

Participatory Budgeting in Local Governance: Global Lessons for Bangladesh

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Abstract

This paper is to discuss the participatory budgeting (PB) in local governance. It examines the position of PB in democracies and discusses the importance as well by discussing the relevant democratic theories. At the same time, the paper compares ten PB processes of different countries' local governments from the different regions of the world and analyzes the similarities and differences. The paper also examines the adoptability of PB in the local government Union Parishad (UP)¹ of Bangladesh and provides lessons for effective implementation too. It is anticipated that PB is an effective tool for engaging citizen in policy decision-making as it is getting importance in governance discourse day by day and gradually becoming a popular democratic practice. It is also the most effective process of attracting citizens in their own interest. As a new democratic innovation PB has already been established as a tool of direct democratic practice in policy decision-making process.

Keywords: Participatory budgeting, local government, deliberation, Union Parishad, Bangladesh.

Introduction

Background

Citizen participation is one of the main components of good governance, which dictates that government operations and decisions should be made openly, and with the active participation of citizens (Folscher, 1999). Participation has become an essential part of modern government (Cornwall, 2008) not only for legitimacy to governance but also to ensure transparency and accountability in broader aspect. It is significantly more rational to engage citizen in local level planning and decision-making instead of national level. There are many processes for engaging citizens in public policy matter. PB is one of the emerging processes of 'engaged governance' that links people more directly to policy decision-making processes. Engaged governance is the latest version of good governance which is about the

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¹Union Parishad (Union Council) is the lowest tier of Bangladesh local government system.

partnership between citizens and government (Guthrie, 2003). PB deals with the same notion of innovative local management practice with the excellent potential to promote engaged governance (UN-Habitat², 2009).

PB represents 'direct democracy'³ to budgeting while representative democracy has deficiencies, especially to uphold the citizens' voice and needs. A major portion of citizens is excluded from the voting system. Besides, citizens have significantly fewer access points to engage themselves directly in policy decision making. On the other hand, PB offers citizens the opportunity to take part in government operations and allows deliberating, debate, and influencing on the allocation of public resources. It is a tool for empowering citizens in strengthening the demand for good governance (Shah, 2007). PB is considered a starting point of 'citizenship schools' as they promote learning and the meaning-giving context in development. It is more important to promote PB at the local level as a way of increasing social equity while reducing clientelism, social exclusion, and corruption (Wampler, 2000), particularly in the case of UP of Bangladesh where these elements are seemed to be evident. Therefore, PB could be considered a broader paradigm shift of governance by which collective decisions are made through public deliberation (Wampler, 2000).

Problem Statement

PB is an emerging process of engaging citizens directly in the public policy-making sphere. While present representative democracies are in crisis due to decreasing voter turnout in the electoral process, this direct democratic practice is getting popular at local level decision-making. So, it is important to discuss why PB is rapidly growing at the local government level across the world. Along with this, it is also significantly important to explore the perspective of theoretical development of PB, as it is still a practical tool. At the same time, although different countries' PB process is rooted in the process of Porto Alegre, Brazil, the public deliberation procedure differs as individual country's social and economic condition as well as political and institutional setting differs.

A comparative analysis of the different PB processes is a demand of time after three decades of its inception. In Bangladesh, the practice of PB particularly has been happening in local government UP and creating enhanced scope to raising voices for a greater share of public resources by the rural poor and vulnerable groups (Rahman, 2005) since the 2000s. Therefore, it is significant to check the adaptability of PB in UP level and examine the institutional and political setting and legal and policy aspects for implementing PB as a common practice.

² UN-Habitat = The United Nations Human Settlements Program.

³ Direct democracy or pure democracy is a form of democracy in which people decide on policy initiatives directly. This differs from the majority of most currently established democracies; e.g. representative democracies.

Research Questions and Methodology

Does this paper have three research questions: (i) why PB is important as a democratic practice in engaging citizen for better local governance? (ii) what are the similarities and differences among different countries' PB process? (iii) Why does *Union Parishad* of Bangladesh need to adopt PB?

To answer these research questions, the paper reviews the relevant democratic theories followed by a comparative analysis of PB processes of selected countries. The paper examines the adaptability of PB in the local government UP of Bangladesh. This study is mainly based on the secondary sources of data and literature, such as existing studies, books, articles of journals, and documents from PB practicing local governments. For Bangladesh case, the main data sources are the documents of participatory budgeting projects implemented by the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives. At the same time, existing laws and policies on local government planning and budgeting are also reviewed. For selecting the multi-country cases, it considers firstly, socio-economic conditions of countries, local governments from both developing and developed countries; secondly, it considers selecting minimum of two cases from each region of the world that has already been evidenced in implementing PB. As it is not commonly implemented in all UPs in Bangladesh, only project-based PB processes are discussed.

