Decentralization in Bangladesh
Theory and Practice

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M. Abdul Wahhab

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(Third Edition)

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This book is dedicated to the memory
of my late father

Publisher's Note

The book Decentralization in Bangladesh: Theory and Practice by Professor M. Abdul Wahhab deals with decentralization process in Bangladesh in general and upazila scheme of decentralization in particular.

The book reveals that upazila decentralization measures of 1982 and the similar measures before it were undertaken mainly by the military regimes. The military regimes experimented local government reforms differently according to their own plan to build support base in the rural areas where bulk of the population live. The upazila scheme was the continuation of chronic change in the structure of rural local government following the change of power at the center by the military take over in 1982.

The decentralization process and local resource mobilization go together. In many developing countries the inadequacy of financial resources is the main cause of the failure of decentralization policies. The book by Professor Wahhab reveals that though the Upazila Parishads were given power to generate revenue from local sources, they could not earn revenue properly due to various problems. Consequently, revenue collection of the Upazila Parishads was very meager. In the face of meager revenue collection, the Upazila Parishads were absolutely dependent on the government for funds. The book further reveals that it was essential for the Upazila Parishads to prepare five year plan and annual plan, but no Upazila Parishad could prepare any such plan. So the upazila plan was an amalgam of the projects proposed by the Union Parishad chairmen who were the representative members of the Upazila Parishads. People's participation in upazila development planning was also very poor.

However, there were many loopholes in the working of Upazila Parishad. But the author considers it a better system compared to previous local government at the thana level because of its elected chairman and financial power along with control over the bureaucracy though in a limited way. The upazila scheme was abolished in 1991, but again in 1998 laws were framed to re-introduce it. The author recommends its revival and suggests for four-tier system of rural localgovernment, namely Zila Parishad, Upazila Parishad, Union Parishad and Gram/Palli Parishad.

The book will, hopefully, by useful to the researchers, academicians, practitioners and students interested in local government at home and abroad.

Preface to the
Second Edition

Although the first edition of this book entitled *Decentralization in Bangladesh* was published in 1996, it was mainly concerned with the various aspects of upazila decentralization (1982-90). Meanwhile, many changes took place in both at the national and local levels of the country. Upazila decentralization was abolished in 1991 and again laws were framed in 1998 to reintroduce it. Fortunately, now upazila decentralization is an issue on which consensus has emerged among the political leaders and the next election of upazila is expected to hold in 2002. Previously, there was serious debate among the political leaders as to the number of tiers of rural local government. This debate has also come to an end it seems to have emerged a consensus about the four tiers of local government in the rural areas.

After the introduction of democratic political system in 1991 two high-powered commissions were constituted, which suggested various recommendations for the rural local government of the country. Various Acts were also passed in this regard. These changes and developments along with their shortcomings have been discussed in this edition. But we hope much more has been done than this. The earlier edition has been thoroughly and extensively revised, and the chapters were reorganized in this edition. A new appendix has been added, the bibliography has been up-dated and the sub-title of the book has been added.

Textually, the present book has been organized into eleven chapters along with appendies and bibliography. Chapter one deals with the setting of problem and methodology. Chapter two discusses the theoretical framework of the study and chapter three analyses the ecology of decentralization in Bangladesh. Chapter four analyses the past decentralization efforts and chapter five states the background and theoretical aspects of upazila decentralization. Chapter six deals with the profile of selected upazilas and leadership as well as personnel strength of Upazila Parishads under observation. Chapter seven examines the finances for upazila development and chapter eight discusses the development planning process at the upazila levels. Chapter nine deals with the people's participation under upazila decentralization. Chapter ten contains the summary of findings of the study and suggests recommendations to strengthen the rural local government system. Chapter eleven is last one, which deals with the changes and developments in local government since 1991.

I deem it my duty to extend my thanks to Professor Aka Firowz Ahmad of Dhaka University and President of OSDER for his keen interest to undertake the publication of this book.

Finally, I remain responsible for any omissions of facts and any errors in analysis and comments made in this study.

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Preface to the
First Edition

The present study entitled *Decentralization in Bangladesh* is an attempt to review decentralization process in Bangladesh in general and upazila (sub-district) decentralization in particular. This study grew out of my doctoral dissertation submitted to the University of Dhaka in 1994. In the course of writing the dissertation, I received help, guidance and advice from many people. Here I cannot mention their names individually for spatial limitations, but I remember all of them with gratitude. Most gratefully I acknowledge my debt to my Supervisor Professor Lutful Hoq Choudhury, Department of Public Administration, Dhaka University, whose magnitude of help, guidance and critical inside at every stage of this research was a constant inspiration, without which this work would not have been completed. Grateful acknowledgements are also due to the authorities of Chittagong University and the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh; the former granted me study leave and the latter awarded me fellowship to carry on this research. I am grateful to Professor M. Anisuzzaman of Chittagong University (now retired), Professor M. Shamsur Rahman of Rajshahi University and Professors M. A. Aleem and Shamim Aleem of Osmania University who made valuable comment on the manuscript of the study and inspired me to publish it.

I am also thankful to Professor Emajuddin Ahmed, Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University; Professor M. Abdul Aziz Khan, former Vice Chancellor of Chittagong University; Professor Rafiqul Islam Chowdhury, Vice Chancellor of Chittagong University; Professor M. Badiul Alam, Pro Vice Chancellor of Chittagong University; Professors A.N. Shamsul Hoque and Golam Morshed of Rajshahi University; Professors Talukdar Maniruzzaman, Syed Giasuddin Ahmed, Mohammad Mohabbat Khan, M. Asaduzzaman, Nazmun Nesa Mahtab and H. M. Zafarullah of Dhaka University; late Mr. Jainul Abedin and Dr. Mohammad Taqui; all helped me in various ways. I am equally thankful to my colleagues at the Chittagong University, especially Professor Muhammad Abdul Hakim, Dean of Social Science; Professor M. Kamaluddin, Institute of Forestry, Mr. Ahmed Zamal Anwar, Professor of Philosophy; Mr. Mohammad ALi, Director, Institute of Forestry; Dr. Mohammad Ali Azadi, Associate Professor of Zoology and Mr. Mozammel Haque, Lecturer in Philosophy for their help in preparing this book. I am also thankful to those local leaders, officials

Contents

Glossary

Ansar	:	Para military police
Beel	:	A kind of Jalmahal (water body)
Baur	:	Another kind of Jalmahal
Bazaar	:	Daily market place
Choukidar	:	Village police
Ghat	:	Ferry or boat station
Gram	:	Village
Gram Pradhan	:	Headman of the village
Gram/Palli Parishad	:	A local council or body at the village level proposed in the study as the lowest unit of rural local government
Gram Shava Gram Unnayan	:	Village Assembly
Committee	:	Village Development Committee
Haat	:	Bi-weekly market place
Haur	:	An extensive marsh
Jalmahal	:	Inland water body owned by the government
Joatdar	:	Petty landlord
Madrashah	:	Islamic educational institution
Mouza	:	The lowest unit of land revenue collection
Maktab	:	Islamic educational institution at the primary level
Palli	:	Rural
Panchayat	:	A village council usually consists of five members
Parishad	:	Council
Para	:	A portion of village
Pourashava	:	Municipality
Suba	:	Province
Subadari	:	Provincial governorship
Taka	:	Currency unit in Bangladesh
Thana	:	Administrative unit consists of several unions covered by a police station
Thana Nirbahi Officer	:	A civil servant who acts as the Chief Executive Officer at the thana level
Thana Unnayn O Samannoy Committee	:	Thana Development and Coordination Committee
Santibahini	:	(Peace force) the Chittagong Hill Tracts *Jana Shanghati Samity,* (Society for the Solidarity of the People) the political wing of the separatist rebels, is known as Santibahini.

Sarkar	:	District during the Mughal period.
Suba	:	Province
Swanirvar	:	Self-reliant village government instituted by the Gram Sarkar Government of Zia.
Union Parishad	:	Local government body at the union level.
Upazila	:	Sub-district, the administrative unit in place of thana. The word Bengali word 'upazila' consists of two words- upa means sub and zila means district. Originally the word upazila was upazila.
Upazila Nirbahi	:	A civil servant deputed to the Upazila Parishad Officer as Chief Executive Officer.
Upazila Parishad	:	Local government body at the upazila level.
Zila	:	District.
Zila Parishad	:	Local government body at the district level.

Abbreviations

ADC   : Additional Deputy Commissioner
ADP   : Annual Development Programs
AL   : Awami (People's) League
ASRC   : Administrative and Services Reorganization Committee
AUDP   : Annual Upazila Development Program
BAKSAL : Bangladesh Krishak Sramic (Farmers and Labors) Awami league
BARD   : Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development
BD   : Basic Democracy
BDR   : Bangladesh Rifles
BGP   : Bangladesh Government Press
BNP   : Bangladesh Nationalist Party
CIRDAP : Center on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific
CAAR   : Committee for Administrative Reorganization/Reform
DC   : Deputy Commissioner
GOB   : Government of Bangladesh
ESCAP   : Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
IOJ   : Islami Oikka Jote (Islamic United Front)
JI   : Jamat-e-Islami
JP   : Jatiya (Nationalist) Party
JSD   : Jatiya Shamajtantric Dal (Nationalist Socialialist Party)
LG   : Local Government
NAP   : National Awami (People's) Party
NGO   : Non-government Organization
Tk.   : Taka (Currency unit in Bangladsh)
SGS   : Swanirvar Gram Sarkar
TTDC   : Thana Training and Development Center
Union   : Rural local government unit below the upazila level.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Centralization and decentralization are frequently used in the study of politics and administration of a state. The earlier states known as the police states were highly centralized. The concept of welfare state has given biorth to the concept of decentralization. The modern states are welfare states. The governments of modern states have to perform multidimensional activities. Without decentralization of administration, it has become almost impossible on the part of the central government of a modern state alone to perform all of its activities effectively (Maddick 1963:26). Secondly, central authority far away from the people may not have adequate knowledge about the local conditions and problems. Hence, centralization of planning and administration proves to be inadequate to the local socioeconomic variations. Decentralization of planning and administration is only the alternative. Thirdly, developmental programs and projects need local support and popular participation. To secure local support and to facilitate popular participation, decentralization of planning and administration is essential. Fourthly, decentralization has its roots in democracy. Political commitment to democracy pushes the central government to adopt decentralization policy in administration. Finally, national governments of many states "are using decentralization as a strategy for coping with political instability which is threatened by secessionist movements and demands for regional autonomy" (Smith 1985:3). Thus, decentralization exists in every state, whether it is big or small, developed or developing "The appeal of decentralization is now so great that it is in competition with democracy as the concept and no political theory, ideology or movement can afford to eschew" (Smith 1980:131).

Although the phenomenon of decentralization is common in all states, developed and developing, the governments of developing states are showing more interest in it. This is because most of the developing states, achieving independence after the Second World War, inherited a highly centralized administration, which could not meet the requirements of independent nations. For, the centralized administration introduced by the colonial rulers was to serve their interest. Moreover, policies taken under the centralized structure focused more on industrial and urban development (Conyers 1983:97). The newly independent states are predominantly rural and their development means the development of the

rural areas where bulk of the population live. Hence, there is a greater interest in decentralization among the governments of the developing states. Now they regard decentralization as a necessary condition for economic, social and political development.

Bangladesh is a developing state. Nearly 85 per cent of its population lives in the rural areas of around 68 thousand villages. Bangladesh is not an exception to the interest in decentralization. Different governments of Bangladesh took different efforts to decentralize powers and responsibilities from the center to the local levels. The important of these efforts are the basic democracy system of Ayub (1959-1969), the district governor scheme of Mujib (1972-1975), the gram sarker scheme of Zia (1976-1980) and lastly the upazila scheme of Ershad (1982-1990). The upazila scheme made a radical change in the decentralization history of Bangladesh and it is the main focus of the present study.

General Ershad assumed power in 1982 by a military coup. Soon after assuming power he announced his own policy of decentralization; and in this connection a high-powered administrative reform committee was constituted. According to the recommendations of the committee, he reorganized the rural local government system where thana level local government was made focal unit in the three-tier structure namely, Union Parishad, Thana Parishad and Zila Parishad. Initially the thanas were upgraded and the responsibility for all development activities at the local levels was transferred to the upgraded Thana Parishads. Later the upgraded thanas were renamed as upazilas (sub-districts) and Thana Parishads as Upazila Parishads. The Upazila Parishads (UZPs) were made semi-elected institutions and given some financial powers along with staff support from the central government. The stated purpose of upazila decentralization was to foster appropriate local development through rural peoples' participation in the development process.

Although the process of decentralization and local government institutions is old, the studies in this regard are fewer still. The studies of Roy (1936) and Tinker (1954) are regarded as the comprehensive studies as to the genesis and development of local government in the country. Roy dealt with Bengal local government and Tinker dealt with local government of India in general. These two studies are mainly concerned with theoretical aspects of local government focusing on different Acts. It is perhaps Rahman (1962) and Wheeler (1967) who first made empirical studies on the functioning of local government. Rahman's focus was on the Union Council at the grass roots level and Wheeler focused on the Divisional Council, the higher tier of local government under the basic democracy system. Rashiduzzaman (1968 and1969) also made an

empirical investigation into the politics and administration of local government under the basic democracy system. He observed that after the introduction of periodical election through adult suffrage, the traditional leadership is breaking down in the villages and an emerging leadership is dominating the local councils. Sobhan (1968) analyzed the political motive of basic democracy by studding the functioning of Rural Works Program. Tepper's (1966) study contains historical background of rural development administration in the then East Pakistan. He observed that the changes introduced for the implementation of rural development projects were more in nomenclature than in substance. In another study he (Tepper 1970) noted the centralizing tendencies of rural development administration and expressed optimistic view about the institutional building efforts, which were underway in the basic democracy system and the Comilla model of rural development. The study of Raper (1970) provides information on the mechanism of the Comilla model of rural development.

The works of Ahmed (1979) and Faizullah (1987) contain the growth and development of local government institutions in Bangladesh. The volumes edited by Siddiqui (1984 and 1992) also contain a brief discussion of local government system in Bangladesh. These works do not attempt intensive analysis. Choudhury (1987) stressed the need for reorganizing local government institutions in Bangladesh by strengthening the Union Parishads. Hoque (1988) analyzed the failure of *Gram Sarkar* instituted by Zia.

Abedin's (1974) work offers an analysis of the changing pattern of local administration and politics focusing on the district administration in Bangladesh. Shawkat Ali's work (1982) also deals with the district administration, but he emphasized the role of District Collector in rural development. Latif (1985), on the other hand, conducted his research on sub divisional administration with particular reference to the role of the Sub Divisional Officer (SDO). Pervin Bhanu (1983) and Shanaj Khan (1995) conducted their studies on the problems of coordination at the local level administration. The former conducted her study on the agricultural administration of a thana, and the later on the Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) Programs at the same level. Wahhab (1985) dealt with local government election and observed that it is largely influenced by the questions of religion, neighborhood, local and non-local and other factional issues. In another study he (Wahhab 1986) remarked that the political affiliation of the members of local bodies is very fluid and shifts with the change of party in power. In this connection his third study (Wahhab 1990) reveals that the persons who win the local

government election, not only control the local government but also control the total power structure at the villages.

The study made by Ali and others *al*. (1983) is perhaps a comprehensive study dealing with the decentralization and people's participation in Bangladesh. The study, based on opinion survey, indicates that majority of the opinion holders preferred thana as focal point of development administration and district as the coordinating unit of thana administration. Most of them also preferred a directly elected people's representative as the head of the thana administration. The study of Akhter (1990) analyzes the sociopolitical impact of upazila decentralization. The study of Aminur Rahman (1990) and that of Tofail Ahmed (1993) are concerned with the relationship between central government and local government. Shamsur Rahman's (1992) study deals with the people's participation, its problems and prospects at the upazila level. Hye (1980) and Zillur Rahman (1986) discussed planning process at the various local levels, while Khan and Zafarullah (1986) analyzed the planning process at the upazila level. The book edited by Hye (1985) contains articles relating to decentralization processes of different countries including Bangladesh. On the other hand, the book edited by Blair (1989) contains articles on local resource mobilization in Bangladesh.

The book of Shawkat Ali published in 1986 is probably a commendable exercise on the upazila decentralization. The author was a Member-Secretary of the Committee for Administrative Reform/ Reorganization according to the recommendation of which upazila decentralization was introduced in the country. He had been thus associated with the upazila administration before its birth. He analyzed the different political and administrative problems that the government of Ershad encountered during the implementation of upazila decentralization. Khan (1984, 1985, 1987, 1988 and 1989) wrote a number of articles on decentralization policies undertaken by government of Ershad. He emphasized the need for the reorientation of bureaucracy to make the decentralized program a success. The same finding is revealed from the observation of Nizam Ahmed (1988) and Mahbubur Rahman (1989). Ashraf Ahmed (1989) and Nurul Islam (1991) held an optimistic view about the upazila decentralization. Yusuf Hyder dealt with the performance of upazila decentralization and spoke high of it. To him upazila decentralization made miraculous development in the way of economic growth. He observed:

> I have attempted to show what miracle the upazila can do in the way of economic growth accompanied by equity within a matter of five years. The secret behind the magic lies in the will of the people to improve their lot by thrift and hard work and by playing their pioneering role in

the development process. The Upazila can provide the leadership, input and service support during the planning and execution stages of the plan and see its post commission performance (Hyder 1986:2).

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

- To review the past local government reforms and find out the changes in the local government administration at the thana level after the introduction of upazila scheme.

- To state powers and functions of the Upazila Parishads in connection with development administration.

- To examine leadership characteristics of the Upazila Parishads and personnel strength and capability in managing development activities at the upazila levels.

- To inquire into financial adequacy of the Upazila Parishads in the context of development.

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

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

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

Due to resource constraints and for research convenience, two districts from each of the former four divisions were selected at random and then one upazila from each of the selected districts was taken at random. Further eight unions, one from each selected upazila, were taken. Selection of the unions was made according to our research convenience and nearness to the upazila headquarters. The names of selected upazilas and unions are given in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Selected Upazilas and Unions

Division Location	Zila Location	Selected Upazila	Selected Union
Chittagong	Chittagong	Hathazari	Fatepur
	Comilla	Chandina	Chandina East
Dhaka	Dhaka	Savar	Aminbazar
	Jamalpur	Dewangonj	Bahadurabad
Khulna	Khulna	Paikgacha	Paikgacha
	Meherpur	Gangni	Gangni
Rajshahi	Dinajpur	Chirirbandar	Abdulpur
	Kurigram	Phulbari	Shimulbari

It was planned to interview all the chairmen and members of the selected eight Upazila Parishads, all the Upazila *Nirbahi* (Executive) Officers (UNOs) and some official members of the selected eight upazilas. But it was not possible for us to interview all of them. We could interview all the chairmen and the UNOs, and not all the members (Table1.2) due to their non-availability and unwillingness to response. However, the total number of respondents among the Upazila Parishad actors is 156. The villagers were selected randomly from three income groups, namely the rich with an annual income of Tk. 35,000/- and above, the middle-income people earning annually below Tk. 35,000/- and the poor earning below Tk. 15,000/-. Here income was considered in gross sense and estimated on the basis of the then market price. The villagers were taken equally from each of the selected unions. As the number of rich in the villages is few and the number of poor is large, this weight was given in determining the sample size of the different income groups. The total number of respondents among the villagers' category is 904. The different categories of respondents along with their number have been presented in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Showing Different Categories of Respondents and their Number

No.	Categories of Respondents	Number
UZP Actors		
1.	UZP chairmen	08
2.	UNOs	08
3.	UZP representative members (UP chairmen)	60
4.	UZP nominated members	20
5.	UZP official members	60
	Total:	**156**
Villagers		
1.	Rich	168
2.	Middle income	232
3.	Poor	504
	Total:	**904**
	Grand total:	1,060

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

i. Relevant books, journals, periodicals, research monographs, and others.

