In the 1997 UP election, there were sharply two trends that demonstrated the dynamics of politics at union under study. First one was non-political election which was nothing novel in the trend as it was only a succession of the old tradition of UP elections in Bangladesh; and the new one was political UP election which was held only in a ward (ward no.2, there are nine wards under one union Parishad).

It was observed that the second trend emerged from the conflicts between the two gusties, Mondol and Molla, centering the Surjonagar haat.

When a nephew, Dulu Molla, of Majed Molla declared his candidature for the UP membership of the ward no. 2 in the 1997 election, the Mondols declared the name of Tuku Mondol as a rival candidate. The candidate nominated by the Mollas was a Mizanpur union BNP leader and the candidate nominated by the Mondols was the secretary of Mizanpur AL. Voters of the Mollas, their relatives and overall the BNP of the ward no. 2 cast their votes in favour of the candidate nominated by Mollas. On the other hand, voters of the Mondols and their relatives and the AL people cast their votes in favour of the candidate nominated by Mondols. The candidate nominated by the Mollas, Dulu Molla, won in a narrow difference of only one vote.

#### **Non-political UP election for the post of chairman:**

There were 3 chairman candidates contested in the 1997 UP election in the union under study. Among them two were prominent. Mr. Kobir (41) contested for the post of UP

left leaning political party when he was a student. In the 1997 UP election, he did not disclose his political identity. Then what were the causes that insisted him to join BNP? We have found two causes behind Atiar's joining the BNP. The first cause was that Atiar thought the next UP election in 2003 would be political and his rival chairman candidate, Kobir, the existing UP chairman of Mizanpur Union Parishad, might be nominated by the AL. The MP, Kazi Keramat, and Upazila and district levels AL leaders might work for Kobir in the next UP election. Atiar thought that if he joined the BNP he would be nominated by the BNP in the next UP election. All BNP votes of Mizanpur union would be cast in favour of him. Besides, he would also get support of Mollas. The second cause was that Atiar was a close associate of the Rajbari Municipality Chairman, Mr. Khayum, in connection of job in the Rajbari municipality. Mr. Khayum was a popular chairman and was a leader of the Workers' Party. The chairman of Rajbari municipality joined the BNP leaving the Workers' Party in January 2001.

#### **v. Auction, political clash and ultimate involvement of National Political Parties**

Surjonagar Haat Committee was formed in 1998 by the businessmen of the haat. Kalu Mondol elected president of the haat committee. It is already mentioned that Kalu Mondol was also the vice president of Mizanpur Union AL. In the year 1998 when the auction (of haat) period arrived, Kalu Mondol tried to buy the auction of Surjonagar haat in liaison with the UP chairman, what he had done in the earlier years, from 1992-97. But Dulu Molla, an elected member in 1997 UP election, opposed the liaison practice in the UP meetings. A fair bid for Surjonagar haat was held for the first time in the year 1998. Razu Molla, a cousin of Dulu Molla, won the bid. Razu Molla bought the auction of the haat in 1998. But he incurred loss due to difficulties in toll collection created by the group of young men led by the Mondols and AL. The next years, 1999 and onwards again the auctions of the Surjonagar haat were bought regularly by Kalu Mondol, in liaison with the UP chairman.

One haat day when Kosimuddin, 55, came to the Surjonagar bazaar embroiled himself in a quarrel with Azam Mondol, a young man of Mondol gusti and the joint secretary of the AL Mizanpur union. The quarrel brewed from a trivial issue (Kosimuddin bought 2 kg dal (lentils) from Solim Mondol, a grocery shopkeeper at the haat. Kosimuddin paid the price of lentils but Solim Mondol claimed that he was not paid). Azam Mondol was around the shop and at one stage assaulted Kosimuddin. Kosimuddin is a cousin of Atiar, a BNP leader of Mizanpur union and the runner -up UP chairman candidate of Mizanpur in 1997 election. Atiar was not far away from the place where his cousin Kosimuddin was assaulted. Soon he

chairman for the second time. Kobir was also elected chairman in the 1991 UP election. Mr. Kobir had a traditional family background. His father had been a chairman of Mizanpur union Parishad. The other chairman candidate was Mr. Atiar (38). Atiar also came from a traditional family background and contested as a chairman candidate for the first time in the 1997 UP election. His father had been elected 3 times UP member of Mizanpur Union Parishad. Atiar's father, Motiar Rahman, supported AL (Awami League) but he had been not involved in the AL politics directly. Atiar was an activist of Chatra League (Student wing of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, a left political party of Bangladesh) while he was a student of Rajbari Degree College in the mid 1980s.

In the 1997 UP election, both Kobir and Atiar down played their political identities and highlighted their personal and traditional family related qualities to get attention of voters. Contests among the chairmen candidates in this 1997 UP election brewed on the sense of regional and also traditional. Kobir, the chairman candidate, resides in the Bagmara village of ward-number 3, a neighbouring village of Molla and Mondol gusties. The very chairman candidate, Kobir, of Bagmara village was a BNP leader, though not very active, behaved as a non-political person during the UP election. The fame of his father and the sense of locality were his strength in the election campaign. As we mentioned earlier that his father had been a former UP chairman and a famous one. That's why he could attract support from both the people of AL and BNP, and the rival gusties. Atiar, secured runner-up position, also attracted the people of north-west regions of Mizanpur union as a regional candidate. His village is located at ward number -6 of Mizanpur Union Parishad. Atiar was defeated in the election race with a difference of 200 votes.

#### Member candidates beyond ward number -2

The member candidates, both male and female, minus the ward-number 2, also participated in election campaigning not upholding their political identity rather they preferred to highlight their personal qualities in the election campaigning.

#### **iv. Active berthing in party politics**

After getting elected in the 1997 UP election Kobir joined in AL politics and began an active role at the Mizanpur Union Branch AL and also worked for the Rajbari Sadar Upazila AL. The AL nominated MP candidate, Kazi Keramat, won for the second time in the 7<sup>th</sup> National Parliamentary election held in 1996, from the Rajbari constituency-1 and AL formed the National Government.

The runner-up UP chairman candidate, Atiar, of Mizanpur Union Parishad in 1997 election joined the BNP in January 2001. We have already mentioned that Atiar was an activist of a

rushed and protested with hard languages. Consequently, he also involved himself in a quarrel with Azam Mondal. Atiar warned Azam Mondal of revenge.

In protest of that incident the BNP activists organized a procession in the afternoon of 21 July 2001, the next haat day. One of the targets of this procession was to showdown the strength of Mizanpur Union BNP. The procession was attended by about 1500 people including the men of the Molla gusti, their relatives, BNP leaders, activists and supporters of Mizanpur union BNP. Some activists of the East Bengal Communist Party, an outlawed party also joined the procession, as if they were BNP activists. All at the procession had sticks in their hands and the activists of the East Bengal Communist Party were with arms. The procession entered the Surjonagar bazaar and damaged the office of AL situated by the side of the bazaar. At one stage Bakar Mondol (an AL activist of Mizanpur union) , the brother of the president of Surjonagar haat committee, was killed by a bullet fired from the procession. There were police forces on duty at the spot of occurrence. The police dispersed the procession and arrested 9 persons from the spot.

The nephew of the murdered, Azam Mondol (joint secretary of the Mizanpur union AL), filed a case accusing 81 people. It is also informed that many of them not even attended the procession. Among the 81 accused, only 35 were at the procession. It is known that after a long discussion the AL leaders of Mizanpur union with the help of AL upazila and district level leaders including the existing MP enlisted a huge number of the BNP leaders and activists. Among the enlisted persons there were BNP leaders of Mizanpur Union and also some Upazila level BNP leaders. Atiar was made the number one accused at the advice of the current UP chairman. Behind making Atiar the number one accused, he was driven by the thought that Atiar would no more be able to compete him in the next UP election, and he (Kobir) must be elected for the third time.

After 4 days the Surjonagar murder, the leaders of the Mizanpur AL and the existing UP chairman, Kobir, of Mizanpur Union Parishad held a meeting with the influential Upazila and district level AL leaders. The MP of Rajbari constituency -1, Kazi Keramat, who is a district level leader of AL also attended the meeting. The MP also called the OC at the meeting at one stage. The MP at the meeting ordered the OC to arrest the listed accused and to take stern action against them. Police tried to arrest the listed persons. But all the activists fled away home. It was reported that police took some bribes for omitting some names from the list of the accused. It can be mentioned, in this regard one former UP member, Malek, gave bribes to the IO (Investigation Officer of the murder case) of the Rajbari sadar thana an amount of Taka 10,000 for omitting his name from the list of the accused.

*The Rajbari district BNP planned to deal the Surjonagar murder case politically. They applied to the Dhaka High Court for the bail of 72 except 9 of the arrested so that they can take part in the campaigning for the 8<sup>th</sup> parliamentary election, held in October 2001. The application to High Court for bail was made by help of the MP candidate of the BNP for the Rajbari – 1 constituency. In mid August 2001, a bail of 28 days was granted and the High Court ordered to apply for the next bail to the Magistrate Court of Rajbari after 28 days. But the BNP candidate did not appealed fearing the possibility of rejection, so as to their participation in the election campaign could not be hampered. So the BNP activists conducted their election campaign evading the police. However, none of the accused was present at the election camps in fear of arrest.*

*The district AL and its MP candidate went several times to Surjonagar and capitalized the Murder issue in the election campaigning. They also tried to influence police to arrest the listed persons. But the AL failed to go ahead with the Murder issue after the national election when the BNP with the 4- party alliance achieved a landslide victory in the 8<sup>th</sup> parliamentary election of 1 October, and at Rajbari -1 constituency too the alliance nominated candidate won.*

*On 28 October the MP influenced the DC for inactivating the murder case and managed to free the arrested persons through bail. The number 1 accused of the case, Atiar, and the MP together went to the residence of the current Home Minister in Dhaka to lobby for resolving the case. The Home Minister ordered the Rajbari DC and the SP to finalise the case. A meeting among the Rajbari SP, DC, OC of the Sadar thana, and the Rajbari -1 constituency's MP was held. The meeting decided finalise the case. But the reality is that with ascending the power by the BNP and the 4- party alliance, the accused of the Surjonagar murder case went scot free without any bail.*

#### **Observation and Comments:**

From the evidences of different events and incidents, as stated above, it reveals that local level politics is running after a variety of interests including *gusti* (lineage), local political interests, national political interest and the interest of the state. The facts narrated in the case stories actually unfolded the gradual process of politicizing the local level politics through the linkages of local political leaders with the national political actors and vice –versa, and that, in turn, determined the dynamics of local –centre relationship. Supremacy in exercising political power by the local level leaders in the local level politics is clearly surfaced in the case study. Moreover, the case story of the 1997 UP election of Mizanpur Union Parishad reveals that politicization in UP elections is an ever–expanding process. Non-political UP elections are gradually moving towards the political UP elections. The political UP election is gradually dethroning the non-political UP elections.



Linkages with the influential political leaders for *tadbir*

'*Tadbir*,' a widely used Bengali word, is used to denote – the act of taking steps so that a thing is properly managed. The another meaning of *tadbir* is to look after the interests of people. Both of these meanings indicate that it is something like that through which someone can solve some problems or achieve some opportunities. In terms of linkages of the local level leaders with the influential political leaders, a wide variety of *tadbirs* are found for which local level leaders are linked with the influential political leaders. We have been informed that the local level leaders perform different sorts of *tadbir* through the influential political leaders. It is found that the local level leaders interact with 45.5% of the influential political leaders for '*tadbir*' (Table 4.1.3).

The *tadbir*, as reported by the local level leaders, can broadly be classified as follows:

*Tadbir* for Personal need: Some *tadbirs* are very much personal for the local level leaders. These are: *tadbir* for sending sons, brothers or closed relatives abroad; *tadbir* for bank loan, *tadbir* for jobs in government and non-government organizations. A relevant case study (case study –3) is given below (Box 2).

**Box 2****Case study-3*****Tadbir (lobbying) for Bank Loan against a Poultry Farm***

*Aleema Khatun, 42, is a local level leader of Mizanpur union. She completed her junior high school education, which was counted class eight, in 1970s. She got married in 1974. She is the mother of two sons and a daughter. Her husband died in 1995. Aleema owns some land from which she can accommodate her household expenditures. She also established a small poultry farm in 1998. Aleema Khatun is an AL supporter and has close contacts with some influential political leaders at Upazila and district levels.*

*Aleema was also the nearest contestant of the UP member at ward no. 3 (reserved seats for women) during the UP election of 1997. For receiving bank's credit facilities against this farm, she interacted with the president of the AL of Rajbari Sadar Upazila. She also visited Mr. Satter, who is a vice president of AL of Rajbari district AL in February 2001. Later she drew an amount of Taka 30,000 from the Sonali Bank Rajbari branch by means of the influential leaders' favour.*

*Note: Information for this case study have been collected from Aleema Khatun (closest contestant for the UP member in 1997 UP election, Mizanpur UP), and Abul Basar, the president of Awami league, Rajbari Sadar Upazila.*

Tadbir for local need: Some *tadbirs*, we are informed, are impersonal in character. Local level leaders perform some *tadbirs* for the interest of community. Thus local level leaders perform *tadbir* for getting registrations of non-registered schools, madrasas (religion based teaching institutions) and clubs in their respective areas. They also perform *tadbir* for government's grants for schools and mosques and like other institutions.

Table 4.1.3: Percent of linked leaders interacted by the respondents for different purposes

(Multiple responses)

Category of respondents	Purposes for which links are made				
	Personal interest	Political interest (Organizational)	Local interest (local development)	Supremacy in exercising power	Tadbir
Local Government N=24	24.1 (41)	26.5 (45)	44.1 (75)	30.6 (52)	56.5 (96)
Political N=10	30.5 (25)	62.2 (51)	46.3 (38)	72.0 (59)	61.0 (50)
Religious N=10	50.0 (27)	20.4 (11)	61.1 (33)	16.7 (9)	14.8 (8)
Social N=17	37.2 (42)	24.0 (27)	42.5 (48)	24.0 (27)	34.5 (39)
Economic N=3	44.4 (8)	50.0 (9)	44.4 (8)	61.1 (11)	33.3 (6)
Total N=64	32.7 (143)	32.7 (143)	46.2 (202)	36.2 (158)	45.5 (199)

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002

Note: Figures in brackets are numbers of influential political leaders linked with the local level leaders. The numbers are calculated cumulatively.

## Section-II

### 4.2. Linkages of the Local Level Leaders with the Administrative Hierarchies

It is again an empirical view that a good number of local level leaders are linked with administrative hierarchies. The administrative hierarchies include the key government officials of different administrative hierarchies, namely the Upazila, district and national levels government officials who are most important to the local level leaders in regard to their domain of administrative power. The local level leaders having linkage with the key government officials enjoy some benefits for themselves and for the locality on the one hand; and on the other hand linkages of the local level leaders

give them opportunity to gain importance in the local level politics. The linkages and the interactions of the local level leaders with the key government officials of Upazila, district and the national hierarchies, which in turn is a linkage with the State —are the key concerns explored in this section.

However, this section includes the pattern of interactions which is produced through the linkages of the local level leaders with the above mentioned administrative hierarchies. Through the pattern of interactions we also intend to explore why these interactions are needed, how these interactions are materialized and what are the outcome of these interactions in the local level political processes.

#### **4.2.1 State of Linkages of Local Level Leaders with the Key Government**

##### **Officials**

We have already mentioned that local level leaders maintain linkages with the key government officials of the administrative hierarchies. And we also mentioned that these key government officials are the most important individuals in term of their extent of official power in the state machinery.

One of the hypotheses was that there were links of the local level leaders with the national level key government officials i.e. with secretaries of different ministries. But our field investigation does not prove that; we do not find any direct or indirect link of the local level leaders with the key government officials of the secretariat. The other two hypotheses in this regard were: There have been links of the local level leaders with the district level key government officials i.e. SP and DC; and with the Upazila level key government officials as well. Our field investigation bears a positive testimony to the latter hypotheses. We have found link of the local level leaders with the district and key government officials of Upazila level.

It should be mentioned in this connection that in our investigation we could not cover all the key government officials of the district administration. Information covered only the district level high officials i.e. the Deputy Commissioner (DC) and the Superintendent of Police (SP). But at the Upazila level the study has covered most of the key government officials. The key government officials at the Upazila level covered are: the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), the Officer-in-Charge (OC), the Upazila Engineer and the Project Implementation Officer (PIO).

The study has also tried to explore the mode of linkages/ Interactions<sup>4</sup> of the local level leaders with the key government officials. In exploring that, we find that the linkages are generally performed in two modes: formal linkage and non-formal linkage. The ultimate result of both the linkages of the local level leaders with the key government officials is to produce some ascertainable achievements relating to local level political process.

#### The Formal Linkage

The formal interactions, as perceived here, of the local level leaders with the key government officials are entirely covered by the talks on official matters. For example, interactions between local level leaders, mainly the UP leaders, and key government officials during the meeting of 'Upazila Development and Co-ordination Committee'. The meeting of 'Upazila Development and Co-ordination Committee' is held once in a month at the Upazila premises, in which attend the key government officials working in the Upazila level offices and all chairmen of the union Parishads under the particular Upazila. Sometimes, the formal interactions between the local level leaders and the key government officials can be characterized as occasional, situational and problem specific. For example, in case of deterioration of law and order situation in the locality, the UNO and police arrange meetings on the spot and exchange views with the local level leaders so as to find out the ways of improving the law and order situation. On the whole, the formal linkages of the local level leaders with the key government officials are explicit, leaving nothing implied.

#### The Non-formal Linkage

The non-formal interactions of the local level leaders with the key government officials are characterized just as an opposite direction to that of the formal linkages. Non-formal interactions are beyond the official formalities. It entirely depends on the local level leaders' personal relationship or scope of non-formal access to the key government officials. It is mostly an implicit. In sum, the main characteristic of non-formal linkage is that there is no official schedule for meeting; no particular venue for meeting, but there is a particular subject matter of interactions. For example, local level leaders keep non-formal linkage with the police to harass their political opponents. The other example of this type can be that the local level leaders maintain

non-formal linkage with the key government officials to get fund for the development of roads, schools and different institutions in the locality.

#### **4.2.2 Linkages of the local level leaders with the District level key Government officials**

It is a general practice that the SPs and DCs do not enter into any non-formal direct contact with the union level leaders; their relationship is mostly formal. However non-formal relations are possible through political leaders at the upper levels who have access to the officials by various means including corrupt practices.

##### Formal Interactions with Deputy Commissioner (DC)

It is found that about 43.2% of the total sampled local level leaders maintain formal linkage with the DC (annex-2). Most of the formal interactions between the local level leaders and the DC are held directly. The purposes for interactions are found multifarious. Multiple responses have been counted in this regard. This study finds that among the local level leaders reported to have formal linkage with the DC, about 90.6% interact for the purpose of law and order<sup>5</sup> situation of the locality. Average number of interactions is counted 1.9 with the DC for this purpose of in the reported year 2001. About 19% of the local level leaders have reported that they have had an average 1.8 times interaction with the DC relating to the 'observance of national days and on some other local matters', the other matters are mainly government *khas* (government's land) land distribution related (annexure-3). They reported that generally, the DC meets teachers and school managing committee members to get some students for observing the national days, mainly the National Independence Day. On the government *khas* land and related matters, the local level leaders, particularly the NGO leaders, who belong to social category, have interactions with the DC in reference to distribution of *khas* land to the landless people.

##### Non- formal Interactions with Deputy Commissioner (DC)

Non- formal interactions of the local level leaders with the DC are duly investigated. It is found that a very small number of the local level leaders, only about 15% maintained non- formal interactions with the DC. This study again took the multiple responses on the purposes for which local level leaders make non-formal interactions with the DC. It is found that among the local level leaders reported to have non-

formal linkage with the DC, about 37% interact for the purpose of seeking help for the poor and distressed people. The frequencies of interactions were average 5.3 in the reported year 2001 (annexure-3). It is noted here that the DC has a fund, called 'poor fund' for the poor and distressed people. DC can directly distribute this fund. As the DC office is not too far from the union under the present study, local level leaders used to go to poor and distress people around them, and manage funds for the poor. This is one of the purposes for which the non- formal interactions are held between the local level leaders and the DC. But in order to be successful they generally take help from the upper level political leaders or district level elites.

The other and most important purpose for which the local level leaders maintain non-formal connections with the DC is '*tadbir* for jobs.' The study finds that among the local level leaders reported to have non-formal linkage with the DC, about 82% interact for this purpose. The frequencies of interactions were average 5.2 in the reported year 2001(annexure-3). '*Tadbir* for job' is found as one of the most important purposes. It has been informed that the DC is very powerful in recruiting persons for the vacant posts under his or her jurisdiction. It is also informed that DC's jurisdiction is not only confined in the government departments and institutions in the district; the non- government organisations/institutions and the semi-government institutions are also under his purview. The types of these jobs mainly include the different departmental clerk, steno, schoolteacher and so on. Every year there arises employment opportunities of various kinds in the departments/institutions. Though this number is not substantial, quite a number of applicants look for DC's favour. The applicants can not directly communicate with the DC. It has been informed that there are some ways through which the job seekers or their guardians can reach the DC 'for *tadbir* of jobs'. The job seekers are generally the relatives, neighbours or favorite persons of some of the local level leaders who are connected with the influential political leaders of Upazila and district levels. Having requested by the job seekers or their guardians, these local level leaders try to convince some of the influential political leaders or elite of upper levels to propose the DC for favour. These local level leaders along with the influential political leaders generally contact the personal assistant of the DC, then they make non-formal appointment to meet the DC. It has been informed that '*tadbir* for job' related interactions of the local level leaders, via

upper level leaders, with DC are almost open -secret. Whether there is any monetary or other sort of transactions or deal is involved is an open question.

A story on 'tadbir for job' (case study-4) is depicted in the following box (Box 3).

**Box 3**

**Case study-4**

**Local level leader's 'tadbir' with DC for securing a job**

*Aparna Begum (25), pseudonym of a woman of Nayandia village, is an assistant teacher of a government primary school. She completed her graduation in 1998. Her father, Jamal(57), is a mid- level businessman. He runs a grocery shop at Suryanagar bazar (market). He possesses arable land of 4 acres. Aparna obtained her job as an assistant teacher in the early 2001. For obtaining the job Aparna had to go through a long process. She had to call on some local level leaders of her area who conduct tadbir for securing her job. The story of how the local level leaders help her out in securing the job is stated below:*

*Following an advertisement Aparna applied for the post of an assistant teacher in February 2000. Later, the Directorate of Primary schools, under the Ministry of Education, the central authority for primary education, conducted a written test for primary selection. Aparna succeeded in the written test. The second and last stage for confirming the job was to face a viva- voce examination. As about double numbers of applicants against the vacant posts in Rajbari qualified in the written test, a five-member viva- voce examination committee was formed in the district chaired by the DC.*

*After getting the written test's result Aparna's father discussed the matter with Mr. Zafar, a local leader and teacher of a local high school, to get help in the final test, the viva voce. Aparna's father had belief that Zafar could do something for his daughter's job as he (Zafar) maintained connections with some influential political leaders of Upazila and district levels and also had connection with the district level offices. Zafar agreed to do something for Aparna's job. After some days Zafar along with Aparna's father visited Ataur, a local level leader and was defeated in the race of UP chairman elections held in 1997. Both Zafar and Ataur assured Aparna's father.*

*Later, both Zafar and Ataur went to Mr. Iradat, who is a both Upazila and district level political leader. They all planned to go to the DC. As for Mr. Iradat, it was very easy to meet the DC. Before meeting with the DC they informed the matter to the personal assistant of the DC. One day after office time they met the DC. The DC told them that he would try his best for Aparna's job.*

*Finally Aparna qualified in the viva- voce examination. Aparna herself believes that without the help of Zafar and Ataur it was not possible for her to obtain the job. Aparna and her father informed that they had to pay Taka 20 thousand to DC. This amount of money they gave to the DC through Zafar and Ataur. Zafar and Ataur also admitted that they paid Taka 20 thousand to DC for confirming Aparna's job. But they also told that the money was not paid directly to DC. The amount was paid via a person working in the DC office and a close aide to DC.*

*Note: Information for this particular story were gathered from Aparna, Jamal ,Zafar and Ataur. The names mentioned in the story are all pseudonyms.*

Formal Interactions with Superintendent of Police (SP)

Information on formal linkages with the SP finds that about 32.4% of the sampled local level leaders are linked with the SP. There is only one purpose, that is the law and order, for which local level leaders are formally linked and have interactions with the SP. The study finds that the average number of formal interactions of the local level leaders with the SP is 1.9 in the reported year (Annexure-4). It is also noted that the formal interaction of the local level leaders with the SP are not a common phenomenon. Such interactions are seen as occasional or related to specific events. These can be termed as incidental. It can be noted here that there were two major incidents/events during the period of our survey for which interactions between the local level leaders and the DC and the SP were held related to the law and order situation.