Literature Review

Citizen Participation in Democracy and Governance

As Aristotle⁴ said, "if liberty and equality, as is thought by some, are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be best attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost". From Aristotle's time to the present day, in various forms and terms- public involvement, citizen participation, popular participation, community participation, citizen engagement has a progressive notion in accelerating democracy. Michels and Graaf (2010) argue that citizen participation is considered a valuable element for democratic citizenship and democratic decision-making. Participatory and deliberative democrats, in particular, argue that citizen participation has positive effects on the quality of democracy (Michels and Graaf, 2010). It strengthens the accountability of government institutions and policies and focuses on good governance. This is an inclusive process by which poor people exercise voice through new forms of inclusion, consultation, and mobilization (Gaventa & Valderrama, 1999).

On the other hand, increased participation may further entrench existing patterns of political and social inequality instead of the desired effect of increasing the voice of the poor and marginalized in local decision-making (Schonwalder, 1997). Similarly, Dahl (1956) argues in assuming that

⁴ Quoted from the 'Politics' by Aristotle (384BC-322BC), a Greek Philosopher wrote in 350BC.

massive participation could be dangerous. It could even lead to totalitarianism (Sartori, 1987). But other scholars, for example, such as Michels and Graaf (2010) marks these arguments as narrow concept of participation. Recently, citizen participation discourse strengthened more in favor of more direct engagement of citizens in the policy decision-making realm, as Goetz and Gaventa (2001) state that a democratic state has a duty to involve the citizen in decisions that affect their lives and they further mention as a right of the citizen, not a privilege. It not only allows the whole citizen to chip in good ideas but also gives them a stake in the outcome by building ownership, a sense of being part of a decision. This process, termed 'deliberative' by political theorists and practitioners, imparts a different quality to democratic governance (Cornwall, 2008).

Citizen participation in local governance is more significant as local government institutions are to serve the citizens directly. It is better to engage citizens in local government policy planning rather than national because effective participation can be ensured in a small political institution easily. Blair (2000) argues that through participation, local government will become more responsive to citizens' desires and more effective in service delivery. Beetham (1996) asserts that local governance has the potential to democratize because of its greater capacity for responsiveness. But local government decentralization with devolution is essential. Oyugi (2000) argues that the genuine devolution of power to the local level has been rare. But there are demands of democratic local governance with meaningful authority that are accessible and accountable to the local citizenry, who enjoy full political rights and liberty (Blair, 2000). In this context, Fung & Wright (1999) suggests that rules and mechanisms for direct engagement need to be established for new relationships of trust and cooperation, particularly if sectors of society are to be included, which have historically been denied access to the public policy realm.

Participatory Budgeting in Local Governance

The existing conceptual discussions of different literature have distinguished participatory budgeting as a new and pragmatic idea in the realm of direct democracy. De Sousa Santos (1998), a pioneer researcher on participatory budgeting, argues that it is an urban experiment aimed at redistributing city resources in favor of more vulnerable social groups. Another pioneering researcher Wampler (2000), highlights it as an innovative policymaking process in which citizens are directly involved. He elaborates that it is a year-round process to allocate resources, prioritize broad social policies, and monitor public spending avoiding social and political exclusion. He designates participatory budgeting as 'citizenship school' where engagement empowers citizens to learn and be aware of their rights and responsibilities.

Since its induction at Porto Alegre in Brazil, participatory budgeting has been heralded as a crucial democratic innovation that results in a more

fruitful relationship between neighbors and local authorities (Peruzzotti, 2005). At the same time, Abers (2000) shows that it helps to open new venues for social movements. From the standpoint of government-locale relationships, Hall (2005) argues it is a mechanism, which brings local communities closer to the decision-making process around the public budget while it makes connections between residents, political representatives, and local government officials. It is not only about the voice of people but also real power to decide how their tax money is spent.

There is a broad consensus among the analysts in recognizing the success of participatory budgeting and stressing its positive effects for redistribution of resources to poor neighborhoods, improved public services, and budget transparency (Abers, 2000; Baiocchi, 2001). In Latin America, participatory mechanisms are considered as a counterweight against the high level of corruption and clientelism (Chalmers et al., 1997). Jacobi (1999) analyzes participatory budgeting as a new practice of resource allocation; the new mechanism promotes decentralization of municipal decision-making and increases public control over the city's investment policies. It is a way of further decentralization, while decentralization is usually referred to as transfer of responsibilities from central to local. It can be seen as a transfer of decision-making powers from public administrators to the public (Zamboni, 2007).