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

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

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

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

Besides interviewing with the structured questionnaire, observation technique was adopted for primary data collection. We attended the meetings of the Upazila Parishads and observed the various dimensions of decentralized administration and development process that were discussed. We recorded relevant information either at the time of meeting or after the meeting was over. We visited the sites of different development projects and observed their implementation process. During the time of observation, we always maintained a diary to record necessary information.

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

Before and during the time of data collection, we informally met the Upazila Parishad chairmen and the UNOs requesting their help about our mission. They helped us in various ways. We also informally met the local leaders and sought their help. Their help made us able to overcome the problems that we encountered while administering the questionnaire at the village levels.

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

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

Decentralization:
A Theoretical Analysis

Meaning of Decentralization

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

Centralization is a system in which all authority and powers of the government lie in the central government. On the other hand, when authority and powers are given to the local levels, decentralization takes place. Rondinelli (1981:137) defines decentralization as the transfer or delegation of legal and political authority to plan, make decisions and manage public functions from national level to local levels. In the same tune, Smith observes "Decentralization involves the delegation of power to lower levels" (1985:1). But these two definitions of decentralization are narrow in operation. They are limited to territorial decentralization and exclude the functional decentralization, i.e. the transfer of authority from central to peripheral organizations at the national level, e.g. from government department to attached offices. Although these two definitions are narrow, they are consistent with the way in which the term "decentralization" is frequently used today specially in less developed countries (Conyers 1985:22).

It should be noted here that the essence of centralization and decentralization lies in the distribution of powers for taking decision and the difference between the two is one of degree, not of kind. No government can completely be centralized or decentralized. Complete decentralization means withering away of the state (Fesler 1968:371). Both centralization and decentralization take place simultaneously and hence "should therefore be envisaged as the processes of movement in either direction along a continuum which has no finite ends" (Conyers 1985:26).

The above discussion invariably indicates that "decentralization is a process, not a condition" (Cohen *et.al.* 1981:17). It is a changing one, not a fixed state. Philip Mawhood described this change as "pendulum model" (Mawhood 1983:8).

Benefits and Objectives

The advocates of decentralization have suggested a variety of benefits of decentralization. Cohen and others described the benefits of decentralization in four categories, viz. (a) administrative, (b) political, (c) economic and (d) primary values such as participation, democracy and self-reliance. (Cohen *et.al.* 1981:33-44) Cheema and Rondinelli identified a wide range of reasons for the governments of developing countries to adopt decentralization policies and programs. The most important of these are:

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

ii.   Pressure from below for increased popular participation in development process;

iii. Influence of aid agencies attempting to promote rural development projects;

iv.   Failure of centrally planned and managed programs to mobilize human and physical resources or rural development in the past;

v.   Increasing complexities of development which increased responsibilities of national agencies;

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

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

viii. Inter-regional economic disparities and ethnic variations;

ix.   The need to mobilize political support from rural areas; and

x.   Recognition of the need to formulate special programs outside the traditional administration to assist the disadvantaged groups (Cheema and Rondinelli 1983:27-30).

Rondinelli and his colleagues at the World Bank reviewed the decentralization practices in developing countries and broadly classified the objectives of decentralization into (i) political and (ii) administrative and management (Ali 1987: 788). Conyers (1885:26-30) categorized the objectives of decentralization into three dichotomous pairs: managerial

versus political, top-down versus bottom-up and explicit versus implicit objectives. A short description of these is given below:

Managerial vs. Political Objectives

By managerial objectives, Conyers means the objectives that are associated with the organization and management of development programs. Under the managerial objective, decentralization is used as a means of improving the planning and implementation of development programs and projects by taking account of local needs, increasing flexibility in the administration of development, mobilizing local resources and increasing local commitment. About the political objectives of decentralization, she holds the view that these are more difficult to identify and analyze, because they are ubiquitous and not often stated explicitly. In fact, decentralization is a political decision about the distribution of power between different levels in political and administrative hierarchy. So, in the managerial objective of decentralization there is also political objective or motive.

Bottom-up vs. Top-down Objectives

The distinction between top-down and bottom-up objectives, according to Conyers, helps explain the objectives at national and local levels. The objectives of national level may sometimes differ from that of local or regional level resulting in a conflict between the objectives at both levels. The majority of decentralized programs in developing countries seem to be initiated at national level and a few countries put a demand for decentralization from local or regional level. For bottom-up objectives, Conyers cited the example of Sudan, Papua New Guinea and Sri-Lanka. However, the initiative of decentralization from national or local/regional level cannot be outside the purview of political and managerial objectives.

Explicit vs. Implicit Objectives

The objectives of decentralization when explicitly stated in a public document or through a declaration are known as explicit objectives. These may be managerial or political, top-down or bottom-up. Implicit objectives, on the other hand, are not publicly stated and are usually of political nature. To explain the explicit and implicit objectives of decentralization Conyers cited the example of Zambia. In 1980, the government of Zambia in a public statement expressed decentralization as a means of `bringing the government closer to the people' especially in the rural areas. Another motive of the government that was not explicitly

stated was the desire to strengthen the role of party at the district and other local levels.

It emanates from the above discussion that decentralization, according to Conyers, is used as a means of achieving a variety of objectives. In the ultimate analysis, her different types of objectives fall in the category of (a) political and (b) administrative and management objectives that were already enunciated by Rondinelli and his colleagues. Conyers "can claim the distinction of being among the few to mention the explicit versus implicit objectives, a subject not touched by many probably because of its delicate nature" (Hye 1985:9). Equally she made an important contribution when she observed "political objectives of decentralization are rather more difficult to identify and analyze, partly because they are not often stated explicitly but also because of their ubiquity" (Conyers 1985:27).

Design

The design of decentralization involves the following questions:

i.   Which of the functional activities are decentralized?

ii. How are these functions decentralized?

iii. To whom the powers are decentralized?

iv. To what level (s) are powers decentralized? (Wahhab 1988:219).

The first question is to decide the type of activities over which the authority is decentralized. The second question deals with the legal basis or sanction of decentralization. Generally, the legal basis or sanction behind the design of decentralization is the constitution and/or legislation. Sometimes order or ordinance of the Chief Executive of the country acts as the basis of decentralization. The third question is to identify who hold the decentralized powers e.g. elected representatives or appointed officials, an individual or a group. The fourth question is to select the level(s) to which the powers are decentralized. There may be several levels where decentralization of planning and administration works.

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

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

c. District level;

d. **Sub-district level**: such as thanas/upazila in Bangladesh and block in India;

e. **Locality level**: such as union or municipality in Bangladesh;

f. **Community level**: such as village; and

g. **Group level**: such as economic enterprise, occupational group, etc. (Uphoff 1985:58).

Forms of Decentralization

The question of measuring the degree of decentralization has given birth to the forms of decentralization and it is very difficult to determine the degree of decentralization in a quantitative manner. In spite of this, there are efforts to measure decentralization by using different terms that are popularly known as the forms of decentralization. They are devolution, deconcentration, delegation and dispersal (Commonwealth Secretariat 1984:5).

Devolution

Devolution indicates the transfer of power to locally constituted political bodies. It has constitutional/legal connotations. The local government is essentially a form of decentralization under the spirit of devolution (Muttalib 1985:2). Devolutionary decentralization is also known as democratic decentralization. When devolution is referred to provincial legislature, it is called political decentralization (Paeniu 1988:204). Devolution in its purest form, has certain fundamental characteristics which are given below:

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

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

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

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

> Finally, devolution is an arrangement in which there is reciprocal, mutually beneficial and coordinate relationship between central and local governments (Rondinelli 1981:138).

It reveals from the characteristics mentioned above that the local governments have recognized geographical boundaries, corporate status and are considered as separate levels of government. They are not merely subordinate governments; they have some independence and autonomy,

and represent the concept of separateness of diversity of structures within the political system as a whole. Since local governments are the part of entire political system, they interact with the central government and other units of government in a reciprocal, mutually benefiting and coordinated manner. Local governments usually assume to entail democracy and exercise collective authority through a council. The members of the council are elected and are accountable to the electorate. The elected members are known as lay personnel (Smith 1985:10). As miniature political institutions operating at their periphery, the local governments enjoy power in raising revenue and in the expenditure of resources, although the central government plays a larger financial role in the operation of local governments. To enable them perform the functions that have been entrusted to them; the local governments employ their own professional staff of administrators and specialists (Dotse 1991:46).

Deconcentration

As a form of decentralization, deconcentration is less extensive than devolution and mostly administrative in nature. It is usually the transfer of specific responsibilities from center to its subordinate officials operating outside the capital city in a system of field administration (Cohen *et.al.* 1981:26). The district collectorate in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh may be cited as the example of deconcentration. Deconcentration is also called bureaucratic decentralization. Thus, both devolution and deconcentration mean the transfer of power from one level to another with territorial jurisdiction. Local administration under deconcentration may either be integrated or unintegrated. In the integrated system of local administration, field officers work under the supervision of local executive. On the contrary, in the unintegrated system of local administration, the field officers work independently of each other and are supervised by different sets of executive (Rondinelli 1981:137).

Delegation

Delegation means the transfer of power by a superior authority to a subordinate one in which ultimate responsibility lies with the transferring authority. Delegation transfers managerial responsibility for specific functions to the organizations that are outside the regular bureaucratic structure and that are only indirectly controlled by the central government. Cohen and others divided delegation of authority into (a) delegation to autonomous agencies and (b) delegation to parallel organization (Cohen *et.al.* 1981:20-26).

Dispersal

Unlike the above "dispersal refers to the posting of officials outside the capital without any substantial transfer of powers and functions to them" (Khan 1985:172). Some writers did not mention dispersal as the form of decentralization. In place of dispersal they mentioned privatism i.e. transfer of authority from public to private sector. (Rondinelli 1983:189). Similarly, debureaucratization has been used by some instead of dispersal/privatism (Friedman 1983:47).

It should be pointed out that under each form of decentralization powers are limited and may be withdrawn by the transferring authority. Generally, the transferring authority does not withdraw powers under devolution unless there is constitutional/legal compulsion or the national interest suffers. On the contrary, in case of other forms the transferring authority does not require any formal authorization in annulling the transferred powers. Again about the accountability, there is difference among the forms of decentralization. Devolution connotes responsibility to the respective electorate, not to the transferring authority, and hence it is downward. In case of other forms, accountability is upward i.e. to the transferring authority. Hence, generally the transferring authority is responsible for the act of commission and omission of those who act under deconcentration, delegation and dispersal.

The foregoing discussion indicates that among the four forms, devolution manifests the highest degree of decentralization and the dispersal refers to the least degree of decentralization. In case of dispersal, neither functions nor responsibilities are substantially transferred to the field level. What happens here are that the officers from the center are sent to the different regions for realization of certain purposes? Delegation is more limited than deconcentration in the sense that under deconcentration some responsibilities are transferred to the field offices, but under delegation though functions are transferred to the lower levels the responsibility lies at the center.

It is also to be noted here that though the four forms of decentralization may be distinguished in respect of their nature, scope and accountability, they are not mutually exclusive. All government structures have some combination of all these four forms with an emphasis on the degree of authority transferred to the decentralized units differing from country to country. For this reason, no clear-cut distinction is found in decentralization policy adopted by the developing countries and hence there are confusion and complexity in implementing the

decentralized programs. However, among the four forms devolution and deconcentration are the most common recognized forms of decentralization, "although not all decentralized systems of government fit clearly into either one or other category" (Maeda 1987:23).

In the above we have briefly stated the different forms of decentralization. This does not mean that we are concerned with all forms of decentralization. Our main concern is only with devolution and hence in the context of present study, decentralization is meant for devolution.

Local Government Vs. Provincial Government

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

a. **Supra-sovereign government:** It is still relatively underdeveloped, such as European Economic Community.

b. **National government:** Today national government is regarded as sovereign that exercises the most authority in the country.

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

d. **Local government:** It is infra sovereign. It works under sovereign national government or quasi-sovereign provincial/state government (Humes and Martin 1969:27).

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

Local Government Vs. Field Administration

The distinction between local government and field administration may be stated from the distinction between devolution and deconcentration as the forms of decentralization. The devolution or democratic decentralization is manifested through the establishment of local government, the characteristics of which we already discussed. Field

administration is an example of deconcentration. Field administration contains three important characteristics that are stated below:

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

> Second, the field officers, generally the civil servants are recruited according to normal selection procedure. They are posted at the field level for a limited period before being moved to another area or back to headquarters.

> Finally, the areas within which field officers function are delimitated by the administrative requirements rather than local requirements unless these have relevance to the administrative tasks of field staff (Smith 1985: 142-143).

In the above discussion, we have stated the different dimensions of decentralization in general and devolutionary decentralization in particular. Now we shall discuss other issues associated with devolutionary decentralization for its effective functioning.

As mentioned earlier, the growing interest in decentralization is not only due to the disillusionment with the result of central planning and the shift of emphasis on equity policy. This is also due to the realization of the fact that development is a complex process that cannot be easily planned and controlled from the center. In other words, the need of decentralized or local level planning arises not only because the national level planners can not often identify local problems, but also because there is a need to involve the general people in development process. Thus, the main thrust of decentralization is to facilitate popular participation in planning and implementation of development activities. This not only creates a more democratic society, but also makes projects and programs more relevant to local needs; and engenders local commitment and, in some cases, makes contribution in the form of money and manpower (Dotse 1991:47). Thus decentralization, local level planning and people's participation are interrelated and interdependent, and one is inseparable from the other. A brief discussion of different dimensions of decentralized planning and people's participation follows in the next sections.

Decentralized Planning: Some Issues

Units of Decentralized Planning

Decentralized planning means devolution of planning functions from central authority to decentralized bodies. Decentralized or local level

planning may be exercised in such levels where decentralization of administration works. But opinions vary as to the appropriate level of such planning. In some countries district is considered as the focal unit of decentralized planning. In other countries, the level either above the district or below to it is identified as an appropriate level of decentralized planning. However, in order to select the appropriate level for decentralized planning, a country has to take into certain considerations, which, according to the report of Expert Group Meeting on local level planning for integrated Rural Development for ESCAP region, include the following:

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

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

iii. Its coincidence with the lowest level of administrative hierarchy (UNAPDI 1980:194).

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

Tasks of Decentralized Planning

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

i.   To inter-link and coordinate the planning and development at the levels of homogeneous small groups, the local government and the administrative unit and to formulate an well-integrated local area plan.

ii. To inter-link the plans and policies of local areas with the regional and national plans and policies.

iii. To mobilize resources at local and supra-local levels in order to match the planned programs and activities with the available resources.

iv. Finally, to implement, monitor and evaluate the development plan and program in terms of outputs, effects and impact with particular reference to the target groups (UNAPDI 1980: 164-165).

Scope of Decentralized Planning

The range and scope of decentralized planning is determined by the size of its geographical limits, and quantitative and qualitative appraisal of its

human and material resources. Generally, the activities that can be planned and executed at the local level, without sacrificing planning efficiency, are considered fit for the subjects of decentralized planning. The Dantwala Working Group on block level planning listed the following areas of functions that form the range and scope of decentralized planning:

i. Agriculture and allied activities;

ii. Minor irrigation;

iii. Soil conservation and water management;

iv. Animal husbandry and poultry;

v. Fisheries;

vi. Forestry;

vii. Processing of agricultural produce;

viii. Organizing input supply, credit and marketing;

ix Cottage and small industries;

x. Local infrastructure;

xi. Social services:

   a. Drinking water supply;

   b. Health and nutrition;

   c. Education;

   d. Housing;

   e. Sanitation;

   f. Local transport; and

   g. Welfare programs.

xii. Training of local youth and upgrading the skills of local population (Menon 1986:226).

Stages of Planning

For its successful working, a development planning, whether national or local, has to pass four well-defined stages. The stages are formulation, adoption, execution and evaluation (Seth 1977:98-100).

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

The execution or implementation of the national plan is the responsibility of the government. The various departments and agencies take necessary measures to implement the plan. The evaluation on the implementation of the plan is the task of an independent body of experts who are not connected with plan formulation or plan execution. This body evaluates the fulfillment of the plan in a strictly impartial manner. To perform the evaluation functions properly, it prepares quarterly, semi-annual and annual evaluation of plan progress.

People's Participation: Meaning and Forms

The most important and at the same time the most complicated issue bearing on decentralization of planning and development is the people's participation. "Calls for participation in development and praise for the value of participation in development have become a common as the ubiquitous adulation one finds for motherland, patriotism, self-improvement and democracy" (Blair 1985:79). In other words, people's participation is regarded as the key component of development process and its need in development is accepted and recognized all around, but there is no clear-cut agreement on the definition of the concept and the mechanism for ensuring effective people's participation.

People's participation means the involvement of general people in development process voluntarily and willingly. Such participation cannot be coerced. According to Blair, people's participation excludes the participation in political process of the country and takes three forms. First, participation in the project cycles, especially within the implementing institutions itself. This involves participation in planning, implementation and evaluation stages of project cycle. Secondly, participation in local organization. Thirdly, participation in local government institutions (Blair 1985:79-107). The main shortcoming of the forms of people's participation given by Blair is the exclusion of people's participation in the benefits of development project, which is the most important form of people's participation. Hence, the forms suggested by Yadav are worth mentioning here. According to him, people's participation has to be understood in the following forms:

i. Participation in decision making;

ii. Participation in implementation of programs and projects;

ii. Participation in monitoring and evaluation of development programs and projects; and

iv. Participation in sharing the benefits of development (Yadav 1986:87).

Prerequisites for Effective Decentralization

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

1. Democratic Environment and Political Commitment

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

ii. Administrative Support and Capability

Administration or bureaucracy plays an important role in the working of decentralization of administration. The success of decentralization largely depends on the support of and commitment to decentralization policies and programs within the line and staff agencies of central bureaucracy. There should also be sufficient administrative and technical capacity for implementing decentralized programs and projects.

iii. Explicit Objective

The objectives of decentralization should be explicit and must be stated in a document or through a declaration. The rules and directives of decentralization must also clearly be written to maintain harmonious relationship among different levels of government and administration so that confusion and conflict may not arise as to their jurisdiction.

iv. Behavioral Factor

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

v. Organizational Factor

Organizational factors that are needed for effective decentralization are:

a. Appropriate allocation of planning and administrative functions among the various levels of government and administration;

b. Flexible arrangement based on performance criteria for allocating functions as the resources and capabilities of local government change over time;

c. Clearly defined and relatively uncomplicated planning and management procedures for eliciting participation of local leaders and people in the formulation, organizations, implementation and evaluation of development projects and programs; and

d. Diverse supporting institutions that complement local government in carrying out decentralized development functions (Rondinelli 1981:142-143).

vi. Resource Condition

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

Although it is possible to identify the above conditions that are conducive to the effective decentralization, the levels of adequacy or measures of effectiveness expressed or implied in these conditions can not be universally prescribed, nor can the precise combination of conditions needed to make decentralization feasible (Rondinelli 1981:143). Of the conditions mentioned above the democratic environment and political commitment are the most important conditions. If democratic environment prevails in the country and political leadership is committed to the decentralization of planning and administration at the local levels, the other conditions automatically will get facilities to be developed. However, fewer the conditions that exist or the greater the obstacles to creating them, the greater the difficulty in implementing decentralized programs.

Chapter 3

Ecology of Decentralization in Bangladesh

Decentralization is a matter of political decision. It occurs in a political setting. "It is this setting that substantially accounts for initiatives to decentralize, conditions the operation of decentralization, and is in turn altered by the political consequences" (Fesler 1965:535). Hence any study of decentralization is closely related to the political setting within which the decentralized policies and programs operate. Administration plays an important role in the functioning of decentralized programs. So the discussion of administrative setting cannot be ignored in the study of decentralization. It is also essential to discuss the demographic view and the socioeconomic settings of the country. The present chapter is devoted to give a short account of all these conditions.