The first incident was that there was a clash between the AL and BNP just a couple of weeks ahead of the 8<sup>th</sup> parliamentary election, held in October 2001, in the union under the present study. An activist of Awami League was killed and about half a dozen of the activists of both the Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party were wounded. A post-clash tense situation was prevailing in the locality. In that situation, the SP and also the DC visited the spot and exchanged views with the local level leaders to find the ways and means to contain the prevailing tension. The second incident was related to national election. Just a week ahead of the 8<sup>th</sup> national election, held in October 2001, the SP, and also the DC, arranged a meeting with the local level leaders of the union under study and exchanged views on improving the law and order situation to create a congenial atmosphere for the national poll.



Non- formal interactions with Superintendent of Police (SP)

Data on non- formal linkages of the local level leaders shows that about 16% of the sampled local level leaders are linked with the SP. Non- formal interactions of the local level leaders with the SP centre around one purpose only; this is '*tadbir* for criminal offence and related cases'. It is found that among the local level leaders reported to have non-formal linkage with the SP of Rajbari district, cent percent interacts for *tadbir*. The frequencies of interactions were average 7.2 in the reported year 2001(Annexure-4). It is noted here that the local level leaders cannot go directly all by themselves to interact with the SP directly alone; generally they (the local level leaders) interact with the SP along with the influential political leaders/ elite at the Upazila and district levels. It has been informed that the influential political leaders of the political party in power and the local MP get first priority to the local level leaders to perform *tadbir* to SP.

However, '*Tadbir* for criminal offence and related cases' can generally be classified as two different types:

a. *Tadbir* to SP for innocent persons who are victimized

Innocent persons can be termed the persons who are not involved in any offence, particularly the offence related to crime, but are victimized by the personal enmities. It is found that the personal enmities originate due to conflicts between *gusties*, by opposing someone's personal ill motive and from opposing unfair interference of police. We find that the local level leaders maintain *tadbir* to SP for releasing the victimized innocent persons.

A related case study on how the local level leaders maintain *tadbir* to SP for releasing the victimized persons, from the false allegations, is stated in the following case study (case study-5, Box 4).

**Box 4***Case study-5****Local level leaders' tadbir to SP in favour of Halim Master***

*Halim Master, 45, is teaching in a junior secondary school located at Marjatkol village in Mizanpur union. He was born and brought up in Marjatkol village. His father was a samaj leader (village leader) of the same village. His father died in 1991. As an elder son of his father Halim is also respected as a matbar (village leader) by a portion of villagers. It is noted here that presently there exist 4 samaj at the Marjatkol village. About 30 years back, there was only one samaj. Halim Master is respected by the people of Marjatkol and neighbouring villages not for his traditional or ancestral identity but for his modest behavior and fame as a good faculty of science of Marjatkol secondary School.*

*Halim Master owns some agriculture land (about 1-acre) at Kolmi village under Ramkantapur Union, about two kilometers away from his village. He bought this land in 1995. Since then he has leased it out to a small farmer of Kolmi village. One Reza, an inhabitant of Kolmi village and a solvent person, wanted to buy this land, but Halim Master refused his proposal. Later, Reza made some fake documents on the land and claimed possession of the land. Halim Master discussed the matter with the chairman of Ramkantapur Union Parishad. The UP chairman organized a Shalish to resolve the matter. Both Halim Master and Reza produced the land documents in the shalish. The shalish proved the documents produced by Reza as fake. Reza was also threatened by the shalishkers (persons who act as judges in the shalish). Reza kept this in his mind.*

*One night, in March 2001, a band of five persons with arms intruded Reza's home and looted some valuables. Later, Reza filed a dacoity case with the Rajbari sadar upazila police mentioning the name of Halim Master as leader of dacoit. It is informed that Reza bribed the police to arrest Halim Master. Having informed about the conspiracy Halim master went into hiding to evade arrest. The UP chairman along with about five local level leaders met the OC of Rajbari sadar thana and requested him to scrap the name of Halim Master from the dacoity case, but the OC to the request. Later they went to the SP of Rajbari to save Halim Master. Knowing the real fact the SP assured them to exempt Halim master from the dacoity case. Thus, Halim Master got released from the conspiracy of Reza and dacoity case.*

*b. Tadbir to SP for political friends*

Local level leaders sometimes go for *tadbir* to SP for their political friends who have committed offences for the sake of their party politics. It is noted here that majority of the local level leaders are involved in party politics. Some of them are very active and

some are supporters of the political parties. Different political interests in connection with local level politics work among the local level leaders. Competition for political hegemony, conflict over political interests and competition for leaderships are observed as the main features of party politics. Political competitions and political interests sometimes lead to quarrelsome situations with consequent conflicts and violence among the political party activists. The contending political parties try to use the state machineries – police and courts, to exhibit their political influence and power. The case study (case study-6) below (Box 5) is showing how local level leaders make non-formal linkages with the SP to get favour for their political friends who committed offence.

**Box 5**

**Case study-6**

***Evidences of Tadbir for Political Friends***

*A political clash between the AL and BNP caused the death of a AL leader, Abu Bakar of Mizanpur union. The date of the political clash was 21 July 2001, about two months ahead of the 8<sup>th</sup> parliamentary election held on October 1, 2001. The nephew of the murdered (joint secretary of the Mizanpur AL) filed a case accusing 81 people, all belonged to the BNP. Before filing the case the AL leaders of Mizanpur held meetings with the influential AL leaders of Rajbari sadar Upazila and Rajbari district. The MP of Rajbari constituency-1, who was elected MP in 1996 national election, also attended the meetings and played a key role. He, along with the president and the secretary of Mizanpur AL, met the concerned SP of Rajbari district and urged to take stern action against the accused.*

*The leaders of Mizanpur Union BNP also held several meetings with Upazila and district level BNP leaders. The meetings decided to deal the Surjonagar (the name of the place where the incident happened) murder case politically. They applied to the Dhaka High Court for the bail. The bail was granted for 28 days. The High Court ordered to apply for the next bail after 28 days to the Magistrate Court of Rajbari. But the MP candidate of BNP for the Rajbari constituency-1 did not make the application considering the possibility of rejection so that their participation in the election campaign could not be hampered. So the BNP activists operated their election campaign avoiding the police. However, none of the accused was present at the election camps in fear of being arrested.*

*BNP with the 4- party alliance achieved a landslide victory in the 8<sup>th</sup> parliamentary election of 1 October, 2001 and at Rajbari -1 constituency too the alliance nominated candidate won. Atiar Rahman, the number 1 accused of the murder case and also a local level leader became runner-up in the contest of Mizanpur union Parishad chairman election held in 1997. Mastafa, a local leader of Mizanpur union and vice president of Mizanpur union branch BNP, along with the MP held meetings with the concerned SP of Rajbari. The meeting decided for resolving the case.*

*Note: Information for this case study have been collected from local leaders who were involved in the incidents. Indepth discussions on the incident also held with the existing and the former MPs.*

Table 4.1.4: Average number of interactions held with the state level key officials in the reported year (2000-2001)

(Multiple responses)

Category of respondents	Key officials and mode of interactions											
	UNO		PIO		Engineer		OC		SP		DC	
	Formal	non-formal	Formal	non-formal	Formal	non-formal	Formal	non-formal	Formal	non-formal	Formal	non-formal
Local Government N=24	4.3 (12)	11.2 (14)	9.6 (8)	20.1 (12)	7.0 (8)	26.3 (8)	2.5 (20)	18.5 (12)	2.0 (12)	5.7 (3)	2.0 (12)	8.3 (3)
Political N=10	3.7 (10)	8.7 (10)	10.5 (6)	21.2 (9)	9.0 (3)	15.3 (4)	3.5 (10)	34.0 (10)	2.0 (10)	10.0 (6)	2.0 (10)	11.0 (3)
Religious N=10	5.0 (3)	7.2 (5)	6.8 (6)	10.5 (6)	3.0 (1)	7.0 (1)	2.0 (8)	3.5 (2)	2.0 (1)	-	3.5 (2)	3.0 (1)
Social N=17	6.4 (7)	8.4 (15)	6.5 (8)	16.6 (8)	2.5 (3)	12.0 (5)	1.5 (12)	19.6 (8)	1.6 (5)	2.0 (1)	2.0 (7)	1.7 (3)
Economic N=3	2.0 (1)	8.5 (2)	5.0 (1)	16.0 (2)	3.0 (1)	8.0 (1)	2.0 (2)	26.0 (3)	1.0 (1)	3.5 (2)	1.0 (1)	2.0 (1)
Total N=64	4.5 (33)	9.2 (46)	8.2 (29)	17.8 (37)	6.1 (16)	18.2 (19)	2.9 (52)	23.0 (35)	1.9 (29)	7.2 (12)	2.1 (32)	6.2 (11)

Source: Field survey 2001-2002

Note: Figures in brackets are numbers of the local level leaders who reported their linkages with the key government officials and interacted with them both in formal and non-formal ways.

#### 4.2.2 Linkages of the Local Level Leaders with the Upazila Level Key Government Officials

Both the formal and non-formal linkages of the local level leaders with the key government officials at the Upazila level gives a clear understanding of the local political dynamics. Why and how such linkages and interactions are shaping, what are the outcomes of these interactions are illuminating in the local level political process also pertinent to the present exercise.

The room for formal interactions and non-formal as well, of the local level leaders with the Upazila level government officials, involve number of meetings particularly relating to development. The development activities at the union level include infrastructure developments i.e. roads, bridge, culvert, health centre and so on. And beyond the infrastructure related programmes there are lots of activities in which the local leaders get involved; For example, management and development of *haat*-

bazar, *ghat*, general education, adult education, schools, madrasas, mosques, clubs, *eidgah*/graveyard, women empowerment, VGF (Vulnerable Group Feeding) and VGD (Vulnerable Group Development) programmes, social welfare, agriculture, *khas* land distribution, local disputes settlement, law and order and so on. Moreover, party politics, political conflicts, local and national elections, and police and court related matters are very much linked with the local development and politics. These activities are very important in the domain of local level politics to amass popular support. For all the above mentioned activities, local level leaders sometimes need some kind of linkages with the Upazila level key government officials.

It was mentioned earlier that about 87%<sup>6</sup> of the total sampled local level leaders responded that they have linkages with the key government officials. Multiple responses on the mode of interactions of the local level leaders with the Upazila level key government officials have been recorded. The Upazila level key government officials include the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), who is the executive head of Upazila administration. The Project Implementation Officer (PIO), who is responsible to look after the development projects and programmes undertaken by the union parishad is also very important. The Upazila Engineer, who is responsible for supervising the development projects and programmes related to infrastructure undertaken by the union parishad, municipality and different departments under the Upazila has a key role in these affairs and hence come in the category of interaction. The Officer- in-Charge (OC), who is the head of the *Thana* (police station at the Upazila) is undoubtedly important figure. *Thana* is one of the most important institutions in the Upazila administration. Controlling the law and order is the prime duty of *thana* personnel i.e. the police.

Data show that about 52% of the local level leaders have made *an* average 4.5 times formal interactions with the UNO, while about 72% reported average 9.2 times non-formal interactions on different purposes in the reported year (table 4.1.4). About 46% of the local level leaders have made *an* average 8.2 times formal interactions while about 58% have reported average 17.8 times non-formal interactions with the PIO on different purposes in the reported year 2001. About 25% of the local level leaders have reported that they have had an average 6.1 times formal interactions with the Upazila Engineer, while 30% have reported their 18.2 times non-formal interactions on different development projects and related purposes in the reported year (table

4.1.4). In the case of OC, it is also found that about 82% of the local level leaders have made an average 2.9 times formal interactions while about 55% have reported an average 23 times non-formal interactions with the OC on different purposes (table 4.1.4).

The mode of interactions of the local level leaders with the key government officials has shown that frequencies of formal interactions for different purposes are comparatively smaller than that of the non-formal (table 4.1.4).

However, the following discussion enumerates the specific purposes for which the formal and the non-formal interactions are made between the local level leaders and the key Upazila level government officials.

#### **4.2.2a: Purposes of Formal and Non-formal Interactions with Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO)**

##### **Purposes of formal interactions with the UNO:**

Table 4.1.4.1 shows the purposes for which formal interactions are made between the local level leaders and the UNO. It is noted here that a total of 33 respondents, about 45% of the total sampled local level leaders, have reported their formal interactions with the UNO. Multiple responses have been taken on the purposes for formal interactions with the UNO.

##### Formal interactions with the UNO for overall local development related matters

Upazila Development and Co- ordination Committee is a body for coordinating the development works in the Upazila. The members of this committee include all the heads of the government offices of the Upazila, all the chairmen of the union parishads under the Upazila and two political leaders, mainly from the political party in power. The UNO is the member- secretary of this committee. And the local MP is the advisor of this Upazila Development and Co- ordination Committee. Generally, this committee meets once in a month. The monthly meeting of the Upazila Development and Co-ordination Committee is presided over by the UP chairmen by turn.

Data show that among the local level leaders reported to have formal linkage with the UNO, only 6% interact for the purpose of 'overall local development'. The frequencies of interactions were average 8 times in the reported year 2001. These are held at the Upazila Development and Co-ordination meetings (see table 4.1.4.1).

#### Formal interactions with the UNO for law and order situation

Law and order situation is found as one of the very important purposes, for which local level leaders interact with the UNO. Among the four purposes of formal interactions with the UNO 'law and order' is placed at the top. It is found that a total of 29 local level leaders, which is 88% of the respondents who have reported their formal interactions with the UNO, have made an average 2.3 times interactions regarding law and order in the reported year (see table 4.1.4.1).

It can be mentioned here that there is a 'law and order committee' in the Upazila headed by the UNO. According to its rule, a meeting of the committee is held once in a month. The members of the committee include the heads of all government offices in the Upazila, all the Union Parishad Chairmen, all the chairmen of the secondary school managing committees and two Upazila level political leaders, generally the leaders of the political party in power. Police, particularly the OC, has a special task to report the overall law and order situation in the meeting. The law and order committee's meeting is held at the Upazila head office and is chaired by the UNO.

According to the structure of the law and order committee at the Upazila, it reveals that among the local level leaders only the Union Parishad chairman can interact formally with the UNO regarding law and order situation. But this study found that a vast number of local level leaders have interacted with the UNO relating to law and order. The reason behind the more formal interactions of the local level leaders with the UNO relating to law and order was a political clash in the locality.

#### Formal interactions with the UNO for local development occasion

'Local development occasion', as perceived, includes the occasions of inauguration or completion of particular development works, mainly related to infrastructure, in the locality. It is informed that some major development works are done in the union under the present study in the reported year 2001. The development works include the construction of a government primary school, a mother care centre, community clinics and an embankment -cum road. The UNO has visited and inaugurated the development sites. During the visits and inaugurations of development works the local level leaders are generally invited.

It is found that inauguration of local development projects has become one of the important purposes of formal interactions between the local level leaders and the

UNO. Data show that about 14 local level leaders, which is 45% of the respondents to have reported their formal linkage with the UNO, have had *an* average 2.4 times interactions for local development occasions with the UNO (see table 4.1.4.1).

#### Formal interactions with the UNO for the development of educational institutions

About 18% of the local leaders, among who have reported about formal interactions with the UNO, have an average of 3.7 times formal interactions for the purpose of 'development of educational institutions' with the UNO in the reported year (table 4.1.4.1). It is noted here the local level leaders, mainly who are involved in school and *madrassa* managing committees and teaching, interacts with the UNO for the development of educational institutions. Moreover, as an executive head of the Upazila administration, the UNO occasionally invites the relevant local level leaders and interacts with them on different issues related to the educational institutions. It is also to be noted here that the head of the respective educational institutions also act as the general secretaries of management committees of educational institutions.

Table 4.1.4.1: Average number of formal interactions on different purposes held with UNO in the reported year (2001)

(Multiple responses)

Category of respondents	Purposes for which links are made			
	Overall development related discussion at the UZ Co- ordination meeting	Law and order	Local development occasion	Development of educational institutions
Local Government N=12	12.0 (1)	2.5 (12)	3.3 (3)	(-)
Political N=10	4.0 (2)	2.0 (10)	2.5 (5)	(-)
Religious N=3	(-)	2.0 (1)	(-)	7.5 (2)
Social N=7	(-)	2.6 (5)	2.0 (5)	5.5 (4)
Economic N=1	(-)	1.0 (1)	1.00 (1)	(-)
Total N=33	8.0 (2)	2.3 (29)	2.4 (14)	3.7 (6)

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002

Note: Figures in the brackets are the numbers of local leaders who have reported their formal interactions with the UNO.



### **Purposes of non-formal interactions with the UNO:**

Non-formal interactions of the local level leaders with the UNO are mainly found as effective weapons in gaining privileges from the UNO in relation to developmental works. It seems that the local level leaders indirectly influence the UNO to gain personal benefits and also benefits for the locality. But our direct participatory observations find that both UNO and the local level leaders develop a kind of intimate relationship, which is the prerequisite for the non-formal relationship, and both have some kinds of benefits from this non-formal interactions. However, the central feature of non-formal interactions of the local level leaders with the UNO can be characterized as '*tadbir*'. But we do not get information directly on *tadbir* rather we have taken information on the specific purposes for which non-formal interactions are made.

Multiple responses have been found on the purposes for which local level leaders do non-formally interact with the UNO. It is found that there is a total of 46 local level leaders, which is about 62% of the total sampled local leaders, non-formally interact with the UNO. The purposes of non-formal interactions of the local level leaders with the UNO are discussed below (See also table 4.1.4.2).

#### Non-formal interactions for getting favour in the development projects

Development projects at the local level are generally implemented by the Union Parishads. The major funds for the development projects generally come from the LGRDC ministry. Moreover, some funds for the development of educational institutions are allocated from the 'Facilities Department' of the Ministry of Education. It is the UNO who, as an executive head of Upazila administration, can influence to some extent in formulating as well as allotting the funds for the development projects in different unions. This is the main reason for the local level leaders to maintain non-formal connections with the UNO.

The study finds that among the local level leaders reported to have their non-formal interactions with the UNO, about 46% maintain average 4 times for getting favour in the development projects in the reported year 2001(see table 4.1.4.2).

#### Non-formal interactions for seeking assistance for the poor

It has been informed that the poor and distressed people union under study, mainly the flood affected and disaster gripped people, need financial help. The UNO office maintains a fund called 'Fund for the Poor'. The local level leaders, who aware about the fund, take the opportunity to get the fund for the poor and distressed people of their own locality. By managing such fund for the poor they can gain popularity in their own locality, and at the same time they perform a vital duty for the community.

'Seeking assistance for the poor' is also found one of the important purposes for which non-formal interactions of the local level leaders are held with the UNO. It is found that a total of 19 local level leaders, about 42 % of the local leaders, who have reported their non- formal interactions with the UNO, have reported an average 5.4 times non-formal interactions with the UNO in 'seeking assistance for the poor' (see table 4.1.4.2).

#### Non-formal interactions for settling local conflicts / disputes

Local disputes, such as frictions over different interests, local political interests, land, dowry and so on, are common phenomena in the local community. It has been informed that the local level leaders used to interact non- formally with the UNO to find out solutions on some disputes held in the locality. It is also known that UNO does not give solutions directly, but generally gives some suggestions how to deal

with the matters. The local level leaders attain additional strength by such connections with the UNO.

It is found that a total of 19 local level leaders, which is about 42% of the respondents reported their non-formal linkages with the UNO, have made an average 8.4 times non-formal interactions for this purpose in the reported year (see table 4.1.4.2).

Non-formal interactions for getting consent and approval in the defective bills of development projects

‘Getting consent and approval in the defective bills’ of development projects is also found as an important purpose of non-formal interactions of the local level leaders with the UNO. The UNO is the supreme authority of the Upazila administration to look after the development projects. The development projects which are not properly done; which are defective because of corruption and malpractices are sent to UNO for approval. In most of the cases the UNO turns the defective bills as normal. Parul Begum, a local level leader and a UP member, has suggested that in doing so the UNO used to take some monetary favour from the local level leaders. It is found that among the local level leaders reported to have their non-formal interactions with the UNO, about 35% maintain average 8.5 times for ‘getting consent and approval on the defective bills of the development projects’ in the reported year (see table 4.1.4.2).

The case study (case study –7) below (Box 6) tells why the local level leaders maintain non-formal connections with the UNO in getting consent and approval in the defective bills of development projects.

**Box 6***Case study-7***Construction of a Culvert in Mohadebpur Village: Confession of a UP Member**

*Parul Begum, 35, is the UP member of ward no. 2 of Mizanpur Union Parishad. As an UP member she has to take some responsibility for the development works of the ward from where she has got elected. As per the rule of project implementation under the union Parishad, she has to take charge of PIC (Project Implementation Committee) chairman on some projects. One such project was the Construction of a Culvert at Mohadebpur Village, a village under ward no. 3 in Mizanpur union. Parul Begum was made chairman of that project. She has provided the information on the project including how she had to maintain non-formal connection with the UNO for getting approval on the Bills. She has also given a statement on the general procedure of formulating such projects and how a local level leader has to interact non-formally with the UNO for getting approval on defective bills, and why such interactions with the UNO are needed.*

**The general procedure**

*Under the ADP (Annual Development Programme) special project, a total of 11 culverts were constructed in Mizanpur by the UP during the fiscal year 2000/2001. The strongest roles were played by the Upazila Engineer and the UNO in the sphere of ADP (special) projects. The UNO issues letter to the UP chairmen under his Upazila for preparing project proposal for their respective UPs. In response to the letter, UP prepares project proposal and submits to the UNO's office. The UNO sends the projects to the Upazila Engineer. The Engineer prepares scheme after visiting the project sites. The UPs form the PICs for projects. Projects are discussed and approved at the meeting of the Upazila Development and Coordination Committee (UDCC). PIC during the running of any project can make bill for part of the work accomplished and submit to the office of the Engineer. After Engineer okays the bill, it comes to the UNO. UNO then okays the bill and issues cheque. The issued cheque goes to the AG office and the AG office deposits the allotted money to bank accounts of PIC president. Bill can be done even after full accomplishment of projects.*

**Construction of a Culvert in Mohadebpur Village**

*In July 2001, Parul Begum, the UP member of the ward no. 2 of the Mizanpur union' prepared the project of construction of a culvert. It was approved at the UP meeting and was submitted to the Engineer's Office of the Rajbari sadar Upazila. In response to the application, the Engineer visited the project area and gave an estimated cost of 20,000 taka. It was reported that the Engineer took 1,000 taka bribe from Parul Begum, the PIC president. It was understood that in case this money was not given, the Engineer might give an estimate of less amount. The project was discussed and approved at the monthly meeting of July of the Upazila Development and Coordination Committee.*

*Construction work of the culvert began in October 2001 and ended in November 2001. After completion of the work, the Upazila Engineer visited the site. The PIC president submitted the bill to him. Before approving the bill, the Engineer and the UNO took 10% of the total amount as bribe. Only after that the Engineer and the UNO approved the bill. Upon their approval, the bill went to the AG office. Prior to the AG office deposited the money to the bank account of the PIC president, another 1000 taka bribe was taken from the president. The allocated money then was deposited by the AG office to the account of the President of the PIC and she withdrew the money. Parul Begum told that if these amounts were not given the Engineer and the UNO would not approve the bill and the AG office would make intentional delay in depositing the money to the bank account of the PIC president.*

*Parul Begum also informed that about 50% of the allocated amount were used in implementing the project.*

*Note: Parul Begum, a pseudonym of a woman member of Mizanpur Union Parishad. Most of the information for this case study have been collected from her.*

Non-formal interactions for heightening personal images and self-benefits

'Heightening personal image and self-benefits' is also found as a purpose of non-formal interactions of the local level leaders with the UNO. A limited number of the local level leaders has been found maintaining non-formal links with the UNO for upholding their personal image to the people and aspiring personal and social benefits. It is found that among the local level leaders who reported to have their non-formal interactions with the UNO, about 15% maintain average 2.3 times interactions for the said purpose in the reported year (see table 4.1.4.2).