Analysis of the Theoretical Perspective

This section is to discuss relevant democratic theories and try to reveal why PB is important in local governance. Discussing complex democratic theories are beyond the scope of this paper rather than focusing on major democratic theories. The present world is mainly governed by representative democracies in which the elected representatives decide (Michels and Graaf, 2010) by-election, which is essential in maximizing democracy (Dahl, 1956). On the contrary, social choice theorists argue that it is impossible to define the will of the majority as voter vote for a party's combined issues; election rarely reveals the preference of voters of specific issues of their own (Michels and Graaf, 2010). At the same time, this is a complex decision-making structure in which many actors interact and the decline of representation while decreasing voter turnout and increasing electoral volatility (Cain et al., 2006). Theoretically, the role of citizen participation in democracy is a discussion mainly conducted by participatory and deliberative democrats (Michels and Graaf, 2010). In discussing some case studies citizen participation, Michels and Graaf (2010) develops a framework to sum up, the theories of participatory democracy, deliberative democracy, and social capital in four aspects; such as inclusion, civic skills, and virtues, deliberation and legitimacy. The theoretical perspective of these four aspects is social capital and deliberative democracy, participatory democracy and social capital, deliberative democracy, and participatory democracy, respectively. Arguably, all these four aspects are truly existing in the practice of PB.

Fishkin (2009)⁵ discussed four democratic theories such as competitive democracy, elite deliberation, participatory democracy, and deliberative democracy, while he tried to establish deliberative democracy and public consultation important in the present day's democracy. He checked these four theories by four basic principles, political equality, participation, deliberation, and non-tyranny by a chart where he showed that participatory democracy contains two major principles: political equality and participation. Although deliberation and non-tyranny were not denied but questioned. He elaborates that if there are available incentives political equality is enhanced and deliberation is also ensured as deliberative component in participatory democracy more desirable. The PB process (e.g. Porto Alegre) follows the logic of democratic majority and logic of distribution justice (Gret&Sintomer, 2005) by which equality and inclusion are ensured through active participation by public deliberation.

Habermas (1996), in his "Theory of Communicative Action," illustrated the process of the collective decision through dialogue among the citizens, which also means deliberation. While Patemen(1970), in his "Participation and Democratic Theory," mainly stressed the political participation, which also related to political equality, one of the important principles of Fishkin's deliberative democracy. Participatory budgeting is, of course, a part of participatory democracy. In this paper, more significantly, it is seen as a direct democratic approach under deliberative democratic theory. In a direct democracy, people decide on policies without any intermediary. So, this is a shift from representative democracy to direct forms of democratic governance. The practice of direct democracy extends citizens' political participation beyond the electoral process. It draws on community participation traditions - in identifying local priorities, planning, and implementing programs - to position citizens as a key decision-maker in local governance processes (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2000). But present day's participatory budgeting translated from theory to practice more, a way of governance and also called 'co-governance' in the sphere of public management. So, it is also a deliberative democracy plus.

Based on the above-discussed theories as well as based on Fishkin (2009), Smith (2009), and Michels and Graaf (2010), a checklist for PB is developed to show the position of PB in democratic discourse. The major three democratic theories, such as representative democracy, participatory democracy, and deliberative democracy, along with participatory budgeting, were checked by five main democratic as well as good governance criteria: participation, deliberation, inclusion and equality, transparency or openness and ownership and partnership. These self-defined criteria are marked by '+' means presence, '-' means absent, and '(?)' means ambiguous.

⁵Fishkin in his 'When People Speak' describes deliberative democratic practices of different counties, combining theory and practice.

Table 1: Checklist of Democratic Theories

	Representative Democracy	Participatory Democracy	Deliberative Democracy
<u>Criteria:</u>			
Participation	+ (?)	+	+
Deliberation	-	+	+
Inclusion & Equality	+ (?)	+	+
Transparency/Openness	-	+	+
Ownership & Partnership	-	+	+

Source: Created by Author.

From this checklist, it is found that the most practiced representative democracy is missing three criteria among five. Although participation is present, this participation is done by the only election of decreased voting. Inclusion and equality are also questioned because it always does not ensure the representation of all diversity of citizens. The other two theories of democracy, participatory, and deliberative, meet all these criteria. Although PB itself is not a theory of democracy, it entails similar things mentioned here in the first column, same as participatory and deliberative democracy. That's why PB is emerging as an essential practice of active and direct participation of the citizen in the public financial policy decision-making process.

Demystifying Participatory Budgeting

Definition and Concept

Although there is no established definition of PB, this paper tries to compile the definitions of different PB scholars and practitioners such as Wampler (2000), Goldfrank (2007), Sintomer (2008), Franzke (2010), Hitchcock (2009), and so on. Based on their definitions a comprehensive definition is developed: "Participatory budgeting is (i) a process/method/mechanism/form/tool through which citizens (ii) engage/participate/deliberate/negotiate/involve/take-part/implement/monitor in (iii) decision making/ prioritizing of need/discussion/planning/demanding the rights on (iv) public budget/resource allocation as a whole or part. In a broad sense, it is a citizen-centered governance approach of direct democracy within the representative democratic setting, where all stakeholders such as government, citizen, and civil society (NGOs/CBOs) equally and horizontally play their roles in decision-making over the budget. The above definition of PB is elaborated by Figure 1 as a conceptual framework where to perform PB citizens participate, civil society facilitates and local government officials provide all sorts of support.