Bangladesh in History

The Pre-British Period

The early history of Bangladesh is obscure. But recent research and excavations at the several sites of Bangladesh and Indian province of West Bengal reveal the separate existence of pre-historic culture of Bangladesh. If we look to the history we find that the two regions now roughly correspond to Bangladesh and the Indian state of West Bengal had always been separate identities although some times were under a common ruler or a common name. The Eastern Bengal roughly the present Bangladesh was known as *Vanga,* its different parts were variously known as *Samatata, Harikala* (Eastern and Central Bengal), *Pundravardhana, Varandra* (North Bengal). Roughly the present West Bengal was known as *Gauda* and also as *Radha, Suhma, Uttar Radha, Dahshina Radha* (Majumdar ed. 1963: 15 and 56). The different nomenclatures used to designate these parts suggest that right from the recorded history, the distinctiveness of present Bangladesh and West Bengal was recognized (Anisuzzaman 1979:18-36). In respect of ruling dynasty there was also difference between the two regions. From the earliest periods, *Vanga* (Bangladesh) had been under the Buddhist rule and *Gauda* (West Bengal) along with some adjoining areas was under the Hindu rule.

A radical change took place in the history of two Bengals with the arrival of Islam and especially the foundation of Muslim rule in Bengal.

East Bengal received the name of Bangla during the Muslim gave, and the people of this region were given the name of Bangalee. Fakharuddin Mubarak Shah was the king of Bangla (1338-49) with capital at Sonargaon. Later on, the term *Bangla* was extended to North Bengal and West Bengal when Sultan Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah (1342-57) united the whole Bengal and laid the foundation of an independent sultanate in Bengal. From his time the whole Bengal came to be known as *Bangala* and the people as Bangalee (Rahim 1968:1-6). The Mughal Emperor Akbar conquered Bengal in 1576-80. But he failed to subjugate Bengal *zamindars* called *Baro Bhuiyans* who independently ruled their territories. During the period of Jahangir Bengal was completely brought under the full control of Mughal rule by Bengal Subadar Islam Khan (1608-11) with capital at Dhaka named as Jahangir Nagar. During the period of Aurangazeb (1658-1707) *Subadar* Shaysta Khan conquered Chittagong from the Arakanese and added to it to the *subadari* of Bengal. After the death of Aurangazeb when Mughal Empire was in a position to decline, the Bengal Subadar Murshid Quli Khan (1717-27) began a practical independent rule in Bengal with capital at Murshidabad. He annexed Orissa to the *subadari* of Bengal and his successor Nawab Shujauddin (1727-38) annexed Bihar to Bengal. However, the Muslim rule in Bengal came to an end after the Battle of Palassy in 1757 and East India Company laid the foundation of the British Empire in Bengal and subsequently it was extended to the whole of India.

The British Period: Communalism and Separatism

It may be mentioned here that with the British conquest of India, the Hindus accepted the British rule because to them it was nothing but a change of the ruler. On the contrary, the Muslims opposed the British rule. The Muslims not only opposed the British rule but also for a long time remained aloof from receiving western education introduced by the British. Consequently, the British did not trust the Muslims and they were systematically ousted from the high positions in the government. On the other hand, the Hindus by receiving western education came closer to the ruling authority and monopolized almost all the professions that were open to the Indian people.

After the war of independence in 1857, which the British called the Sepoy Mutiny, some thoughtful Muslim leaders like Sir Syed Ahamed Khan set to work for improving the position of the Muslims and advocated western education for them. In order to give western education to the Muslims, Syed Ahamed Khan established Aligarh College in 1875. Later on, this college was developed to university. As a result, the Muslims began to receive western education and became conscious of their rights.

But already the conditions of the Muslims became so much deplorable that they were almost exposed to the formidable Hindu dominance. The Muslims found themselves neglected in every field of social and political lives. They felt themselves threatened in the face of stronger Hindu competition.

In 1885 the All India Congress was established, but gradually it was turned into an organization of the Hindus. So the Muslims realized the necessity of a separate political party of their own. Accordingly, the All India Muslim League was established in Dhaka in 1906. The birth of the Muslim league and the award of separate electorate to the Muslims through the Morly-Minto Reforms of 1909 were not liked by the Hindus. Their dissatisfaction was clearly visible after the election of 1937. The Muslim League proposed coalition government in the provinces. The Congress flatly rejected the proposal and the Congress government was formed in all the provinces except Bengal and the Panjab. However, during the Congress rule in the provinces from 1937-1939, the Muslims found themselves in an absolute uncongenial environment. Serious riots went on in the provinces where the Congress formed government and the lives and properties of the Muslims in those provinces were totally insecure. In other words, two years' rule of the Congress in the provinces spelt disaster for Hindu-Muslim unity.

Thus, while the Hindu communalism was simmering and driving the Muslims to the wall, the Muslim separatism was growing stronger. The Muslims developed the historic 'Two-Nation Theory' demanding that the Hindus and the Muslims were two separate nations and for that reason the Muslims would have their separate homeland.

The Muslims of Bengal wholeheartedly supported the movement of separate homeland under the leadership of the Muslim League. Apart from the common causes that led the Muslims of India to join the separate homeland movement, the Muslims of Bengal were moved by more other reasons. These are the oppressive *zamindari* system dominated by the Hindu *zamindars*, the partition of Bengal in 1905 which was opposed by the Hindus and the establishment of Dhaka University, which was also opposed by the Hindus.

a. Zamindar*i* System

A new form of *zamindari* system was introduced in Bengal under the Permanent Settlement Act of 1793. The Act created a new class of *zamindars* in Bengal who were to act as the intermediaries between the ruler and the ruled. The main purpose of the system was to collect revenue

regularly and in this regard the *zamindars* were given much powers. The government was indifferent to the subjects and was not interested in the protection of the subjects against the interest of the *zamindars*. The *zamindars* oppressed the subjects in every conceivable manner. They collected illegal land taxes from the subjects, which were many times greater than the actual rent. The fact was that almost all the *zamindars* were Hindus who tortured the Muslim subjects with or without reason. Against their wishes, the Muslim subjects were forced by the *zamindars* to give subscription to the Hindu religious ceremonies. Some Hindu *zamindars* imposed tax upon the Muslim subjects for keeping beards (Nahar 1976:104-115). Sacrificing the cow in the *Eid-ul-Azha* day is an important religious function for the Muslims. But it was prohibited by the *zamindars* (Rahim *et. al*. 1977:368 and Islam 1964:69). This anti-Muslim attitude of the *zamindars* divided the whole population into two parties--on the one side were the *zamindars* and the Hindus especially the rich class; and on the other, were the Muslims. As a result, the Hindu-Muslims relationship that was harmonious before turned into communalism. Thus "the report on Pabna Trail, showed that if any complainant was a Hindu, the defendant invariably was Muslim and vice versa" (Gupta 1974:51).

b. Partition of Bengal

The partition of Bengal, which was announced by the British government on the 3rd December of 1903 and carried out on the 16th October of 1905, had a far-reaching effect in the political history of Bengal. Although the purpose of partition was administrative, the Muslims of East Bengal gladly accepted it for many reasons. First, East Bengal was a raw material producing area. It had to depend on Calcutta because it was the capital of Bengal and as such a place where almost all the industries flourished. Second, East Bengal was famous in the world for its handicrafts but it had to depend on Calcutta City for selling its products. Thirdly, the East Bengal was educationally backward, all the important colleges and schools were situated in Calcutta and its neighborhood. So when the partition of Bengal took place the Muslims of East Bengal, who constituted a preponderant majority of the population in the province, become very happy, except a few Calcutta based Congress supporting lawyers. With the establishment of the capital, many provincial offices including the Secretariat, the Assembly House, the High Court and other fine buildings were built in Dhaka. The Muslims of East Bengal felt a new pride and hoped that they would make better progress in a separate province governed from Dhaka. The partition did away with their dependence on Hindu predominant city of Calcutta. To them it was nothing but their liberation from the clutches of Hindu domination. But the Hindus opposed the partition of Bengal and they

started agitation for its annulment. Their protest meetings, "processions and chanting slogan of *Bande Matorum*, a song disliked by the Muslims, were considered a danger for the peace of the new province" (Wasti 1964:28). "The movement took clear anti-Muslim turn and was run and organized on Hindu lines. Hindu goddesses and gods were appealed to and oaths were taken in the temple of Kali" (Syeed 1968:26-27). In short, the tactics adopted by the Hindu leaders to mobilize public opinion against the partition of Bengal led to strong difference between the Hindus and the Muslims (Wasti 1964:30-31).

The Muslims of East Bengal under the leadership of Sir Salimullah opposed the annulment of the partition of Bengal. The British government gave assurance to the Muslims that partition was a settled fact and it would continue. But the anti-partition movement launched by the Hindus took a severe turn because of the support of the Congress. On the contrary, the Muslims had no political party of their own to lead any movement against the annulment. So the some Muslim leaders of India, with the invitation of Nawab Salimullah and Vikharul Mulk, assembled at Dhaka in December 1906 and the Muslim League came in to existence. However, the partition of Bengal was annulled in 1911; and only Bengal separated from Bihar, Orissa and Assam constituted a Governor's province. Lord Carmichael was the first governor of Bengal. The Muslims were shocked so much at the annulment of the partition of Bengal and their good faith in the British as well as in the Hindus was badly shaken.

c. Establishment of Dhaka University

After the annulment of partition of Bengal, the British government announced to establish a university at Dhaka to regain the trust of Muslims and to compensate the loss of the Muslims in East Bengal due to the annulment of the partition of Bengal. The announcement was done at Dhaka during the visit of Lord Hardinge, the Governor General of India. At the announcement the Hindus showed serious reaction and they opposed the establishment of university at Dhaka. About two hundred leading Hindus of East Bengal led by advocate Ananda Chandra Roy met the Governor General and submitted a memorandum against the establishment of Dhaka University. The similar reaction was expressed in Calcutta also. A delegation led by Dr. Rammohan Behari met the Governor General during his visit at Calcutta and gave him a memorandum opposing the establishment of Dhaka University. The Vice-chancellor of Calcutta University, Sir Ashutosh Mukharji and veteran politician Shurendranath Benarji also opposed the establishment of second university in undivided Bengal. However, in the face of severe

opposition made by the Hindus the Dhaka University was established in 1921. But for a long time, they tauntingly called Dhaka University as Mecca University. The movement launched by the Hindus against the establishment of university in the Muslim majority area of East Bengal seriously hampered the Hindu-Muslim relationship.

The Muslims League adopted a resolution at Lahore in 1940 demanding the partition of India into the Hindu majority and the Muslim majority areas. The general election of India in 1946 testified their demand. The Muslims League upheld the demand for Pakistan as an election issue and won all the Muslim seats in the Central Assembly and almost all the Muslim seats in the Provincial Assemblies. In the post-election period, the constitutional crisis as well as the Hindu-Muslim communal riots increased in the different parts of India to such an extent that partition of India appeared to be the only solution. As a result, the British government was compelled to partition India and the Indian Union and Pakistan came into existence in 1947. The territory of Pakistan comprised the Panjab, Sind, Beluchistan and North-west Frontier in the west; and East Bengal and Sylhet district of Assam in the east; and also the princely states joined it.

The Pakistan Period : New Colonialism and the Birth of Bangladesh

Pakistan was the result of movement for the separate homeland of the Muslims. But this does not mean that one wing of Pakistan will exploit the other wing. It is true that at the time of the partition of India in 1947 there was economic imbalance between the eastern and the western parts of Pakistan. Only two officers of the ICS (Indian Civil Service) and the IPS (Indian Police Service) who opted for Pakistan were from East Bengal. The British policy of recruitment in army from the martial races of West Pakistan deprived the East Bengal almost completely. In additions, before the partition of India in 1947 East Bengal, as stated earlier, was a hinterland of West Bengal. The partition further increased the imbalance. After the partition of 1947, wealth flowed from East Bengal to India. For, the Hindu *zamindars* and *marwaris* (business group) controlled the economy of East Bengal. After the partition they migrated to India with their accumulated capital. The case of West Pakistan was different. West Pakistan did not lose any capital city like Calcutta that East Bengal lost, and the non-Muslims did not control its economy as the case of East Bengal. Though a few non-Muslims migrated from West Pakistan to India, most of the Muslim capitalists who left India for Pakistan settled in West Pakistan in quest of better prospects because the capital of Pakistan was located there. On the other hand, the Muslim evacuees who came from India to Bangladesh were mostly poor cultivators, petty landholders and landless laborers.

But it is surprising that in the history of 24 years of united Pakistan no systematic effort was taken by the central government dominated by the West Pakistanis to remove the imbalance. Over and above, they always pursued the policy of domination and exploitation against East Pakistan. Their deliberate policy of domination not only affected Bengali literature but also endangered democratic process in the country. Their attempt of making Urdu as only the state language of Pakistan laid the foundation of Bengali Nationalism. Their successive attempts not to share power with the East Pakistanis through democratic practices and finally the military rule produced in East Pakistan for the first time, the politics of regionalism, second the demand for complete autonomy and finally, the struggle for independence.

General Ayub took the reins of the government of Pakistan by promulgating martial law in 1958. Although the government of General Ayub was not acceptable to the people of the both wings of Pakistan, the system of basic democracy and bureaucracy, civil and military, made the government function for a decade. However, mass uprising from the two wings of Pakistan compelled General Ayub to relinquish office in March 1969; and the military led by General Yahya took over Pakistan. General Yahya promised restoration of parliamentary democracy in Pakistan that was replaced with presidentail autrocracy by General Ayub. Accordingly, the parliamentary election was held all over Pakistan in December 1970. The *Awami* League (AL), led by Mujib, captured the majority seats in the parliament of Pakistan. Out of the total 300 seats in the parliament of Palistan, the AL won 167 seats. It should be mentioned here that all seats won by the AL were from East Pakistan and it did not win any seat in West Pakistan. The People's Party led by Z.A. Bhutto, a member of the Ayub Cabinet, emerged second majority in the parliament having no seat in East Pakistan. However, according to the rule of parliamentary democracy, power was not handed over to the Al. Hence Mujib called for civil disobedience and non-cooperation movement that paralyzed the entire administration of East Pakistan and finally, East Pakistan renemed as Bangladesh declared herself independent on March 26, 1971. But the formation of the first government of Bangladesh (government in exils) dates a little back on April 10, 1971. After a nine-month war of liberation Bangladesh became independent in December 1971.

The partition of Bengal in 1905, its second partition in 1947 and the joining of East Bengal with Pakistan and finally the emergence of independent East Bengal renamed as Bangladesh bears the testimony of separate identity of Bangladesh from ancient time.

Geography

Geographically, Bangladesh lies in the north east part of South Asia between 20° 34′ and 26°38′ north latitude, and 88° 01′ and 92° 41′ east longitudes. It is positioned at the top of the Bay of Bengal that forms its southern boundary. Bangladesh is surrounded by India, excepting a short land border with Myanmar in the southeast. The total area of Bangladesh is 55,598 squire miles or 143.999 squire kilometers. An overwhelming proportion of the surface of Bangladesh is a vast, flat, even, alluvial and plain. The rest regions are hilly in the northeast and southeast, and highland in the north and northeast part of the country. Bangladesh is very much the child of its rivers. A network of rivers of which the Padma, the Jamuna, the Teesta, the Brahmaputra, the Surma, the Meghna and the Karnaphuli are important, and their tributaries numbering about 230 with a total length of about 24140 kilometers covering the country flow down to the Bay of Bengal.

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

Agriculture is the main occupation employing 69 per cent of labor force. This directly contributes around 25 per cent of GDP. The industrial sector contributes 11 per cent of GDP and is dominated by the jute processing followed by cotton textiles, cigarettes and garments industries. Bangladesh has a few proven mineral resources. The country has enormous deposit of natural gas.

The People: Socioeconomic and Cultural Setting

Literally the word "Bangladesh" means the land of Bengalis. In fact, Bangladesh is a country of Bengali speaking people. Bengali is the state language and also the language of almost all the people except some tribal people who constitute about one per cent of the population. Like linguistic homogeneity, there is also a religious homogeneity. Islam, the state religion, is followed by 88.3 per cent of the population. The rest of the population is mainly Hindus (10.5%), with some Buddhists (0.6%), some Christians (0.3%) and a few pagans.

Bangladesh is a small country having 143,999 squire kilometers. It stands 89th country in the world by size, but in respect of population, it is the 8th in number and most populous country in the world and 5th in Asia.

The total population of Bangladesh, according to the Census of 1991, is 111.4 million living in 19.9 households. The population-density of Bangladesh is 755 persons per squire kilometer, and it is most thickly populated area in the world. The percentage of urban population is 20.1 while that of rural is 79.9. According to the Census of 1991, the literacy of the country is 32.4 per cent for the population of 7 years and above. The male literacy is 44.3 per cent and that of female is 25.8 per cent. The sex ratio of the population is 106:100 i.e. 106 male per 100 female.

The labor force participation for population 10 years and above is 51.2 per cent of which 31.1 per cent is male and 20.1 is female as per extended definition. In extended definition the activities like care of poultry and livestock; processing, husking, preparation of food etc. arte considered as economic activities which are usually performed by the women in and out of the agriculturally based household in the rural areas. In conventional/usual definition these activities are not considered as economic activities.

Bangladesh is one of the Least Developed Countries in the world where stark deprivation blights the life of more than two thirds of her population. More than seventy per cent of her population consume less than average calorie requirements (2200 kcal per day). Rapid growth of population, traditional agriculture, high man-land ratio and low level of industrialization have led severe unemployment and under employment in the country. Moreover, frequent natural calamities such as flood, cyclone, etc. affect the agriculture, the main occupation of the majority people. Consequently, food deficiency and wide spread poverty prevail here. The labor unrest in the industries and frequent *hartal* from different corners, have made the industries of the country to losing concern. The exports of the country lag the imports.

Bangladesh imports almost all necessary commodities including food grain. Hence, she faces with a heavy and persistent balance of trade deficit. Misuse of government funds and expenditure on unproductive sectors are great threat to the economic development of the country. Since independence in 1971, Taka, the currency of Bangladesh, has been devaluated by 575 per cent in many times. The development budget of the country is almost entirely dependent on foreign aids.

Bangladesh is a transitional society, which is gradually getting rid of its traditional characteristics. Dependence on tradition, custom and hierarchy of authority are the characteristics of Bangladesh society. In Bangladesh society, the hierarchy of authority begins at the family in which the

children are born and brought up. The children are to obey their fathers, mothers or elder members in the family and carry out their orders. The children are not encouraged to exercise their own choice and responsibility. Consequently, a feeling of subordination grows among the children in the family, and they become dependent on other to take decision. This prevents the children from building their personality and self-confidence. The hierarchy of authority is also manifested in the social life. The *sardars* and the *matbars*, the grass roots level leaders are consulted by the common people in the society for taking any decision. This outlook of the people is not conducive to the change and development. The requirement for development and modernization is that the people themselves must change. Development will not occur without psychological change in individual thoughts and personality. Development requires creative and innovative persons—the entrepreneurs (Choudhury 1979:41).

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

Most of the people of Bangladesh are illiterate. The illiteracy and authoritarian family and social life as well as authoritarian attitude of the bureaucrats created a situation that the ordinary people generally do not get much interest in community development works. Being unaccustomed to make their own decision, the ordinary people find it very difficult to exercise the task of decision making and thus they continue to look to the officials for decisions and for answer to their many problems. On the other hand, a considerable number of bureaucrats also believe that the ordinary people are not capable of doing anything with their own initiative. Hence a sense of apathy has developed among the people and thus popular participation in developmental works remained very low. The people are not only indifferent of developmental works, but also indifferent of their rights. So "of the three elements of the state⎕the citizens, the politicians and the administrators, the citizens are the least organized and articulate elements" (Haque 1970:19).