Table 4.1.4.2: Average number of non-formal interactions on different purposes held with UNO in the reported year (2001)

(Multiple responses)

Category of respondents	Purposes for which links are made				
	For getting favour in development projects	Seeking assistance for the poor	For getting consent and approval in the defective bills	For settling the local conflicts / disputes	For heightening personal image and self-benefits
Local Government N=14	4.3 (8)	4.7 (6)	10.1 (8)	2.4 (5)	1.0 (2)
Political N=10	6.7 (3)	5.4 (5)	9.3 (3)	3.3 (3)	2.0 (1)
Religious N=5	2.6 (5)	3.0 (1)	(-)	5.0 (2)	3.3 (3)
Social N=15	4.3 (3)	6.4 (7)	5.3 (3)	6.3 (8)	2.0 (1)
Economic N=2	2.5 (2)	(-)	4.5 (2)	3.0 (1)	(-)
Total N=46	4.0 (21)	5.4 (19)	8.4 (16)	3.9 (19)	2.3 (7)

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002

Note: Figures in the brackets are the numbers of local leaders who have reported their non-formal interactions with the UNO

#### 4.2.2b: Purposes of Formal and Non-formal Interactions with the Officer-in-Charge (OC)

The police station at the Upazila level, which is known as *thana*, is one of the very important government institutions responsible mainly for maintaining law and order. The Officer-in-Charge (OC) is the head of police station. This study investigated the

state of linkages of the local level leaders with the OC. What sort of linkages lie between the local level leaders and the OC, what are the purposes of such links, that is the purposes of interactions, and how these affect the local level political process are the main queries for this investigation.

#### **Formal Interactions with Officer-in-Charge (OC):**

The formal interactions of the local level leaders with the OC are found distinctly related to the law and order. It is found that among the local level leaders, the Union Parishad chairman is the only leader who is the member of Upazila Law and Order Committee have an official status to maintain relation with OC. The Upazila Law and Order Committee members are responsible to report on the law and order situation to the Upazila Law and Order Committee. The UNO is the president of the Committee and the OC is the member secretary. The heads of the important government offices, for example the fisheries officer, the social welfare officer, of the Upazila and all the UP chairmen of the union parishads under the Upazila are the members of the committee. The study finds that the Union Parishad chairman of the union under study alone has had formal interactions of 12 times with regard to law and order situation with the OC in the monthly meetings of the Law and Order Committee, in the reported year 2001.

Apart from the kind of formal interactions, as mentioned, we find some special kinds of formal interactions of the local level leaders with the OC. Such special kind of interactions between the local level leader and the OC can be termed as 'situational-formal interaction'. The perspectives of situational-formal interactions of the local level leaders with the OC are found to have taken place just ahead of 8th parliamentary election. It is found that about 70% of the total sampled local level leaders, about 81% of the leaders who reported their linkages with the key government officials, have had 2.9 times situational – formal interactions with the OC in the reported year (table 4.1.4). An evidence of 'situational-formal interaction' is stated in the case study (case study –8) below (Box 7).

## Box 7

## Case study-8

**Situational- formal interaction of local level leaders with the OC**

The poll schedule of the 8<sup>th</sup> national parliamentary election, held on 1st October 2001, was announced by the Election Commission of Bangladesh. The Election Commission also instructed the local administration, the district and Upazila administration, to locate the possible violence prone poll centres / localities and take necessary measures to ensure free and fair election. The local administrations of Rajbari located some possible poll centres/ locality which they called 'risk' areas. The Rajbari administration, both the district and Upazila administration, counted Mizanpur Union, the study union, as one of the risk localities. The local administration was supposed to arrange a meeting with the local level leaders in the locality, which had been identified as a risk area.

But in the case of Mizanpur union, they had to arrange several meetings with local level leaders. The entire meetings were related to law and order and the OC of Rajbari Sadar Upazila was the key officials to organize these meetings. In the meetings the local level leaders interacted with the OC regarding law and order prevailing in the locality. The interactions between the local level leaders and the OC on the above stated situation were not common, so we termed those as situational-formal.

The first situational-formal interactions of the local level leaders with the OC held in late July 2001 just after an incident in the union. The incident was just a political clash between the Awami League (AL) and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). In the clash, an AL activist was killed and about half-a- dozen of the activists of both the parties injured seriously. A case was filed with Rajbari sadar thana in this connection.

It should be mentioned here that the two political parties, the Awami League (AL) and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) are strongly rooted in the study union. Assuming the clash as a big threat for holding free and fair election, the OC, also the UNO, of Rajbari sadar Upazila visited the site and held a meeting with the local level leaders. The meeting was attended by most of the local level leaders invited by the OC and the UNO. In fact there was no written invitation letter; upon getting a request from the OC and the UNO the existing UP chairman of Mizanpur union Parishad invited the local leaders through UP messengers.

The second situational-formal interactions between the local level leaders and the OC were held in the early August 2001 for the same causes.

The third situational-formal interactions between the local level leaders and the OC related to law and order again was held in mid September 2001. The meeting was a part of administrative initiative for holding a free and fair election

We find such formal interactions between the local level leaders and the OC are not unusual but situational.

### **Non-formal Interactions with Officer-in- Charge (OC):**

Unlike the formal interactions, a variety of purposes are found in non-formal interactions of the local level leaders with the OC. It is found that most of the non-formal interactions of the local level leaders with the OC are centre around the personal and political interests of local level leaders. However, only a very limited numbers of those non- formal interactions with the OC are related to the interests of people.

Multiple responses have recorded in depicting the non-formal interactions of the local level leaders with the OC. It is found that about 47% of the total sampled local level leaders are non-formally linked with the OC. From another perspective it can be said that 76% of the local level leaders, among the local level leaders who have reported their linkages with the key government officials, are non-formally linked with the OC (See also table 4.1.4.3).

#### Non-formal interactions with OC for keeping political hold over the political opponent

Varieties of political interests work among the local level leaders. The leadership dynamics is seen in the light of competitions in the local polity. A good relation with the police can provide extra strength in performing leadership at the local level. It is also reported that a non-formal linkage of a local level leader with the police, especially the OC, is very important to score a point against their political opponents. It is found that 60% of the local level leaders, who have reported their non-formal linkages with the OC, have performed an average 10.5 times non- formal interactions with the OC for maintaining supremacy over their political opponents in the reported year (2001).

#### Non-formal interactions with OC for filing cases and opponent allegations

It is interesting to note that the OC acts as an important agent in the local level politics. For winning race of local level political competition, leaders are found to



make non-formal linkages with the OC. It is found that a section of local level leaders used to interact with the OC with some silly allegations for political interests. Though most of these are also reported as false or minor, the local level leaders try to turn them as major offences by the collaboration with the OC/police. The other section of local level leaders also used to interact with the OC/police in the same manner to refute the allegations raised against them. The relation of local level leaders with the OC has become an essential part of local level politics. Indeed, most of the non-formal relationship between the local level leaders and the OC are driven by motive of conspiracy that interrupts the environment of conducive interactions and contaminate the local level politics. It has also been reported that through this sort of interactions of the local level leaders, the OC enjoys monetary benefits from the local level leaders. Data show that among the local level leaders reported to have non-formal interactions with the OC, about 77% interact for the purpose of filing cases and opponent allegations. The frequencies of interaction were average 11.9 in the reported year 2001 (see table 4.1.4.3).

#### Interactions with OC for disputes negotiation

We have been informed that some disputes are not possible to settle by the local initiatives alone. The nature of such disputes is much different to the disputes generally happened in the rural areas. These disputes take place by sudden incidents and are counted beyond the control of local mediation/ *shalish*. Police is responsible to take over such disputes. Murder, rape and suicide related cases are the examples of such disputes. This study finds that among the local level leaders reported to have non-formal linkage with the OC, about 35% interact for disputes negotiation. The frequencies of interaction were average 14.3 times in the reported year 2001(table 4.1.4.3).

A case study (case study –9) on the ‘mediation in dispute’, in which one can see the OC’s role, is given below (Box 8).

**Box 8**

**Case study-9**

***Moina’s suicide case mediated by the OC and the local leaders***

*Moina (22) was a housewife of Nayandia village. Roni (30), Moina’s husband, was working as a manager in a press at Faridpur town, the neighbouring district of Rajbari. They got married in 1999. Roni stayed at the press compound where he was working. Once in a week he used to come to Nayandia for a day where his wife had been living with his father’s home in a joint family. One day in early March 2001 Roni came to his village home and heard from his younger sister that his wife went to her father’s home, in the same village, and developed a love relation with one of her cousins. Roni believed that and beat his wife. The next day Roni went to Faridpur to his working place. Moina got shocked on the allegation and took poison at night. Roni’s father informed the matter quickly to Moina’s father. They brought Moina to Rajbari hospital; the doctors failed to make her survive. Moina was buried in Nayandia graveyard.*

*About a week later, a news was published in a local newspaper on Moina’s death. It said, ‘Moina, 21, a housewife of Nayandia village was beaten to death by her husband. The OC of Rajbari sadar thana went to Nayandia and tried to record the fact. Having informed, the Chairman of Mizanpur union parishad, a UP member, and some other local leaders also went to Nayandia village and discussed the matter with the OC. Moina’s father accused Roni and his family for the death of Moina. OC convinced on the real fact that it was a suicide. But the OC was very angry for not informing him before. The OC intended to file a murder case on the matter.*

*Later, Roni’s father Kosimuddin sought help from the UP chairman. The UP chairman of Mizanpur union suggested Kasimuddin to discuss the matter with Mastafa - an UP member, Tutu and Khaled. Both Tutu and Khaled involved in the party in power at that time and they had frequent interactions with the OC. UP member Mastafa also used to maintain a good relation with the OC. Roni and Roni’s father discussed the matter with Mastafa, Tutu and Khaled. They took initiative to resolve the dispute. They first met Moina’s father. Moina’s father told them that he was angry to Roni and his father, but he did not file any case against them. He is not interested to go to police for his daughter’s death at all.*

*Then they met the OC. OC told Mastafa, Tutu and Khaled that it was a murder case. So any time he could call Moina’s father to file a case. They met 3 times with the OC on the matter. Finally, the OC demanded Taka 40 thousand bribe for not taking action against Roni and his father. Mastafa, Tutu and Khaled collected the amount from Roni and his father. They gave the amount to the OC. Thus the dispute was settled.*

*Roni and his father informed us that the local level leaders whom they selected as mediators were very kind of them, otherwise they had to go to jail. But they did not know whether the total amount was paid to OC or not.*

*Note: Information for this particular case study were collected from Roni, Kosimuddin, the UP chairman, Mastafa, Titu and khaled. The names used in the case study are pseudonyms.*

Non-formal interactions with OC for self- security

Self-security is found as one of the purposes of non-formal interactions of the local level leaders with the OC. It is important to elucidate here that how this study defines self-security. In fact, this study has perceived the local level leaders' understanding in sensing the meaning of 'self-security.' To them, self-security means roaming free from unnecessary harassment and false cases by police. It is clearly understood from a statement of a local leader who reported, " police can harass any innocent person in one hand, and on the other hand they can respect a criminal". A good relation with the police, especially the OC can give a sense of security.

It is found that among the local level leaders reported to have non-formal linkage with the OC, about 23% interact for the purpose of self-security. The frequencies of interaction were average 3.5 in the reported year 2001(See table 4.1.4.3).

Table 4.1.4.3: Average number of non-formal interactions on different purposes held with the OC in the reported year (2001)

(Multiple responses)

Category of Respondents	Purposes for which links are made			
	Keeping political hold over the political opponent	Filing case and opponent allegations	Mediation / <i>shalish</i> in dispute	Self- security
Local Government N=12	10.3 (6)	10.6 (8)	13.0 (5)	3.3 (3)
Political N=10	15.0 (7)	14.4 (8)	18.8 (4)	5.0 (2)
Religious N=2	2.0 (1)	2.5 (2)	(-)	(-)
Social N=8	9.8 (5)	9.4 (7)	10.7 (3)	5.0 (2)
Economic N=3	17.5 (2)	25.0 (2)	(-)	3.0 (1)
Total N=35	10.5 (21)	11.9 (27)	14.3 (12)	3.5 (8)

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002

Note: Figures in the brackets are the numbers of local leaders who have reported their non-formal interactions with the OC.

The non-formal relationship between the OC and local level leaders avers that there also exists a deep links between them. They score a point more in their supremacy as being leaders of local level politics. A strong link of them with the OC indicates the ability of local level leaders to gain in the political games at the local level in one hand, and on the other hand such links create scopes for the OC to make illegal money from the local level leaders. In fine, it can be argued that non-formal links of OC with the local level leaders is an intrusion of state to the local politics in various forms including corrupt practices. Local leaders are obviously involved in these mal-practices. This, in turns, grossly violates the development-oriented democratic practices at local level.

#### **4.2.2c: Formal and Non-formal Interactions of Local Leaders with Project Implementation Officer (PIO)**

The Project Implementation Officer (PIO) is one of the important key government officials of the Upazila administration. The Project Implementation Officer (PIO) at the Upazila is the key person in formulating and supervising the 'food for work' related development projects implemented by the Union parishads. There are mainly two types of such projects: Test Relief (TR) and Food for Work (FFW). It is reported that during the fiscal year 2000/2001, there was 72 tons of wheat allocated in the Mizanpur Union under the FFW programme from the Relief Ministry. Utilising the allocated wheat, 5 earthen roads were reconstructed. Using the 10 tons of rice allotted as TR (general), 5 roads were repaired and with the 45 tons of wheat allocated as TR (special), 7 earthen roads were reconstructed and developed.

##### **Formal interactions with the PIO:**

Data show that a total of 29 local level leader, which is about 39% of the total sampled local level leaders, interact formally with the PIO mainly on two purposes: a) Development project related interactions with the PIO in the Upazila TR and FFW Committee Meetings to mobilise projects; interactions relating to development projects inspections. It can be mentioned here that a 7-member Project Implementation Committee (PIC) headed by an elected UP member. The other members are included in the PIC from local people according to the rules of forming

PIC; most of them are local level leaders. PIO visits the project sites as he is responsible to do this. During the visits of PIO at project sites, there take place interactions between the local level leaders and the PIO relating to project works.

Formal interactions with PIO regarding Test Relief (TR) and food for Work(FFW)

There exists two committees at the Upazila level namely The Upazila TR Project Committee and Upazila FFW Project Committee. These committees deal with the TR and FFW related projects in the Union Parishad. UNO is the chairman and PIO is the member-secretary of these committees. Among the other members, Union parishads chairmen under concerned Upazila are included. One political leader at Upazila level is also included as a member of these committees. These committees are supposed to meet once a month but in practice these meetings are held once after two months. In these meetings local level leaders formally interact with the PIO. It is found that about 7% of the local level leaders have had average 8.0 times formal interactions with the PIO in the purpose of development related discussion in the TR and FFW committee meetings in the reported year 2001 (see table 4.1.4.4).

Formal interactions with PIO regarding project inspection/visits related matters

The PIO visits the sites of the UP projects and provides cost-estimates for allocations. It is the duty of a PIO to inspect the project sites and discusses the project-related matters, progress etc. with the members of the PIC. It is mentioned earlier that most of the members of the PIC are the local level leaders. It is found that among the local level leaders reported to have formal linkage with the PIO, 100% interact for project inspection related matters. The frequencies of interactions were average 7.7 in the reported year 2001 (4.1.4.4).

Table 4.1.4.4: Average number of formal interactions on different purposes held with PIO in the reported year (2001)

Category of respondents	Purposes of formal interactions	
	Development related discussion in the TR and FFW committee meeting	Project inspection/visits related matters
Local Government N=8	12.0 (1)	8.1 (8)
Political N=6	4.0 (1)	9.8 (6)
Religious N=6	(-)	6.8 (6)
Social N=8	(-)	6.5 (8)
Economic N=1	(-)	5.0 (1)
Total N=29	8.0 (2)	7.7 (29)

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002

Note: Figures in the brackets indicate the number of respondents.

#### **Non-formal interactions with Project Implementation Officer (PIO):**

It is found that a total of 27 local level leaders, which is about 50% of the total sampled, interacts non- formally with the PIO mainly on four purposes:

##### Non-formal interactions with PIO for Liaison of Development projects

It is found that a total of 16 local level leaders, which is about 43% of the respondents reported to have their non-formal interactions with the PIO, interacts non-formally for 'liaison of Development projects'. The average number of interactions on this purpose is 7.1 in the reported year 2001(table 4.1.4.5)

##### Non-formal interactions with PIO for formulating of development projects

It is informed that a total of 11 local level leaders, which is about 30% of the respondents reported to have their non-formal linkage with the PIO, interacts for the purpose of 'formulating development projects'. The average number of interactions on the purpose is found 4.5 in the reported year 2001(see table 4.1.4.5)

Non-formal interactions with PIO for processing bills of development projects

Processing bills of the development projects undertaken by the Union Parishad is found as one of the most important purposes for which the local level leaders non-formally interact with the PIO. It is informed that a total of 22 local level leaders, which is about 60% of the respondents reported to have their non-formal interactions with the PIO, interacts for processing bills of development projects. The number of interactions on the purpose is counted average 10.5 in the reported year 2001(table 4.1.4.5).

Table 4.1.1.5: Average number of non-formal interactions on different purposes held with PIO in the reported year (2001)

Category of respondents	Non-formal interactions with the PIO		
	Liaison of Development project	Formulating of Development project	Processing bills ( of dev. Projects)
Local Government N=12	8.3 (6)	5.5 (4)	13.5 (8)
Political N=9	9.3 (3)	6.3 (2)	16.7 (3)
Religious N=6	5.5 (2)	3.0 (1)	7.5 (4)
Social N=8	4.7 (3)	3.3 (3)	5.0 (5)
Economic N=2	5.5 (2)	2.0 (1)	9.5 (2)
total N=37	7.1 (16)	4.5 (11)	10.5 (22)

Source: field survey, 2001-2002

Note: Figures in the brackets indicate the number of respondents

#### 4.2.2d: Formal and Non-formal Interactions of Local Level Leaders with Upazila Engineer

Both formal and non-formal interactions of the local level leaders with the Upazila Engineer are reported to be found. Data show that only 16 local level leaders, which is about 22% of the sampled local level leaders, exercise formal interactions with the Upazila Engineer; while a total of 19 local level leaders, about 26% of sampled local level leaders, make non-formal interactions (see table 4.1.4).

### **Formal interactions with Upazila Engineer:**

#### Formal interactions with Upazila Engineer for development related discussion

The Upazila Development and Co-ordination Committee meets once a month. Among the local level leaders, the chairmen of Union Parishads in the Upazila are authorized to participate in the meeting. One of the Upazila level political leaders can also participate in the meeting. It is seen that the political leaders, who participate at the meeting, are from the political party in power. It is also found that only two of local level leaders, 12.5% of the respondents reported to have their formal linkage with the Upazila Engineer, interact with the Upazila Engineer in the purpose of 'development related discussion in the Upazila Development and Co- ordination Meeting'. The frequencies of interactions of the local level leaders with the Upazila engineer are found average 8.0 in the reported year 2001 (Table 4.1.4.6).

#### Formal interactions with Upazila Engineer for development project supervision related discussion

As Upazila Engineer is the key official to formulate and supervise the infrastructure related development projects under the union Parishads, S/he often calls a meeting holding a discussion with the local level leaders involved in the Upazila Engineer's office. It is found that a total of 16 local level leaders, which is 100% of the respondents reported to have their formal interactions with the Upazila Engineer, holds interactions with the Upazila Engineer in the purpose of 'development project inspection/ supervision related discussion. The number of interactions of the local level leaders with the Upazila engineer was found average 5.1 in the reported year 2001 (Table 4.1.4.6).



connections with the Upazila Engineer ensure the local level leaders to make development projects with an excessive budget. Informal discussions with the local level leaders and knowledgeable persons of the locality reveal that the Upazila Engineer is also keen to interact with the local level leaders in the purpose of formulating development projects. As S/he gets a lucrative amount of bribe or fees from the local level leaders for assisting them in formulating development projects with higher budgets. It is seen that a total of 12 local level leaders, which is about 63% of the total respondents reported to have their non-formal links with the Upazila Engineer, interacts for this purpose. It is also found that the average number of interactions on the purpose is 6.6 in the reported year 2001 (see table 4.1.4.7).

A relevant case study (no.10) below shows how local level leaders interact with the Upazila Engineer for formulating and approving the development projects.

### **Box 9**

Case study-10

#### **Non-formal links for the U culvert project**

*In April 2001, Thahera Khatun, a UP member of the ward-number old 3 of Mizanpur union prepared a project proposal for a U culvert. After preparing the project of construction of a U culvert project she got approved it at the UP meeting and submitted to the Engineer's office. Thahera Khatun was president of PIC of the project. After submitting the proposed project to the Engineer's office, Thahera along with one of the PIC members called at Engineer's office thrice. Non-formal discussions were held with the Engineer relating to confirmation of the amount mentioned in the proposed budget for the U culvert project. In response to the application, the Engineer visited the project site and gave an estimate of 47,000 taka, the amount was already mentioned in the proposal. It was reported that the Engineer took 1,500 taka bribe from the PIC president for not cutting the proposed amount. Thahera Khatun and Taslim, a PIC member for the U culvert project, informed this researcher with quote - 'You will have to pay an amount of money to the Engineer at this stage, otherwise you will have to face lots of hassle'.*

*It was understood that in case this money was not given, the Engineer might cut the proposed amount and approve an estimate of less amount. The project was discussed and approved at the monthly meeting of July of the Upazila Development and Coordination Committee, and works started in July too.*

*Note: Information were collected from Thahera Khatun and the PIC members of the U culvert project.*

Non-formal interactions with Upazila Engineer for Processing bills for the development projects

Local level leaders need to maintain non-formal link with the Upazila Engineer in the purpose of processing bills for the development projects. It is found that a total of 15 local level leaders, which is about 79% of the respondents reported to have their non-formal links with the Upazila Engineer, holds interactions with the Upazila Engineer for the above purpose. Average number of interactions of the local level leaders with the Upazila Engineer on the purpose is informed 6.6 in the reported year 2001 (Table 4.1.4.7)

A relevant case study (no.11) below (Box 10) shows how local level leaders interact with the Upazila Engineer for processing the bills of the development projects.

**Box 10**

*Case study-11*

**Construction of a U Culvert at Sonapur Village: Billing Dilemma**

*The Project Implementation Committee (PIC) during running of the project makes a bill for part of the work accomplished and submits to the office of the Upazila Engineer. "After submitting project's bills to the office of the Engineer's, PIC president or any member of the PIC needs to maintain non-formal connections with the Engineer, otherwise there might be some problems that could hamper the works". An UP member, Mastafa, who was also the president of a U culvert project, stated the above lines.*

*Mastafa, a UP member of ward no. 7 of Mizanpur Union Parishad, was made the president of the PIC of Sonapur U culvert project. Sonapur is name of the village. The budgeted amount for the project was Taka 38,000. Mastafa along with Kafiluddin, one of the members of the PIC, went several times to the Engineer and held discussions non-formally with the Engineer relating to endorsement and passing of the bills submitted to the office of the Upazila Engineer. Mastafa informed us that non-formal interactions with the Engineer can ease the bureaucratic entanglements of Upazila Engineer's office, but one has to pay some money for this. Mastafa also informed that at the billing stage he had to pay about Taka 700 to the Engineer for getting assent to the bills submitted to the Engineer's office for the Sonapur U Culvert project.*

*In sum, it reveals that lack of non-formal connections with the Upazila Engineer can make it almost impossible to get Engineer's assent to the bills. As a result, cheque can not be issued from the Engineer's office even after the full accomplishment of the project.*

Table 4.1.4.7: Average number of non-formal interactions on different purposes held with Upazila Engineer in the reported year (2001)

Category of respondents	Non-formal interactions with the Upazila Engineer		
	Maintaining liaison for getting development project	Formulating and approving the development project	Processing bills for the development projects
Local Government N=8	9.5 (6)	10.6 (5)	12.5 (8)
Political N=4	5.7 (3)	7.5 (2)	9.7 (3)
Religious N=1	(-)	2.0 (1)	5.0 (1)
Social N=5	4.7 (3)	2.7 (3)	7.5 (5)
Economic N=1	2.0 (1)	1.0 (1)	5.0 (1)
Total N=19	6.9 (13)	6.6 (12)	10.3 (15)

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002

Note: figures in the brackets indicate the numbers of respondents.

The non-formal interactions of local level leaders with the PIO and Upazila Engineer indicate that without such links their locality will suffer from serious dearth of development projects. The procedures of development projects for UP have been framed in such a manner, where the roles of PIO and Upazila Engineer are stated as fundamental. If there is no non-formal link with them, development will be hampered. And again, PIO, Engineer and local level leaders, particularly those who are involved in development projects, indulge corruption and malpractices in collusion with local level leaders. In fact, development and corruption are vitally linked with each other.