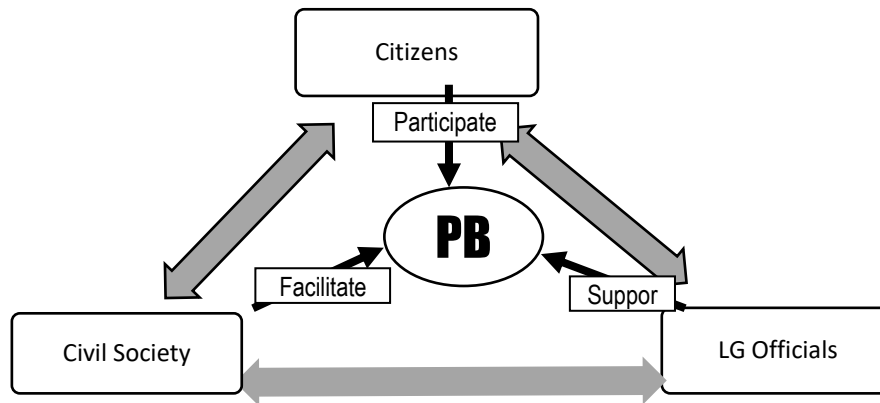


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of PB. Source: Created by Author

This comprehensive definition encapsulates three significant aspects of PB, such as participation by the citizen, facilitation by civil society, and support by the local government. The three stakeholders are equally and horizontally play their role, and nobody is dictated by others. This definition is overcoming the ambiguity and exaggeration of other definitions.

Steps and Cycle of PB

There are no specific steps and cycles of PB. It is usually followed by Porto Alegre's procedures. PB has three general steps (Malena & Khallaf, 2010). These steps and sequential activities are summarized hereby the arrow symbol.

Step 1: Preparation and Initiation

Stakeholder Analysis → Collaboration among stakeholders → Earmarking Fund → Establish guiding principles → Agree upon the principles → Establish PB calendar.

Step 2: Formulation

Informing People → Convene neighborhood open meeting → Prioritizing need in an open meeting → Field visit to prioritized project → Convene municipal budget priority meeting → Technical review of prioritized projects → Approve by local government authority.

Step 3: Implementation

Open competitive bidding of priority projects → Implementation starts → Implementation monitoring and evaluation by citizen → Assess budget for upcoming years.

The general PB cycle takes one year to perform three steps. Wampler (2000) suggests some basic tenets based on the Porto Alegre case. The municipality is divided into regions to facilitate meetings and distribution of resources. A 'Quality of Life Index' is created for the justified distribution of resources. Regions with higher poverty, denser populations, and less infrastructure receive a higher than well-off and wealthier neighborhoods. Then public deliberation and negotiation take place among and between

citizens and the government. A ‘bus caravan of priorities’ is conducted by elected representative visit to preapproved projects before the final vote for selection. Then elected representatives vote on final projects. A municipal-wide council of each region elects two representatives to this council, which oversees and makes final budget recommendations. After final approval of the budget by delegates, the mayor sends it to the municipal legislative chambers for approval. The annual cycle of PB is shown here in Figure 2.