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

> While the inarticulate illiterate rural masses, who are under the strong influence of religion and traditional thoughts and practices and who are very conservative and orthodox, stood at one extreme, the modernized elite, who are relatively much more secular and progressive and who are familiar with western ideas, stand at the other extreme (Abedin 173:66).

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

Corruption is not only confined among the government officials. It is also rampant among the members of the public, such as contractors, dealers and suppliers and others through whom the development works are undertaken. The representatives of the people are not also out of corruption. According to a study, when Rural Works Program was launched in the country in the year of 1962 five per cent of the total fund allotted for the Rural Works Program was taken by the government officials concerned as bribe. With the passage of time, the percentage of bribe increased and on the eve of Ayub's downfall it increased to 15 per cent. After the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, the percentage of rural development fund taken by the officials as bribe increased more. In this connection, some UP members argued that if a person prepares a false master roll of 15 per cent or more for the government officers, what amount he will appropriate for his own? From this one can understand the cases of the UP members (For details, see Wahhab 1998: 89-92).

In Bangladesh most of the people are suffering from frustration. In connection with frustration, the people may be divided into three

categories. First, the moneyed and educated employed persons are not satisfied with their income and position. They want more and more. Their frustration grows partly because of the fact that nepotism, money and contacts with high-ups in political, administrative and social hierarchies play a vital role in furthering one's interest; and partly from the facts that the above mentioned malpractices are so wide that it is not surprising for them to think that they failed to get facilities for promotions, permits, licenses, etc. Secondly, many educated or half-educated persons, who are unemployed or underemployed, are severely frustrated because there are least possibilities of employment opportunities according to their educational qualification. Thirdly, due to unequal distribution of wealth and corrupt practices, the wealth and/or land became concentrated in the hands of a few people. As a result, the number of low-income people and landless laborers is increasing tremendously. Now they are a vast majority and suffering from frustration. The feeling of frustration resulted in social tension and consequently this situation made the people selfish, irresponsible, parochial, abusive and contemptuous.

Political Setting

Bangladesh is a unitary state. According to the constitution, the government of Bangladesh is to be democratic one (Bangladesh Constitution: Article II). Both the governments in exile and post-liberation led by the AL followed parliamentary democracy of the British type. However, within three years after taking office, the government of the *A*L amended the constitution and presidential rule of one party political system was introduced in the country. The presidential form of government introduced by the AL differed from real presidential type as it is found in the United States of America. It had similarity with the form of government under the Fifth Republic of France. The President, the Chief Executive of the country was directly elected and he took precedence over all other persons in the country. There was a provision of the Vice President to be appointed by the President. The Vice President exercised such powers as the President by order could specify. The President was assisted by the Council of Ministers and he presided over its meetings. The Council consisted of a Prime Minister, one or more Deputy Prime Ministers and other Ministers; all were appointed by the President and accountable to him. They were the members of the legislature, but not accountable to it. Thus though presidential in name, it also maintained some characteristics of parliamentary system. After the political change in 1975, though Zia introduced multi-party politics, presidential form of government continued to function till the Twelvth Amendment of the constitution in September 1992. According to the Twelfth Amendment, parliamentary democracy again has been revived in the country.

The constitution provides for a unicameral legislature, which is called *Jatiyo Sangsad* (House of Nation). It consists of 300 members directly elected by adult franchise. The elected Members of *Jatiyo Sangsad* elect 30 female Members. The *Jatiyo Sangsad* is a National Parliament and is vested with the legislative power of the Republic (Article 65).

The highest judiciary of Bangladesh is the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court comprises two Divisions, the Appellate Division and the High Court Division. The Supreme Court consists of a Chief Justice to be known as the Chief Justice of Bangladesh and such number of other judges as the President deems it necessary to appoint to each Division (Article 94). The President appoints Chief Justice and other judges. Below the Supreme Court, there are subordinate courts.

Although constitutionally Bangladesh is a democratic state, before the national election in 1991 there was no change in the government through proper election. Change in the government had been the result of coups, assassination or mass movement. Consequently, before 1991 except a short break (1971-75) Bangladesh was governed by military rule, directly or indirectly.

Administrative Setting

The apex organization of the national administration is the secretariat, the nerve center of entire administrative organization and the main spring of all governmental activities. It is the hub of administration, and the main center of policy-making. The secretariat consists of all ministries. A ministry is composed of one or more divisions. A division is divided into wings, branches and sections. A Minister is the political head of a ministry and a Secretary is its administrative head. Next to Secretary, there are in descending order, Additional Secretaries, Joint Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Secretariat Setup

Minister	Political/Policy head
Secretary	Administrative head of a Ministry/Division
Additional Secretary	In-charge of a Ministry /Division
Joint Secretary	Head of Wing
Deputy Secretary	Head of Branch
Assistant Secretary	Head of Section
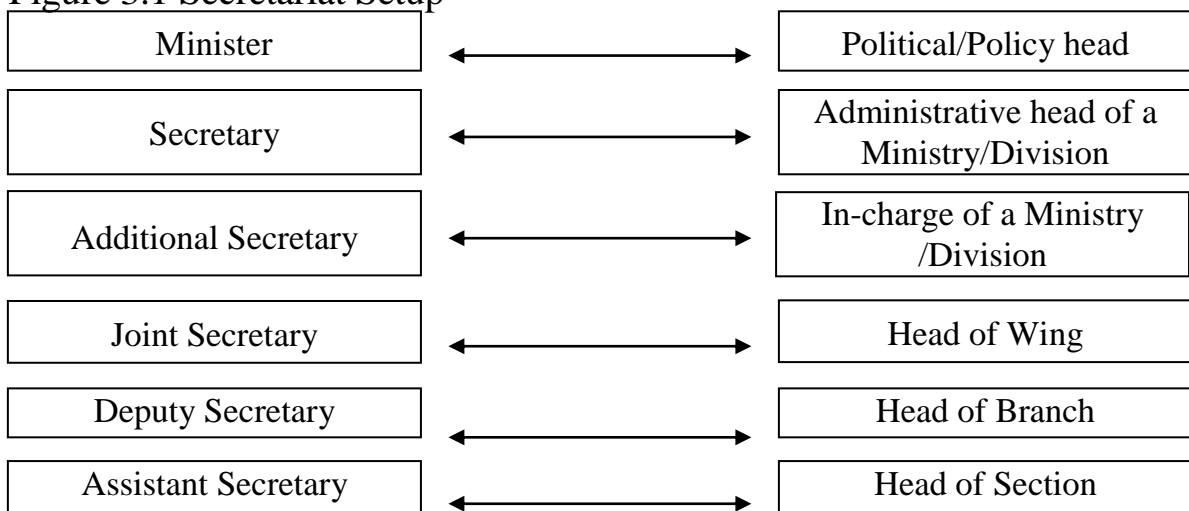
The Ministries are responsible for the formulation of government policies and the implementation of those policies are the functions of executive agencies, called attached departments and subordinate offices. The attached departments, also called directorates, are responsible for providing executive directions required in the implementation of policies formulated by the ministries to which they are attached. Subordinate offices are responsible for detailed execution of the policies at the field levels.

There is another type of functional administrative bodies called public statutory organizations (autonomous/semi-autonomous bodies). These bodies are variously known as corporation, authority, board, trust, etc. They function according to their respective acts, ordinances, rules, and executive orders. They have also subordinate offices spreading over the country. The functional departments and their subordinate offices may be classified into various categories, viz. regulatory departments, service departments, nation building departments, etc. This classifica-tion is an arbitrary one.

For the convenience of field administration, the whole country is divided into divisions headed by Divisional Commissioners. Each division is divided into zilas (districts). A Deputy Commissioner runs the administration of zila. The zilas are subdivided into several thanas (sub-districts). Formerly the upazilas were thanas and the zilas were basically subdivisions. The subdivisions were converted into zilas and thanas were upgraded into upazilas when General Ershad carried on administrative reorganization in 1982-1984 that we are discussing later. The BNP government that came to power in 1991 abolished upazila scheme and renamed upazila as thana, but the AL government again passed laws in 1998 to reintroduce upazila scheme. Next to upazilas there are unions in the rural areas. A union is composed of several villages. In the urban areas of the country there are Pourashavas (Municipalities) and City Corporations (Figure 3.2).

It should be recalled here that the present administrative system of Bangladesh is not the creation of independent Bangladesh. The administrative system dates back to the Muslim, the British and the Pakistan periods. The field administrative units were created in different times for revenue collection.

Figure 3.2

Level   Field Administrative Setup

Level	
Central	Ministry/Division
	Department/Directorate Bureau — Corporations/Autonomous Bodies
Division No 65	Divisional Commissioner Division Level Officers
Zila No.64	Deputy Commissioner Zila Level Officers
Upazila No.462	Upazial Administration
Union No.4401	None
Village No.68,000	None
Urban Areas City Corporation No.4	None
Pourashava No.225 (March 01)	None

The villages of Bangladesh have been from time immemorial. The ruling dynasties changed over the years, but the villages remained unchanged. As the Muslim rulers were urban based, they were more interested in urban administration. They laid the foundation of district administration. In order to collect revenue the Bengal *suba* was divided into nineteen sarkers during the period of Akbar, the great Mughal Empire. The British government renamed it as district and appointed Collector in the districts in 1769. The British government also created division in 1829 consisting of four or five districts to supervise the functions of the districts. They also created thanas and unions. The unions were created in 1870 as the units of rural local government and thanas were created in 1875 for police administration.

LG Provisions in the Constitution

The constitution of Bangladesh introduced in 1972 made provision for elected local government and people's participation. Article 11 of the constitution states:

The Republic shall be a democracy in which fundamental human rights and freedoms and respect for the dignity and worth of the human person shall be guaranteed and in which effective participation by the people through their elected representatives in administration at all levels should be ensured.

Article 59 deals with the local government in the following languages:

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

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

    a. administration and the work of public officers;

    b. the maintenance of public order ; and

    c. the preparation and implementation of plans relating to public services and economic development.

Article 60 of the constitution delineates the fact that:

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

The above mentioned provisions of local government were abolished in 1975 when under the Fourth Amendment of the constitution one party political system was introduced in the country. Since then until now the local government institutions were constitute by the ordinances, the discussion of which follows in the next chapter. However, when Zia introduced multi-party political system, a sentence on local government was incorporated in the constitution in 1979 under the Article 9 that states:

> The state shall encourage local government institutions composed of representatives of the areas concerned and in such institutions, special representation shall be given, as far as possible, to peasants, workers and women (Bangladesh constitution as amended up to February 28, 1979).

The provisions for local government that were abolished by the Fourth Amendment in 1975 were revived word for word in September 18, 1991 under the Twelfth Amendment of the constitution (Bangladesh Constitution as amended up to October 10, 1991: Articles 59-60). But the

Article 9 of the constitution that was incorporated in 1979 remains unchanged.

This is the socioeconomic and politico-administrative environment in Bangladesh. Under such environment the different governments of Bangladesh experimented different decentralization measures, the discussion of which follows in the next chapters.

Chapter 4

Decentralization in Bangladesh: Historical Perspective

The British Period

It follows from the preceding chapter that the genesis of Bangladesh administration dates back to the periods of the Buddhist/Hindu, the Muslim and the British rules. But undoubtedly, it was the British who introduced modern administration in the sub-continent. They introduced a large number of reforms for solving the administrative problems of the country including the problem of decentralization. As we are concerned with devolutionary decentralization, the present chapter deals with the past efforts of decentralization especially the development of the rural local government institutions.

The British introduced colonial rule in India. To prolong their rule they developed controlled institutions as army and bureaucracy, and discouraged the growth of democratic institutions like elected legislatures, political parties, etc. They were not interested in decentralization unless it served their colonial interests. However, politically decentralization process in a restricted sense was started in the British India with the Charter Act 1853. It first created Legislative Assembly in India consisting of 12 members including the Governor General, the Commander-in-Chief, 4 Members of Administrative Councils and 6 government officials from the provinces (Ali *et.al.* 1985:39). Under the India Council Act 1861, the provincial legislatures were created and the Government of India Act 1919 demarcated the provincial subjects from the central subjects. Finally, the Government of India Act 1935 partially granted autonomy to the provinces. But administratively, decentralization process started before the Charter Act 1853. Even the local government, which is essentially a form of decentralization and "operationally an administrative organization" (Muttalib and Khan 1983:17), was given start before the British became the ruler in India. The regular and modern municipal government started its journey in 1687, when king James II granted the East India Company a Charter according to which the Company was empowered to establish Municipal Corporation at Madras. The Company was also empowered to establish Municipal Corporation at Calcutta and Bombay through the Charter of 1726 granted by King George I (Choudhury 1973:12-19).

Attempts were made to establish municipalities in other towns with the Acts of 1842 and 1850. Since then many Acts were passed about the municipal government. The Bengal Municipal Act 1932 was the final Act, which not only governed the municipalities of Bengal but still it provides the fundamental principles of municipal government in Bangladesh (Wahhab 1993:204).

The local government in the rural areas of Bengal was established with the Bengal Village *Choukidari* Act 1870. The Act was passed in response to Lord Mayo's resolution on financial decentralization, which among others, proposed to extend opportunities for the development of local self-government. This does not mean that before the Bengal Village *Choukidari* Act, Bengal had no village government at all. The villages of Bengal in the olden days had *Panchyats* or bodies of elders who were responsible for running the village affairs. However, before 1870 the British governments took no initiative to organize the self-governing institutions in the villages. Rather they wanted to maintain law and order in the villages by the *zamindars* created for revenue collection under the provision of the Permanent Settlement Act 1793. The function of revenue collection was carried on by the *zamindars* properly, but the maintenance of law and order was hampered seriously. The main reason for this was that most of the *zamindars* were urban dwellers, and they generally came to the villages during the harvesting seasons for revenue collection. Due to their absence throughout the year, law and order situation in the villages deteriorated. When the problem of law and order took an acute turn in the villages, the British government passed the Bengal Village *Choukidari* Act in 1870. The Act created a primary unit of local government called union consisting of several villages. This was presided over by five-man committee called *Panchyat*. The *Panchyat* was not an elected body. The District Magistrate appointed its members. Membership of the *Panchyat* was obligatory and on refusal, one could be fined up to Rs. 50.00 (Roy 1936:133). The District Magistrate was empowered to remove the members of the *Panchyat*. The *Panchyat* was responsible only for maintaining law and order in the villages and *Choukidars* (watchmen) were its instrument. To meet the expenditure of maintaining *Choukidars*, the *Panchyat* was given power to assess and collect tax, known as *Choukidari* tax, from the villagers.

Lord Ripon, the then Viceroy of India is deservedly known as the father of modern local self-government in India. The credit goes to him for giving more prominence to the idea of local self-government than to the idea of more local taxes for the services that was the dominant feature of the preceding years. In 1882, the objectives of his famous resolution on local self-government were three folds: (a) financial decentralization should be

carried to the local bodies, (b) administration of the local bodies should be improved, and (c) the local bodies should be developed for political and popular education (Tinker 1954:43-63). Ripon's resolution with certain modifications was accepted in 1885, and accordingly the Bengal Local Self-Government Act 1885 was passed. The Act 1885 established a network of local government throughout the country that still provides the basis of network system in the rural local government of Bangladesh. The Act created three tiers of local bodies in Bengal. Union Committee for a union, Local Board for a sub-division and District Board for a district. The Union Committee was to be constituted by the villagers with an election of informal character. It was given the power of municipal functions such as education, sanitation and communication; and the management of village police remained with the *Panchyat* created in 1870. The Local Board at the sub-divisional level was simply a coordinating body for the Union Committees without independent authority and source of income. It acted as the agent of the District Board that was given wider executive and financial powers. Although the Union Committee was given power of municipal functions, it had no financial power, and in this way, it was made dependent on the charity of the District Board. The Act 1885 did not provide any Chairman for the Local and Distract Boards. The District Magistrate and the Sub Divisional Officer (SDO) respectively were made chairmen of the District Board and the Local Board. Two-thirds members of the Union Committee, Local Board, and District Board were elected by an informal election, and one third nominated by the government. The system of nomination continued till 1946 when it was abolished on the recommendation of the Bengal Administration Inquiry Committee 1944-45 (Rashiduzzaman 1968:5). Thus, the extensive control of the government on the local bodies through the system of nomination as well as the official chairman and limited financial power hampered the proper growth and development of local self-government bodies in Bengal. In other words, local self-government reforms since 1885 onwards were more for administrative convenience than for either national or local political aspirations.

In 1892, an Act was passed according to which the control of *Choukidars* was given to the regular police. Now the *Panchyat* could recommend candidates for the posts of *Choukidars* and the District Magistrate would appoint them. Thus the Act 1892 made the *Panchyat* totally powerless (Ahmed 1979:13-14).

The Decentralization Commission (Hobhouse Commission) 1907 reviewed the existing institutions of local self-government. It suggested that the members of the *Panchyat* should be elected and their functions should

be expanded gradually. It also suggested that the Local Board should have independence and separate sphere of duties, otherwise it could not justify its existence. With regard to the District Board, the Commission held the view that there should be more elected members in the District Board and its chairman should be a non-official one. The Commission recommended the formation of circles within the subdivision to extend the civil administration to the rural areas (Tinker 1954:64-83). According to the recommendation of the Commission, the circle consisting of two or three thanas was introduced in the selected sub-divisions of Bengal in 1911, headed by the Circle Officer (CO), a member of junior civil service. The main function of the CO was to supervise and guide the local bodies at the union levels. While recommending the circle system, the Decentraliza-tion Commission proposed to create Circle Board, a new tier of rural local government. But the Circle Board was never constituted in Bengal. The circle system became universal in the subdivisions of Bengal with the recommendations of the Bengal District Administration Committee, 1913-14 (Ali 1982:37). The circle system was in operation in the country after the independence in 1947 till January 1961 when the thana was converted into a development circle which we shall discuss later.

Meanwhile, in the political arena the Muslim League and the Congress were demanding greater participation and self-government through constitutional means. Moreover, the British government after the First World War did not possess sufficient finance to take welfare measures for the people and could not earn their confidence. Hence, the government decided to place the local bodies under popular control while retaining effective power of government firmly in the hands of officers. Montague-Chelmsford Report 1918 clearly pointed out this policy of the British government, which culminated in the Bengal Self-government Act 1919 (Choudhury 1987:10-11).

Under the Bengal Self-Government Act 1919, the *Panchyat* and the Union Committee were merged into one body called the Union Board. The Local Board and the District Board remained unchanged. However, the Local Board was abolished in 1936. The Act 1919 provided the Union Board with wide scope and authority for municipal functions including some powers of finance. The Act also made provision that the Union and District Boards would have their President/Chairman from their own elected members. Undoubtedly, the Act 1919 contributed a lot toward the development of local bodies, yet they were not fully representative bodies. Two-thirds members of the Union and District Boards were elected and one third was nominated. The element of nomination was a clear departure from the concept of local self-government. Moreover, during that period

women were not enfranchised. The franchise was limited to those male persons of 21 years and above who paid one rupee as tax (Roy 1936:149). The limited male voters also could seldom exercise their vote freely without fear. The voters had to vote by open declaration before the presiding officers and in the presence of candidates or their authorized agents. Consequently, local *zamindars* and moneylenders influenced the voters.

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

The Pakistan Period

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

The constitution of Pakistan was promulgated in March 1956. The constitution declared Pakistan as the Islamic Republic and made provision for parliamentary form of government both at national and

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

Basic Demorcary

The coup d'eta leader General Ayub introduced basic democracy throughout Pakistan, which made a radical change in the inherited local government system. It covered both urban and rural areas of the country. It was pyramidal in structure consisting of four tiers. These were Divisional Council, District Council, Thana Council and Union Council respectively at division, district, thana and union levels. In the urban areas there were Town and Union Committees; and Cantonment Boards in the cantonment areas. Later Municipal Committees were formed in the towns where Union Committees were established.