### Section III

#### 4.3 Linkages of the Local Level Leaders with the Non-resident Development-collaborative Citizenry

It has already been mentioned that the non-resident development-collaborative citizenry are those people, who have roots in the union under study but presently residing in different places outside the union, and are basically non-political. Though some of them have political ambitions. The ranges of these non-resident development-collaborative citizenry cover the people residing at the Upazila level small towns, major cities of Bangladesh, and abroad in connection of business and services. The occupational profiles of the non-resident development-collaborative citizenry, as being reported, cover business (24%), private and government services (68%), and law business/ teaching/ journalists etc. (8%). It is found that the non-resident development-collaborative citizens have a spontaneous connection with the local level leaders. The reason behind the spontaneous connection is that they born and brought up in the union and have many relatives still residing in the villages. The local level leaders have an easy access to these people. A calculation of the respondents also suggests that around 90% of the non-resident development-collaborative citizens have their origin by birth in the villages of the union under the present study. They were born in the villages of the union under the present study. Having been educated and in connection of business/ services they are now settled in different towns and cities of Bangladesh. Their fathers and close kins are still residing in the villages. And about 10% of the non-resident development-collaborative citizens are not originated in the villages but have close relatives in the villages in the union under study, mainly through marriages.

Non-resident development-collaborative citizenry carry out a lot of development activities individually and informally. They do, among other welfare activities, development of educational institutes, financial help for the poor during the religious festivals, help for treatment of poor, creation of employment for the unemployed, financial help for marriage of poor people's daughters etc. They do these not under any political patronization, rather non-politically and with their own initiatives.

It is also informed that all of the non-political philanthropic personalities, whom we called non- resident development-collaborative citizenry, have relationship with the local leaders at the union. Whatever development and welfare-oriented activities they do, they discuss with the local level leaders before doing those. They also discuss closely with the local level leaders for keeping sound law and order in the localities.

#### **4.3.1: Residence and Workplace of Non-resident Development-collaborative Citizenry**

It is mentioned earlier that the non- resident development – collaborative citizenry are called those people, who have roots in the study union and are now residing different small towns, Upazila and district level towns, and major cities<sup>7</sup> of Bangladesh. Some of them are also residing in abroad.

The local level leaders seek different sorts of assistance for the development of the people of their localities and institutions. It is for this purpose that they keep contacts with the non- resident development–collaborative citizenry and participate actively with their efforts of developing the locality and solving any problem.

The following table is locating the ‘non-resident development-collaborative citizenry’ by their workplace and residence.

It is notable that a total of 57 respondents, which is about 77% of the total sampled, reported their linkages with the non-resident development–collaborative citizenry. Table 4.3.1 shows that 39% of the non- resident development–collaborative citizenry reside in the district towns, 59% in the major cities of Bangladesh and 2% in abroad.

Table 4.3.1: Distribution of the non- resident development – collaborative citizenry linked with the respondents in percent.

Category of respondents	Workplace/residence of the linked development – collaborative citizens			Total of linked citizens
	District town	Dhaka and other major cities	Abroad	
Local Government N=20	36.36 (12)	63.64 (21)	(-)	100.0 (33)
Political N=6	18.18 (2)	81.82 (9)	(-)	100.0 (11)
Religious N=10	64.71 (11)	23.53 (4)	11.76 (2)	100.0 (17)
Social N=18	25.81 (8)	74.19 (23)	(-)	100.0 (31)
Economic N=3	75.0 (6)	25.0 (2)	(-)	100.0 (8)
Total N=57	39.00 (39)	59.00 (59)	2.00 (2)	100.0 (100)

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002

Note: Figures in brackets are the numbers of non- resident development – collaborative citizenry linked with the respondents

#### 4.3.2: Purposes of Interaction of the Local Level Leaders with the Non- resident Development – collaborative Citizenry

The mode of interactions of the local level leaders with the non-resident development-collaborative citizenry can generally be termed as non-formal. It is reported that the interactions with the non- resident development–collaborative citizenry held are not confined in a certain sphere. These happen when the non-resident development–collaborative citizenry come to their village home, having invited by someone to attend the ceremonies of diverse kinds; or come to the locality to inaugurate the development site in which they are involved. Moreover, the local level leaders go to towns and major cities, when they feel urgencies, to meet the non-resident development – collaborative citizenry.

In the quantitative survey, it is found that a total of 57 local leaders, which is about 77% of the total sampled respondents, have reported their linkages with the non-resident development-collaborative citizenry. Multiple responses have been taken on

the purposes of interactions of the local level leaders with the non- resident development – collaborative citizenry.

The purposes of interactions as reported by the respondents can be divided into five broad heads.

#### Personal and Family matters

It is informed that such interactions happen frequently. There have been a strong kinship relationships of the local level leaders with the non- resident development - collaborative citizenry, and owing to such relationship the local level leaders interact with the non- resident development – collaborative citizenry on merely a personal and family affair. The personal and family affair ranges from emotional aspects, decision making (for example, marriage of family members, education of children) to inter-kinship skirmishes. It is reported that about 55% of the non- resident development – collaborative citizenry have been interacted by the local level leaders on the purposes of ‘personal and family affair’ in the reported year 2001(table 4.3.2).

#### Financial support for the poor and distressed

This is another kind of interactions that local level leaders do with the non- resident development – collaborative citizenry. Non-resident development–collaborative citizenry help the poor with financial contributions, bears the expenses for treatment of poor sick people, and distribute clothes among the poor and distressed during religious festivals. It is reported that about 38% of the non- resident development - collaborative citizenry have been interacted by the local level leaders on this purpose in the reported year 2001(table 4.3.2). Following is a relevant case study (case study- 12, Box 11), which narrates how the non-resident development–collaborative

citizenry support the poor and distress people and how the local level leaders maintain links for such purposes.

**Box 11**  
*Case study-12*  
**An Initiative of Blotting out Moina's Trauma**

*Rashid Pramanik, 55, is a businessman residing in Khulna, a divisional town, in connection of his job. He has two ice factories and other business in Khulna. He left Rajbari about 20 years ago and has settled in Khulna. He used to come to his village, at least once in a month, Mathil Chapor village under Mizanpur union where his close kins are still living. He has involved himself with a several development activities of the Union. He donated a loudspeaker set to his village mosque in 1998. He helps the poor with financial contributions, also bears the expenses for treatment of poor sick people, and distributes clothes among the poor during religious festivals.*

*Monira, 46, a poor woman of Moukuri village in Mizanpur, had been suffering from heart ailment for years. Doctors of Rajbari unable to manage her ailment and they suggested her to go to Dhaka for better treatment. But it was out of thinking for Monira. Mojibor Rahman, 51, a local leaders of the Moukuri village met Rashid Pramanik when he came to Rajbari in May 2001, and requested him to solve Monira's problem. Rashid Pramanik agreed and took her Dhaka for treatment. In July 2001, after having a -month- long treatment Monina came back to Rajbari. Monira is fine now. Monira apprised us, "Rashid Pramanik has saved her life spending about 30 thousand taka for her treatment in Dhaka".*

*Note: Information of the case study were collected from Mojibor Rahman, a local level leader, and Moina who got benefited.*

Local Development

Interaction for local development is found as one of the important purposes. The non- resident development-collaborative citizenry accomplish welfare activities like development of educational institutes, mosques, clubs and so on. It is reported that about 57% of the non- resident development-collaborative citizenry have been interacted by the local level leaders on the purpose of 'local development' in the reported year 2001(table 4.3.2). The stories below (case study-13, Box 12) are illustrating how the non- resident development-collaborative citizenry do welfare and development activities in the locality.



**Box 12**

*Case study-13*

***Local Development Activities Performed by the Non- resident Development – collaborative Citizenry***

*Case-1: Harunar Rashid Badsa, 45, an engineer of the Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) resides in Dhaka in connection of his job. He used to come to his village home and Rajbari town, at least once in two months. Badsa is also involved in a brickfield business at Rajbari. Some of the family members of Badsa residing at the Rajbari town and at his village home are looking after the brickfield business. His ancestral home is at Char Joukura, a village under Mizanpur Union. He has involved himself with a several development activities of the Union. Badsha is the founder of Char Joukura Junior Secondary School in Mizanpur Union established in 1995. He also donated Tk. 10,000 for the Marjatkol Junior Secondary School in 2001. Marjatkol is also the name of a village under Mizanpur union. The existing chairman of Mizanpur union Parishad and the head teachers of Marjatkol and Char Joukura Junior Secondary Schools inform that they have good connection with Badsa. Badsha is very interested to discuss local development matter with the local level leaders and is continuing to donate lavishly to educational institutions.*

*Case-2: The village home of Anwarul Odud, 50, an advocate of the Dhaka High Court, is at Marjatkol under Mizanpur union. He is one of the founders of the Marjatkol Junior High School. Anwarul Odud keeps connections with the local level leaders of Mizanpur union and comes to his village home intermittently. He, apart from contributing himself financially, helps the school by lobbying with the MP of Rajbari -1 constituency and the Education Ministry.*

*Case-3: Mohadehpur, a village under Mizanpur union, is the village of Samaresh Hazra, 48, a government official at the Education Ministry. He is living in Dhaka in connection of his government job. Local level leaders maintain a connection with Samaresh Hazra and interact regarding local development. He usually goes home during the religious festivals and donates cash and goods for mosques and clubs of his village and the neighbouring villages. He also donates garments and money among the poor people.*

*Note: Information of the above stories have been collected through focused group discussion and one to one discussion with the concerned persons.*

Local Political affairs

Dealing with local political affairs, especially political party related matter, is not the prime concern of the non- resident development–collaborative citizenry. But there are some political events in the locality that drag the non-resident development–collaborative citizenry into the scenario. It is reported that about 16% of the non-resident development–collaborative citizenry have been interacted by the local level leaders on the purpose of ‘local political affairs’ in the reported year 2001(table 4.3.2).

A relevant case study (case study-14, Box 11) below is explicating the matter.

**Box 13**

Case study-14

**A Modest Initiative to Solve the Political Dispute**

*All of the non-political benevolent personalities, who we termed non- resident development – collaborative citizenry, have relationship with leaders of all strata of the union under study. They discuss the development and welfare-oriented activities with the local leaders. They also discuss closely with the local leaders for keeping sound law and order situation in the localities.*

*On 21 July 2001, a political clash took place between the Awami League (AL) and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) at Surjonagar haat of Mizanpur union. In the clash, an Awami League (AL) leader of Mizanpur union branch named Abu Bakar Mandol was murdered by the BNP activists in a procession. After the occurrence, a case was filed and tensions spread over the area. Harunar Rashid Badsa , 45, the Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) engineer residing in Dhaka was requested by some local leaders to play a role in resolving the tense situation . Badsa was very pro-active in resolving the situation. He discussed with noted personalities of Surjonagar including Mujibar Rahman, former UP member of Mizanpur union, and initiated a compromise between the two parties by fining the offender a huge amount and giving it to the family of the victim. He thought that it would lessen the tension in the locality and at the same time it would benefit the family of Abu Bakar. But the accusers didn't agree to with his initiative, because they had other political intention of harassing their political counterpart and establishing their dominance.*

*But the political scenario got changed when BNP ascended the power on 10 October, 2001 following their huge victory in the 8th parliamentary election of 1 October. The political environment changed also in Surjonagar. Since all of the accused of the case were BNP activists and supporters, the case was relaxed through political lobbying. Thus the initiative taken by Harumar Rashid Badsha was in vein.*

Interactions for *tadbir*

*Tadbir* is one of the purposes for which local level leaders maintain links with the non-resident development–collaborative citizenry. It is informed that the local level leaders look for favour of the non-resident development–collaborative citizenry for their children’s admission to good institutions, job for their relatives and unemployed youths of the localities, and educated and solvent bridegroom for their daughters. It is reported that about 25% of the non- resident development–collaborative citizenry have been interacted by the local level leaders for *tadbir* in the reported year 2001(table 4.3.2).

Following is a relevant case study (no.15, box 14) which is giving a testimony of how the non- resident development–collaborative citizenry provide jobs to the youths of the locality.

**Box 14**

**Case study-15**

***Lutfar Rahman's Initiative of providing Employment***

*Lutfar Rahman, age 45, a police officer designated as Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), is originally from the village Ramchandrapur of Mizanpur Union. As his job in police department is transferable, he has to work different places of Bangladesh. At present he is working in Rajshahi, a divisional town of Bangladesh. A large number of local level leaders of Mizanpur union maintain connection with Lutfar Rahman. Lutfar Rahman is also very interested to discuss local problems with the local leaders who maintain relationship with him. He generally comes to village home during the religious festivals of Eid-ul-Fitre and Eid-ul-Azha, and duly interacts with the local level leaders of the locality.*

*Monjur Alam , a village leader, said that he had gone to Lutfar Rahman's residence several times when he had been working in Chittagong and Barisal . He also went to the residence of Lutfar Rahman at Rajshahi twice in the year 2001. Bakul, a UP member of Mizanpur Union Parishad informed us Lutfar Rahman is a nice man. He is doing a lot for the young unemployed persons. Lutfar Rahman has been providing jobs to the young persons of the locality since 1995. He has mainly provided employment for the local unemployed young people in his department. Monjur and Bakul, the local leaders, informed that about 15 people of Mizanpur were provided with jobs in the Police department.*

Table 4.3.2: Percent of non- resident development – collaborative citizenry interacted by the respondents for different purposes

(Multiple responses)

Category of respondents	Percent of linked non- resident development – collaborative citizenry in different purposes				
	personal and family affair	Financial support for the poor and distressed	Local development	Local Political affairs	Tadbir
Local Government N=20	45.45 (15)	45.45 (15)	69.70 (23)	18.18 (6)	36.36 (12)
Political N=6	81.82 (9)	9.09 (1)	36.36 (4)	18.18 (2)	36.36 (4)
Religious N=10	47.06 (8)	29.41 (5)	41.18 (7)	11.76 (2)	11.76 (2)
Social N=18	61.29 (19)	54.84 (17)	51.61 (16)	16.13 (5)	22.58 (7)
Economic N=3	50.0 (4)	(-)	87.5 (7)	12.5 (1)	(-)
Total N=57	55.0 (55)	38.0 (38)	57.0 (57)	16.00 (16)	25.0 (25)

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002

Note: Figures in brackets are numbers of non- resident development – collaborative citizenry linked with the respondents in different purposes.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

The chapter attempts to explore the dynamics and political process at the local level through a careful and critical review. The study finds that most of the local level leaders maintain links with the upper level political leaders of major political parties, important government officials and the non-resident development -collaborative citizenries. The outcomes of such links can be summarized as follows:

1. Local level leaders are generally related to the upazila and district level government officials through their routine works; hence the relationship is formal. The non-formal relationship of the local level leaders with district and upazila level government officials is shrouded in mystery because of exercising corrupt practices in the bureaucracy. Our data and case studies cannot reveal these secret deals but fact of injustices and negligence perpetrated by these government officials give ample testimony to the above observation.

2. Political leaders at the Upazila, district and national levels who maintain links with the union level leaders are mostly prompted by their ulterior motives. The union level leaders in their turn also seek the blessing of these upper level political leaders mostly for their personal ends. Hence, the political dynamics is to the mutual benefits of the leaders at the different levels. However, we also find that money and muscle power played some important role particularly during local and national elections.

3. Another important interaction is to be found in the relationship between the local level leaders and the non-resident development-collaborative citizenry plays an important role in this union (which may not be found in other areas). These non-resident development -collaborative citizens stayed outside the areas. Some of them even work outside of country. The purpose for which links are made manifolds:

First, a large number of them are prompted by philanthropic attitude: They send money from abroad or from their urban residences only for building schools, improving mosques and sometimes help needy and distressed people. Some of them occasionally visit the area only for their personal satisfaction. During the time of their visits also they donate money to different persons and institutions. Second, there are also few non-resident development-collaborative citizenries who have some political desire for which they maintain close links with the local level leaders. Third, there are some local level leaders who maintain continuous relationship with the non-resident development -collaborative citizenries for their personal ends. Sometimes they pester the non-resident development -collaborative citizenries for *tadbir*.

The relationship shows clearly that this has particular significance for democratic transition and good governance in the country. Local level leaders operate within an environment in which political competition compels them to establish patron-client relationship with political leaders at the upper levels and also with administration. The collusion of these three types of key actors and use of *tadbir* and bribes distort the

proper functioning of local administration. Both are dysfunctional for democratic transition, and good governance.

But local politics has also a positive aspect. The local level leaders work as development agents and provide quick justice to local people through *shalish*. Thus local level politics in Bangladesh is in a state of transition and has many complex features – both negative and positive which has far reaching consequences for future of democracy and good governance in Bangladesh.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Power is ‘ the probability that one actor within social relationship will be a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests’ (1947, Weber: 152). According to David V. J. Bell, the concept power is considered many times as interchangeable with influence and authority (Bell, 1975:ix and 15). The exercise of power depends upon political sanctions, while it is not so in regard to influence (Bachrach and Baratz, 1970:30-31). It (power) is based on the ability to influence the actions of others. But not all influence needs to be considered power (Easton, 1965:3). ‘ We recognize a theoretical difference between’ influence’ and ‘power’, but feel obliged to blur the distinction for purposes of our study of images and perceptions of these social phenomena’ (Rose, 1967:300). It is also a fact to note that that the two concepts are often mutually reinforcing, that is, power frequently generates influence and vice versa (Bachrach and Baratz, 1970:32). Although the concept of power is complex and it is difficult to operationalize, this difficulty is more evident in case of influence. By influence we mean the way leaders on the strength of their ties with higher level leaders of the political party in power modify behaviour of civil servants. *Tadbir* through non-formal links is the mechanism through which it is done.

<sup>2</sup> In most of the cases the terms linkage and interaction have been used interchangeably.

<sup>3</sup> Left party is not a name of a political party. Here left party indicates the political parties believed in socialist ideology. The Workers’ party and the Communist party of Bangladesh are found active in Rajbari area. These two political parties are counted as left party.

<sup>4</sup> Both the terms, linkage and interaction, have been used interchangeably.

<sup>5</sup> It can be noted here that the local level leaders' formal interactions with the DC and also with the SP relating law and order are not usual rather incidental and situational. We have been informed that there were two major incidents for which interactions between the local level leaders and the DC and SP were held on the law and order matter. The first incident was that there was a political violence just a couple of weeks ahead of the 8<sup>th</sup> parliamentary election, held in October 2001, in the union under the present study. An activist of Awami League was killed and about half a dozen of the activists of both the Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party were wounded. A post – clash tense situation prevailed in the locality. In the prevailing situation, the DC, SP and also the key officials of the Upazila administration visited the spot and exchanged views with the local level leaders to find the way out to control the tense situation. The second incident was that again just before the 8<sup>th</sup> national election held in October 2001, both DC and SP attended a meeting with the local level leaders of the study union and exchange views relating the improving of law and order to create a congenial atmosphere in the poll. It is mentioned here that the interim government directed the district and Upazila administrations to make a congenial atmosphere for the 8th parliamentary elections.

<sup>6</sup> percentages are not shown in the table (4.1.4). For avoiding a complicated structure of the table, we have only put the averages. Percentages have been calculated separately and were not shown in a tabular

<sup>7</sup> Major cities indicate the divisional cities and the capital city of Bangladesh.

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## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Conflicts of Interests and Issues of Governance and Politics at the Local Level**

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#### **5.0 Introduction**

The analysis of political dynamics at the local level in chapter four shows how local level leaders interact in the local space, shape the agenda of politics and deal with the local political issues. The study found that local political issues mainly include the development of the locality, democratic practices, conflict resolution and competition for leadership. The chapter highlights governance, conflicts, competition and conflict resolutions. The chapter also attempts to explore the existing governance situation and the political realities of the political processes at local level.

The chapter has been divided into two sections. Section I has tried to explore political and administrative influences over the Union Parishad's developmental activities and the consequences of those influences in politics at the local level. Section II covers the issues relating to governance, particularly the informal governance and the state of local justice.

#### **Institutional arrangements for local governance:**

Developmental function and social welfare activities are the two key agenda of Union Parishad (UP). This institution came into existence by the enactment of the Gram Chowkidari Act of 1870. There are more or less 4,500 UP bodies in the whole country with nearly 60,000 elected representatives. Local level development projects and programmes are implemented by Union Parishad. The resource constraints of Union Parishads compel them to depend almost entirely on the grants of national government. The grants of national government come to Union Parishads in the forms of various development projects and programmes.

Institutional autonomy<sup>1</sup> of local government institutions is conspicuous by its absence in Bangladesh. It is because the national government is not interested in the development of local self-government; rather their interests remain in using local level bodies for locating and sustaining their power base. Strong local level- elected bodies have been perceived to be a threat to the power base of leaders at the national level. Political influence over the local development projects and programmes of Union Parishads virtually reflect the intention of national government, especially when it is observed that the political leaders, mainly Upazila and district level political leaders, of the party in power and local MPs interfere with those activities of Union Parishads. This is one of the important aspects through which the question of local autonomy can be perceived.

Development projects and programmes are apparently implemented by the local bodies (here the Union Parishads); but in reality most of these projects are interfered by the bureaucrats centrally deputed as Upazila administrators. Almost each and every aspect of development projects, from project design to implementation; are supervised by those officials. Such interferences are given a testimony by the case studies appeared in section -1 of this chapter.

It is recently observed that the officials, for example, UNO, Upazila Engineer and like others of Upazila administration exercise their influence on the development programmes of UP that engender various vested interests and related conflicts. It is also argued that such conflicts had appeared as impediments in the implementation of programmes and eventually sequester the development process at the local level.

The local justice system is also an important area to look into, regarding aspects of governance at the local level. Although there is some political influence, local governance through societal initiatives, that is *shalish*, has better performance record. This is clear from some case studies appeared in section -2 of this chapter.

## Section I

### 5.1. Politico-administrative Influence over the Union Parishad Activities

Several development projects of the UP are operated with the allotments from several ministries of the government. The administration has legal authority in the processes of designing and implementing all development projects. It is a common knowledge that the administration, mainly Upazila administration, exerts its legal authority for extracting financial benefits by exploiting the UP. It is also known that the political influences of leaders of the party in power and the local MP's interference in the UP projects make things complicated. However, before getting into a detailed discussion on this unseemly conduct of the legal authority of the administration and the extent of political interference, it is necessary to delve into the nature of allocations for development projects and the rules for implementing those projects.

#### **Development projects under the Union Parishad – an overview**

Union Parishads (UP) have been executing several development activities including development of roads, construction of culverts, infrastructural development of educational institutions, vulnerable group development etc. The UP accomplishes most of these activities with the amount (cash, rice and wheat) allocated by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MDMR), the Ministry of Local Government Rural Development and Cooperatives (LGRDC). Only a handful of the development activities are accomplished with money collected by means of several taxes, for example, lease money of *haat/ghat*, and fees collected on transferring landed properties and trade licenses.

### Projects of the LGRDC Ministry

Financial allocations of the Union Parishads come from the LGRDC Ministry through the ADP (Annual Development Programme). Among the works done under ADP budget are education, communication and transport, agriculture and development of physical infrastructure. ADP (general) allocations are channelled to each Upazila and the allotments are distributed among the unions of the Upazila according to area and population of each union. For this, decisions are taken in the monthly meeting of the *Upazila Development and Coordination Committee (UDCC)*. The UDCC is a formal body of union parishad chairmen and upazila level's key government officials. It is located at the Upazila headquarter. The main responsibility of this body is to disburse funds for local development and coordinate the development works of Union Parishads. The members of UDCC include the UP chairmen of union parishads under the Upazila and the Upazila level key government officials. Meeting of this body is generally held once in a month at the Upazila Parishad premises. One of the UP chairmen (one for each meeting by turn) acts as president and the UNO acts as member-secretary at meetings. The local MP acts as an advisor, though MP seldom attends to the meetings of '*Upazila Development and Coordination Committee.*'

There is also an allotment from the Ministry of LGRDC which is called ADP (Annual Development Programme) special. The local MPs bring special lump-sum allotments of ADP by lobbying with the LGRDC Ministry. The MPs bring these allotments from the ministry of LGRDC in the names of some local development projects or even without any project in the name of development of roads, culverts and canals. All the works of the LGRDC Ministry are implemented under the supervision of the Upazila Engineer. Major role is played by the Upazila Engineer along with the UNO in the projects of the LGRDC Ministry.

The formal procedure of formulation and implementation of the development project is as follows: the UNO is supposed to issue letter to each UP for designing development projects. In response, UP is expected to prepare projects and submit to the UNO office. The UNO sends projects to the Upazila Engineer. The Upazila Engineer prepares

schemes after visiting project sites. UP, in a meeting, forms a Project Implementation Committee (PIC) for the project. Submitted projects are discussed at the meeting of the 'Upazila Development and Coordination Committee' (UDCC) and projects are then approved. The PIC submits bill (written statement of money for works) against a part of the work to the office of the Upazila Engineer. The bill comes to the UNO after the Upazila Engineer approves it. The UNO approves the bill and issues cheque. The issued cheque goes to the Accountant General (AG) office at the district and the AG office deposits the allotted money to the bank account of the PIC president. The bill may also be prepared after completing total project work.

#### Projects of the Disaster Management and Relief Ministry

Allotments of the Relief Ministry come in the forms of wheat and rice. Allotments are made in the names of programmes and projects like Test Relief (TR), Food for Works (FFW), Vulnerable Group Development (VGD<sup>2</sup>) and Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF<sup>3</sup>) as support in kind, to the extremely poor and distressed people.