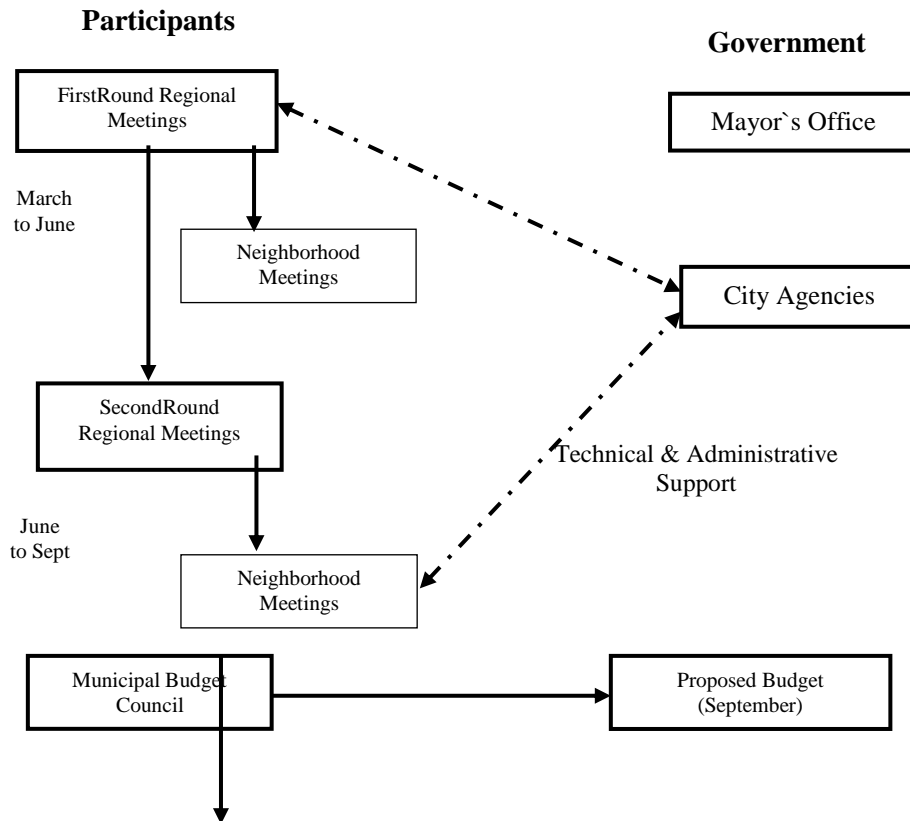


Figure 2. Annual PB Cycle. Source: Wampler (2000).

Preconditions and Factors for PB

The UN-Habitat (2009) identifies a number of basic preconditions by an elaborate study on ‘Planning Sustainable Cities.’ The *first* is a clear political will of the Mayor and the other municipal decision-makers. The *second* is the presence of interested civil society organizations and citizenry in general. The *third* is a clear and shared definition of the rules of the game. The *fourth* precondition is the capacity building of citizens and stakeholders on public budgeting in general as well as PB in particular. The *fifth* precondition is the widespread dissemination of information through all possible means. Finally, the *sixth* precondition is the prioritization of demands by citizens.

Very few studies have identified factors for PB. Based on Navarro (1998), Wampler (2000), and Goldfrank (2007), the summarized factors are given below:

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- Enabling legal provisions and conducive social and economic conditions.
- Strong political commitment and willingness of elected representatives.
- Pro-citizen minded and self-motivated local officials.
- Sufficient revenue strength and available discretionary funding.
- Tradition of participation and cooperation within and among local civic groups with representation of all sections of society.
- Vibrant civil society with strong coalition and network.
- Clear rules and responsibilities of all stakeholders.
- Facilitation skill of local government and CSO officials and capacity of citizens.
- Aware and educated stakeholders, conscious about their local development.
- Public awareness campaign and media involvement.
- Available incentives for all level participants.

International Perspective of PB

PB started first in Brazil 1989 at the municipality of Porto Alegre, the capital of Brazil's southernmost state, Rio Grande do Sul. Then the practice was spread out to many other cities within Brazil in immediate years, followed by other Latin American cities of Argentina, Uruguay, Nicaragua, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Guatemala, Ecuador, Venezuela, and El Salvador during 1990s. PB was introduced in African countries during the late 1990s to early 2000s and had been practicing in many countries; such as South Africa, Albania, Senegal, Mali, Guinea Bissau, Burkina Faso, Benin, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Madagascar, and Uganda. In Europe, PB started before and after 2000 in countries like France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, and the UK. North American countries such as Canadian and American cities started PB about a decade ago. In Asian countries, it spread out in the 2000s in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and in a very small scale in Korea, Japan, and China.

Comparative Analysis of the PB Process

As mentioned earlier in the methodology section, this study selected cases from both developed and developing countries. At the same time, it includes countries from all regions of the world. Hence, this study analyzes Latin American cases from Brazil and Argentina; European cases from Spain, France; North American cases from Canada and the USA; African cases from South Africa and Uganda and Asian cases from Korea and Bangladesh. The summary of case studies is given in *Table 2*. Among the

different deliberation processes of PB, the six major PB processes are shown by four levels: high (+++), medium (++), low (+), and nil (-) and are compared.

Table 2:An Analysis on the PB Process.

Name of Region	Name of Country	Name of LG/City	Major Processes (+++)= High; (++)= Medium; (Low = +); (-) = Nil					
			Face-to-face deliberation	Negotiation/debate	Technical / feasibility analysis	Practical visit to project location	Voting (General consensus/ballot/SMS/ Internet)	Follow up/monitoring
Latin America	Brazil	Porto Alegre	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++ (ballot)	-
	Argentina	La Plata	+++	+++	++	-	+++ (ballot/SMS)	+++
Europe	Spain	Cordoba	+++	++	+++	-	+(consensus)	-
	France	Morsang-sur-Orge	++	++	+	-	+(ballot)	+++
North America	Canada	Guelph	+++	+++	+	-	+(consensus)	+++
	USA	Chicago	+++	++	-	-	+(ballot)	-
Africa	South Africa	Mantsopa	++	+	-	-	+(consensus)	-
	Uganda	Village Council	++	+	+	-	+(consensus)	-
Asia	South Korea	Dong-Ku, Ulsan	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++ (ballot)	-
	Bangladesh	Union Parishad	+	+	-	+	+(consensus)	+

Source: Created by author.