At the time of promulgation of the Basic Democracies Order 1959 General Ayub claimed that with the introduction of basic democracy, democracy has been brought to the doorstep of the people. According to him, the aim of basic democracy was direct participation of the people in the management of their affairs through representative bodies that were not far away from their own village (Inayatullah 1964:29). But this was not true. In fact, basic democracy was far away from the principles of local self-government and democracy. Except the bodies at the grass roots levels, all bodies of higher tiers were devoid of elective and representative character. Even initially, the bodies at the grass roots levels were not fully elected. One third of their members were nominated and two thirds were elected. The chairmen of these bodies were not elected directly by the general voters; rather the members among themselves elected them. The chairmen of the Union Councils and the Town Committees, if any, were the ex-officio representative members of the Thana Council, and the thana level officials were its official members. However, the number of officials

would not exceed the number of representative members. The Sub Divisional Officer was the chairman of the Thana Council. In his absence, the Circle Officer (Development) was the acting chairman. In fact, Circle Officer (Dev.) was the nerve center of the Thana Council.

The District Council consisted of equal number of both officials and non-official members. The chairmen of the Union Councils and the Town/Union Committees within the district elected the non-official members. The Deputy Commissioner was the Chairman of the District Council. Similarly, the Divisional Council consisted of official and non-official members headed by the Divisional Commissioner concerned. Thus, all bodies from the Thana Council upward were not directly elected by the people and thus "lacking any elective support they tend to become rubber stamps for official decision making" (Sobhan 1968:94-95). In other words, these bodies were used as the extended arms of the central government through bureaucracy rather than the organizations of local government.

The control on local government by the central government through bureaucracy may further be analyzed if we discuss the power and functions of different Councils under basic democracy system. The Union Council was given a wide range of functions including the power to levy taxes, but the Thana Council as the former Local Board had no power to generate fund from imposing taxes nor did it have any specific functions in relation to local government. The Thana Council performed such functions as were given to it by the government and the District Council. Its main responsibility was to coordinate and control the functions of the Union Councils and the Town Committees. The District Council, on the other hand, was given a number of functions and it was so bureaucratized that it marked retreat beyond 1885 position when only 25 per cent of its members were nominated (Sbohan 1968:78). Like the Thana Council, the Divisional Council had no specific functions of local government except coordinating the activities of local bodies at the lower levels, and formulating and recommending to the provincial government development schemes of importance to the division. The government could further direct the Divisional Council to undertake any functions entrusted to the District Councils. The government provided fund to the Divisional Council to meet its routine expenditure and to give grants to the District Councils and other local bodies.

The main motive behind the introduction of basic democracy was to legitimize Ayub's regime and to create a new pattern of leadership especially in the rural areas in support of the regime. First, after the election of the Union Councils and the Town/Union Committees, General Ayub

sought a vote of confidence of the basic democrats, i.e. the members of these bodies including the members of the Cantonment Boards, on his assumption of the Presidency through a referendum held in February 1960. He managed to win about 96 per cent affirmative votes of the basic democrats (Wahhab 1988:217). Second, the basic democrats were given power of electoral college to elect the President and, the central, and provincial legislatures. "This political role of the Basic Democracies, however, assumed greater importance than their administrative and local government functions" (Jahan 1972:130). Finally, an economic program called Rural Works Program (RWP) was launched in 1962 with the objective that it would strengthen basic democracy and helps the rural poor to participate in the development process. But basic democracy was so much politicized by General Ayub for the support of his regime that the RWP failed to its objectives. It was turned into an alliance of the Union Council members, the village touts and the officers denying the people at the grass roots levels a participatory role.

However, despite the shortcomings of basic democracy as devolutionary decentralization, it had a great impact on the development of deconcentrationary decentralization, especially at the thana level. With the introduction of basic democracy, the thana administration was reorganized in 1961. The thana, used for police outpost, was converted into a development circle where RWP, Thana Irrigation Program (TIP) and two-tier Cooperative (*Krishak Shamobay Samitiy* (KSS)— Farmers' Cooperative Association (KSS) and Thana Central Cooperative Association (TCCA) were launched, and Thana Training and Development Center (TTDC) was established.

With the establishment of TTDC in 1963, thana was provided with some infrastructure and it became an important unit of development administration. Many officers from different nation building departments including a development officer called the Circle Officer (Dev.) were posted at the thana level. Most of the offices of these officers were located at the TTDC building. Thus, the establishment of TTDC brought the officers of nation building departments at the thana level into a campus to work as a team. They were also getting organized when they were made the official members of the Thana Council. As the vice-chairman of the Thana Council, the Circle Officer (Dev.) emerged as a team leader and coordinator. The assumptions behind official and non-official members of the Thana Council were that the people should be mobilized through their elected leaders, and the officers should be coordinated in departmental activities with each other as well as with the elected leaders (Ali, *et.al*.1983:153).

Decentralization in Independent Bangladesh

Post Independence Politics

In connection with the independence of Bangladesh, a number of achievements may be attributed to the *Awami* League and Mujib who also actively participated in the movement of separate homeland for the Muslims in 1940s. After the liberation in 1971, the government of Awami League headed by Mujib was encountered with many problems including the constitution making. The government of Mujib successfully completed the task of constitution making within a time of less than a year. The constitution of Bangladesh was promulgated in November 1971 in which Bangladesh was declared as the Peoples' Republic. The principles of nationalism, socialism, democracy and secularism were incorporated in the constitution as the fundamental principles of state policy. The constitution provided for parliamentary democracy. It also provided for elected local government, which we discussed in a separate aection of chapter 3.

But the government of Mujib became unpopular within two years after taking the office, and it became clear that Bangladesh was steadily approaching a grave political crisis. Among the most important factors, responsible for this, were the large-scale distribution of political patronage to the party members, and the creation of special militia called the *Jatiyo Rakhhi Bahini* (National Security Force, JRB). Instead of the army and the police, Mujib had more reliance on the *Jatiyo Rakhhi Bahini* (JRB). The mission of JRB was to maintain Mujib security and to eliminate anti-Mujib and anti-Awami League forces. In doing this, the JRB took a heavy toll of innocent lives (Ziring 1980:42). Thereafter a law under the name of 'the Special Power Act' was enacted in February 9,1974. Under the grave of this law thousands of leaders of anti-Awami League were arrested. Since 1974 to date many arbitrary actions were taken by the different governments under the authority of this law.

In the face of severe crisis in the country, the government promulgated state of emergency on December 28, 1974 and suspended the constitutional provisions relating to fundamental rights. Except four, all newspapers and periodicals were closed down. Now Mujib, who fought for parliamentary democracy during Ayub regime and was jailed for long time, argued like Ayub that parliamentary system was not suited to Bangladesh's needs. So "he insisted on the adoption of presidential system that would better allow him to consolidate power" (Ziring 1980:43). On January 25,1975 at the single initiative of Mujib, and reportedly against the wishes of most of the members of the parliament belonging to the Awami League,

the constitution was amended (Fourth Amendment) to provide one party state of presidential rule. The amendment bill was passed so hurriedly that it took a period of half an hour, without debate. According to the amendment, Mujib became the President of the Republic with enormous power and authority symbolizing one- man rule. He was also empowered to form a single national party. Accordingly, all political parties were banned and a national Party called BAKSAL (Bangladesh *Krishak Sramic* [farmers and labors] *Awami* league) was formed in June 1975. Almost all members of the new party were the members of the *Awami* League. In fact the BAKSAL was the *Awami* League under a different name. However, the period of one party presidential rule was very short and the government of Mujib ended with the change of political power in August 1975. Since then the military ruled Bangladesh directly or indirectly till 1990.

Decentralization : Mujib Period

After independence, the new government of Bangladesh was confronted with many problems including the problem of relief distribution. For the administration of relief goods, the Relief Committees were constituted at the union and the thana levels comprising the local leaders of the AL, the then ruling party (Wahhab 1980:9). The government abolished basic democracy and renamed Union Council as Union *Panchyat* and later Union Parishad, Thana Council as Thana Development Committee (TDC), District Council as Zila Board, and Municipality as Paurashava. The government also converted every town, whether big or small, into Pourashava. The government took plan to constitute the Union *Panchyat*/Parishad like the Relief Committee, but for strong criticism from various corners, the plan for appointment of the party members was given up; and the *Tahshildar* (Land Revenue Collector) or the Agriculture Assistant at the union level was appointed its Administrator. Keeping in view the location of Paurashava, the Circle Officer, the Sub Divisional Officer or the Additional Deputy Commissioner was appointed its administrator. This system continued until the elections of the Union Parishad and the Pourashavas in 1973.

The government of Sheikh Mujib took the question of administrative reform, and set up a four-member committee on March 15, 1972, styled as the Administrative and Services Reorganization Committee (ASRC) headed by Professor Muzaffar Ahmed Chaudhury, the then Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University. The report of ASRC was submitted to the government in three phases (1974-75). It was the first comprehensive report that dealt with almost all aspects of administration. The report pleaded for democratization of administration in the country, and strongly

argued for devolution of authority to the local governments. It proposed that subdivisions with necessary territorial adjustment should be converted into zilas, and division should be eliminated as a unit of administration. It also recommended that the post of Deputy Commissioner should be retained with necessary changes, and the post of Divisional Commissioner should be converted into the Vigilance Commissioner. It further proposed for establishing Regional Planning Authority (The Report of ASRC 1974:270-288).

The ASRC recommended for three tiers of rural local government, namely Union Parishad, Thana Parishad and Zila Parishad. It also proposed that thana should become the basic unit administration; and the development administration both at thana and zila levels should be transferred to the local governments, i.e. Thana and Zila Parishads. As to the constitution of Union, Thana and Zila Parishads, the ASRC recommended the following:

— Fully elective Union and Thana Parishads including the chairman and the vice chairman, the election to be held on the basis of universal adult franchise.

— The Zila Parishad would be a directly elected body having the number of members @ one member per 40,000 of population.

— The chairman and the vice chairman of the Zila Parishad may, however, be elected indirectly by an electoral college consisting of all the chairmen, the vice chairmen and the members of the Union and Thana Parishads within the district (Report of the ASRC 1974:23-24).

The constitution of Bangladesh, promulgated in December 1972, made provision for elected local government and people's participation as we mentioned it in chapter three. Hence, the government as it was then constituted and headed by Mujib was constitutionally committed to establish local government and local administration run by the elected representatives of the people. Unfortunately, the government of Mujib neither followed the provision of the constitution about local government nor made the report of the ASRC public. The government organized the Union Parishads and the Paurashavas only, and made no provision for the TDC and the Zila Board. As there was no provision for organizing the Thana Development Committee and the Zila Board, the CO (Dev.) was given power to perform the functions of the TDC in consultation with the Thana Relief Committee, and the Deputy Commissioner was made the administrator of the Zila Board (Choudhury 1987:17-18). Thus the government headed by Sheikh Mujib was not willing to establish elected

local governments at the thana and district levels. Rather the government was thinking of party-oriented administration at these two levels, the discussion of which follows in the next section:

It has been mentioned in chapter three that the Fourth Amendment of the constitution provided one party state of presidential rule. As per requirement of the Fourth Amendment, the provisions for elected local government were abolished. By a Presidential Order, issued on June 21, 1975, the government introduced a new administrative system in which divisions and subdivisions were abolished and subdivisions were upgraded into districts. According to the new system, a district was to be governed by an appointed District Governor as chief officer-in-charge of general administration of the district. The District Administrative Council was to be set up from September 1975 in the following manner:

1.	Governor;	Chairman
2.	All MPs from the district;	Member
3.	Deputy Commissioner;	Member, ex-officio
4.	Secretary of the District Committee of the national party;	Member, ex-officio
5.	Police Superintendent;	Member, ex-officio
6.	One member of the national party from the district to be nominated by the chairman of the party;	Member
7.	One representative from each of the district unit of the *Jatyo Krishak* League, *Jatyo Sramik* League and *Jatyo Mohila* (woman) League to be nominated by the chairman of the party;	Member
8	One representative from each thana unit of the national party to be nominated by the chairman of the party;	Member
9.	The chairman of each Pourashava in the district;	Member
10.	One representative of the Cantonment Board of the zila, if any, to be nominated by the Board;	Member
11.	One senior officer of the Army, Navy, Air Force, BDR and JRB stationed in the district to be nominated by the Chief of Staff or as the case may be, D.G of the force concerned; and	Member
12.	The holder of such other office of the government and local authorities of the department as the government may from time specify (GOB 1975)	Member

It was decided that like the Administrative Council at the district level, the Administrative Council at the thana level will be set up in one year's time. It was also decided that the UP will be abolished and the multipurpose cooperatives will be instituted at the village levels. However, the constitution of District Administrative Council mentioned above clearly indicates the authoritarian attitude of the government headed by Mujib and

that it was willing to devise a net work of control for it. According to its plan, the government announced the names of the District Governors. The Governors were the members of the National Political Party (BAKSAL). They were supposed to take the charges of the districts after a special political training for one month. "The plan was to put half a battalion of JRB under each governor, with governor being directly under the control of the President" (Maniruzzaman 1988:181). However, the plan of party oriented administrative system was not materialized as the August coup 1975 did away with Mujib and his authoritarian rule.

Decentralization: Zia Period

Political Change and Development

After the August political change in 1975 Mushtaq Ahmed, a minister of the Mujib's Cabinet, was made the President of Bangladesh. Ten of the 18 members of Mujib's cabinet joined the government of Mushtaq. The government of Musthaq abolished the party based restructuring of administration, and ordered the continuation of original districts. Mushtaq's period was very short. On November 3, 1975 a counter coup was staged and Chief Justice Sayeem was installed as the next President. After four days, on November 7, a Sepoy Revolt occurred and Lt. General Ziaur Rahman, the Chief of the Army Staff, emerged as the strongman a government and effective power holder. General Zia took over the power of the Chief Martial Law Administrator on November 19, 1976 and subsequently installed himself as the President on April 11, 1977. His assumption of the office of the President was legitimized through a referendum held on May 30, 1977. Martial was lifted within a year, constitution was revived and Zia was elected the President on June 3, 1978

Zia was a freedom fighter. He was popular among the military as well as the people for the courageous role he played in the liberation war of 1971. He was aware of the pulses of the people and the undemocratic measures adopted by the government of Mujib. He made changes in the constitution. He restored multi-party political system, but retained presidential form of government introduced by Mujib. Bangalee nationalism was substituted by Bangladeshi nationalism. Bismillahir Rahmanir (in the name of Allah, the Beneficial and the Merciful) was added in the preamble of the constitution. Secularism was dropped from the constitution and in its place 'absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah' was provided. Socialism was redefined as 'social and economic justice'. By introducing multi-party political system Zia attempted to convince the western democratic countries of his democratic credentials and by incorporating Islamic provisions in the

constitution he was successful in winning the support of the right wing political parties as well as some Muslim countries. (Akhter, 2001:57).

In February 1979, the Parliament election was held, and Zia's party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), won sweeping victory. The martial law was lifted on April 2, 1979. However, Zia's regime ended when he was assassinated on May 30, 1981 in the port city of Chittagong by some of his army commanders

LG Reforms

The government of Zia also took administrative reform measures, but the commission he constituted for this purpose mainly dealt with the pay and services. By an ordinance known as the Local Government Ordinance 1976, Zia introduced three-tier system of rural local government. They were Union Parishad, Thana Parishad and Zila Parishad. By another ordinance (the Pourashava Ordinance 1977) he organized the Pourashavas in the urban areas. Both the Union Parishad and the Pourashava were elected bodies except a few nominated female members/commissioners. But the Thana Parishad and the Zila Parishad were not elected bodies. The composition of the Thana Parishad was almost similar to that of former Thana Council. The Zila Parishad was not constituted as per provision of the Ordinance 1976. The Deputy Commissioner acted as its chairman and another officer viz., the Assistant Director for rural development, or the Assistant Director of local government was made its secretary. However, the nature of functions and the control of government over the local bodies through bureaucracy remained essentially the same as under Ayub regime. Over and above, the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner, the Sub Divisional Officer, and the Circle Officer (Dev.) were given more coordinating power (Ali *et.al.*1983: 59).

In the Local Government Ordinance 1976 there was a provision for creating a new institution of local government at the village level. Strategically the implementation of this provision was delayed and another new institution viz., the Thana Development Committee (TDC) parallel to the Thana Parishad was created in 1978. The UP chairmen within the thana were made the members of the TDC. The UP chairmen elected one of them to be the chairman of the TDC. The Deputy Commissioner was the controlling authority of both the Thana Parishad and the TDC. It was also decided that 3-8 persons from general people would be added to the TDC provided that the number of such members would not exceed the number of the representative members, i.e. the UP chairmen. Although the chairman of the TDC was the drawing and disbursing officer, the Circle

Officer (Dev.) was to issue certificate for fund, and the Sub Divisional Officer countersigned the bills of the TDC.

The plan of the TDC further required the approval of the Thana Parishad. This dual authority of the TDC and the Thana Parishad created difficulties in planning and implementing development projects at the thana level (Interviewing of the author with some UP chairmen who were members of the TDC.

After being elected the President in 1978 and the victory of the BNP in the parliamentary election of 1979, General Zia turned his attention to the district and the village levels to execute his own plan of administration. Accordingly, the District Development Coordinator (DDC) and the *Swanirvar Gram Sarkar* (Self-reliant Village Government) schemes were introduced in the country.

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

i)   To coordinate and assist in implementation of different develop-ment schemes in respective administrative district as directed from time to time;

ii)   to entertain and process public complaints; and

iii) any other duties given by the President (Ali *et.al*. 1983:134).

Since these decisions were politically motivated, there was no evidence for the improvement of development conditions at the district levels. Rather a study reveals that the scheme of DDC failed in its purpose (Roy 1981:144-157).

The *Swnirvar Gram Sarkar* (SGS) was one of the most notable features of the government of General Zia. In April 1980, he announced to establish the SGS in each village starting from May next. Accordingly, the Sawnirvar Gram Sarkar (Constitution and Amendment) Rules 1980 were promulgated in May 1980. The Rules got the approval of the Parliament in June 1980 with the passing of Local Government (Amendment) Act 1980. A SGS consisted of a chief executive called *Gram Pradhan* (Village Chief) and eleven members of which two must be women. The *Gram Pradhan* and the members were to be selected through consensus of the persons present in the meeting of the *Gram Shava* (Village Assembly). The *Gram*

Shava was composed of all persons whose name appeared in the electoral roll of the village(s) concerned. The SGS was given such functions as it considered necessary for overall development of the village and in particular (i) to increase in food production; (ii) mass literacy; (iii) population control; and (iv) law and order and settling local disputes (Huque 1988:73-74).

With regard to the introduction of SGS the opposition leaders especially the *Awami* Leaguers expressed their doubt about the sincerity of the government. According to them, the government planned to create a class of village touts to perpetuate the BNP rule thorough the SGS. In response to this criticism the government replied that the political opportunists were opposing the SGS, who practice politics with basis only in the towns. The government argued that the SGS, a village government on the basis of self-help, was essential to build a society that would help the villagers to become conscious of their community interest and participate in the development process (Parliament Debate, the June 21, 1980, published in the different daily news papers).

However, whatever might be the reply of the government, the implicit political objective appeared when the government made hurry in amending the Local Government Ordinance 1976 to pass the Local Government (Amendment) Act 1980 for establishing the SGS. The entire machinery of government was employed for the SGS and within a year the government could bring all villages of Bangladesh under the SGS. Moreover, the rules for the constitution and functions of the SGS were framed in such a way that the government officials as well as the ruling party members were allowed to play prominent role. The government could inquire into the affairs of the SGS through its officers and suspend it for some time. The sources that were expected to supply the required fund to the SGS are (a) contribution from individuals, village cooperative societies or any institution or local authority; and (b) any other income from any legitimate source (Haque 1988:74). Thus, the sources of fund of the SGS were vague and consequently, it had to depend fully on the government for fund. Furthermore, the SGS was established in isolation from the main structure of local government and no linkage was established with the Union Parishad. However, with the assassination of Zia on May 30, 1981, the momentum generated by the SGS began to degenerate slowly, and ultimately in 1982 after the assumption of power by General Ershad, the SGS along with the scheme of DDC was abandoned.