Following is the formal procedure for the implementation of development projects under the Relief Ministry:

The Ministry sends allotments of TR (general) and FFW (general) to the TR Implementation Committee and FFW Implementation Committee of each district respectively according to area and population of the district. The district TR and FFW Committees distribute the allotments among the Upazilas according to size of population. The Upazila TR Implementation Committee and the Upazila FFW Implementation Committee calls for projects to the concerned MP. The Project Implementation Officer (PIO) at the Upazila visits the sites of the UP projects and provides cost estimates for allotments. TR (special) and FFW (special) allotments come through lobbying by the local MPs. Each UP prepares projects and after approval on priority basis of the Upazila TR project and Upazila FFW project committees those (projects) are sent to the district TR Project Committee and district FFW Project Committee. On the approval of the District Committees, the concerned MPs with their lobby gets their respective allotments from the ministry; or they bring allotments for the development of different institutions, roads, culverts and canals. These allotments are distributed to the projects approved by

the district TR Project Committee and the district FFW Project Committee. The PIOs generally visit the on going projects and also after the completion of the work. The Project Implementation Committee (PIC) prepares a bill of the project's activities. After the PIO recommends the bill, the UNO approves it and accordingly the PIC issues a delivery letter in the name of the president of PIC to the officer in charge of the government food storage for delivering goods (wheat and rice). The PIC president then draws the allotted goods from the godown. It is worth mentioning here that the UNO is the president of the Upazila TR project committee and also the Upazila FFW project committee, and the Deputy Commissioner (DC) is the president of the district TR and FFW project committees.

#### **5.1.1. Exercise of Administrative Authority in the UP Development Projects**

Information about the utilization of allocations by the administrative authority and accordingly extraction of financial benefits from several development projects of the fiscal year 2000/2001 has been reported. It has also been reported that during the fiscal year 2000/2001, 72 tons of wheat was allocated for Mizanpur Union, the union under study, from the Relief Ministry as a general allotment. With the allotted wheat, 5 *katcha* roads were reconstructed. 10 tons of rice allotted as TR (general); with allotted rice, 5 roads were repaired. And with the 45 tons of allotted wheat as TR (special), 7 *katcha* roads were reconstructed and improved. Moreover, 495 VGD cards and 7000 VGF cards were distributed among the poor and distressed people. From the LGRDC Ministry, a total of 2,97,000 taka (Tk. 1,92,000 + Tk. 1,05,000) was sanctioned from the ADP (general and special) for the fiscal year 2000/2001. The Mizanpur UP with this allotment, undertook works of development of 1 club, construction of 1 mosque, a library, repair of 1 junior secondary school house, construction of 11 culverts and construction of 1 hygienic latrine.

In each of the development project, the role of administration was pronounced and information on extraction and misuse of financial resources was reported. Here, the power exercised by the administrative authority to gain financial benefits under the two

projects are demonstrated below (Box15, Case study-16 & Box 16, Case study-17).

**Box 15**

**Case study -16**

**Development Work shelved into corruption**

*Acceleration and early payment of construction work of a culvert in Mohadebpur villaage is totally dependrent on the bribary system. In July 2001, a UP member named Parul Begum of the ward no. 2 under the Mizanpur Union Parishad after preparing the project Proposal of construction of a culvert had got approved it at the UP meeting. Then she submitted to the Upazila Engineer's office. In response to the application, the Engineer visited the project and gave a cost estimate of Taka 24,000. It was reported that the Engineer took bribe Taka 1,000 from the PIC President. It was understood that should this money had not been given, the Engineer would have given an estimate of less amount. The project was discussed and approved at the monthly meeting of the Upazila Development and Coordination Committee (UDCC) in July, 2001.*

*Construction work of the culvert began in October, 2001 and completed in November, 2001. After completion of the work the Engineer paid a visit to the site. The project Implementation Committee (PIC) President submitted a bill to the Engineer. Prior to approval of the bill, the Engineer and the UNO took bribe an amount of money popularly known as commission. Only after then, the Engineer and the UNO approved the bill. After their approval, the bill went to the AG office. Before the AG office deposited the money to the bank account of the PIC President, another bribe Taka 7000 was taken from her. The allocated money then was deposited by the AG office to the account of the president and she withdrew the money. It is informed that an average 10% of the money allotted for any of the development projects is paid to the relevant government officials as bribe. For the culvert project, 10% of the money taken by the administration can be fragmented as follows: 3% to the UNO, 4% to the Engineer, 2% to the office of the Accountant, 1% to the office of the Anti Corruption Bureau. If these amounts were not given, the Engineer and the UNO would not approve the bill and the AG office would make intentional delay in depositing the money to the bank account of the PIC president.*

*It is noted that under the ADP (special) project, a total of 11 culverts were constructed in Mizanpur union by the UP during the fiscal year 2000/2001.*

*Note: Most of the Information for the case study have been collected form the UP member of ward no.2, who was the president of the PIC of the Culvert project. The UP chairman of Mizanpur Union Parishad and a UP member of the same union also provided the information. Two of the PIC members of the same project also provided information.*



**Box 16**

Case study-17

***Prior Bribe Ensures an Exaggerated Allocations***

*A percentage of the total allocations have to be paid to the Upazila administration and it ensures an exaggerated allocations. During the fiscal year 2000/2001, Mizanpur Union received an allocation of 72 metric tons wheat under the FFW (special) project. With this allocation, reconstruction works of 5 roads were implemented.*

*FFW (special) allocations come by means of lobbying of the local MP. Each UP prepares project proposal and submits to the office of PIO and UNO. The PIO visits the project sites and gives a cost estimate for each. Projects according to their importance are approved at the meeting of the Upazila FFW Project Committee and sent to the district FFW Project Committee. After the approval of the District Committee, concerned MP by his endeavors brings allocations and those allocations are distributed among the projects approved by the district FFW Project Committee. It should be mentioned here that the Upazila FFW Project Committee is headed by the UNO and the district one is headed by the DC.*

*In January 2001, a UP member named Khalilur Rahman of the ward no. 7 under Mizanpur Union Parishad had applied to the UNO office for reconstruction of the road Selimpur-Jokura villages. In response, the PIO came to visit the project area. The UP member paid him Taka 1,500 for the purpose of travel so that he would report well about the project and mention an exaggerated allocation. The UP member brought the specific form from the office of the PIO and submitted to the office of the UNO after forming the PIC. The project was discussed at the meeting of Upazila FFW Project Committee and a cost estimate of 22 tons of wheat for 3600 feet long earthen road (market Price:  $22 \times 8000 = 176000$  taka) was passed. The approved project was sent to the district FFW Project Committee. After the district committee approved the project, the local MP with his endeavors brought the sanction from the Relief Ministry.*

*Work of the project started in April, 2001. After completion of one third of the work, PIC president made a bill of the part of completed work. The PIO then came to visit the project. After the approval of PIO, the UNO approved the bill. PIO issued a letter of delivery to the officer in charge of the government food storage for drawing the allocated rice and wheat. The PIC President withdrew one third of the total allocated amount of wheat. Thus, by three bills, the whole of the allocated amount were withdrawn. The total allocation for the construction of this road under the FFW (special) project was Taka 1,76,000. There is information regarding the fact that an amount of Taka 17,600 as 10% of the total was taken bribe by the administration. Among the 10% of the bribe, the UNO got 3%, the PIO 4%, the Accounts Department received 1%, so did the DRO (District Relief Officer) and the Anti Corruption Bureau. If the UNO were not paid 3%, S/he would stop the bill showing a fault. If the PIO were not given 4%, he would complain against the PIC for not doing the work properly and would fine for that. On the other hand, if S/he is offered the percentage, he will arrange to approve the bill even if there are huge irregularities. The officer in charge of the food storage takes Taka 200 for each ton of wheat as expenses of the storage. If this amount is not paid, he would make intentional delays in delivering the allocated wheat and rice, or delivers bad quality wheat and rice, or even delivers such quantity which weighs less. It is to be mentioned here that this 10% of the total had to be given to the Upazila administration before the approval of bill. Not only for this specific project, these practices have become open-secret rules for all development projects in Mizanpur union.*

*Note: Information of the case study have been collected from the president and 3 members of the PIC. The UP chairman of Mizanpur Union Parishad also provided a few information.*

### 5.1.2 Political Influence in the Development Projects of Union Parishad

Implementing the development projects is one of most important activities of Union Parishads. Among the development activities of UP are involved works like construction, repair of roads, streets, *ghats (boat station)*, bazaars, educational institutions, bridge, culverts and so on. The UP receives grants for the activities stated above of the projects. The projects are categorized as: Food for Works (FFW) (general allotment), for road reconstruction; FFW (special allotment) for road reconstruction; TR (general allotment), for reconstruction and development of roads, *eidgah*, mosques etc.; Test Relief (TR)(special allotment), for development of educational institutions, mosques, clubs and temples; Vulnerable Group Development (VGD); Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF); Annual Development Programme (ADP) grants (general), for education, agriculture, communication and physical infrastructure; and ADP (lump sum allotment) for educational institutions, mosques, development of roads.

A perception survey carried out on the local level leaders provides information of political influence on the development projects. It is reported that political influences generally come from the leaders of the political party in power. The survey also finds enormous influence of the Member of Parliament (MP) in the development projects of Union Parishads (see annexure -5). It is about 76% of the local level leaders who reported political influences of the party in power in the development activities of Union Parishad. The types of influence include- interfering with UP development projects, suppressing the elected apolitical and opposition UP functionaries, and hindering the development project's works. About 80% of the local level leaders reported MP's influence and interference over the activities of Union Parishads, especially the interference by MP in the development projects of Union Parishad (annexure-5).

The case studies below (Box-17, case study-18, Box-18, case study-19 and Box- 19, case study-20) are depicting the stories how the Member of Parliament and the leaders of the

political party in power influence the UP activities, particularly in the development projects of UP.

**Box 17**

**Case study-18**

***Political interference violets the regulation of forming PIC***

*Political interference is so prevalent that violets the regulations of forming PIC and hamper the development work. The best instance of it is the reconstruction of a road from Surjonagar to Baghmara in Mizanpur union. In January 2001, a person named Tuku Mia, AL Secretary of Mizanpur Union branch, had submitted to the MP a project of reconstruction of road of 3000 feet from Surjonagar to Baghmara (the name of the location). MP passed the project. It should be noted that the MP of Rajbari - 1 constituency, Kazi Keramat Ali was elected in 1996 for a five-year tenure and is a vice president of Rajbari district branch of Awami League. For the said project, a total of 8 m. tons of rice was sanctioned. The project was under the category of FFW (special) and commenced in July 2001. It is noted that the local MP through lobbying from the LGRDC Ministry manages the special allocations.*

*According to the existing regulations, a six to seven -member Project Implementation Committee (PIC) is formed with one of the UP members or the UP chairman as the chairperson. If any one of the UP members is made chairperson of a PIC, S/he should be a member of the ward where the project site is located. The other members of PIC are selected from the following groups: Schoolteacher (1 member), Imam of mosques (1 member), local elite (1 member), UP member (1 member), Village Defense Party (1 member) and from women community (1 member).*

*But in practice, the regulations of forming PIC are violated. It is observed that according to the MP's instruction his people (usually of his party) are included in the PIC committee. The Project Committee for this project was as follows:*

*Chairman: Md. Siddiqur Rahman, village - Kakiladah, ward no. - 9*

*Secretary: Md. Tuku Mia, village - Dayalnagar (AL Secretary of Mizanpur union)*

*Members: 1. Md. Jalal Mandol, village - Dayalnagar (AL member of Mizanpur union)*

*2. Md. Hobi Mandol, (AL member of Mizanpur union)*

*3. Md. Shihab Mandol (AL member of Mizanpur union)*

*4. Md. Shakhawat Hossain village - Kakiladah (Jubo League Leader of Sadar uazila Rajbari)*

*5. Parul Begum , village -Baghmara (female UP member of Mizanpur Union Parishad and AL activist)*

*It is worth mentioning here that the above mentioned road is in the Dayalnagar village under ward no. 2 of the union. Since the UP member, Dulal Fakir of ward no. 2 was a BNP supporter, the UP member of ward no. 9, an AL supporter was made PIC chairman. The UP chairman said, when contacted, " I don't like to violate the regulation in forming the PIC, but I compel to do that as I don't want to be an enemy of the MP and the leaders of the party in power".*

*A misappropriation of the fund of the project is also reported. Kalu Mia, the team leader of the labourers (locally known as labour sarder) informed that his team worked for the project. Where a total of 40 workers worked for 10 days for the project. The payment was in cash, daily 70 taka each for 40 workers. His team received a total of Taka 28,000 in return of their work. It is also reported that the sale- value of the allocated rice was Taka 64, 000 (per ton Taka 8000).*

*The PIO visited e the project site thrice. It was reported that as the local people complained to PIO about the irregularities in the implementation of the road construction work, he (PIO) retorted that government officials could do nothing about it because the works are conducted by the MP's people in his directions. And doing anything against them could pose problems to his service. Thus the conscious people of the locality are left with no other choice but gazing at the realities of no justice and project's works being done by the local activists of the party in power.*

**Box 18****Case study-19****Political Influence in the Auction of Haat (Bazar)**

*Surjonagar haat (a village market) in the Mizanpur Union is auctioned regularly. This is the only haat (bazar) of the union that is enlisted by the government for auction. Local leaders of ruling party usually try to exercise their influence during the auction of this hat. The Chairman of the Surjonagar hat Committee is Md. Shahidur Rahman Mandol. He is also the Vice President of the Mizanpur Union Awami League. In 1992 the auction of the Surjonagar haat started to be done through the UP. According to the existing rules and regulations regarding the auction of haat anybody is allowed to submit schedule, and the one who quotes the highest amount in schedule wins the auction. It should be noted that as per the rules of auction, a hat below the auction value of 1 lakh is tendered by the Union Tender Committee and above 1 lakh valued hat to be tendered by the Upazila Tender Committee headed by the UNO. As per the rules the Union Tender Committee is formed as follows:*

- (1) President –UP chairman*
- (2) Member - 3 UP members (one of them is female UP member)*
- (3) Member – 1 schoolteacher and 1 government official selected by the UNO*
- (4) Member - Tahshilder (head of union land office)*
- (5) Member secretary - secretary of the union Parishad*

*As per the rules; again the tender has to be invited for submitting schedules in Chaitra (Mid March to mid April), a month of Bengali calendar. The schedule of tender has to be circulated by beating drums in the haats and public gathering places. But in practice, this was not done in Mizanpur union.*

*It is informed that the president of the Surjonagar haat Committee in liaison with the UP chairman, president of AL of Sadar Upazila and the UNO did not let people know the time of buying schedule and submission. Shahid Mandol submitted the schedule quoting as low amount as he wished. To keep the rules working, he also bought schedule in the name of others of his family at even lower prices, and thus he won the schedule. It is mentionable here that almost all of the Surjonagar Haat Committee members are AL activists or supporters. And that all the influential businessmen of the haat including his brother and nephew are relatives to Shahid Mandol.*

*Shahid Mandol bought the auction of the haat at Taka 12000 in 2000. But in 2001, the local youths could know about the auction and submitted the schedule quoting Taka 30,000 and won it. However, they parleyed in meeting with Shahid mandol and his people in fear of possible harassment from them. Then it was agreed that the people of Shahid Mandol would not make any problem in collecting taxes in return of an amount Taka 20 thousand as subscription to the haat committee.*

## Box 19

## Case study-20

***Interference of MP and Ruling Party on VGF Cards and TR Allocations***

*Case-1: The newly elected MP, Ali Newaz Mahmud Khayam from Rajbari constituency-1, visited the bank of the Padma river to see the condition of the victims of erosion in Mizanpur Union. It was in October 2001. But during the visit UP members and BNP leaders Md. Golam Mostafa and Dulal Fakir, both of them are elected UP members of Mizanpur Union Parishad, did not let the UP chairman Kabir meet the MP. It was informed when the newly elected MP reached the Bazar ghat, where these two UP members and some BNP leaders were waiting for the MP; the Mizanpur UP chairman too went the ghat intending to visit the victims of river erosion with the MP. But the said two UP members and the other BNP leaders present at the ghat were angry to see the UP chairman there. The MP also declined to include the UP chairman with his team. This is because the UP chairman, Kabir, worked for Awami League during the 8th parliamentary election held on October 1, 2001. After the visit, the MP ordered the UP members accompanied him, Golam Mostafa and Dulal Fakir to make a list of the poor victims of river erosion. Following their list a total of 1416 families were given 16 kg of rice each under the VGF scheme. The distribution was conducted by that two UP members and the BNP leaders of Mizanpur union. The chairman and other UP members were not allowed to play any role. But in papers, it is shown that the distribution of VGF rice was performed by the Mizanpur Union Parishad. The chairman of Mizanpur Union Parishad said, "we had to make the papers and take the responsibility of the unfair distribution of VGF cards. Thus, we are coping with the political and MP's influence in the UP activities".*

***Case-2: MP's Influence in TR's Allocations***

*In November 2001, a total of 110 m. tons of rice under TR came in Rajbari for the unions of Rajbari Sadar Upazila. The newly elected MP called for his party people of several unions to accomplish some of the development works. Accordingly some applications were submitted to the MP. The MP marked the applications to the UNO of Rajbari Sadar Upazila and asked him to arrange passing those through resolutions of the UP chairmen. When the UNO raised the point at the Upazila Development and Coordination Committee (UDCC) meeting on 26 November 2001, the chairmen present there announced their lodged and told that they would pass only those proposals coming from the UP members. But they were compelled to pass those projects at the strong pursuance of the UNO and at an indication of the MP. Chairmen of all the 14 unions of the Rajbari Sadar Upazila were present at the meeting.*

*Note: Information of case-2 were collected from a informal discussions with 3 UP chairmen of 3 Union Parishads of Rajbari sadar Upazila.*

The above stories manifest the influence and intervention of the MP and the leaders of the political party in power in the Mizanpur UP activities. Among the main causes of such influence are advisor's position held by the MP in the Upazila Development and Coordination Committee, indication for discussion with the MP and working according to his suggestions in the letters from concerned ministry etc. For these reasons, the MP has become the guardian of the UP, and the UP has become the handmaid of the ruling party.

## Section -II

### **5.2 The State of Local Justice**

Both in rural and urban areas of Bangladesh there are different types of disputes which are occurring almost everyday. These disputes are resolved through the formal and informal courts. Formal courts are the main organs of the judicial structure of Bangladesh. The judicial system in Bangladesh consists of two categories— superior courts and subordinate courts. Civil and criminal cases can be processed at both levels of the system. The subordinate courts, which function at the district level, are classified according to the types of cases they are authorized to hear.

Village courts are also treated as formal courts though the formation of these courts is not similar to those of the formal courts under the judicial structure. The village courts are established under the Village Courts Ordinance 1976 to handle relatively insignificant criminal and civil matters at the union level. Village courts are not empowered to order imprisonment or fines, but may order the accused to pay an aggrieved party compensation up to Tk. 5,000. The main objective of the village courts is not to determine right or wrong and punish the wrongdoers but to find an amicable settlement of the disputes.

The informal judicial system has a long tradition in Bangladesh. It is popularly known as *shalish*. *Shalish* is not encoded in the legislation; it is the council of village elders that works for resolving the conflicts at the local level. It can be noted that the traditional and informal *shalish* functions at one or more levels, i.e. neighbourhood, village and union, depending on the situation .

This section tries to explore the state of disputes and the ways that formal and informal courts performing in resolving the disputes at the local level. Emphasis is given to the questions like -how efficiently is the process of *shalish* working at the local level? Is political power influencing the *shalish*? The main empirical findings are summarized below:

#### **The State of Conflicts and Conflict-resolution Mechanisms**

Conflicts arise among people for various reasons and are resolved through the different formal and informal conflicts-resolution mechanisms. Depending on the issues, the conflicts found in the study *can* be categorized as follows:

- a. Conflicts related to dowry, divorce and marital problems,
- b. Conflicts related to land and other property,
- c. Conflicts related to enmity, arising from personal rivalry,
- d. Conflicts related to family/ *gusti* (*lineage*) antipathy, and
- e. Conflicts related to local politics and political party politics, arising from political rivalry and political competitions.

The survey, carried out on the local level leaders, also provide a vivid picture on how the conflicts are resolved. Respondents were asked to give their opinions on the conflicts resolved during the last year. Table 5.2.1 presents respondents' opinion on conflict resolution methods and conflict settlements. It is reported that 86 % of the conflicts were resolved through *shalish*, 6.5% of the conflicts were resolved at the village courts and

about 7.5% of the conflicts were tried<sup>4</sup> to be solved through the formal, civil and criminal, courts (See below table 5.2.1).

Table- 5.2.1: Distribution of conflicts settled by the formal and informal courts (in percent)

Category of respondents	Formal and informal courts and percent of settled conflicts		
	Village <i>shalish</i>	Village court (in UP)	Formal court (civil & criminal )
Local Government N=28	88.0	6.0	6.0
Political N=10	83.0	7.0	10.0
Religious N=12	86.0	6.0	8.0
Social N=21	85.0	7.0	8.0
Economic N=3	85.0	7.0	8.0
Total N=74	86.0	6.5	7.5

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002

#### Nature of *shalish* and *shalishkars* (adjudicators/mediators)

As per the field level information, *Shalish* can be divided into three categories depending on the gravity of incidents and the number of mediators present. These are: small *shalish*, medium *shalish* and large *shalish*.

##### Small *Shalish*

A small *shalish* is the one in which only one or two *matbars* (*village leaders*) and representatives of the disputant families, disputants themselves, relatives etc., are involved in the *shalish*. Basically, the small *shalish* is held on the *para* (neighbourhood) and *gusti* (lineage) based conflicts. It is worth noting here that the word *matbar* has different names in different localities, for example, village head, *morol*, *pardan* (head of the village *samaj*) etc. However, people of Mizanpur union, the union under study, are very much familiar with the word *matbar* and they use the word frequently.



In each village, there are a few people who are obeyed by all the people of the village society. The villagers come to these people, *matbars*, whenever there is any hassle or danger of conflict in the village. Most of the *matbars* are hierarchic. *Matbars* in a village *samaj* usually comes from those families who have considerable influence in that village. However, sometimes, exceptional personalities with wisdom and courage become *matbars* even though they may not come from very respected families. The *matbars* are involved in social welfare activities including maintaining law and order situation in the village, resolving conflicts, socially boycotting the anti-socials elements etc.

#### Medium shalish

A *shalish* is the one in which all the *matbars* of the respective village, school teachers, if any in the village, informal leaders, such as former UP chairmen and members residing in the village, existing UP member of the respective ward and elite relatives of the disputant parties are present. In some cases the political leaders of the respective area also attend the *shalish* but they seldom influence the *shalish*.

#### Large shalish

A large *shalish* is the one in which apart from the *matbars* of the respective village or community takes part. The *matbars* from nearby villages, existing and former UP chairmen, members, teachers, local level political party leaders, Upazila level political leaders, in some cases the district level political leaders, mainly those having leadership with the party in power, NGO leaders and other elites take part as *shalishkars* (mediators). In such a *shalish*, sometimes the personnel from the law enforcing agencies are also present if the incident is related to criminal offence.

However, it has been known that on an average 3 *shalishes* are held yearly in each village. It has also been informed most of the *shalishes* were characterized as small and medium, only a few were characterized as a large *shalish*.

### 5.2.1 Political Influence in *Shalish*

It has been known from discussions with different people that political influence on mediation has been observed since early 1990s. This has been because it is around this time when the political parties of the country, particularly the Awami League and BNP strengthened their organizations not only at the national level but also at the local levels. Before this time, even during the Ershad regime (from 1982 to 1990), political influence was not that much pervasive. The main reason for this is that at that time the Jatiya Party (lead by Ershad) was not that much strong at the local level, at least at the union levels. It is informed that in Mizanpur union, the union of our study, those who were in the union committee of Jatiya Party had not shown interests to influence *shalish* in 1980s. But at present, political influence on *shalishes* in Mizanpur union is noticeable. Whenever there is a conflict in the village, mainly in the medium and large *shalishes*, the people related to it take the help of political leaders. In addition, if the conflicting parties are somehow related to any of the political parties, they go for help to their respective parties.