From the summary of case studies, the pioneer since 1989 Porto Alegre, Brazil, has two dimensions of the PB process: the regional and thematic. Although it seems complex (Souza, 1998), it is comprehensive in terms of engaging citizens and allocating budget to those who have less (Baiocchi, 2003). The deliberation process includes regional and thematic discussion, neighborhood prioritization meeting, technical analysis, negotiation and debate, and voting for project selection. The levels of the processes are high in general, but there is no follow-up mechanism.

The La Plata of Argentina started PB in 2008 and follows a little innovative process of mobile voting along with face-to-face deliberation (Peruzzotti et al., 2011). The major processes of deliberation are face-to-face deliberative discussion, neighborhood meeting of public forum and

voting for prioritization, financial and technical verification, door-to-door campaign for vote and final voting by paper or mobile SMS. This PB process has strong monitoring and follow-up system. But this PB process has no in-location practical visit.

The Cordoba was one of the first cities to implement PB in Spain (Allegretti & Herzberg, 2004) in 2001. The PB has three phases with the deliberation process of informative district assemblies and review of previous year's budget, electing district table agents and conducting training for them, deciding prioritization criteria, feasibility analysis and discussion and selection of project. By these process Cordoba ensures strong face-to-face deliberation, medium level of negotiation but strong technical feasibility. But these PB process also has no location visit and follow-up mechanism.

The Morsang-sur-Orge is a small commune in the southern suburbs of Paris in France, stated PB in 2001. This PB process is composed of two simultaneous running processes (Talpin, 2005) such as neighborhood evaluation and discussion meeting followed by technical and final evaluation of choices, budget orientation debate, and consultation, selection of priority by vote. This PB process also has a strong follow-up mechanism. But it is different from La Plata's monitoring mechanism as it has a specific Observatory Committee.

In Canada, since 1999, Guelph residents have been using PB to allocate a small portion of the City's budget through the Guelph Neighborhood Support Coalition, and neighborhood groups share and redistribute resources for the local community projects (Lerner, 2006). The deliberation processes are coalition meeting for city priority, neighborhood meeting for local priority, neighborhood delegate's negotiation meeting, re-evaluation meeting, and budget allocation meeting, finalization of project, implementation, and monitoring by a neighborhood group. An important feature of this PB process is the citizen-led mentoring mechanism, which is a strong part.

Chicago's 49th Ward is among the first political jurisdictions in the United States to use PB from early November 2009. The major processes are neighborhood assemblies and ward-wide introductory meetings, project brainstorming, final list making by neighborhood, and final ward-wide voting. This PB has no three major processes: technical feasibility analysis, project location visit, and follow-up mechanism.

The Mantsopa Local Municipality in the Free State Province of South Africa started the PB process in 2006 when it implemented five phases of Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) (Leduka, 2009). The PB processes include listing of problems by the citizen, civil society group, and local government officials, ward-wide meetings identifying citizen preference and

prioritizing citizen needs and preference, a representative forum for finalizing budget needs, and special council meeting for approval. But Mantsopa PB process has no technical feasibility analysis, project location, voting, and follow-up options.

The PB process is in practice at the village council level in Uganda since 2000 (Shall, 2007). The deliberation processes followed by the village council are the village council's budget meeting for making priority list, parish council meeting for discussion and agreement on priorities, technical consideration by officials, parish executive committee meeting for input and parish council meeting for approval after debate and consensus. This PB also has no option for visit of project location and monitoring system like Morsang-sur-Orge.

The Korean case is distinguished as another Porto Alegre in the Far East (Sintomer et al., 2010). Civic organizations and leftist political parties had shown more interests than the academic community in introducing Citizen Participatory Budgeting (CPB) in Korea. The PB process of Dong-ku, Ulsan started in 2004. The general PB processes of Dong-ku are a little similar to the case of Porto Alegre, such as it has regional and thematic dimensions. The regional and thematic meetings are held on budget proposals and examining of the proposal followed by a prioritization meeting. It also has a PB council that plays the role of consolidation of regional and thematic projects. A final general meeting is held for deciding priorities.

PB was started in Bangladesh in the 2000s. Still, now it is not a widely practiced process but continuing at the UP level under some projects. These deliberation processes are open meeting for disseminating information widely, ward level selection meeting of schemes, visiting the scheme (small project) location, and final open meeting of UP for finalizing the schemes. But this PB seems not strong as face-to-face deliberation, negotiation, and project location visit are at a low level, and at the same time, there is no technical feasibility analysis during prioritization.