Although Zia did not install elected local governments at the district and thana levels, he took attempt to gear up development activities at the thana

level that got set back after the independence of Bangladesh. During the period of his rule, the scope of thana administration became so wide that officers from almost all the nation building departments were posted at the thana level. In the study of Birgonj thana of Dinajpur district, Majumdar (1981:12-20) observed that 41 officers from 14 ministries were posted there. The study made by Ali *et.al.* (1983:150), reveals that on the average 62 officers of the government departments and the autonomous bodies were working in a thana. These two studies, however, included the officers of bank, railways, etc. who were outside the purview of development administration. On the average, for development administra-tion at the thana level there were 24 officers from different ministries. Most of those officers were class II and a very few of them were from class I (Sami 1979: 6-8).

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

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

ii) creation of the TDC parallel to the Thana Parishad.

It has already been discussed that the CO (Dev.) was posted in 1960s as a team leader of all officers from the nation building departments working at the thana level. The CO (Dev.) was given higher pay and status compared to other officers in the thana. He could thus exert influence as a senior officer over the officers of other departments to get the desired cooperation, and hence his role as a coordinator was effective. The situation was changed with the implementation of the new national pay scales in 1977. The new national pay scales placed the CO (Dev.) in the scale of Tk. 625-1315, and some officers in the thana such as Agriculture, Live-stock, etc., junior in pay and rank, were placed in the scale of   Tk. 750-1470. Now the officers having higher scale became unwilling to accept the coordination role or the chairmanship of the CO (Dev.) in the meeting of the Thana Parishad.

Chapter 5

Upazila Scheme of Decentralization

Emergence of Ershad

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

General Ershad took over the charges of the Presidency on November 11, 1983. Like Generals Ayub and Zia, he sought approval of the people to his becoming President through a referendum held on March 21, 1985. Later he managed to hold parliamentary and presidential elections on May 7 and October 15, 1986 respectively. His party *Jatiyo* Party (National Party) won the majority of seats in the Parliament, and he assumed the mantle of the elected President and the martial law was lifted on November 10, 1986. Since there was widespread rigging in the election, a movement was started against General Ershad. Most of the leaders of the major political parties were arrested. Lastly when the MPs of the *Jamat-e-Islami* (JI) having ten seats in the parliament resigned, General Ershad dissolved the Parliament. Again parliamentary election was held on March 3, 1988, but the major political parties did not participate in the election. Hence, General Ershad's political Party, *Jatiyo* Party (JP) managed to capture almost all the seats in the parliament. However, the regime of General Ershad ended in December 1990 when he was compelled to hand over power to a caretaker government headed by Chief Justice Shabuddin Ahmed.

Formation of CARR

On the day of assumption of power, General Ershad announced desire to evolve a new administrative system that would be people oriented and

capable of removing the gap between people and administration (General Ershad's address to the nation through radio and television, March 24, 1982). To recommend such administrative system a Committee was appointed on April 28, 1982 known as the Committee for Administrative Reorganization/Reform (CARR). The Committee was headed by Rear Admiral Mahbub Ali Khan, the then DCMLA and Chief of the Naval Staff and Adviser-in-Charge of the Ministry of Communication. The terms of reference of the Committee were:

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

b. to recommend an appropriate, sound and effective administrative system based on the spirit of devolution and the objective of taking the administration nearer to the people (Report of the CARR 1982: i).

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

CARR identified the following nine major inadequacies of Bangladesh administration:

a. Lack of appropriate and uniform personnel policies with regard to recruitment, promotion and training of public services;

b. *Tadbir* (lobby) based approach to decision making;

c. Difficulties of the common men to comprehend compartmentalized functions and complexity in governmental decision making;

d. Absence of sound and durable political process to provide appropriate policies for the welfare of the people;

e. Vertical functional departmentalization that vitiates area based coordination;

f. Weak local government system rendered weaker by lack of appropriate political directions;

g. Weakening of traditional administrative and representative institutions at different levels of administration;

h. Creation of parallel political and administrative institutions leading to conflict in jurisdiction; and

i. Reluctance on the part of political authority to devolve power to the representative institutions at local levels (The Report of CARR: vii-viii).

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

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

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

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

c. Chairmen of UP to be members of TP.

d. Chairmen of TP to be members of ZP.

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

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

g. UP/TP/ZP chairman to be chief coordinator of all government activities except magistracy/judiciary that will be separate.

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

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

j. A real recognition of existing administrative units should be made in terms of converting existing subdivisions into districts and abolition of division as a unit of administration.

k. In view of the large number of districts created, it may be necessary to provide regional planning and vigilance support. Seven such centers may be created including the existing four divisions (The Report of CARR: 150-151).

CARR categorically called upon the government to carry out the principles of devolution in letter as well as in spirit by establishing refurbished local government setup. In order to achieve this objective, CARR strongly suggested the government to follow the recommendations made by ASRC. In implementing its recommendations, CARR also suggested a gradualist approach according to which the entire set of recommendations would be implemented by the year of 1985, the terminal year of the Second Five Year Plan. The CARR further suggested that

before the creation of districts, the elections to Thana Parishads and Union Parishads might take place as soon as practicable. The election of Zila Parishads might follow the creation of new districts. It also suggested for constituting a high powered national implementation committee for the implementation of the decentralization measures that are recommended in the report (The Report of CARR: 170-173).

It is evident from the above recommendations that CARR owed much to ASRC. For, elected local government at union, thana and district levels; devolution of authority to the local government; demarcation of the areas of responsibility between the central government and the local government, abolition of division and conversion of subdivision into district were the main themes of recommendations made by CARR. And these already were recommended by ASRC. Even about the process of devolution of authority to local government, CARR suggested the government to follow the recommendations made by ASRC.

Implementation Process of Decentralization

Though the government of Ershad accepted, in principle, the recommendations of CARR and instituted a high-powered national implementation committee in August 1982 known as the National Implementation Committee for Administrative Reorganization/Reform (NICAR), it did not follow the recommendations of CARR in toto. However, the process of decentralization recommended by CARR began with the Cabinet decision of October 23, 1982 entitled "Resolution on Reorganization of Thana Administration" according to which thana was declared as the focal point of all administrative activities (Manual on Thana Administration Vol.1. Henceforth cited as Manual). The Resolution divided the governmental functions at the thana level between the central government and Thana Parishad, the local government at that level. The central government retained itself regulatory and major development functions. The rest of the functions basically, local development in nature, were transferred to the Thana Parishad. As per the decision of NICAR, thanas were upgraded and the officials of high caliber including a chief executive officer called the Thana *Nirbahi* Officer (TNO) were posted there. The task of upgradation of thanas started on November 7, 1982 and completed on February 1, 1984 (Appendix 1). In all, there were ten phases of upgradation. After completing the fifth phase, upgraded thanas were renamed as upazilas. Eight of the ten phases involved the upgradation of rural upazilas. The remaining two phases involved the upgradation of urban upazilas. Thanas under Dhaka and Chittagong metropolitan cities were not upgraded. These thanas continued to be used as police stations.

Elimination of divisions and upgradation of subdivisions into districts are other aspects of administrative reform recommended by the CARR, but it was decided to retain division as a unit of administration to maintain relation between central government and districts and upazilas. The subdivisions were upgraded into Zilas (districts) on various dates of 1984. The total number of subdivisions upgraded into Zilas was 62. So with the existing 22 Zilas another 42 were added.

To give effect to its own policy of devolutionary decentralization, the government of Ershad planned to introduce three-tier system of rural local government, viz. Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad and Zila Parishad suggested by CARR (Figure 5.1.).

Figure 5.1 Rural Local Government Institutions during Ershad Period

Administrative unit		Local government unit
Division	⟷	x
District	⟷	Zila Parishad
Upazila	⟷	Upazila Parishad
Union	⟷	Union Parishad
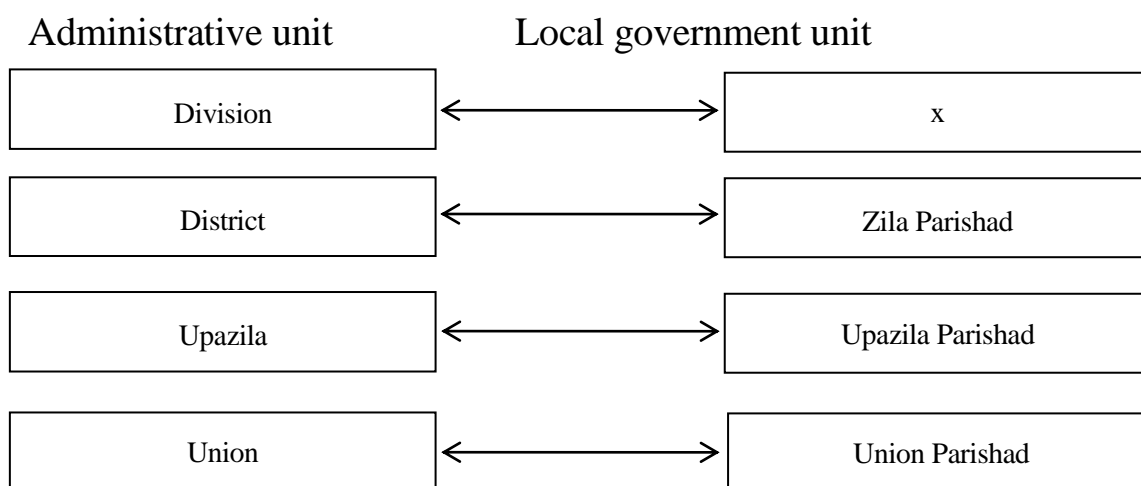
The Local Government (Union Parishad) Ordinance 1983 provides rules for the constitution of Union Parishad. According to the Ordinance, the composition of a Union Parishad is almost the same as before. The only difference is that formerly a Union Parishad had two nominated female members and now the number increased to three, i.e. one nominated female member from each of the three wards of a union. The first election of the Union Parishads under this new arrangement was held in 1983. Although the subdivisions were upgraded into zilas in 1983-84, the laws regarding the constitution of Zila Parishads were delayed four years and enacted in 1988 through the passing of Local Government (Zila Parishad) Act 1988.

According to the Act, a Zila Parishad consists of (a) representative members, (b) nominated members, (c) women members, (d) official members and (e) a chairman appointed by the government having the status of Deputy Minister. The members of the parliament, the chairmen of the Upazila Parishads and the Pourashavas within the Zilas are the ex-officio representative members. The nominated members and the women members

are to be nominated by the government from among the inhabitants of the Zila but their number would not be more than the number of representative members. The Deputy Commissioners and the other selected officials working at the Zila level are the ex-officio official members of the Zila Parishad without voting right in the meetings. However, the proposed Zila Parishads were not constituted. The government simply announced the names of the chairmen of Zila Parishads immediate before step down from the power.

In the year of 1988 the government Passed three separate Acts for three Zilas of Rangamati, Bardorban and Khagrachari of Chittagong Hill Tracts and accordingly and the Zila Parishads of these districts were constituted. These Zila Parishads are still in operation.

Organizational Setup of Upazila Administration

Annexure-II of the Government Resolution of 1982 provides the organizational setup of upazila administration, which are presented in Figure 5.2. Under upazila administration, the officers and staff dealing with the transferred subjects were placed at the disposal of the Upazila Parishad and were accountable to it (GOB 1983:23). Later, they were deputed to the Upazila Parishad. Hence, they were subject to all terms and conditions applicable to the government officers on deputation.

Figure 5.2 Administrative Setup of Upazila Decentralization
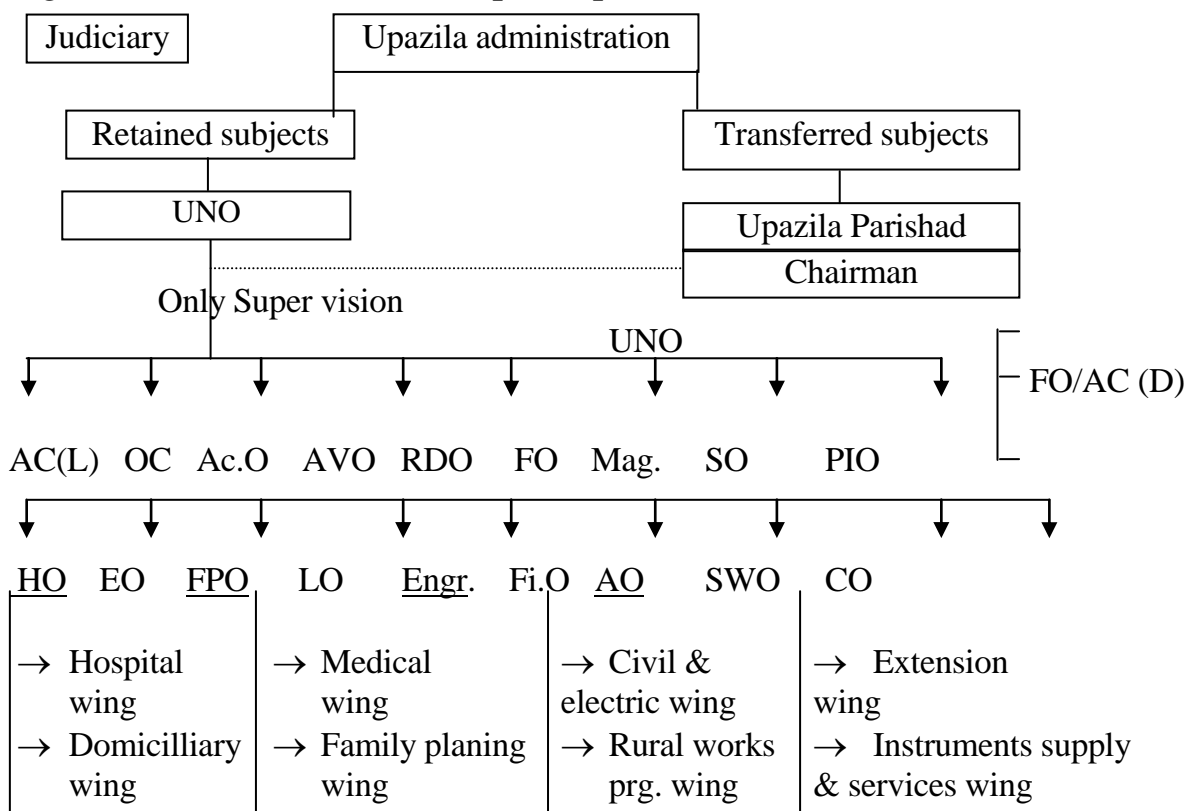
Note:	*Note:*
Retained subjects	**Transferred subjects**
AC(L) = Assistant Commissioner (land)	HO = Health Officer
OC = Officer-in-charge (P.S)	EO = Education Officer
Ac.O = Accounts Officer	FPO = Family Planning Officer
AVO = Ansar and VDP Officer	LO = Live-stock Officer
RDO = Rural Development Officer	Fi.O = Fishery Officer
FO = Food Officer	Eng. = Engineer
Mag. = Magistrate	SWO = Social Welfare Officer
SO = Statistical Officer	AO = Agricultural Officer
	CO = Cooperative Officer

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

Upazila Parishad

The Upazila Parishad is the central point of decentralization policy of General Ershad. It was organized with the Local Government (Thana Parishad and Thana Administration Reorganization) Ordinance 1982. The Ordinance 1982, which had been amended several times, provided the composition, functions and other operational details of the Upazila Parishad. According to the Ordinance a Upazila Parishad consisted of

a. One Chairman;

b. Representative members;

c. Three nominated women members;

d. Official members;

e. Chairman of Upazila central cooperative Association; and

f. One nominated member.

The Upazila Parishad chairman was elected directly by the voters of entire upazila. But before the elections to the chairmen held in 1985, the UNOs acted as the chairmen of Upazila Parishads. The Union Parishad chairmen within the upazila were ex-officio representative members of the Parishad. The chairman of Pourashava, if any within the upazila or a commissioner to be nominated by the chairman, was also ex-officio representative member of the Parishad. Nominated women members of the Parishad were appointed by the government from among women residing in the upazila. The government also could appoint a person preferably a freedom fighter residing in the upazila to be a member of the Parishad provided that if he was eligible for the election of Upazila Parishad chairmanship. Bur for giving adequate representation to different groups of people living in the Hill districts, the government would appoint more than one person as nominated members to a Upazila Parishad, not exceeding one half-half of

the total representative members. The chairman and a member, whether representative or nominated, held office of the Parishad for a period of five years.

The Local Government Ordinance 1982 simply states that the holders of such offices in the upazila as may be specified by the government shall be the official members of Upazila Parishad without voting right. There is no mention about the number and the type of official members. A notification from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development provided a list of officers who were made ex-officio official members of Upazila Parishad. They are set forth below:

i.   Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer;

ii.   Upazila Education Officer;

iii. Upazila Agriculture Officer;

iv.   Upazila Engineer;

v.   Upazila Cooperative Officer;

vi.   Upazila Live-stock Officer;

vii. Upazila Fishery Officer;

viii. Upazila Social Welfare Officer;

ix.   Upazila Rural Development Officer;

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

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

xii. Upazila Family Planning Officer (Manual, Vol. I: 87-88).

Scope and Functions of Upazila Parishad

The government Resolution 1982 that laid down the foundation of upazila decentralization divided the government functions at the upazila level into retained subjects and transferred subjects. The responsibility of transferred subjects was given to the Upazila Parishad but the Resolution did not provide the list of transferred subjects. It simply provided the list of retained subjects. The retained subjects included civil and criminal judiciary, administration and management of central revenue, maintenance of law and order, registration, maintenance of essential goods including food, generation and distribution of electricity, irrigation schemes involving more than one district, education above primary level, large scale industries, etc. (Appendix-II).

Since the government Resolution of 1982 did not provide the list of transferred subjects, by adopting the method of exclusion the subjects

which were not included in the retained list may be regarded as the transferred subjects. They are stated bellow:

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

ii.   Small and cottage industries.

iii.   Primary education and child development program.

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

v.   Fishery

vi.   Live-stock

vii.   Cooperative

viii. Rural Works Program

ix.   Food for Works Program

x.   Disaster relief including VGA, IGF, etc.

xi.   Social welfare (Faizullah 1986:201).

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

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

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

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

3. Giving assistance and encouragement to the Union Parishad in their activities.

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

5. Provision for management of environment.

6. Training of Chairmen, members and secretaries of the Union Parishads.

7. Implementation of government policies and programs within the upazila.

8. Supervision, control and coordination of functions of officers serving in the upazila except Munsifs, Trying Magistrates and officers engaged in regulatory functions.

9. Promotion of socio-cultural activities.

10. Promotion and encouragement of employment generating activities.

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

12. Promotion and extension of cooperative movement in the upazila.

13. Assistance to the Zila Parishad in development activities.

14. Planning and execution of all rural public works program.

15. Promotion of agricultural activities for maximizing production.

16. Promotion of educational and vocational activities.

17. Promotion of livestock, fisheries and forest.

It emanates from the above discussion that the Upazila Parishad, the hub of upazila development administration, had two organs:

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

b. Policy implementation called 'Executive' comprising the Chairman, the UNO and other officials.

Defining Parishad, the Local Government Ordinance 1982 stipulates that every Parishad shall be a corporate body having perpetual succession and a common seal. It will have power subject to the provisions of this Ordinance and rules to acquire, hold and dispose of property both movable and unmovable and shall by its name sue and be sued (Article 3). Stating the scope and operation of executive powers of the Upazila Parishad, the Ordinance 1982 reads:

i. The executive powers of the Parishad shall extent to the doing of all acts necessary for due discharge of its functions under this Ordinance.

ii. Save as otherwise provided in this Ordinance and the rules, the executive powers of the Parishad shall vest in and be exercised by the Chairman, either directly through the UNO or any other officer or person authorized by him in accordance with this Ordinance and the rules.

iii. The Chairman shall be responsible to the Parishad.

iv. All acts of a Parishad, whether executive or not, shall be expressed to be taken in the name of the Parishad and shall be authenticated in the manner prescribed (Article 27).