The following case study (Case study-21) states the state of political influence in *shalish*:

#### ***Case study-21: Political Influence in shalish – a shalish in the Chardunchi Village***

*Two persons name as Rahmat Ali and Abul Fakir are inhabitants of Chardunchi village in Mizanpur union. Both of them are solvent farmers, can be counted them as middle peasants. In 1998, Rahmat Ali bought a piece of land measuring 1 bigha (1bigha=. 33 acre) from Haji Nasim, a man of Pabna district but resides at Pabna town. Haji Nasim owned a plot of land measuring 2.5 bighas in Chardunchi village which he had bought some years ago. The piece of land that Rahmat Ali bought from Haji Nasim was part of the plot of latter's 2.5 bighas plot. In the same year, about six months later Abul Fakir bought rest of the land - 1.5 bighas from Haji Nasim. Soon after buying the land Abul*

Fakir visited the land and found Rahmat Ali started to plough back some of his land, about half a bigha. Abul Fakir and his men tried to protest and were beaten by Rahmat Ali and his men. Abul fakir called for shalish in the village in which all the village leaders including an UP member of Mizanpur Union Parishad took part as shalishkars. At the shalish, after verifying the papers of the land, the shalishkars (mediators) asked Rahmat Ali to leave the part of land owned by Abul Fakir. Though Rahmat Ali apparently obeyed the verdict, he again continued to cultivate in the same way. Shalish was again called for, but the same story was repeated. This was happening because Rahmat Ali's brother -in -law, Mizan Ali, was an influential AL leader at the sadar Upazila and he lived at the Rajbari town. It was reported that Rahamat Ali got courage to disobey the verdicts of shalish due to that political connection. On the contrary, Abul Fakir had no strong political connections. It should be noted here that the AL was the party in power at the time the village shalishes were held. As Abul fakir getting no justice on the above matter he sold his land to Abdul Kuddus of the same village in March 2000. Abdul Kuddus was a BNP supporter and he had a good connections with most of the local level leaders including the UP chairman of Mizanpur union Parishad .He thought he could easily get back the part of land occupied by Rahmat Ali.

Events to Follow:

Abdul Kuddus demanded his half-bigha land to Rahmat Ali. But Rahmat Ali disagreed. Abdul Kuddus called for a shalish, in the late June 2001, with the following designated local level leaders:

Four village leaders (matbars) of his own village, four village leaders of the nearby villages, three UP members, including a female UP member of Mizanpur Union Parishad and two BNP leaders of Mizanpur union branch BNP. After hearing the arguments from both the parties, the shalish instructed Rahmat Ali to give the land back to Abdul Kuddus. Rahmat Ali committed at the shalish to return the land he occupied illegally, but he did not do so. Later, Abdul Kuddus went to Mizan Ali, brother- in -law to Rahmat Ali and a AL leader, who lived at the Rajbari town, with the papers of the land to claim his legal right. But Mizan Ali insisted Abdul Kuddus to sell the disputed land to Rahmat Ali. Abdul Kuddus was not satisfied with it. This happened before the parliamentary election of

2001 (in the late August 2001). Abdul Kuddus did not try to get the position of the land any more, rather he waited to see which party comes in power after the election.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> parliamentary election (held on 1 October 2001), Abdul Kuddus participated strongly in favor of BNP in campaigning. BNP candidate won the election. After the election, as Abdul Kuddus went for taking the position of the land with the relatives, Rahmat Ali and his sons tried to prevent. There was a hand to hand fight between the two parties, Rahmat Ali got injured in his hand and admitted in hospital. Rahmat Ali filed a case against Abdul Kuddus and his relatives at the Rajbari court. On the other hand, Abdul Kuddus also filed a counter case against Rahmat Ali and his relatives. After the case ran for a few days, Mizan Ali the brother-in-law to Rahmat Ali informed the matter to the newly elected MP from Rajbari – 1 constituency Ali Newaz Mahmud Khayam. Mr. Khayam shifted the responsibility of solving the matter to Abdul Matin Mandol who is a businessman of the Rajbari district town and a BNP leader. Abdul Matin Mandol fixed the date of shalish on 20 December 2001.

*The shalish and the Results:*

The shalish started at 6 pm at the residence of Abdul Matin Mandol at Rajbari town. The following persons were present as shalishkars:

Abdul Matin Mandol (50), businessman and BNP leader, Rajbari town.

Md. Joynal Fakir (60), village leader of Silimpur village, BNP supporter.

Md. Musa (45), village leader of Sonakanda village and vice president of AL, Mizanpur union.

Md. Yusuf Ali (50), village leader of Chardhunchi village.

Md. Abdul Fakir (50), village leader of Chardhunchi village.

Md. Jalal (50), village leader of Chardhunchi village.

Md. Rahman Gazi (40), village leader of Silimpur village.

Md. Nowab Ali (35), UP member of Mizanpur union Parishad

Mojibor Rahman (55), a former UP member of Mizanpur Union Parishad

Mizan Ali (49), brother-in-law of Rahmat Ali and a AL leader of Sadar Upazila branch AL.

Md. Kholil (51), UP member of Mizanpur Union parishad.

*After hearing from both the parties, the shalishkars (mediators) agreed the decision and Abdul Matin Mandol read out the verdict which was as follows:*

*-Both the parties will withdraw their respective cases from the court at their own expenses.*

*-All village leaders present at the shalish will go to the land and erect boundary after measuring.*

*-Abdul Kuddus will pay Rahmat Ali Taka 1000 for treatment.*

*Compromise was made with all hands stretching together. According to the decision both the parties withdrew their cases within one week of the shalish and both got their land according to the verdict of the mediators. Rahmat Ali released the land he was occupying.*

Observation and Comment:

Political influence on village *shalish* quite obvious now-a-days. It is clear from the case story that Abul Fakir and Abdul Kuddus did not get justice during the AL regime. This was because Rahmat Ali's relatives were AL leaders and the leaders of party in power who influenced Rahmat Ali not to obey the village *shalish*. It is observed that the *shalishs'* verdict could not be implemented because of political influence. Political influence is not always needed directly, as was observed in the case of Rahmat Ali. He accepted the verdicts of village *shalishes* at the spot but disobeyed later as per the directions of his relative who belonged to the political party in power. There was no question of fair *shalish* but there was question on the implementation of the verdict of *shalish*. Political influence, either directly or indirectly, can impede the implementation of fair *shalish*. It is also observed that a 'medium' can turn into a 'large' *shalish*. As it is witnessed that after the change in power, the proposal for arranging a *shalish* on the matter went directly to the local MP, and mediation was arranged at the residence of the person (BNP leader) nominated by the MP. Finally, it was observed that all were satisfied with the *shalish*. But it required the influence of political party in power. It does mean political influence on *shalish* has both negative and positive consequences.

### 5.2.2 Fair shalish – a connotation of positive governance

Fair *shalish*, as perceived by the respondents, means a fair judgement of a dispute settled in a *shalish*. A fair judgment denotes a judgment that can satisfy the *shalishkars* (adjudicators/ mediators) present at the *shalish* as well as the other people involved. A fair shalish must be unbiased and neutral. Neutrality of a *shalish* is measured by the judgement of a *shalish* that rebukes or fines the wrongdoers.

There are lots of factors that create obstacles towards sound and neutral shalish (mediation). Political parties and political influences to some extent create obstacles towards sound and neutral mediation at local level. Local level leaders present at the shalish cannot ignore political influence. If one of the parties, especially the offenders, has influential political leaders, then it is difficult to adopt any strict measure against them. For this reason, the local level leaders are sometimes not being able to play neutral role in *shalish*. However, there are also cases where presence of political leaders is in fact helpful for the neutrality of *shalish*.

Besides, local level leaders often have their own on-going interests with parties in conflict as a result of which they, at times, cannot reach any consensus and loose neutrality. That is why the *shalish* often becomes partial. In case any activists (during the election) of the UP chairman and members are in any of the disputant parties, the chairman and members tend to support their activists. Often the *shalishkars* tend to support their relatives, and the verdict is thus affected.

Even after all these problems, most of the *shalishes* in Mizanpur Union are neutrally performed. The perception survey carried out on the local level leaders, reveals that about 83% of the disputes settled by the *shalish* were considered fair (table 5.2.2). It was also informed that to avoid the lengthy processes of the formal court, harassment by the

police, abuse of money and influence of power, people take resort to shalish to resolve their conflicts.

Table- 5.2.2: Percent of fair *shalish* reported by the respondents

Category of respondents	Percent of fair <i>shalish</i>
Local Government N=28	83.29
Political N=10	79.80
Religious N=12	84.58
Social N=21	83.58
Economic N=3	81.67
Total N=74	83.01

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002

### 5.3 Role of MP in local politics

Strong political influences are observed in the development activities of the union. The Union Parishad leaders more often have to follow the leaders of political party in power. Among the causes for which the UP leaders are to follow the national ruling party in government are development of the union, protection from harassments by the police etc. That is why the ruling party also influences the UP activities.

Members of the Parliament have strong power to influence over all local development activities including those executed through the local government bodies. A great deal of influence is thus delegated to the local elected functionaries. This has increased soon after the MPs were designated as advisers to the Upazila Development and Coordination Committees. The bureaucrats, for example the UNO, generally take side with the MPs, particularly if the latter happen to come from the party in power.

The way -how the MP Influences:

The local MP, as ex-officio, is the advisor of the Upazila Development and Coordination Committee.

1. MP's recommendation on the form submitted to the office of the PIO usually assures sanctioning of the project.
2. Being the advisor of the Committee, MP doesn't usually allow any sanction if the UP chairman acts against any of his decision.
3. The letters that comes from the LGRDC Ministry to the Committee usually indicates to do everything with the consent of MP.
4. The works of those sanctions that MP manages from the ministry of LGRDC or Relief are usually conducted by the people of MP's choice.
5. If MP is from the ruling party, then at the discussion of Upazila Development and Coordination Committee, the people of the opposition cannot even oppose the offering of the projects to the people of the MP's own party.
6. In cases of VGF and VGD cards, MP usually provides UP with a list of his own political people, and cards have to be given to them.

Eventually, this study explores the general facts that the MPs of the party in power dominates the Upazila administration which is reflected in the domain of politics at local level.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

An analysis of the local level politics shows that developmental activities of the Union Parishads are seriously affected by the bureaucracy and leaders of the political party in power.

Exercise of power by administrative authority is found in the development projects of Union Parishad. The Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), the Upazila Engineer and the Project Development Officer (PIO) hold administrative power to sanction and supervise the development projects of the Union Parishads. In the context of sanctioning and implementing the development projects of Union Parishads, the local level leaders,



particularly the Union Parishad's chairmen and members, to a great extent depend on the bureaucrats at the Upazila level. It is an open -secret that the UNO, Upazila Engineer and the PIO are taking bribe from the local level leaders against sanctioning and supervising of the development projects. This kind of relationship between the local level leaders, UP functionaries, and the administrative authority at the Upazila level create anomalies in the implementation of development projects.

Strong political influences are observed in the development activities of union parishads. The leaders of Union Parishads more often than not have to follow the leaders of political party in power. MPs play a critical role over UP activities, which is in fact interference with the UP activities. As such the local government becomes dependent upon the MPs. It seriously curbs the autonomy of the local government, and it leads to poor governance.

Furthermore, conflicts and conflicts resolution mechanisms duly explained in this chapter by using the perception survey method. This study finds five types of conflicts in the union under study. These are:

1. Conflicts related to dowry, divorce and marital problems,
2. Conflicts related to land and other property,
3. Conflicts related to enmity, arising from personal rivalry,
4. Conflicts related to family/ *gusti* antipathies, and
5. Conflicts related to local politics and political party politics, arising from political rivalry and political competitions.

The study finds that the majority of such conflicts, as noted above, are resolved through *shalish*, an informal judicial system traditionally practised at the local level for centuries. And the remaining, which are very few, are resolved through village court, a formal court at the Union Parishad, and formal courts (civil and criminal) of state judicial system. The study also finds political influence on *shalish* as increasing pattern in the rural areas of Bangladesh. The facts and findings of the case stories covered in the study in relation to conflicts and conflicts resolution mechanisms provide testimony of political influence in *shalish*. Local level leaders are sometimes not able to play a neutral role in the *shalish*

because of political influence. However, there are cases where presence of political leaders and political influence is, in fact, helpful for the neutrality of *shalish*.

### Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Political scientists use the term in reference to the right or power of self-government. In sociology, it is usually applied in contexts where the writer has in mind a rational, self-determining social actor, who is not subject to some form of determinism but expresses his or her own goals and interests (Marshal, 1998:31). In order to ensure self-rule, Bangladesh Constitution makes the local government institutions autonomous and independent entities, distinct from the central authorities. It mandates elected local bodies at each administrative unit in addition and co-equal to the regular administrative setups.

<sup>2</sup> It's a regular programme for the vulnerable groups. A vulnerable household gets monthly 30kg of rice over a period of 18 months.

<sup>3</sup> This programme is designed for the people who are victimized by natural calamities, like flood, draught and disaster. A total of 10 kg of rice at a time is given for a household as aids.

<sup>4</sup> It is known through the information of informal discussions, with the local level leaders and people of different walks, that most of the cases filed in the formal courts take their resort back to *shalish* after a few days due to wastage of money, harassment by the police and lengthiness of the procedures.

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## **CHAPTER 6**

### **Conclusions and Summary of Findings**

## CHAPTER 6

### Conclusions and Summary of Findings

#### 6.0 Major institutions

This study shows that there are vibrant local level politics in rural Bangladesh. These politics revolve around informal institutions like *samaj* and formal institutions like Union Parishad. The *samaj* performs the task of social control and conflict resolution and is a significant political institution at the local level. The Union Parishad is the most stable tier of local government in the country and enjoys tremendous popularity. The local branches of political parties have now spread to the union level where the *samaj* has been found as one of the prominent informal institutions in the union under study. It is a traditional institution and its existence seems to be as old as the rural society in Bangladesh. The general functions of this institution include dispute resolution (through *shalish*) and religious ceremonies. Moreover, *samaj* as an institution plays a sort of political role in the union. Furthermore, the performance of this institution also fulfills an important role of civil society on the issues of governance, rural justice and social dimensions of local level politics.

Union Parishad as a formal institution has a long history since the British time in Bengal. It is one of the oldest and operative formal institutions at the local level. The union under study includes only the major political parties. These are the Awami League, the Bangladesh Nationalist party, the Jatiya Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh.

There are about fifty small, middle and large NGOs working in Rajbari district. A few of them are national; others are local or regional. In the union under study, we found six registered and two non-registered NGOs. The NGOs have multifarious programmes and activities including agricultural development, educational development, health services, credit delivery, enforcing the legal rights of the landless etc. Micro-credit is found as one

of the major programme component of the NGOs in the union under study. There is only one NGO (*Samata*) which is not running micro-credit. Rather the principal goal of this NGO is to establish the right of the landless people by making arrangements with *khas* land (government land) distribution. Within the programmes of this NGO are also included issues of social mobilization and governance. As it has started to work in the union under study only for a couple of years, it is too early to draw any conclusion from the present mobilization and works undertaken.

### **6.1 Socio-economic and political background of local level leadership: Stability and Change**

The study analyzes the socio-economic and political backgrounds of local level leaders. Socio-economic background of local level leaders includes the analysis of age structure, marital status, religion, education level, occupation, family composition, landholdings and income. The study finds that most of the local level leaders (43.2%) belong to the age group 35 to 49 years. The education level of the local level leaders gives an indication on changes in leadership pattern at the local level. It is found that gradually more educated leaders cover the local leadership space. The occupational profile of the local level leaders reveals that agriculture is now no more a dominating occupation, instead non-agricultural occupations, particularly the business sector, have emerged as the principal occupations of local level leaders. It is found that farming, business and services are the major sources of income of the local level leaders.

The political background of the local level leaders shows that a few local level leaders were involved in student politics while they were students. More than fifty percent of the local level leaders were found to be involved with the national political parties. The remaining local level leaders are not directly involved, but they are very much conscious about politics. The study finds that the majority of the local level leaders are affiliated with the two major political parties – the Awami League (AL) and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). Changing political parties of the local level leaders is also found

as a common phenomenon. The causes behind changing affiliations to political parties by the local level leaders are found as follows:

Decreased popularity and image of the higher level political party leaders, conflict among the forgone political party leaders, deprive of political benefits, and intend to be a member of the political party in power.

## 6.2 Linkages and Interaction Pattern

The overriding focus of this study has centered on the upward looking linkages of the local level leaders with (i) the influential political leaders, (ii) the key government officials and (iii) the non-political development activists, whom we designated as the non-resident development –collaborative citizenry.

### Interaction between local level leaders and the influential political leaders

The study finds that the interactions between local level leaders and the influential political leaders mainly centered on five different purposes: Personal interest, political interest, local interest, supremacy in exercising power, and *tadbir* (a Bengali word denotes the act of taking steps so that things are managed according to one's wishes). Among these, local interest and *tadbir* are most frequently found. Supremacy in exercising power as a purpose of interaction is also found an important aspect. Moreover, the study found that the interactions of the local level leaders with the influential political leaders of different levels are generally non-formal in terms of mode of linkages.

The multiplicity of purposes of interactions of the local level leaders with the influential political leaders exhibit three distinct outcomes:

Local interest (local interest/ development and *tadbir*)

Individual interest (personal interest), and;

Power struggle (supremacy in exercising power, political interest).

### Local Interest

The study finds that keeping the local interest in mind, local level leaders maintain links with influential political leaders. Local interest is explored as an important dimension for which local level leaders maintain linkages with the influential political leaders of Upazila, district levels and to some extent with the leaders of national level. Local interest, as perceived by the local level leaders, is a connotation of local development. Development related local demands tend towards the development of infrastructure, education, law and order and so forth. These are mainly addressed by the local level leaders. The study finds that development funds for local development that come from the concerned ministries may come into the possession of local level leaders if they could maintain strong links with the influential political leaders at higher level. Especially so, through the links of local level leaders with the leaders of Upazila, district levels and with the MPs of the political party in power. The study also finds that local development may be hindered if the local leadership does not maintain links with the upper level political leaders.

### Individual Interest

Local level leaders' linkage with the influential political leaders for individual interests is found as a strong pattern of interaction. Loan from different national banks, admission of children for good schooling, better health service, having invitations in different social occasions for gaining prestige are found in the ranges of individual interests for which local level leaders keep connections with the influential political leaders of upper levels. Links for individual interests sometimes go beyond 'absolute individual interests' as it is found that through such links local level leaders also help their relatives, neighbours and also other associates to receive some sort of benefits.

### Power struggle (conflicts at the local level, political interest)

This study finds conflict among the local level leaders related to competition for control over local people. It is found that the supremacy in exercising political power in the local

polity prompts local level leaders to maintain connection with the influential political leaders of upazila, district and national levels. In the power game at the local level different political interests work. Keeping up one's supremacy in the power games at the local level, the local level leaders are also found maintaining connections with the state (Upazila and district administration). The state power is found as an important factor in the conflict at the local level politics, since it is seen as the vital instrument to keep one's supremacy in exercising power at the local level. Moreover, seeking protection from police harassment, to influence the police to harass rivals, influencing cancellation bail for rivals, influencing the court for bail for offenders, lobbying for getting access to the Union Parishad's development projects — all these are found as part of the power struggle among local level leaders. Finally, it is seen that, local level leaders maintain linkages or some kind of patron-client ties with the influential higher-level political leaders including the local MPs to show their supremacy in exercising power in local level politics. Because of their power linkage with the influential political leaders, (Upazila, district and national levels) and the local MPs they (the local level leaders) can use the field level bureaucratic mechanism (the upazila and district level administration) to get things done easily whether it falls within the category of development or otherwise.

#### **Interaction between the local level leaders and the administrative hierarchies**

The study does not find direct or indirect links of the local level leaders with the national level government officials i.e. bureaucrats. But links are found between the local level leaders and the important government officials of district and upazila levels. The study finds both formal and non-formal links of the local level leaders with the district level bureaucrats, the DC (Deputy Commissioner) and SP (Superintendent of Police) and the upazila level bureaucrats, the UNO (Upazila Nirbahi Officer), OC (Officer-in Charge), Upazila Engineer and the PIO (Project Implementation Officer).

Most formal interactions of the local level leaders with the DC and SP take place directly. In the cases of non-formal interactions, the local level leaders often interact with the DC and SP in collaboration with some Upazila or district level political leaders / elite. The



purposes of formal interactions with the DCs include the law and order situation, observance of national days and *khas* land (government's land) distribution. The non-formal interactions of local level leaders with the DCs include seeking help for the poor and distressed people and *tadbir* for job opportunities of their own clients.

Information on formal linkages with the SP finds that the local level leaders maintain links with the SP only for the purpose of law and order situation, while non-formal interactions also centered on the purpose of 'tadbir for criminal offence related cases'. *Tadbir* for criminal offence related cases are found in two forms: *tadbir* to SP for innocent persons who have been victimized and *tadbir* for political friends.

This study also finds both formal and non-formal linkages of local level leaders with the UNO, OC, Upazila Engineer and PIO at the Upazila administration. Formal interactions of the local level leaders with the above-mentioned Upazila level government officials are explicit and the non-formal ones are implicit. The purposes of formal interactions of the local level leaders with the UNO mainly concerned two issues: a); law and order b); local development. On the other hand, the non-formal interactions of the local level leaders with the UNO revolved around three issues: a); local development b); self-imagery benefits of local leaders c); corruption (performed by both local level leaders and the UNO)

Formal interactions of the local level leaders with the OC are held mainly on law and order related matters, while non-formal interactions of local level leaders with the OC mainly are held for three purposes: a) to keep control of the local power structure; b) self-security; b) Self-security; c) dispute resolution.

Formal interactions of the local level leaders with the PIO and Upazila Engineer are held mainly on the local development purpose. While the non-formal interactions are held on two issues: a); local development and b); corruption (performed by the local level leaders and the PIO, and the Upazila Engineer on the development projects).

### Linkages with the non-resident development-collaborative citizenry

The study finds the linkages of the local level leaders with the non-resident development – collaborative citizenries. The non-resident development–collaborative citizenries reside in different towns and cities of Bangladesh and also abroad and they have emotional attachment to their roots. Most of them are basically non-political but some of them have political ambitions. The study explores non-formal linkages of the local level leaders with the non-resident development–collaborative citizens. It finds that the interactions of the local level leaders with the non-resident development–collaborative citizenries remain confined mainly to local development.

The study explores that the non-resident development–collaborative citizenries perform a lot of development activities informally. Among other things, they undertake welfare activities like development of educational institutes, financial help for the poor in the social and religious festivals, help for treatment of poor and distressed, provision of employment for the unemployed, financial help for marriage of poor people's daughters etc. These non-political benevolent personalities usually discuss with the local level leaders before undertaking any development or welfare-oriented activities. They also tend to maintain close links with the local level leaders for the improvement of law and order situation in their localities.

### **6.3 Dynamics of State and Local Level Politics: Stagnation or Change?**

We have discussed the state of linkages and interaction patterns of local level leaders with the political party leaders, administration and the non-resident development–collaborative citizenry ( see chapter 4 and 5). The case studies delineated in chapter four have portrayed a multiplicity of interactions and outcomes at the local level political processes. In chapter five, we examined the extent of political and administrative interference in the development programmes and projects of the Union Parishads. We have also discussed the state of local justice ( see section II, chapter five). The case

studies (in chapter five, section I) outlined the facts of interference on the development programmes and projects of union parishads.

We also made an attempt to summarize how the existing local–centre linkages shape and affect local level politics and development. Close attention was paid to see the outcomes of the linkages between local level leaders, i.e. the leaders of the micro level institutions, and the influential political leaders, formal macro level structures, i.e. the influential political party leaders and the representative of the state, i.e. the bureaucrats. The study has also highlighted the outcomes and consequences of linkages of local level leaders with the external citizenry, which is, in turn, a society-centric developmental dimension. Here we have in fact made effort to explore the outcomes of such interactions and the insight of the developmental role played by the external citizenry in the locality.

And more importantly what we have examined is the consequences of political and bureaucratic influences on the local development programmes and projects implemented by the union Parishads. The question of local autonomy is pertinent to be discussed here. Finally, we have discussed the local justice system.

In sum, this study has tried to explore and analyze the local political processes focusing upon how political power is exercised, how does the existing political processes hinder or facilitate political, economic and social development at the local level.

This discussion has given rise to several interesting themes that requires special attention and further research. These are as follows:

- a. Politicizing local politics: national politics at the local level
- b. Local development and party politics
- c. State influence at the local level: the ambivalent development
- d. Poor Governance and diminished local autonomy: A symbiosis of the state and political party in power
- e. Local justice and informal roots of democracy

#### **a. Politicizing local politics: National politics at the local level**

While examining the pattern of linkages, we find ‘the supremacy in exercising political power’ as one of the important pattern for which interactions are made between the local level leaders and the influential political party leaders. Local level politics is being increasingly penetrated by national level politics and its bi-partisan and confrontational politics. The case study namely (case study-2 in chapter 4), ‘stories behind the story: evidences of exercising political power and local politics’, depicts how local level politics is politicized by the national level political parties and how it is played out in the union level politics.