The PB process usually follows different steps to perform the activities of public deliberation within a time frame. There are also different types and mechanisms of public deliberation. Some deliberation processes are common to every case of PB, from the earliest Porto Alegre in 1989 to the newest Chicago in 2009 of studied cases. There are few differences, though. Every process has some steps in proceeding with public deliberation. These are initial meetings for information dissemination at the maximum possible grassroots level, such as neighborhood, ward, civic group level. At the same time, in every process participatory process starts from the small unit of citizens, which is important for efficient deliberation outcomes. Technical analysis and evaluation, feasibility checks are also a common process in consideration of the sustainability of the project. Another common process is a visit to the location of project, important to understand the real situation

of demand of some localities. The final project selection is usually done by voting of citizen or their community representatives. There is huge mechanism of consensus building by discussion, debate, negotiation etc. Local government council is just a formality to approve the final voted projects, not to cut-down or add of any project. On the other hand, some PB processes have different feature such as La Plata of Argentina has mobile voting and door-to-door campaign for voting, Morsang-sur-Orge of France has an observation committee, and Guelph of Canada has a neighborhood monitoring group.

Adoptability of PB in the UP of Bangladesh

The practice of PB started about two decades ago at the UP level. But such practice was basically a pilot project. For example, the Government of Bangladesh, UNDP, and UNCDF jointly implemented a project titled ‘Sirajganj Local Government Development Fund Project.’ This project organized PB until July 2000 (Rahman et al. 2004). Besides, some other NGOs organized PB on a small scale in different forms and names such as ‘one-day open-budget session,’ ‘open-budget hearing,’ ‘participatory planning and budgeting,’ etc. (Rahman, 2005).

This section is to discuss and check the adaptability of PB in the UP of Bangladesh. The adaptability is checked by the preconditions and factors of PB identified in the previous section. The following chart in Table 3 illustrates the discussion.

Table 3: Checklist of PB Preconditions/Factors in the UP

Preconditions/Factors	+ / - (?)	Clarification
Legal provision	+	Existence of laws, policies, strategies, etc.
Political will/commitment and supportive political environment	+ (?)	Will of mayor and support from central government
Sufficient/available resource	+ (?)	Sufficient own resource or central government transfer for funding the selected projects
Decentralization (political and institutional)	+	Discretionary political and financial authority in the decision making of
Small size	+	Size in terms of area and population
Bureaucratic competence	+ (?)	How bureaucrats efficiently act in terms of policy matters and
Pro-citizen local government officials	+ (?)	local government officials are concerned over the welfare and development of citizen

Strong civil society network/civic group and association/strong social capital	+	United citizen in different forms of association for their own benefit and generate social capital
Citizen's interest/tradition of participation and cooperation	+	Interested citizenry habitual to cooperate local government body
A defined role of stakeholders	+	Stakeholders such as elected representatives, local government officials, civil society organizations, NGOs and citizens have some extent clear and shared roles and responsibilities
Stakeholder's and citizen's skill	+	Skill to deliberate as well as negotiate over the public interest and has facilitation capability to run a PB process
Ownership and partnership among the stakeholders	+	Stakeholders engaged roles to own of a PB process and making partnerships between and among them
Dissemination of information	+	A precondition to ensure inclusion of all folks from the community

Source: Created by Author.

The above chart depicts the existence and non-existence of pre-conditions and factors of PB in the UP. The existence of a certain factor means by '+' sign, non-existence means by '-' sign, and '?' sign means ambiguity of existence. The UP is governed by the Local Government (Union Parishad) Act 2010. Article 4 and 5 of this act state mentioned ward-level citizen participatory committee and organize open meetings of that committees with the participation of a minimum of 5% voters. Moreover, article 57 has a specific provision for PB and preparation of the budget of every Fiscal Year⁶ on the basis of prioritization by the ward-level committee followed by a participatory budget session. Simultaneously, the National Constitution also provides power to local government to prepare their own budgets, "Parliament shall, by law, confer powers on the local government bodies referred to in that article, including the power to impose taxes for local purposes, to prepare their budgets and to maintain funds"⁷. Political commitment depends on the ruling government's pro-citizen policies as well as ensure of local autonomy with ensuring decentralization and discretionary authority of planning and budgeting. All these are prevailing in UP, but political commitment also depends on UP Head's

⁶ Fiscal year starts on July 1st and ends on June 30 in Bangladesh.

⁷ Article 60 of Bangladesh Constitution 1972.