Although the officers were made members of the Parishad, their role in decision making/policy formulation process of the Parishad was not specified. They simply could participate in the debate and discussion in the Parishad without voting right. The representative members were the real decision makers in the Parishad because they were given voting rights and they were majority among the voting members. According to the Ordinance 1982, the officials were assigned the role for the implementation of the public policies that were formulated by the Parishad under the leadership of elected Chairman.

Thus, the Upazila Parishad was successor to the Thana Parishad and Thana Parishad was the successor to the Thana Council. However, the most distinctive characteristics that marks the Upazila Parishad separated from the Thana Council/Parishad are the elected chairman, distribution of powers and functions between it and the center, and the subordination of government officers to it. Another distinctive characteristic of the Upazila Parishad is that, unlike the Thana Council/ Parishad, it was given some financial powers, which we shall elaborately discuss in a separate chapter. Considering all these distinctive characteristics of the Upazila Parishad, it may be said that from the perspective of democracy and local government the upazila scheme was comparatively better than the previous reforms.

It may be said form the above discussion relating to the decentraliza-tion measures taken by the government of General Ershad that excepting the conversion of subdivisions into districts, the other recommendations of the CARR were not fully materialized. The three-tier system of rural local government including the elected body at union level is not a new phenomenon in the history of local government in Bangladesh. What CARR wanted were the elected councils at upazila and district levels that

were not materialized. However, the novelty of the reform carried out by General Ershad was the elected Chairman of the Upazila Parishad.

What has been discussed in the present chapter is concerned with the theoretical aspects of upazila decentralization. Let us now discuss the practices of upazila decentralization in the selected eight upazilas. This has been elaborately dealt with in the following chapters.

Chapter 6

Characteristics of Selected Upazilas and UZP Leadership

Profile of Selected Upazilas

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

Savar upazila under Dhaka district is close to Dhaka City, the capital of Bangladesh. It is located at a distance of 29 kilometers north west of Dhaka City. Jahangir Nagar University, Bangladesh Public Administration Training Center (BPATC), National Monument, and other important government offices are situated in Savar upazila. Savar thana was upgraded into upazila in the fifth phase (July 2, 1983) of upgradation. Dewangonj upazila in the district of Jamalpur is situated 233 kilometers north east of Dhaka. It stands on the east bank of the Jamuna, the widest river in the country. The railway ferry *ghat* (station) on the Jamuna, which connects northern part of the country with the eastern part, is located here. Dewangong thana was upgraded to upazila in the first phase (November 7, 1982) of upgradation. Paikgacha upazila of Khulna district is located at a distance of 386 kilometers southwest from Dhaka. It stands on the River Shitsha, and the Bay of Bengal touches its southern part. There is no railway in Paikgacha upazila. It was converted to upazila in the first phase (November 7,1982) of upgradation.

Gangni upazila under Meherpur district is 325 kilometers west of Dhaka. The northwest part of Gangni touches the international borderline between India and Bangladesh. Kushtia-Meherpur high way runs through it. Gangni thana acquired the status of upazila in the second phase (December 15, 1982) of upgradation.

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

This is a short description of the upazilas selected for the study. The other information of the upazilas has been projected in 6.1-6.4 tables.

Table 6.1 Areas of Selected Upazilas

Name of upazila	Total area in sq. km.	Land in sq. km.	Reserve forest in sq .km	River in sq. km.	Population density in sq. km.
Hathazari	207	148	59	-	140
Chandina	207	202	-	-	1061
Savar	292	272	02	05	937
Dewangonj	425	409	-	16	581
Paikgacha	388	308	-	80	453
Gangni	344	337	07	-	542
Chirirbandar	308	341	-	67	599
Phulbari	163	145	-	18	635

Source: Compiled from the records of Upazilz Parishad.

Table 6.2 Demographic View of Selected Upazilas

Name of Upazila	Total population	Literacy in % (7 yrs.+)	Male liter-acy in %	Female lite-racy in %
Hathazari	321004	48.3	53.9	42.3
Chandina	269878	27.7	34.3	21.1
Savar	372034	37.8	44.8	29.1
Dewangong	246,987	20.9	27.2	14.4
Paikgacha	225085	32.6	43.0	21.6
Gangni	229138	21.0	25.2	16.6
Chirirbandar	232409	28.6	37.1	19.5
Phulbari	129668	24.0	33.0	14.8

Source: Compiled from the Census of 1991

Table 6.3 Administrative Units of Selected Upazilas

Upazila	No. of Unions	No. of Mouzas	No. of Villages
Hathazari	15	51	514
Chandina	12	16	233
Savar	12	256	425
Dewangong	13	64	332
Paikgacha	10	172	204
Gangni	09	103	127
Chirirbandar	12	145	145
Phulbari	06	50	50

Source: *Compiled from the records of Upazila Parishads*

Table 6.4 Educational Institutions of Selected Upazilas

Name of Upazila	No. of Colleges	No. of Hig/ Jr. School	No. of Pri-. school	No. of Madrashas
Hathazari	05	33	120	06
Chandina	02	17	84	05
Savar	01	23	84	68
Dewangong	04	45	67	12
Paikgacha	02	29	72	04
Gangni	-	19	75	04
Chirirbandar	01	27	92	09
Phulbari	01	10	51	15

Source: *Compiled from the Census of 1991*

In the above discussion we have stated in a nutshell way the various characteristics of the upazilas selected for the study of decentralization practices in Bangladesh. Now we shall discuss the political leadership responsible for running decentralized administration in the upazilas and the development management capacity for the implementation of decentralized programs/projects undertaken by the Upazila Pariashads.

Upazila Leadership Characteristics

The overall development of any community depends largely on the qualities of its leaders. The leadership qualities are closely related to their background. Hence the study of background of the leaders is very important to assess development process for which they are responsible. Here we shall discuss the background of the Upazila Parishad chairmen and members by examining certain factors like age, education, occupation, experience, etc.

Age

The age composition of the members of any institution is an important index to assess the kind of people responsible for running it. If elderly persons dominate the institution, it is doubtful whether they can meet the need of an emerging society. Bangladesh society is a transitional one with an interaction of the forces of traditionalism and modernization. It is, therefore, expected that younger and educated people should assume the leadership in social life.

The age of the Upazila Parishad members under examination ranged from 28 to 59 years. For a precise and meaningful analysis, the age data have been divided into four age groups. Table 6.5 explains their age distribution. The data projected in Table 6.5 show that none from the chairmen and the representative members came from the age group below 30 years. Only 2 i.e. 10 per cent of the nominated members, who were women, came from the age group below 30 years. The majority of the chairmen and the representative members respectively constituting 62.50 per cent and 66.67 per cent came from the age group of 40-49 years. On the contrary, the majority of the nominated members belonged to the age group of 30-39 years.

Table 6.5 Distribution of the UZP Members by Age

Category of Members	Age in year				
	Blow 30	32-39	40-49	50-59	Total
Chairman	-	02 (25.00)	05 (62.50)	01 (12.50)	08 (100.00)
Representative Members	-	15 (25.00)	40 (66.67)	05 (08.33)	60 (100.00)
Nominated Members	02 (10.00)	13 (65.00)	04 (20.00)	01 (05.00)	20 (100.00)
Grand total:	02 (2.28)	30 (34.09)	49 (55.68)	07 (07.95)	88 (100.00)

Notes:

a. *The nominated members includes both male and female members and the chairmen of UZCCA*

b. *Figures in parentheses indicate percentages*

Source *: Fieldwork*

Thus the age data clearly reveal that the leaders belonging to the age group of 40-49 years dominated the Upazila Parishads in our study areas. Similarly the leaders belonging to this age group also dominate the Union Parishads also (Wahhab 1998:62) However, the leaders from this age group

not only dominate the local and regional politics, but also the national politics (GOB 1974:3). Another notable feature of the age data is that the persons belonging to the age group of 60 and above were absent from the leadership structure of the Upazila Parishads. The absence leaders from the age group of 60 and above is a good sign for healthy local government administration, because the leaders who are above 59 generally do not get full energy for the work, as their active period of life has ended.

Education

In a traditional society like Bangladesh a mixture of traditional and modern forces is obvious. It is, therefore, expected that the forces of modernization and social change would be dominant over the traditional forces of the society. Here lies the necessity of educated leaders. Looking at the level of education, it reveals that the Upazila Parishad members were an educated group. None of them was illiterate (Table 6.6). The catagory-wise data presented in Table 6.9 show that the Upazila Parishad chairmen were better educated than the members. The majority of the chairmen constituting 75.00 per cent were either Graduates or Master's degree holders and the rest either passed the Secondary School Certificate Examination or the Higher Secondary Certificate Examination. There was no Upazila Parishad chairman whose educational qualification was below the secondary level. Again if we consider the members in category wise, the nominated members were better educated than the representative members. Like the chairmen no nominated member had educational qualification below the secondary level. On the contrary, one fourth of the representative members had educational qualification below the secondary level.

Table 6.6 Distribution of the UZP Members by Education

| Category of Members | Level of education | | | |
	Below Secondary	Secondary & +	Graduation & +	Total
Chairman	-	02 (25.00)	06 (75.00)	08 (100.00)
Representative members	15 (25.00)	35 (58.33)	10 (16.67)	60 (100.00)
Nominated members	-	16 (80.00)	04 (20.00)	20 (100.00)
Grand total	15 (17.04)	53 (60.23)	20 (22.73)	88 (100.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Source: Fieldwork

Occupation

There is a separate domain of occupation between the male and female citizen in Bangladesh. Cultivation and household affairs respectively constitute main occupation among the male and female citizens in the rural areas (Wahhab 1998 : 65-66). But our data on occupation (Table 6.7) show that the majority of the Upazila Parishad chairmen and members, all were male, were not exclusively engaged in cultivation. Similarly, all women members also were not exclusively engaged in cultivation They accepted other modern occupations also. Out of the total chairmen, the representative members and the nominated members respectively 12.50 per cent, 40.00 per cent and 05.00 per cent had cultivation as main occupation. The majority constituting 62.50 per cent, 51.67 per cent and 55.00 per cent respectively from the chairmen, the representative members and the nominated members had business (including contract and industry) as principal occupation. The remaining members maintained other principal occupations including teaching, law practice, medical practice and pension. Among the women members the majority were found to maintain modern occupations including teaching, law practice and business.

Table 6.7 Distribution of the UZP Members by Principal Occupation

Category	Cultivation	Business	Others	Total
Chairmen	01	05	02	08
	(12.50)	(62.50)	(25.00)	(100.00)
Representative Members	24	31	05	60
	(40.00)	(51.67)	(08.33)	(100.00)
Nominated Members	01	11	15	20
	(05.00)	(55.00)	(17.04)	(100.00)
Grand Total :	26	47	15	88
	(29.55)	(53.41)	(17.05)	(100.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages
Source: Fieldwork

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

Annual Income

The Upazila Parishad members under the study were asked to assess their approximate annual income in terms of Taka. Here income was considered in gross sense and estimated on the basis of the then market price. Their annual income varied widely ranging from Tk.40 thousands to more than Tk.10 lacks. For the advantage of analysis, various amounts of income

have been classified into four groups: (a) Tk.40, 000-59,000; (b) Tk.60, 000-79,000; (c) Tk.80, 000-99,000; and (d) Tk.100, 000 an**d above (Table 6.8).**

Table 6.8 Distribution of the UZP Members by Annual Income

Category of Members	Annual income in thousand Taka				
	40-59	60-79	80-99	100 & +	Total
Chairmen	-	01 (12.50)	02 (25.00)	05 (62.50)	08 (100.00)
Representative Members	08 (13.33)	09 (15.00)	31 (51.67)	12 (20.00)	60 (100.00)
Nominated Members	02 (10.00)	13 (65.00)	03 (15.00)	02 (10.00)	20 (100.00)
Grand Total :	10 (11.36)	23 (26.14)	36 (40.91)	19 (21.59)	88 (100.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages
Source: Fieldwork

It appears from the income data presented in Table 6.8 that the Upazila Parishad leadership came from the very rich stratum of the rural society in Bangladesh. The data also reveal that the chairmen as a group were richer than the members in general. Similarly the representative members as a group were richer than the nominated members. While the majority of the chairmen (62.50 per cent) belonged to the group of persons whose annual income was Tk. 100, 000 and above, the majority of the representative members (51.67 per cent) and also the majority of the nominated members (65.00 per cent) respectively belonged to the income groups of Tk.80, 000-99,000 and 60,000-79,000. The data also indicate that no chairman came from the income group below Tk.60,000, but 13.33 per cent of the representative members and 10.00 per cent of the nominated members belonged to this group.

Landholding

As it is evident from income background that the Upazila Parishad chairmen and members belonged to the rich stratum of the society, the size of landholding owned by them also indicates that they belonged to the group of large farmers. The size of landholding of the Upazila Parishad chairmen and members varied from 4 acres to 50 acres. The different sizes of landholding have been categorized into three groups and projected in Table 6.9.

Table 6.9 Distribution of the UZP Members by the Ownership of Landholding

Category of Members	Landholding in acre			
	Below 5	Below 10	10 & +	Total
Chairmen	-	01 (12.50)	07 (87.50)	8 (100.00)
Representative members	08 (13.33)	21 (35.00)	31 (51.67)	60 (100.00)
Nominated members	03 (15.00)	05 (25.00)	12 (60.00)	20 (100.00)
Grand Total :	11 (12.50)	27 (30.68)	50 (56.82)	88 (100.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Source: Fieldwork

The data projected in Tables 6.8 and 6.9 indicate that the chairmen not only were higher income earners, they also owned larger size of landholding than that of the members. Although the majority from all categories of upazila parishad leadership came from the group of persons having 10 acres of land or more than 10 acres, the highest concentration in this group was found among the chairmen. No chairman belonged to the group of persons who owned land below 5 acres. On the other hand, 13.33 per cent of the representative members and 15.00 per cent of the nominated members belonged to this group (below 5 acres).

Experience

Prior experience of the Upazila Parishad chairmen and members in their line was an important factor to assess their capability in planning and administering the works for which they were responsible. The data projected in Table 6.10 show that the majority of the chairmen and the representative members had experience in different local government institutions.

Table 6.10 Distribution of the UZP Members by Prior Local Government Experience

Category of Members	Experience in					
	UP	UP & UZP	UZP	Pourashava	No experience	Total
Chairmen	04 (50.00)	01 (12.50)	01 (12.50)	01 (12.50)	01 (12.50)	08 (100.00)
Representative Members	25 (41.67)	10 (16.67)	08 (13.33)	02 (03.33)	15 (25.00)	60 (100.00)
Nominated Members	02 (10.00)	-	01 (05.00)	-	17 (85.00)	20 (100.00)
Grand Total :	31 (35.23)	11 (12.50)	10 (11.36)	03 (03.41)	33 (37.50)	88 (100.00)

Note : Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Source: Fieldwork

On the other hand, an overwhelming majority of the nominated members were the newcomers to the upazila Parishad who had no experience in the local government institution. Absence of prior experience in local government does not mean that they (inexperienced) had no experience in other organizations/institutions before they held the formal position in the Upazila Parishads. The data presented in Table 6.11 that reveal all the chairmen and the members, whether experienced in local government or not, were involved with their different capacities in other different organizations/institutions including schools, colleges, mosques, clubs, *haats/bazaars*, and so on. Maximum involvement of an individual member was in 12 organizations/institutions and minimum one. It also appears from Table 6.11 that a preponderant majority of the chairmen and the representative members involved in 9-12 organizations/institutions; and the rest were involved in 5-8 institutions. It is also evident from the table that none of the chairmen and the representative members was found in the group of persons who were involved in less than 5 organizations/ institutions. On the other hand, a sizable number of the nominated members, who were female, were found in the group of people who were involved in 1-4 organizations/institutions.

Table 6.11 Distribution of the UZP Members by the Involvement in Voluntary Organizations/Institutions

Category of Members	No. of Organizations/Institutions			
	1-4	5-8	9-12	Total
Chairmen	-	01 (12.50)	07 (87.50)	08 (100.00)
Representative Members	-	05 (08.33)	55 (91.67)	60 (100.00)
Nominated Members	06 (30.00)	09 (45.00)	05 (25.00)	20 (100.00)
Grand Total :	06 (06.82)	15 (17.05)	67 (76.13)	88 (100.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages
Source: Fieldwork

Training

As the Upazila Parishads were given power to plan and implement the development projects that are technical in nature, it was essential that the members of the Upazila Parishads would have training in this regard. Our data presented in Table 6.12 reveal that almost all the members (95 per cent) had no training of any kind. All the chairmen and only 3

representative members (5 per cent of them) had training for one time. The chairmen attended the training courses in the areas of office management and different rules of upazila administration. The training courses attended by the chairmen were held at the National Institute of Local Government located at Dhaka.

Table 6.12 Distribution of the UZP Members by Training

Category of Members	No. of non-trained	No. of trained for one time	Total
Chairmen	-	08 (100.00)	08 (100.00)
Representative Members	57 (95.00)	03 (05.00)	60 (100.00)
Nominated Members	20 (100.00)	-	20 (100.00)
Grand Total :	77 (87.50)	11 (12.50)	88 (100.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages
Source: Fieldwork

The three representative members, claiming for training of one time, received training on rural development at the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development located at Comilla. None from the chairmen and the members was found trained in planning and implementation of development projects for which they were responsible.

Political Affiliation

When upazila decentralization was introduced there were many criticisms from different corners especially by the political parties that its main objective was to build support structure for the ruling regime. The criticism had positive co-relation with our finding relating to the party affiliation pattern of the Upazila Parishad chairmen and members studied by us. The data on their party affiliation, arranged in Table 6.13, show that except two representative members (3.33 per cent), all had affiliation with one or other political party. It is noteworthy that out of the party affiliated members, the highest representation went to the *Jatiyo* (National) Party (JP), the then ruling party. More notable point is that in case of the nominated members, the percentage of ruling party representation was very higher (75 per cent). The remaining members were affiliated to different political parties including the *Awami* League (AL), the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the *Jamat-e-Islami* (JI), the Muslim League (ML), the Jatiyo Samajtantric Dal- the National Socialist Party (JSD) and the National *Awami* Party (NAP).

Table 6.13 Distribution of the UZP Members by Affiliation to Political Parties

Categoryof Members	Name of parties to which affiliation						
	JP	AL	BNP	JI	Others	Non-affilion.	Total
Chairmen	03 (37.50)	02 (25.00)	02 (25.00)	01 (12.50)	-	-	08 (100.00)
Represent. Members	29 (48.34)	08 (13.33)	09 (15.00)	05 (08.33)	07 (11.66)	02 (03.33)	60 (100.00)
Nominated Members	15 (75.00)	01 (05.00)	02 (10.00)	01 (05.00)	01 (05.00)	-	20 (100.00)
Grand Total:	47 (53.41)	11 (12.50)	13 (14.77)	07 (07.95)	08 (09.09)	02 (02.27)	88 (100.00)

Note : Figures in parentheses indicate percentages
Source: Fieldwork

The influence of ruling party was not only over the Upazila Parishad members, the same influence is found upon the members of the lower councils, i.e. the Union Parishads (Wahhab, 1986:49-62). However, the influence of ruling party on the local/regional body politic is not a new phenomenon in Bangladesh. The same trend is found in other South Asian countries also. According to a study, 85 per cent of the members of the local government institutions in the India have affiliation to the ruling party (Sirsikar, 1970: 92).

Sense of Obligation of the UPZ Members

The Upazila Parishad members were the agents through which the development works at the upazila level were initiated and executed. So it is essential to know their sense of obligation and commitment to the duties for which they were responsible. Here an endeavor has been made to examine the sense of obligation and commitment of the Upazila Parishad members by studying their attendance at the meetings of the Upazila Parishads and the time they spent for public works.