We have noted in the case study that both *Mondal* and *Molla gusties* in their effort to overpower each other tried to strengthen themselves and developed contacts with political parties and even the outlawed political parties. The conflict between the two *gusties* became transformed into a conflict of the local units of two political parties. It eventually led to a political murder and increased level of party conflict at the local level.

#### **b. Local development and party politics**

Is there any developmental role of political parties at the local level? The question is pertinent in discussing the local level political process. In the preceding chapter 4 (section I), we have explored the pattern of linkages of the local level leaders with the influential political leaders. ‘Local interest’ is found as an important pattern for which local level leaders maintained links with the influential political leaders at the Upazila, district and, to some extent, central levels. It is observed that community level demand mainly tends toward the development of infrastructure, education, law and order and so on. Local leadership wants to address the development-related demands raised by the local people. Most of the funds for local development come from the centre, from the concerned ministries. Local demands for local development may not be fulfilled if there is lack of lobbying to bring funds from the concerned ministries. The influential political leaders of Upazila and district levels, most of them are the leaders of the political party in power,

and the MP play an important role in pursuing the local demand to the authority concerned. Local development may be hindered if the local leadership abstains from the interactions with the influential political leaders related to local development.

The study finds that for local interest and development, the local level leaders are compelled to keep connections with the influential political leaders of the political party in power. The local level leaders, who belong to the local government category, especially the UP chairmen and UP members, are almost bound to maintain links with the influential political party leaders of Upazila and district levels, otherwise their Union Parishad is denied in getting developmental funds. It is one of the major causes UP chairmen and members, the formal local leaders, tend to maintain relations with the influential political leaders of the party in power. The relationship between the local level leaders and the influential political leaders seems something like patron–client relationship. Rather, we find that there are lots of mutual interest that works in such relationship. The local level leaders maintain links with influential political leaders for developing their locality and personal image, likewise the influential political leaders including elected MPs gain their fame and party activities through the local level leaders. This is one of the naïve aspects of the relationship between the local level leaders and influential political leaders (case study –1, chapter 4). It shows that one schoolteacher, who is not a political person but a local level leader, has managed funds for the development of his school and also for the development of a mosque and a graveyard by means of his links with the MP. The second example can be the case of ‘Aleema’s *tadbir* for bank loan ’ (case study –3, chapter 4) in which it is seen that Aleema is an AL supporter and the closest contestant for the UP membership in the 1997 UP election. By means of her linkages with influential political leaders, she had managed a bank loan for her poultry farm.

### **c. State influence at the local level: the ambivalent development**

We have explored the state of linkages of the local level leaders with the administrative hierarchies ( see section II, chapter 4). In exploring linkages of the local level leaders

with the administrative hierarchies this study investigated the questions: Why are these links formed? What are the forms of these links? And, what are the outcomes of these links at the local level political process?

The study reveals that both formal and non-formal interaction of the local level leaders with the key government officials have an enormous impact on the local level politics and development. Particularly, the non-formal connections of the local level leaders delineate the picture of State interference at the domain of local level development.

It is found that the local level leaders non-formally interact with the District and Upazila level bureaucrats, for different purposes, in collaboration with the Upazila and district level influential political leaders. The story (see case study –4 in chapter 4) ‘local level leaders’ *tadbir* for one Aparna’s job’ depicted how local level leaders in collaboration with the Upazila and district levels influential political leaders maintained non-formal links with the DC and managed the job for Aparna. An evidence of *tadbir* is also illustrated at a case story (see case study-6, chapter 4) that depicts the picture of party politics at the local level. The case story shows how do the influential political party leaders, the MPs, of both conflicting political parties exercised political power through the state.

The study finds profound linkages, both formal and non-formal, of the local level leaders with the Upazila level administrative hierarchies. It has found that all formal interactions are explicit; there is nothing implicit. But the entire non-formal interactions of the local level leaders with the Upazila level administrative hierarchies are found implicit. The present study has explored the reasons of those implicit interactions and their implications at the local development and local level political processes.

It is found that the non-formal interactions of the local level leaders with the Upazila level bureaucrats are revolved into three directions: local development, self- imagery benefits of local level leaders and corruption (performed by both the local level leaders and the Upazila level bureaucrats). The outcomes of such non-formal links are apparently positive for the local development as this kind of link of the local level leaders with the upazila level bureaucrats could generate more funds and development projects for local

development. But the latent fact is that through this kind of links both upazila level bureaucrats and local level leaders have been involved in corruption related practices.

Moreover, an analysis of local level politics (see in preceding chapter 5, section I) shows that the development activities at the local level are adversely interfered by the upazila and district level administrations and the political party in power. The analysis shows that the local level leaders are now subservient to the bureaucracy and the political party in power. In recent years, the situation has been worsened by the intrusions of the Members of Parliament in local affairs. In fact, the present study finds that the entire local level development depends on the top-down development planning of politicians and bureaucrats, though in papers it is called bottom-up one. In reality, bottom-up development planning is an utmost rhetoric of politicians as well as the bureaucrats. Thus the local level development is in an ambivalent state that deserves attention from the scholars and policy makers.

**d. Poor governance and diminished local autonomy: A symbiosis of the state and political party in power**

We have examined and discussed the politico-administrative influences on the local level politics (see section I, chapter 5). It should be noted that the politico-administrative influences on the local level politics can best be understood by analyzing the state of local level development projects and programmes which are implemented by the union parishads. We have discussed that owing to the narrow resource bases, union parishads are to depend almost exclusively on the grants of national government for local development. The grants from national government come to Union Parishads through Upazila administration in the forms of various development projects and programmes. It is explored in the study that the bureaucrats of the Upazila administration i.e. the UNO, PIO and the Upazila Engineer enjoy enormous power to control the development projects of union parishads. They intercept almost each and every aspect of development projects, from project design through implementation to completion. Political interference over the local development projects and programmes of Union Parishads robustly influence the

local level politics. The leaders of the political party in power and the local MP interfere on the development activities of union parishads.

It has also been observed that the bureaucrats working at the Upazila administration exercise their influence in the development programmes of UP that yield variety of vested interests related conflicts. And by means of such bureaucratic influence over the local development programmes and projects, the pride of local autonomy is sharply diminished. But the existing formal procedure of formulation and implementation of the local level development projects do corroborate the bottom-up planning instead the top-down what is exercised by the Upazila level key government officials who represent the state.

In exploring the relationship between the local government institutions, particularly the union parishads, and national political parties this study finds that the local development projects and programmes are robustly interfered by the leaders of the political party in power and the local MP. Political interference over the development activities of the union parishads influences the local level politics that ultimately turns towards bad governance at the local level and a diminishing of the local autonomy.

The study finds a symbiosis between the Upazila level bureaucrats who represent the state and the ruling political party leaders including the MP in interfering with local development and politics that impede the spirits of promising local governance and introduce poor governance at the local level politics and development. The question of local autonomy has been tremendously stifled by political interference, especially by the political party in power and the Members of Parliament.

#### **e. Local justice and informal roots of democracy**

The study of local justice shows that there is great potential for informal conflict resolution at the grassroots level. The study has not made any detailed study of how such informal institutional resources should inform the building of the democratic process. But it is clear that the issue deserves greater attention from scholars.



Finally it is to be mentioned that in the Mizanpur Union there are thirty seven villages all of which are populated by Muslims. However seven of the villages have been eroded or partially washed away by river Padma; the displaced persons have taken shelter in nearby villages mostly with their kinsfolk. From the information supplied by the villagers it is gathered that a decade or so ago people of this union hardly trespassed the bounds of kinship and agnatic relationship. In fact village disputes were settled mostly on the basis of those relationship specially by the honorable persons among them. In union parishad elections also this bond used to play the major role.

But recent changes have weakened this bond to the extent that political party affiliations are sought by the contestants in elections. However the family relationship is not totally bypassed since sometimes party affiliation is sought on the basis of *gusti*.

In this context we may also point out that, in the Mizanpur Union the party rivalry had never been so acute as it is today. This is occurring because kinship bond is giving way to the political affiliations with massive infiltrations of national politics in the locality, particularly the politics of the two major parties.

Here we may further point out, such division of population in the union is not based on any ideological differences, rather it is a politics of opportunism unleashed by the massive inflow of development funds which the party in power usually controls. It is interesting to note that decades ago when the left parties in this locality used to play a more prominent role such opportunistic role was conspicuous by its absence. But in recent times the people who used to support their left oriented politics became disillusioned, as governmental interference in the so-called development efforts extended allurements to these folks for speedy proliferation of their personal property through corrupt means. It is also a cause of frequent change of party affiliations.

In local politics thus corruption is gradually becoming a pervasive phenomenon. In this game the bureaucrats at Upazila, district and even at national level play some role, though the main catalytic agents are the upper level political leaders (Upazila and district level leaders) particularly the MP of the locality. Thus a sort of unwritten understanding prompts the bureaucrats and national or regional politicians to take more active interest in

the Union Parishad elections as well as other affairs such as adjudication and popular mobilization for their mutual benefit.

It also ensues a close contact with the leaders of the union with musclemen as conflict of interest centering round the various governmental facilities are gaining more and more importance over the years.

The use of force and resort to violence is not a new phenomenon. However the recent change is the politicization of it which may at times become very embarrassing for the administration (Example case studies 2, 6 and 18). This trend, in any case, is very ominous in the sense that in the near future, it is apprehended that those having the muscle power (the *mustans* and the hooligans) are increasingly taking over a dominant role. They are mostly serving under god-fathers of Upazila or district levels. They also tend to maintain close contact with the police administration which gives them considerable immunity. Thus it ultimately turns into tripartite relation which is the appropriate characterization of future local leadership.

The traditional leadership at the national level is giving way to lumpen leadership. This percolates down to the lower level and creates, at least partially, a state of anomie (normlessness). A change of attitude is also perceptible in the fact that the traditional respect for the elders is gradually receding to the background; the family and kinship relations are gradually losing its hold in political and social behaviour. The kind of kinship and agnatic relationship which was so long the most important binding force still remains partially but only as a mean to gain support for election and other political ends.

In this connection, the traditional rivalry of the two *gusties*, the *Mondols* and *Mollas*, are taking new forms. Initially they tended to be divided in line with the national politics in two main parties. But on the questions of dominance of the village *haat* (market) they had a different pattern in their conflict as depicted in case study 2, chapter 4. What is interesting here to note is the shifting of interest in the mode of production. While agriculture and landownership was the most important source of power and wealth, in recent times a major shift towards business and other non-farm occupations are gaining

ground. This accounts for the relatively volatile political situation in the union. It also indicates a new orientation which we have alluded before. This unfortunate development of national politics which may be characterized as 'retreatism' are becoming perceptible in the union level politics as well. However, given the proper opportunity to the local leadership and ensuring relative autonomy to the local bodies, particularly in financial matters, this ominous trend may be thwarted.

## Annexures

## Annexure 1

### AN INTERVIEW SCHEDULE OF LEADERSHIP SURVEY FOR THE STUDY OF POLITICAL DYNAMICS

(An interview schedule for a Ph. D. Research)

Ph. D. Topic: Local Institutions and the Political Space: A Study on Political Dynamics  
in Bangladesh

Sample No.: 

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#### Identification of Respondent

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Father's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Village: \_\_\_\_\_ Ward: \_\_\_\_\_  
Union: \_\_\_\_\_ Upazila: \_\_\_\_\_  
District: \_\_\_\_\_

Sample Category: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name of Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section-I: Socio-Economic Background of Leader(s)**

Socio-Economic Background of respondent

1. age
2. sex  1 male  2 Female
3. Marital Status  1 Married  2 Unmarried  
 3 Divorced  4 Widow  
 5 Separated
4. Religion  1 Muslim  2 Hindu  3 Other
5. Sect: \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Education:  
 1 Illiterate  2 Literate can read and write  3 Primary (1 to 5 Class)  
 4 Secondary (6 to 10 Class)  5 S.S.C Pass  6 H.S.C Pass  
 7 Graduation  8 Post-graduation  9 Others (Specify):
8. Occupation:  
 Main Occupation  Secondary Occupation

**Occupation Code:** Agriculture=1, Business=2, Wage labourer=3, Service=4, Teaching=5, Advocate=6, Other Professional=7, Household Work=8, Student=9, Others (Specify)= 10 \_\_\_\_\_

9. Family Members of Respondent [Excluding Respondent]:

Name	Relation with respondent (Code)	Sex		Age (Code)	Education (Code)	Main Occupation (Code)	Secondary Occupation (Code)
		Male=1	Female=2				

**Relation with Respondent Code:** Grand Father=1, Grand Mother=2, Grand Father-in law=3, Grand Mother-in law=4, Father=5, Mother=6, Father-in law=7, Mother-in law=8, Brother=9, Sister=10, Husband=11, Wife=12, Husband's borther=13, Husband's Sister=14, Son=15, Daugther=16. Other (Specify):17

**Age Code:** 1-9=1, 10-14=2, 15-17=3, 18-25=4, 26-35=5, 36-45=6, 46-55=7, 55+=8

**Education Code:** Illiterate=1, Literate (can read & write)=2, Primary=3, Secondary=4, SSC Pass=5, HSC Pass=6, Graduation=7, Post-graduation=8, Others (Specify)=9 \_\_\_\_\_

**Occupation Code:** Agriculture=1, Business=2, Wage labourer=3, Service=4, Teaching=5, Advocate=6, Other Professional=7, Household Work=8, Student=9, Others (Specify)= 10 \_\_\_\_\_

10. Different Sources of income: (in Taka)

	Gross Income	Net Income
Agriculture		
Business		
Service		
Other sources		
Total Yearly Income		

11. Land Owned by Respondent (in acre)

Land	In Acre
Total Land Owned	
Total Land Leased Out	
Total Land Leased in	
Total cultivated Land	

**Section-II: Political Involvement of Respondent**

**A. Respondent's Involvement**

1. Have you been involved in any trade union/ peasant organization)?

1 yes  2 No

If yes, mention the name of organization and the period

Name of organization	Period of involvement	Leading post hold (Code)	Level Committee (Code)

**Leading post hold code** : President=1, General Secretary=2, Other secretaries=3, Executive Committee member=4,

**Level/committee code** : Union Committee=1, Upazila Committee=2, District Committee=3, Other Committee=4, (Specify):

2. Are/were you involved in student politics?

1 yes  2 No

If yes, mention the name of organization and the period

Name of organization (Code)	Period of involvement	Leading post hold (Code)	Level (Code)

Organization code : Chatra league=1, Jatiatabadi Chatra dal=2, Left party's student front=3, Chatra Shibir=4, Others=5

Leading post hold code : No Leading Post=1, President=2, General Secretary=3, Other secretaries=4

Level code : Union level=1, Upazila level=2, District level=3, Central level=4

3. Have you participated in any local government/ national election?

1 yes  2 No

If yes, mention the name of the posts and years

Type of Post (s)	Elected (Year)	Defeated (Year)	Total participation in election
UP Member	1.	1.	
	2.	2.	
	3.	3.	
	4.	4.	
	5.	5.	
	Total	Total	
UP Chairman	1.	1.	
	2.	2.	
	3.	3.	
	4.	4.	
	5.	5.	
	Total	Total	
Upazila Chairman	1.	1.	
	2.	2.	
	Total	Total	
MP	1.	1.	
	2.	2.	
	3.	3.	
	4.	4.	
	Total	Total	

4. Are you a supporter or a member of a political party?

1 Supporter  2 Member  3 Neither a member nor a Supporter

(i) If you are a supporter of a political party: (Tick)

1 Jamaat  2 JP  3 AL  4 BNP  
 5 Left Party  6 Muslim League  7 Others (Specify):

(ii) If you are a member:

(a) Name of political party (Tick)

1 Jamaat  2 JP  3 AL  4 BNP  
 5 Left Party  6 Muslim League  7 Others (Specify):



(b) Name the political party committees you are involved in.) (Tick, one or more)

<u>Name of Committee</u>	<u>period/year</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Ward Committee	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Union Committee	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Upazila Committee	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Zila Committee	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> 5 Union Committee	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Others (Specify):	_____

(c) Programs of your party?) (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Poverty free country
- 2 Self-reliance country
- 3 Terrorism free
- 4 Independence of judiciary
- 5 Fair administration
- 6 Development of agriculture
- 7 Women right
- 8 Solving unemployment problem
- 9 Others (Specify):

(d) When you have first joined the political party?  
Year: \_\_\_\_\_

(e) Have you ever changed your party?

- 1 yes                       2 No

If yes, mention the name of your previous party

\_\_\_\_\_

(f) What are the reasons for the change of party? (mention 3 reasons)

- 1 In honour of my close leader who changed party
- 2 Disliked the influential party leaders of my previous party
- 3 Disliked Political factionalism and conflict of the previous party
- 4 Deprived from political benefits
- 5 For better opportunity in politics
- 6 Protect myself from police harassment
- 7 Protect myself from criminal court cases

- 8 Disliked the ideology of my previous party
- 9 Attracted by a charismatic leader of the present party
- 10 Regional political factors
- 11 For the development of my area
- 12 Others (specify):

5. Do you have any major life experience that has influenced your entry in politics?

- 1 Yes                       2 No

If yes, please elaborate:

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6. Have you been involved any social movement in last 5 years?

- 1 Yes                       2 No

If yes, mention the nature of the movement (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Protest movement against thief and dacoits
- 2 Movement to protect river erosion
- 3 Movement for tree plantation and to protect trees
- 4 Movement for recovering Khas landform land grabbers
- 5 Movement for Khas land distribution to landless
- 6 Literacy movement
- 7 Others ( specify):

7. Are you associated with any social activist?

- 1 Yes                       2 No

If yes, please mention the nature of work of the activist:

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8. Are you associated with any influential landlord of your area?

- 1 Yes                       2 No

If yes, please mention the nature of your association

- 1 Personal friendship
- 2 Family connection
- 3 Kinship relation
- 4 Party fellow

- 5 Political patron
- 6 Financial exchange
- 7 Others (Specify):

9. What are the factors that have inspired you to take leadership? (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Local interest
- 2 Gosti interest
- 3 Kinship interest
- 4 Party interest
- 5 Ideological commitment
- 6 Religious values
- 7 Others (Specify):

10. If you are inspired by any ideology, please specify: ( tick)

- 1 Progressive
- 2 Liberal
- 3 Liberal conservative
- 4 Conservative
- 5 (Specify)

(N.B. Some questions, in General Opinion Section, will also be asked to verify one's ideological position.)

### B. Family Background of Respondent

11. Your Father's Name): \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Age \_\_\_\_\_

13. Education:

- 1 Illiterate
- 2 Literate (Can read and write)
- 3 Primary (1 to 5 Class)
- 4 Secondary (6 to 10 Class)
- 5 S.S.C Pass
- 6 H.S.C Pass
- 7 Graduation
- 8 Post-graduation
- 9 Others (Specify):

14. Your Father's Occupation:

- Main Occupation
- Secondary Occupation

Occupation Code: Agriculture=1, Business=2, Wage labourer=3, Service=4, Teaching=5, Advocate=6, Other Professional=7, Household Work=8, Student=9, Others (Specify)= 10 \_\_\_\_\_

15. Is/was you father a matbor/morol/samaj Prodan/ sarder)? (a village leader)

- 1 yes
- 2 No

If yes, please mention the nature of his leadership? (Tick , multiple choices)

- 1 Salishker i.e. leader of dispute resolution
- 2 Social Worker
- 3 Leading Person of Village
- 4 Founder of Mosque/Madrassa/Orphanage
- 5 Founder of School
- 6 Leader of Cooperative Institutions
- 7 Others (Specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

16. Did he (your father) participate in any local government election)?

- 1 yes
- 2 No

If yes, please tick and detail

√	Position	Elected (Year)	Defeated (Year)
1	UP Member		
2	UP Chairman		
3	Upazila Chairman		
4	Others Specify: _____		

17. Is/was your father member of a political party?

- 1 yes
- 2 No

If yes,

(a) Name of political party (Tick)

- 1 Jamaat
- 2 JP
- 3 AL
- 4 BNP
- 5 Left Party
- 6 Muslim League
- 7 Others Specify \_\_\_\_\_

(b) Is/was he member of any political party committee(s)? (Tick one or more)

Sl. No.	Name of Committee	√	Year						
			JI	JP	AL	BNP	LP	ML	Others
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Ward Committee								
2	Union Committee								
3	Upazila/Thana Committee								
4	Sub-division Committee								
5	Zila Committee								
6	Union Committee								

4	Sub-division Committee								
5	Zila Committee								
6	Union Committee								

18. Did he (your father) participate in any parliament election?

1 yes  2 No

If yes, did he elected?

1 yes  2 No

19. Near relative's involvement in local government and/or politics (specify):

Near relative (Code)	Education (Code)	Occupation (Code)	Political party (Code)	Elected as UP Member/ Chairman/ Upazila Chairman (Code)	Year

Education Code: Illiterate=1, Literate (Can read & write)=2, Primary=3, Secondary=4, SSC Pass=5, HSC Pass=6, Graduation=7, Post-graduation=8, Others (Specify)=9 \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation Code: Agriculture=1, Business=2, Wage labourer=3, Service=4, Teaching=5, Advocate=6, Other Professional=7, Household Work=8, Student=9, Others (Specify)= 10 \_\_\_\_\_

Near Relative Code: Brother=1, Sister=2, Uncle=3, Maternal Uncle=4, Cousin=5, Father-in-law=6, Brother-in-law=7, Sister-in law=8, Others (Specify)=10 \_\_\_\_\_

Political Party code: Jaamat=1, JP=2, AL=3, BNP=4, Left part=5, Muslim League=6, Others (specify)=7

Elected and Defeated Code: Elected as UP Member=1, Elected as UP Chairman=2, Elected as Upazila Chairman=3, Defeated as UP Member=4, Defeated as UP Chairman=5, Defeated as Upazila Chairman=6, Others (Specify):

20. Near relative's participation in Parliament Election (Specify):

Near relative (Code)	Political Party (Code)	Education (Code)	Occupation (Code)	Elected year	Defeated year

Near Relative Code: Brother=1, Sister=2, Uncle=3, Maternal Uncle=4, Cousin=5, Father-in-law=6, Brother-in-law=7, Sister-in-law=8, Others (Specify)=10 \_\_\_\_\_

Political Party code: Jaamat=1, JP=2, AL=3, BNP=4, Left part=5, Muslim League=6, Others (specify)=7

Education Code: Illiterate=1, Literate (Can read & write)=2, Primary=3, Secondary=4, SSC Pass=5, HSC Pass=6, Graduation=7, Post-graduation=8, Others (Specify)=9 \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation Code: Agriculture=1, Business=2, Wage labourer=3, Service=4, Teaching=5, Advocate=6, Other Professional=7, Household Work=8, Student=9, Others (Specify)= 10 \_\_\_\_\_

**Section III: Linkage (s)**

**A. Link with Political Party (s)**

1. Do you have close interaction with any influential political leader? (Tick)

1 yes

2 No

If yes, please detail of the leaders you are linked with:

Political Leader (s) (Name)	Political party (Code)	Political position of leaders (Code)	Purpose of interaction (Code)	Purpose of interaction

Political Party code: Jaamat=1, JP=2, AL=3, BNP=4, Left part=5, Muslim League=6, Others (specify)=7

Political Position Code: Union level leader=1, Upazila level leader=2, District level leader=3, Central leader=4

Purpose of Interaction Code: Family purpose=1, Political purpose=2, Personal friendship=3, Official work=4, Conflict resolution=5, Political advantage=6, Local interest=7, Ceremonial occasion=8, Fighting against rival=9 Tadbir=10, Others (Specify)=11 \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Linkages with the state**

2. Have you met any government official (s)/executives during the last one year)? (Tick)

1 yes  2 No

If yes, who are they (Tick and detail)

Government Official (s)	Tick	Formal Meeting (Number)	Purpose of Meeting (Code)	Informal Meeting (Number)	Purpose of Meeting (Code)
TNO (Upazila Level)					
PIO (Upazila Level)					
Officer in Charge (Thana)					
AC (land)					
Magistrate					
Paskar					
Tehsilder					
Engineer (LGED)					
Superintendent of Police (district)					
Deputy Commissioner (DC)					
Secretaries/ high-ranking bureaucrats					
Others (Specify)					

**Purpose of Meeting Code:** Development project related=1, Law and order related=2, Administrative purpose=3, Political conflict related=4, Land dispute related matter=5, Khas land related=6, Road/culvert construction=7, School/college/madrassa development purpose=8, Criminal case related=9, Crime control related discussion=10, Personal affairs=11, Others (Specify)=12

**C. Intra-Union Linkage**

3. Do you have any link with the different institutions in your union? (Tick)

1 yes  2 (No

DEi nuv náj, Avcwb wK ms<sup>-</sup>v,ájvi bvg ejfeb †h,ájvi mv†\_ Avcbvi Nwbó wj¼  
Av†Q?