(Chairman)eagerness. But in many cases, UP Chairman has less capacity and understanding to implement such a democratic practice. At the very beginning of introducing the participatory planning and budgeting process government implemented a pilot project in the name of ‘Local Government Support Project’ at some UP of northern Bangladesh. The project has been marked as a pioneer in the area of fiscal decentralization, participatory planning, and budgeting, as well as local governance. The project has introduced different innovative approaches at the UP level and has become one of the 15 best practices of Social Accountability Exercises in the South Asia region (UNDP, 2007). This project was later extended with new component ensuring resource availability from the World Bank in different phases. At present, the 3rd phase (2017-2021) of the project in the name of Local Government Support Project (LGSP-3) is under implementation. The project cost is BTD 554 billion⁸, which ensured resource availability through the ‘block grant’ to implement PB (GOB, 2018). But UP is fully dependent on the central government in implementing PB. Need to stress upon own resource generation to make PB effective. PB is suitable for small-sized local government for effective implementation. UP is the smallest unit of local government containing on an average of 20,000 populations and divided into nine wards. Participatory planning and budgeting mainly take place at the ward level. The LGSP has six components. One of the important components (component 3) is to build the capacity of bureaucrats, local government officials, CBOs/NGOs, and citizens (GOB, 2007), which ensures the competence of all stakeholders. The pro-citizen local government officials depend on the leadership of individual UP. It cannot always materialize. The project also empowered citizens to make UP accountable and transparent (Rahman, 2005). Bangladesh has active CBOs and NGOs at the grassroots level. These can easily be engaged in facilitating PB. As UP is a local government body at the doorstep of the citizen, they are usually concerned about all sorts of activities. It seems that they own UP’s activities. So, citizens are eager to participate in any UP activities voluntarily. Traditionally it is a societal norm to cooperate among the members of the community and work on partnership basis, which is also important in the implementation of PB. Information sharing is another precondition that is ensured by establishing Union Information Center in each UP office during the last few years (GOB, 2018).

Discussion

This study sought to explore the importance of PB as a democratic practice for better local governance, especially in engaging citizens in public policy matters. A theoretical perspective is discussed by a checklist to find out the position of PB in democracy considering its adequacy in the context of

⁸ 1 USD = 85 BDT (Bangladesh Taka)

citizen participation, and PB is such a practice that ensures all criteria of democracy such as participation through deliberation with inclusiveness, equality, transparency, and ownership in the same line of participatory and deliberative democracy. Both theories aim to reform, rather than replace, representative democracy (Fung, 2006). Although there could be an argument on the degree of presence of these criteria, deliberative democracy through PB overcomes such argument while PB is designated as a “school of democracy,” whereby citizens learn to deliberate, learn about the functions of government, and begin to engage in democratic practices (Baiocchi, 2005). At the same time, PB is rapidly expanding across the world because its core tenets appeal to many audiences as it is considered as a vehicle to broaden the confines of representative democracy and achieve greater social justice (Wampler, McNulty & Touchton, 2018). Since its inception in 1989 in Porto Alegre, Brazil, PB has spread to over 1,500 local governments in Latin America, North America, Asia, Africa, and Europe.

Although PB practice follows some general process for public deliberation, the practical mechanism may vary at the ground level. The comparative discussion of different countries’ PB cases across the world outlined some common features as well as similarities in the process of deliberation and implementation. From the beginning to end entire PB process is led by citizens or their groups while they engage in initial discussion to project listing, prioritization, selection by voting, and in some cases, monitoring and follow-up. Some common features of PB are neighborhood, ward, and civic group meeting, technical feasibility, field visit, and voting. In all steps, stakeholders come in a consensus discussion, debate, and negotiation. Besides, some PB is different, considering the usage of technology support to make participation and deliberation easier and effective.

As discussed in the previous sections, the adaptability of PB depends on the congenial social and political structure of a local government along with discretionary authority with sufficient resource. This paper checked the adaptability with the identified factors of PB by an analytical matrix that clearly showed the availability of positive aspects prevailing in the UP level of Bangladesh. Therefore, every UP can implement PB as common practice as they are also mandated by law and bound to practice it. The major lessons for UP are:

- Although UP fulfills all criteria and factors, it needs to make a strategic plan with a clearly defined implementation process.
- Have to take some crash activities and program to make PB as a common practice.
- Enthusiastic UP leadership is necessary with clear knowledge and understanding of PB and needs to be aware of how PB is good for re-electing for the next period.

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- Should avoid dependency on the central government resources while citizens' concerns will be more effective on their own tax money.
- The use of technology such as introducing e-participatory budgeting could be helpful for the rapid expansion of PB.
- Have to conduct regular awareness sessions among the citizens prior to the start of a PB. Many local rural people are not always aware of their needs and priorities. There might have token-participation if participants are not well capable of raising their voice during deliberation.
- A group of facilitators needs to develop so that they can effectively run a PB deliberation process.
- Inter-UP collaboration for mutual learning needs to establish for understanding each other know-how for avoiding hindrances and delays.

Conclusion

This study discussed the position of PB in the theories of democracy by checking basic democratic criteria and analysis. PB contains all criteria of democracy, such as participation through deliberation with inclusiveness, equality, transparency, and ownership in the same line of participatory and deliberative democracy. It does not replace the representative democracy, but it complements with reform. The study also discussed the PB process and showed the similarities and differences by the comparative case study. It also checks the adaptability of PB in local government UP of Bangladesh by analyzing the identified factors. Despite the impressive findings, this study has some limitations because it is based on secondary data and literature and could not look into detail by fieldwork. Moreover, this study is limited to ten cases, which are, to some extent, evidence of successful implementation, although the selection was made by regional and social and economic considerations.

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