If yes, can you identify the institutions in which you are very closely linked? (Tick, one or more)

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Activity ( code)</u>			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Village Samaj				
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Salish				
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 NGO				
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Haat and bazar committee				
<input type="checkbox"/> 5 Mosque committees/Imam				
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Madrasa committee				
<input type="checkbox"/> 7 Temple committee				
<input type="checkbox"/> 8 Puja committee				
<input type="checkbox"/> 9 Club				
<input type="checkbox"/> 10 Managing Committee of High Schools				
<input type="checkbox"/> 11 Managing Committee of (Non-Govt.) Primary Schools				
<input type="checkbox"/> 12 Others (Specify)				

ctivities (\*Code) : Dispute resolution=1, Political activities=2, Development work=3, UP Election related=4, Parliament Election Related=5, School development work=6, Madrasa development work=7, Mosque Management and Development=8, Social Development)=9, Religious Work=10, Haat-bazar management=11, Others (Specify)=12



**D. Outside union linkage (with influential people living in Upazila, district town or big cities)**

4. Are there some people residing outside the union closely connected with the politics or development activities of your union?

1 yes  2 No

5. Are you connected with someone of them?

1 yes  2 No

If yes, who are they? (please detail):

Connected person (Name)	Occupation	Designation	Organization	Approximate yearly Gross Income (in Tk.)	Residing (Code)	Nature of your involvement with them

**Residing Code:** Upazila Town=1, District Twon=2, Other cities=3, Dhaka=4

**Nature of involvement code:** Getting administrative support=1, Getting financial support=2, Managing project for development=3, Getting political support=4, Getting help for job=5, Others (Specify)=6

## Section -IV: Role of Local Institutions

### A. Role of Informal institutions

1. Do you think that kinship relationship is important in local level politics ?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Very Important	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Important
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Less Important	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Not Important
  
2. Does the kinship relation important in UP election?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Very Important	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Important
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Less Important	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Not Important
  
3. Do you think the role of large *gostis* is important in the UP elections
 

<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Very Important	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Important
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Less Important	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Not Important
  
4. Who are the Salishkers? (Tick, one or more)
  - 1 Village leaders
  - 2 Local Political Leaders
  - 3 NGO Persons
  - 4 UP chairman and members
  - 5 Teachers
  - 6 Members of influential *gostis*
  - 7 Imam/Religious leaders
  - 8 Others (Specify):
  
5. Are the Salishkers impartial for fair salish?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> 1 yes	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Partially	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 No
--------------------------------	--------------------------------------	-------------------------------

If no, why (Tick, one or more)

  - 1 Party men (Political friends)
  - 2 Relatives
  - 3 Due to fear of terrorism
  - 4 Influential people

- 5 Own monetary benefit
- 6 Regional Interest
- 7 Others (Specify)

6. Do the political leaders of your area keep relationship with the leaders of informal institutions (matbor, village leaders etc.)?

- 1 yes                       2 No

If yes, what is the nature of relationship? (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Maintaining regular connections
- 2 Giving material support to the informal leaders
- 3 Giving assurance for development
- 4 Giving assurance for job to the persons connected with informal leaders
- 5 Personal friendship
- 6 Others (Specify)

7. Do the political leaders of your area seek support from the informal leaders during the election time?

- 1 Yes                       2 No

If yes, what sort of support) (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Organizing meeting/rally in favour of candidate
- 2 Door to door campaign for the candidate
- 3 Others (Specify):

8. How are the local disputes resolved generally) (Tick and %)

(%)

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Salish                 | <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Through Union Parishad | <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Through Formal Courts  | <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Through Fatua          | <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Others (Specify):      | <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="text"/> Total                        | <input type="text"/> |

9. Does the Fatua influence the salish? (Tick)

- 1 yes                       2 Partially                       3 No

If yes/partially, how? (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Coating religious words
- 2 Using religious sentiment of general people

- 3 Religious meeting i.e. waas mahfil/mosque  
 4 Others (Specify):

B. Role of Formal Institutions

10. Are the poor people of your union getting benefits from the UP programmes? (for example, VGD, VGF, RMP etc.)

1 yes                       2 Partially                       3 No

If yes/ partially, what sort of benefit: (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Food aid  
 2 Employment opportunity  
 3 Technical Training  
 4 Better communication (e.g. infrastructure)  
 5 Developed growth centre  
 6 Monetary/goods  
 7 Others ( specify):

11. Are the women of your union getting benefits from the UP programmes?

1 yes                       2 Partially                       3 No

If yes/ partially, what sort of benefit: (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Food aid  
 2 Employment opportunity  
 3 Technical Training  
 4 Better communication e.g. infrastructure  
 5 Developed growth centre  
 6 Monetary/goods  
 7 Others ( specify):

12. Do you know about the Bazar Management Committee?

1 yes  2 No

If yes, does the Bazar Management Committee contribute as much as necessary for the development of Bazar?

1 yes  2 No

If no, Please describe (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Lack of sufficient fund
- 2 Lack of consensus among the committee members
- 3 Lack of strong supervision from UP
- 4 Unfair influence of some of the committee members
- 5 Political interference
- 6 Due to Mastanism
- 7 Others (Specify)

13. Do you play significant role in local elections?

1 yes  2 No

If yes, what sort of impacts of election you find over social and economic life in your village? (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Create friendly relation among the people of different strata
- 2 Decrease conflict/factionalism
- 3 Increase conflict/factionalism
- 4 Create temporary employment
- 5 Increase selling in the shops
- 6 Poor people receive cash/kind
- 7 Remove unpopular leader from the formal post
- 8 Inclusion of the popular leader in the formal post
- 9 Others (Specify):

14. Do the NGOs have any kind of relationship with the union parishad ?

1 yes  2 No

If yes, what kind of relationship?

---

---

15. Do the NGOs have any role in the UP election?

1 yes

2 No

If yes, what sort of role? (Tick, one or more)

1 Compete in the election

2 Voter education

3 Inclusion of women leadership

4 Support to their favorite candidate

5 Support to certain political leader

6 Support to influential person

7 Others (Specify):

16. Do the NGOs have any role in the national election?

1 yes

2 No

If yes, what sort of role? (Tick, one or more)

1 Participate to National election

2 Support to a certain political party

3 Voter education

4 Others (Specify):

17. Do the NGOs have any involvement with the politics at your union?

1 yes

2 Only some

3 No

18. Do you think that the NGOs working in your union are influencing the development activities of union parishad?

1 yes

2 No

If yes, how? (describe)

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19 Do the NGOs play any role to prevent the execution of *fatua*? (Tick)

1 yes                       2 Partially                       3 No

If yes/partially, how? (describe)

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Section –V: Political Influence

1. Do you think that the leaders of the ruling party influence the IIP activities?

1 yes                       2 No

If yes, what kind of influence? (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Push party members in project committee
- 2 Create obstacle in project implementation
- 3 Interfering UP programmes
- 4 Others ( Specify):

2. Do the opposition party leaders influence the UP activities?

1 yes                       2 No

If yes, how? (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Push party members in project committee
- 2 Create obstacle in project implementation
- 3 Interfering UP programmes

3. Do the ministers of government or any high-ranking persons (same status of minister) influence the UP activities?

1 yes                       2 No

If yes, how? (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Project approval with the condition include some person related with minister or high ranking persons
- 2 Interrupting in the project approval
- 3 Getting monetary benefit for the project approval
- 4 Others (Specify):

4. Do the ministers influence the local politics?

1 yes                       2 No

If yes, how? (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Giving administrative support to the selected person
- 2 Promising more development if voted for the selected person
- 3 Giving financial support to selected person

5. Does the ruling party use police to influence the local politics?

1 yes  2 No

If yes, how do they use police? (Tick, one or more)

- 1 For protecting the party members
- 2 For harassing opposition party members
- 3 For protecting party mastans
- 4 Not filing the oppositions' genuine cases
- 5 Filing fake cases against the member of oppositions'
- 6 For protecting people from police harassment
- 7 For grabbing khas land
- 8 Others (Specify):

6. Do you think the MP is playing a vital role in the activities of Union Parishad mainly project?

1 yes  2 No

If yes, how? (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Pushing party men to Project Committee
- 2 By allocating more projects
- 3 By adjourning the projects

7. Does the MP has any role on UP programmes (like VGD, old age pension etc.)?

1 yes  2 No

If yes, how? (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Giving VGD Cards etc. to the vulnerable people
- 2 Giving VGD Cards etc. to the party workers
- 3 Manage more assistance for the vulnerable people
- 4 Influence the UP functionaries to select his (MP) people for various programs

8. Do you think that the UP chairman and members keep close connection with the leaders of the ruling party?

1 yes  2 Partially  3 No

If yes/partially, what are the advantages they derive from that connection? (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Guarantee for getting project
- 2 To avoid accountability in implementing projects
- 3 For escaping from corruption charge
- 4 For escaping from police harassment
- 5 For getting benefit from local administration



Section-VI: Role of Local Administration

1. Does the UNO has an important role over the activities of UP?

1 yes  2 No

If yes, (specify):

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2. Do you think that maintaining a connection with the OC/other officials of police station is crucial for UP functionaries?

1 yes  2 No

If yes, why? (Tick, one or more)

- 1 For administrative help  
 2 For Law and order  
 3 For escaping from police harassment  
 4 For earning illegal money  
 5 Others (Specify):

Section-VII: Local Problems/Issues

1. Are the political parties concerned about the local problems?

1 yes  2 No

If yes, do they take steps to solve the problems (describe)

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2. Do the political parties come to consensus on the local problem/issues?

1 yes  2 No

If yes, what are the problems/issues? (describe)

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3. Does the MP influence the local administration (thana administration) to solve important local problems?

1 yes  2 Partially  3 No

If yes/partially, describe and example: (Problems/issues may be flood, infrastructure, law and order, river erosion education) (describe)

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4. Does MP bring local problems to the parliament/national level aiming to them solved? (Tick)

1 yes                       2 Partially                       3 No

If yes/partially, describe and example: (problems may be flood, infrastructure, law and order, river erosion education) (describe)

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### Section-VIII: Co-ordination

1. Is there any coordination problem between the UP and field level govt. staff at the Union? (i.e. Family Planning, Block Supervisor, Health Worker, Tahsilder etc.)

1 yes                       2 No

2. Have you heard the name of Upazila Development and Coordination Committee?

1 yes                       2 No

If yes, what do you know about its functions? (describe)

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3. What is the basis of ADP money distribution? (describe)
- 
- 

4. Who are playing a vital role in distributing the ADP resources? (describe)

### Section-IX: Conflict and Factionalism

1. Are there conflicts between the political parties at the union?

1 yes                       2 No

If yes, please mention the nature of conflict: (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Leadership conflict  
 2 Money related  
 3 Conflict for power  
 4 Regionalism  
 5 Others (Specify):

2. What are the impacts of political conflicts? (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Increase political violence
- 2 Develop apathy toward politics
- 3 Interruption in local development
- 4 Party factionalism in politics
- 5 Others (Specify):

3. Is there conflict between political parties?

- 1 yes                       2 No

If yes, please mention the nature of factionalism: (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Leadership conflict
- 2 Conflict for power and influence
- 3 Regionalism
- 4 Monetary interest
- 5 Ideological conflict
- 6 Others (Specify):

4. What are the impacts of party factionalism? (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Violence
- 2 Split organization
- 3 Decrease popularity of the party
- 4 Stagnation in local development
- 5 Party change
- 4 Others (Specify):

5. Do the politicians use *mastans* in the conflict?

- 1 yes                       2 No

6. Are there conflicts between MP and UP functionaries?

- 1 yes                       2 No

If yes, what are the causes of conflict? (Money, power, kinship, influence) (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Political conflicts
- 2 Partiality of MP
- 3 Disagree with MP's decision
- 4 Too much influence of MP
- 5 Others (Specify):

7. What are the impacts of conflicts between UP functionaries and MP? (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Stagnation in development
- 2 Stagnation in project approval
- 3 Disrupt local interest
- 4 UP deprived from administrative help
- 5 Increase accountabilities of UP functionaries
- 6 Others (Specify):

### Section-X: Women and Politics

1. Do the women of your union participate actively in politics?

- 1 yes                       2 Only some                       3 No

If yes/only some, what are the backgrounds of women who are active in politics? (Tick, one or more)

- 1 Traditional family
- 2 NGO involvement
- 3 Political family
- 4 Education
- 5 Rich family
- 6 Others (Specify):

2. What are the main factors of women involvement in politics (Specify in two factors)

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## Annexure 2

### NGO Activities in the Mizanpur Union (the study union)

Activities of 6 registered NGOs are observed in the Mizanpur union, the study union, under the *Sadar* Upazila (The Upazila in district head quarter) of the Rajbari district. These are: 1) BRAC, 2) KKS, 3) VPKA, 4) Sangjog, 5) Samata and 6) Grameen Bank. Besides, among the unregistered NGOs are RADA (Remote Area Development Association), Promise etc. The NGOs have multifaceted programmes and activities including agricultural development, educational development, health services, credit delivery, building of houses, enforcing the legal rights of the landless etc. But in practice the credit delivery programme is visible.

#### *NGO Programmes in Mizanpur Union*

##### BRAC:

BRAC is one of the top NGOs in Bangladesh. BRAC was established in 1972. It started its activities in Rajbari district with its relief activities here during the flood of 1988. They distributed for each family 30kg of rice, 5 kg of potatoes, 1 kg of pulse and 1 kg of oil during the flood. In 1990, BRAC launched its programmes in several unions of the district including Mizanpur union. The BRAC workers formed teams of landless people. One team or committee consisted of 40 members. There are 40 such groups in Mizanpur having 1469 members in total. For each group is a committee for management of the group. Each week a meeting of the group is held at a specified place. At the meeting collection of credit installments are done. Monthly target for each of the BRAC workers is to disburse credit of 3 lakhs taka and collection of installments.

The major programme of BRAC in Mizanpur is micro-credit. Besides, it launched the programme of NFPE school for spread of primary education. In the Rajbari district 80 such NFPE schools are run by BRAC of which 3 are in Mizanpur.

Among the other programs of BRAC are:

- Poultry and Live Stock
- Agriculture and Social Forestry
- PC Culture
- Fish Culture
- Social Development
- Bee cultivation

BRAC Hospital, Providing health services among the members in several areas.

But the above mentioned programme are not in operation in the Mizanpur union. There are only Micro-credit and NFPE.

### KKS (Karmojibi Kalyan Sangstha)

This association was established in 1985 for the socio-economic development of the landless, property-less, poor people. Among the objectives of the KKS are:

- Socio-economic development of the poor and distressed people in the project areas;
- Building awareness among the targeted people through formal and non-formal education;
- Undertaking income raising projects for the targeted population;
- Building awareness about child right and woman right;
- Resisting torture on women;
- Providing education on health and family planning. Building awareness on environment and conservation of environment;
- Building awareness about human life and human rights;
- Building mass awareness on the issues of STD/HIV.

Among the major programs of KKS are:

Micro-credit program  
Adult education and child education  
Sanitation and health  
Social forestry  
Fisheries project  
Awareness about land  
Housing  
Training

The above mentioned programmes are not in operation in the Mizanpur union. KKS runs micro-credit and housing programmes in the Mizanpur union. Under the housing program KKS provided credit to 10 landless families for construction of houses in the year 2000. The cost of each house was 20,000 taka.

### VPKA (Voluntary Paribar Kalyan Association)

This is a local non-government development association. It was established in 1981 and was registered with the directorate of social welfare in 1984. VPKA started its programme in Mizanpur union in 1984. They formed groups of 25 landless people and advanced credit to them. The loaned amount is reimbursed through installments. On a specified day each week and at a specified place, works of loan distribution and collection of installments are done and discussions about these are held.

Among the programmes of VPKA are:

- Distribution of loan among members and collection of weekly installments;
- Setting education centers for adult education and child education.
- Distribution of tube-wells and latrines through credit among group members;
- Free health services among group members.

*Program of VPKA in Mizanpur:*

Since 1984 the NGO has formed 40 groups up to 2001 and there are now 925 members including male and female in those 40 groups. Separate groups for men and women are formed. VPKA runs only micro-credit programme in the Mizanpur union

Sangjog:

Like several other non-government development organizations, Sangjog is also one. It started its primary work in Rajbari district in 1991. It got its registration from the directorate of social welfare in 1992. In 1994 it started its programs in Mizanpur union. It is a local NGO. Among its activities are:

- Organizing groups and enforcing savings among them;
  - Distributing loans among members and collection of weekly installments;
  - Child education and adult education.
  - Health and sanitation;
  - Legal aid;
  - Social forestry;
  - Building awareness about social forestry among members and distributing plants.
- Fisheries project.

*Programmes of Sangjog in Mizanpur:*

Sangjog started its programmes in Mizanpur in 1994. Groups are formed with 20 landless people in each. For leading the group a committee for each group is formed. Each group is again divided into 4 sub-groups of 5 each. These four sub-groups elect the president and the treasurer for the whole group of 20. In Mizanpur union there have been 23 groups with 460 people (male plus female) up to 2001. Sangjog mainly operates with its micro-credit program in Mizanpur.

Grameen Bank

Grameen Bank started its activities in the Mizanpur union in 1991. In the 5 villages Bagmara, Dayalnagar, Nayandia, Ramchandrapur and Mahadevpur, Grameen Bank has in total 9 centres with 40 members (women) in each centre. Grameen Bank works only these five villages of the union. It has no other programme than that of micro-credit.

Samata

Samata started its programs in Rajbari in 2000. Samata works for the landless poor, and the organization is operated by the representatives of those people. That means, the highest body – the executive committee – is formed and operated by the organized landless poor. There are 5 stages of the formation and operation of this people's organization:

1. Formation of primary *samity*
2. Village Development Committee (VDC)  
[A small ward based committee formed with representatives from the primary committee]
3. Union Development Committee (UDC)

[Formed with representatives from VDCs]

4. Area Development Committee

[Formed with representatives from UDCs]

Executive Committee (EC)

[Formed at the central level with representatives from ADCs]

Unlike other NGOs, Samata's programmes are not the ones of delivery of credit and collection of installments. Rather the principal goal of Samata is to establish the right of the landless people by making arrangements with the *kahs* land. Samata has three main programmes:

-Land right

-Democratization

-Gender

*Main Programme of Samata in Mizanpur Union:*

Land Right:

Samata works for land right. Samata assist those who have no land in getting *khas* land according to the government rules and regulations. In Mizanpur, of the total of 117.14 acres (according to the statement of the AC Land office) of *khas* land, 22.08 acres have been given under settlement, and the rest 95.06 acres remain. Samata helps their member apply for the land. Needless to mention, all the members of Samata are landless. After the application is submitted, the Samata worker does the necessary lobbying and advocacy at the offices so the applicant gets the land. Samata in 2000-2001 helped 300 of their members to apply to the AC Land office. Of those, 68 applications are at the AC Land office after being finalized by the DC's signature. Among those, 4 people got land with registration. The rest who had been facing delay in settlement, went to the DC and submitted a memorandum to the him, and he promised to take proper initiatives to distribute the *khas* land as quickly as possible and investigate the corruption in land survey.

CARE:

CARE<sup>7</sup> is a non-government development organization. During the period from 1978 to 1986, CARE worked with the union *parisahd* for construction of roads. Since 1986, it stopped the work with the UP and started to organize 10 women workers in group to repair roads. In Mizanpur union, 10 such women have been working and daily wage for each of them is 43 taka. 90% of this money is given by CARE and the rest 10% by the UP. This program of CARE is named RMC.

*Unregistered NGOs in Mizanpur Union*

RADA (Remote Area Development Association):

In 1997, an NGO named RADA emerged in Silimpur village of Mizanpur union. Seven young men of Silimpur village founded RADA. Each of them subscribed 1000 taka at the beginning. They collected members in the village. Groups of 20 members each were



formed. Saving of 10 taka per member per week started. From the saved money, credit is delivered to the members. There are at present 175 female members and 105 male members of RADA. Total saving generated by RADA is 2,25,000 taka. Saving is withdrawn and deposited in bank account. Money is deposited in the joint account at the names of members Md. Saglul Hossain, Md. Mannan and Md. Iman Ali. There's a working committee of 7 members with Md. Saglul Hossain as the convener, Md. Abdus Sattar Molla as the joint convener, and 5 other members. RADA is trying to get registration from the social welfare office.

Promise:

'Promise' was established by Md. Jalil Sheikh of Char Silimpur village of Mizanpur union. Jalil Sheikh worked at BRAC from 1985 to 1995. In 1995, he formed a *samity* in his own village after leaving the job and returning home. In 2001 he named the *samity* as 'Promise'. Before the naming, all knew the *samity* as Jalil's *samity*. Weekly 10 taka is taken as saving from each member and with the saved money loan is advanced to the members which they repay in weekly installments. Promise at present has 300 members and the saved money has amounted to 3,20,000 taka.

Source of information:

Information have been collected from the respective of NGO offices located in Sadar Upazila and Rajbari district town.

## Annexure 3

Table: Average number of formal interactions on different purposes held with DC in the reported year (2001)

Category of respondents	formal interactions with the DC	
	Law and order	development of educational institutional/ observing national days
Local government N=12	2.0 (12)	(-)
political N=10	2.0 (10)	(-)
Religious N=2	2.0 (1)	2.5 (2)
Social N=7	1.6 (5)	1.5 (4)
Economic N=1	1.0 (1)	(-)
Total N=32	1.9 (29)	1.8 (6)

Source: field survey, 2001-2002

Note: The figures in the brackets indicate the numbers of respondents.

Table: Average number of non-formal interactions on different purposes held with DC in the reported year (2001)

Category of respondents	Non-formal interactions with the Engineer	
	Help for the poor	Tadbir for Job
Local government N=3	5.0 (1)	6.7 (3)
political N=3	6.0 (2)	7.0 (3)
Religious N=1	3.0 (1)	(-)
Social N=3	1.0 (1)	2.0 (2)
Economic N=1	(-)	2.0 (1)
Total N=11	5.3 (4)	5.2 (9)

Source: field survey, 2001-2002

Note: The figures in the brackets indicate the numbers of respondents.

## Annexure 4

Table: Average number of formal interactions on different purposes held with SP in the reported year (2001)

Category of respondents	formal interactions with the SP
	Law and order Institutional
Local government N=12	2.0 (12)
political N=10	2.0 (10)
Religious N=1	2.0 (1)
Social N=5	1.6 (5)
Economic N=1	1.0 (1)
Total N=29	1.9 (29)

Source: field survey, 2001-2002

Note: The figures in the brackets indicate the numbers of respondents.

Table: Average number of non-formal interactions on different purposes held with SP in the reported year (2001)

Category of respondents	Non-formal interactions with the SP
	Tadbir for criminal case
Local government N=3	5.7 (3)
Political N=6	10.0 (6)
Religious N=0	(-)
Social N=1	2.0 (1)
Economic N=2	3.2 (2)
Total N=12	7.2 (12)

Source: field survey, 2001-2002

Note: The figures in the brackets indicate the numbers of respondents.

## Annexure 5

Table-: Local leaders' perception on political influences of the party in power in UP activities

(Multiple responses)

Category of respondents	Types of influence		
	Interfering the UP development projects	Suppressing the apolitical and opposition UP functionaries	Hindering the project implementation work
Local government N=20	90.0 (18)	80.0 (16)	40.0 (8)
Political N=7	71.4 (5)	85.7 (6)	28.6 (2)
Religious N=10	70.0 (7)	30.0 (3)	30.0 (3)
Social N=18	83.3 (15)	33.3 (6)	16.7 (3)
Economic N=1	33.3 (1)	33.3 (1)	33.3 (1)
Total N= (56)	82.1 (46)	59.3 (32)	31.5 (17)

Source: Field Survey, 2001-2002

Note: A total of 56 respondents turn out with the positive responses. Figures in the brackets indicate the numbers of respondents.

Table-5.2: Parliament Member's influence over the UP activities

(Multiple responses)

Category of respondents	Ways to how MP's influences			
	Inclusion of party men to the development project	Allocations of projects	Adjourning the development projects	Making money from the development project
Local government N=25	68.0 (17)	52.0 (13)	24.0 (6)	48.0 (12)
Political N=6	66.7 (4)	50.0 (3)	50.0 (3)	66.7 (4)
Religious N=8	62.5 (5)	37.5 (3)	(-)	87.5 (7)
Social N=18	11.1 (2)	44.4 (8)	44.4 (8)	83.3 (15)
Economic N=2	50.0 (1)	50.0 (1)	(-)	50.0 (1)
Total N= (59)	49.2 (29)	47.5 (28)	28.8 (17)	66.1 (39)

Source: Field survey, 2001-2002

Note: Figures in the brackets indicate the numbers of respondent.

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