Participation in Meetings

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

special meeting was to be held for an emergency or any important business of the Upazila Parishad. The meetings of the Upazila Parishad, whether ordinary or special, were called by the chairman or in his absence, by the UNO (Manual Vol. 11, 1983: 1).

The Upazila Parishad members were asked to state their presence in the meetings of the Upazila Parishads that were held during their tenure. Their replies have been summarized in an average form and presented in Table 6.14. It appears from the data projected in Table 6.17 that the chairmen and the representative members seemed to have demonstrated a high degree of enthusiasm in attending the meetings of the Upazila Parishad. On the average, the chairmen and the representative members respectively were present in 90 per cent and 80 per cent meetings. On the other hand, on an average basis, the nominated members were present only in 50 per cent meetings. This invariably indicates that the nominated members, especially the women, as our data reveal, seemed to have taken less interest in the meetings of the Parishad.

Table 6.14 Showing Presence of the UZP Members in the Meetings of Parishad

Category of Members	Average Presence
Chairmen	90 per cent of the meetings
Representative Members	80 per cent of the meetings
Nominated Members	50 per cent of the meetings

Source: Fieldwork

The factors that prevented the chairmen from attending the meetings of the Upazila Parishad were two: (a) their absence from the upazila for official purpose and (b) illness. The factors that prevented the members from attending the meetings of the Upazila Parishad were various such as illness, preoccupation with other activities, absence from the upazila for official or personal business, distance of upazila headquarters from their union and less interest in the activities of the Upazila Parishad.

Time Spent for Public Works

The sense of obligation and commitment of the Upazila Parishad members to their duties was further evident when they were asked to state that how much time they spent for public works a day on an average. The data on their replies presented in Table 6.15 indicate that, except one, all the chairmen (87.50 per cent) and the majority of the representative members (58.33 per cent) were so busy with public works that they could not

mention how much time they spent per day for public works. The remaining representative members including a chairman and some nominated members spent time either 6-8 hours or 4-6 hours. The members who spent time 2-4 hours or below 2 hours for public works were the nominated female members.

Table 6.15 Distribution of the UZP Members by the Time Spent for Public Works

Category of Members	Time spent for public works per day on an average					
	Below2 hours	2-4 hours	4-6 hours	6-8 hours	Indef-inite	Total
Chairman	-	-	-	01 (12.50)	07 (87.50)	08 (100.00)
Representative Members	-	-	06 (10.00)	19 (31.67)	35 (58.33)	60 (100.00)
Nominated Members	07 (35.00)	05 (25.00)	05 (25.00)	03 (15.00)	-	20 (100.00)
Grand total:	07 (07.95)	05 (05.68)	11 (12.50)	23 (26.14)	42 (47.73)	88 (100.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages
Source: Fieldwork

Profile of Upazila Officers

The personnel of the Upazila Parishad may broadly be divided into two categories, namely (i) the deputed officers loaned from the various ministries/departments and (ii) the staff recruited by the Upazila Parishad. In fact, a vast majority of the staff was absorbed from the previous thana administration. Table 6.18 shows the number of the officers and the staff working at the disposal of a Upazila Parishad. All the officers, both class I and class II shown in Table 6.16, were found in all upazilas surveyed by us except the officers of health, family planning, agriculture and education. In the case of health, the number of class I officers, and in the case of education, the number of class II officers varied from one upazila to another due to the variation of population size. Similarly the case is with the class III staff of health, family planning, agriculture and education. Their number also varied from one upazila to another according to the number of population. Table 6.18 shows the number of the officers and the staff working in a upazila consisting of 15 unions having 290,044 people. (according to the Census of 1981).

Table 6.16 Showing Officers and Staff of a UZP

Name of Office	Officers		Staff	
	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV
UNO	01	-	08	09
AC (Dev.)	01	-	02	-
PIO	-	01	01	-
Engineering	01	-	09	04
Health	13	-	73	24
Family Planning	02	03	96	19
Agriculture	02	01	45	07
Live-stock	02	-	07	02
Fisheries	01	-	01	01
Education	01	05	569	02
Social welfare	-	01	05	03
Cooperative	-	-	04	01
Total:	14	11	820	72

Note: The class III 569 staff in education is the primary school teachers.
Source: Hathazari Upazila Statistical Office

Age of the Officers

The age data of the officers presented in Table 6.17 indicate that the UNOs and the class II officers were older than the class I officers. This is because the UNOs were senior officials and the class II officers mostly were promoted from the class III employees. However, comparing to the people's representatives, the officers as a whole were younger in age.

Table 6.17 Distribution of Upazila Officers by Age

Category of Officials	Age in year				
	Below 30	30-39	40-49	50-57	Total
UNO	-	04 (50.00)	03 (37.50)	01 (12.50)	08 (100.00)
Others Class I	05 (10.00)	31 (62.00)	09 (18.00)	05 (10.00)	50 (100.00)
Class II	-	01 (10.00)	07 (70.00)	02 (20.00)	10 (100.00)
Grand Total:	05 (7.35)	36 (52.94)	19 (27.94)	08 (11.77)	68 (100.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages
Source: Fieldwork

This is also because the upazila lowest unit of field administration and generally the junior officers are posted there. So it is not unusual that the officers working at the then upazila level were to be younger than the people's representatives who spent long time to build their political career and support base. The age data of the officers and the people's representatives tend to support this observation. While the majority of the chairmen and the representative members came from the age group of 40-49 years (*supra* Table 7.7), the majority of the officers came from the age group of 30-39 years. (Table 6.17).

Education

With regard to education, the data projected in Table 6.18 reveal that the UNOs and other class I officers were more qualified than the Class II officers. This reason for this is that in Bangladesh minimum educational qualification is bachelor degree for the recruitment of the class I officers. On the other hand, most of the class II officers were promoted from the class III staff whose minimum educational qualification is Higher Secondary or Secondary level. All the UNOs and the class I officers had either Master's Degree or Bachelor Degree in Medicine/Agriculture/ Engineering which is equivalent to general Master Degree. On the other hand, the majority of the class II officers (58 per cent) had bachelor degree.

Table 6.18 Distribution of Upazila Officers by Education

Category of Officers	Level of education			
	Secondary & +	Bachelor	Master's	Total
UNO	-	01 (12.00)	07 (87.50)	08 (100.00)
Others Class 1	-	40 (80.00)	10 (20.00)	50 (100.00)
Class II	01 (10.00)	08 (80,00)	01 (10.00)	10 (100.00)
Grand Total:	01 (01.47)	49 (72.06)	18 (26.47)	68 (100.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages
Source: Fieldwork

Only one class II officer (10 per cent) had general Master's Degree and another one (10 per cent) had qualification of the Higher Secondary level.

If we compare the education of the officers with that of the people's representatives at the upazila level, the officers were more qualified than the people's representatives. Because there in no education bar for the people's representatives. But there is education bar for the recruitment of the officers. Hence it is likely that the officers are more qualified than the people's representatives especially at the local level. The data on educational qualification of the upazila level officers confirm this. The officers under observation had higher degree than that of the people's representatives. Except one, who was a cooperative officer, all the officers were Bachelor or Master's Degree holders. On the other hand, many Upazila Parishad members including some chairmen (25 per cent) had qualification below the Bachelor/Higher Secondary level (*supra* Table 6.6).

Yearly Income

Yearly income of the upazila level officers varied widely ranging from Tk. 60 thousands to Tk. 10 lakhs. The income data have been classified into three groups: (a) Tk. 60,000-79,000; Tk. 80,000-99,000 and Tk. 100,000 and above. It reveals from income data presented in Table 6.19 that none from the officers came from the group of people having yearly income below Tk. 60,000. Although the requirement of the officers started in the income group of Tk.60, 000-79,000, the majority of them (60.29 per cent) came from the group of TK. 80,000-99,000.

Table 6.19 Distribution of Upazila Officers by Yearly Income

Category of Officers	Yearly income in thousand Taka			
	60-76	80-99	100 & above	Total
UNO	01	05	02	08
	(12.50)	(62.50)	(25.00)	(100.00)
Others	10	29	11	50
Class 1	(20.00)	(58.00)	(22.00)	(100.00)
Class II	02	07	01	10
	(20.00)	(70.00)	(10.00)	(100.00)
Grand Total:	13	41	14	68
	(09.12)	(60.29)	(20.59)	(100.00)

Note: *Figures in parentheses indicate percentages*
Source: *Fieldwork*

Landholding

The officers at the upazila level owned different sizes of landholding ranging from 3 acres to 25 acres. Their various sizes of landholding have

been categorized into three groups: (a) below 5 acres, (b) below 10 acres and (c) 10 acres and above. The landholding data presented in Table 6.22 indicate that although some officers were found in the group of people who own land below 5 acres, but an overwhelming majority of them came from the group of people who own land above 5 acres.

Table 6.20 Distribution of Upazila Officers by Ownership of Landholding

Category of Officers	Landholding in acre			
	Below 5	Below 10	10 & +	Total
UNO	01 (12.50)	05 (62.50)	02 (25.00)	08 (100.00)
Others Class 1	18 (36.00)	22 (44.00)	10 (20.00)	50 (100.00)
Class II	01 (10.00)	06 (60.00)	03 (30.00)	10 (100.00)
Grand Total:	20 (29.41)	33 (48.53)	15 (22.06)	68 (100.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages
Source: Fieldwork

Experience

Upazila Parishad was the key unit of three-tier system of local government. Hence prior experience of upazila level officers was an important indication to assess their role in the rural development activities. The data on experience of the upazila level officers presented in Table 6.21 reveal that the UNOs and the class II officers were more experienced in their line of work than the class I officers. This is also because the UNOs were senior officials and the class II officers were also senior in service in the sense that they were promoted from the class III employees as mentioned earlier.

Table 6.21 Distribution of Upazila Officers by Experience

Category of Officers	Experience in year					
	Below 1	1-3	4-7	8-11	12 & +	Total
UNO	-	-	-	06 (75.00)	02 (25.00)	08 (100.00)
Other officers Class 1	02 (04.00)	07 (14.00)	09 (18.00)	12 (24.00)	20 (40.00)	50 (100.00)
Class II	-	-	01 (10.00)	03 (30.00)	06 (60.00)	10 (100.00)
Grand Total:	02 (02.94)	07 (10.29)	10 (14.71)	21 (30.88)	28 (41.18)	68 (100.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages
Source: Fieldwork

Training

The data on training of the upazila level officers projected in Table 6.22 indicate that UNOs were more trained than other officers. All the UNOs were trained at least for three times and only 3 i.e. 6 per cent of other class I officers belonged to this group. Among the rest, the majority was trained for one time and about one fourth had no training in their line of work.

The nature of training received by the upazila level officers varied according to their nature of job. The training attended by them had been in the areas of rural development, planning, office management, financial administration, law, etc. They were trained in different institutions including the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Center (BPATC) located at Savar of Dhaka, the Civil Officers' Training Academy at Dhaka, the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development at Comilla, and the Rural Development Academy at Bogra. Some of the officers were trained at the specialized institutions like the Academy for planning and Development, the National Institute for Population Research and Training, the Bangladesh Agricultural University, and the Bangladesh University for Engineering and Technology. Two UNOs were trained abroad.

Table 6.22 Distribution of Upazila Officers by Training

Category of Officers	Training Frequency				
	No training	One time	Two times	Three times & +	Total
UNO	-	-	-	08 (100.0)	08 (25.00)
Others					
Class 1	12 (24.00)	25 (50.00)	10 (20.00)	03 (06.00)	50 (100.00)
Class II	02 (20.00)	07 (70.00)	01 (10.00)	-	10 (100.00)
Grand Total:	14 (20.59)	32 (47.06)	11 (16.18)	11 (16.18)	68 (100.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages
Source: Fieldwork

It may be concluded from the training date that the officers were more trained trom the People's representatives. Although the chairmen received training for one time, almost all the members including all nominated members had no training in their line of work (Table 6.12). On the other hand, the majority of the officers including all the UNOs were trained in their line of work (Table 6.22).

General Observations

It appears from the above discussion that the upazila decentralization could attract educated and middle aged people to take its leadership. It also appears from the discussion on the profile of the upazila personnel reveals that the officers of high caliber were deputed to the upazila levels for the execution of development works undertaken by the Upazila Parishads. Moreover, a comparative analysis reveals that the officers were more advanced than the people's representatives in some respect especially, in education and training. This, along with other factors, tended to create a sense of superiority complex among the officers vis-a-vis the people's representatives, which in some cases, as our observation shows, led to the problem of cooperation among them. Such lack of cooperation among the major actors of local government, in turn, affected effective working of the upazila decentralization scheme. However, for smooth functioning of the upazila scheme a relationship of mutual understanding and respect was essential among them. Our observation shows that the upazilas where such good relationship existed, their performance happened to be also good and effective.

Chapter 7

Finance for Development
Upazila Parishad Fund

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

Implications of this process of devolution are: (a) reduction of dependence of rural people on national government for meeting the needs which can be made locally and development of self-reliance in this process; (b) mobilization and utilization of resources which have hitherto remained untapped; and (c) reducing direct involvement of national government in planning and implementation of projects that are purely local in nature. All these are expected to lay the foundation of a solid local government that could be ushering a better life for rural people in the near future (GOB 1983:1).

The fund of the Upazila Parishad composed of the following:

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

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

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

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

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

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

7. All profits accruing from investment.

8. Such proceeds from such sources of income as the government may direct to be placed at the disposal of the Parishad (The Local Government Ordinance 1982: Sec. 32).

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

1. Revenue surplus of the Upazila Parishad;

2. government grant for development;

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

4. local contribution (GOB 1990: xvi-I).

Sources of Revenue

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

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

2. Tax on profession, trade and callings.

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

4. Street lighting taxes.

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

6. Fees for licenses and permits granted by the Parishad.
7. Lease money from specified *haats, bazaars* and ferries to be determined by the government.
8. Toll on services and facilities maintained by the Parishad (The Local Government Ordinance 1982: Third Schedule).

These items are the sources from which the Upazila Parishad was empowered to collect revenue. Previously either the central government or the Union Parishad collected revenue from these sources. Profession, trade, calling, drama, theater, and other entertainment and amusement are the items from which the Union Parishad collected revenue (Appendices III & 1V). The central government collected revenue from the rest of items. However, the above mentioned items were transferred to the Upazila Parishad as grants for nine years on experimental basis and not as permanent sources of revenue.

Lease money from *haats* (by weekly markets) and *bazaars* (daily markets) was a common source of revenue for all Upazila Parishads in Bangladesh. For, there is no upazila that has no *haats* and *bazaars*. According to a study conducted in 1991, Bangladesh has about 7500 *haats* and *bazaars* formally recognized by the government (Siddiqui 1991:46). So on the average a upazila has about 17 *haats* and *bazaars*. Out of the money collected as lease from *haats* and *bazaars*, 5 per cent was allotted to the central government and 25 per cent to the Union Parishads concerned for developing market facilities. The rest 70 per cent of the lease money was meant for the fund of the Upazila Parishad.

The Upazila Parishad had also leasing right over the *jalmahals* (water estates). *Jalmahals* in Bangladesh may be divided into four types, namely rivers and canals; *beels, haors* and *baors*; ponds and tanks; and reservoirs. There are about 1,800,000 ponds and tanks in the country. The total number of all other types of *jalmahals* is slightly above 10,000. Of the total tanks and ponds, only 100,000 belong to the government and as such constitute the part of *jalmahals* (Syddiqui 1991:43). The Upazila Parishad had the right to lease a *jalmahal* with an area of 3-20 acres provided that if it is situated within the boundaries of the upazila. If a *jalmahal* has an area of 3-20 acres and it is situated between the two upazilas; and also a *jalmahal* with an area over 20 acres, it was the district that had the leasing right. Among the government ponds and tanks that are below 3 acres were declared as the water bodies free for public use; and were managed by the Land Ministry officials at the upazila levels.

The Upazila Parishad was empowered to raise revenue from leasing ferry *ghat* (station). The right of leasing ferry *ghat* depended on the location. If the location of a ferry *ghat* is situated in a union, it was the Union Parishad that had the leasing right. If one side of a ferry *ghat* is situated in one union and the other side in other union of a upazila, the Upazila Parishad concerned had the leasing right. If the ferry *ghat* is situated between the two upazilas, the district concerned had the leasing right.

The Upazila Parishad was also empowered to collect tolls on bridges and ferries. There was provision that tolls on bridges and ferries could be directly collected by the Upazila Parishad or leased out. But the government vehicles were exempted from the tolls on bridges and ferries. However, being low level of transportation in the country, almost all upazilas in Bangladesh has no such ferries and bridges.

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

The Upazila Parishad (Taxation) Rules 1983 stipulates that no person would carry on any profession, trade, calling or business specified in the first column of the Second Schedule without a license from the Upazila Parishad. A person carrying on such profession, trade, calling or business was to obtain license from the Upazila Parishad concerned. A license remained valid for one calendar year and was to be renewed every year. Generally, a Upazila Parishad issued a license of trade of capital Tk. 20,000 and below but the license of capital over Tk. 20,000 was issued by the central government.

Revenue Collection in the Selected Upazilas

It has been mentioned above that *haats* and *bazaars* were common sources of revenue for the Upazila Parishads all over Bangladesh. For, there is no upazila that has no *haats* and *bazaars*. All Upazila Parishads under review collected revenue from leasing *hasts* and *bazaars*. But the case of other sources was different. The other sources of revenue either were not available in the selected Upazilas or revenue collection from these sources was very poor. The data on five yearly average revenues Collections from various local sources have been presented in Table 7.1 It reveals from the table that all the selected eight Upazila Parishads collected a lion share of

revenue from leasing *haats* and *bazaars*. On the average the Upazila Parishads collected 56.46 per cent (the case of Phulbari) to 88.77 per cent (the case of Chandina) of their local revenue from leasing *haats* and *bazaars*. The amount of revenue collection from leasing haats and bazaars, however varied from one Upazila to another and also from one year to another due to numerical and other importance. But, one common feature is evident from the revenue collection pattern of the Upazila Parishads that there was no improvement in it over a period of five successive years; (Table 1-8 in Appendix-V).

Table7.1 Five Yearly Average Revenue Collections of the Selected Upazila Parishads (Figures in Taka, but bracketed figures in percentages)

Upazila Parishad	Haats and Bazaars	Licenses and Permits	Rents, Forms Bank interest etc.	Jalmahals	Profit from Investment	Total
Hathazari	4,65,714	76,833	1,71,503	-	-	7,14,050
	(65.22)	(10.76)	(24.02)			(100.00)
Chandina	4,44,870	23,098	33,218	-	-	5,01,186
	(88.76)	(04.61)	(06.63)			(100.00)
Savar	6,24,481	6,128	58,451	1,56,007	267,803	11,12,870
	(56.11)	(00.55)	(05.25)	(14.02)	(24.06)	(100.00)
Dewangonj	1,33,800	8,350	33,000	41,701	-	2,16,851
	(61.70)	(03.85)	(15.22)	(19.23)		(100.00)
Paikhgacha	2,77,400	45,832	104,200	63,068	-	4,90,500
	(56.56)	(09.34)	(21.24)	(12.86)		(100.00)
Gangni	1,60.358	17,104	42,210	-	-	2,19,672
	(72.99)	(07.79)	(19.22)			(100.00)
Chirirbandar	3,23,230	9,437	92,500	74,953	-	5,00,120
	(64.63)	(01.89)	(18.49)	(14.99)		(100.00)
Phulbari	96,058	30,280	14,390	29,380	-	1,70,106
	(56.47)	(17.80)	(08.46)	(17.27)		(100.00)

Source: Calculated from the records of the Upazila Finance offices

The poor collection of revenue by the Upazila Parishads from local sources may also be explained if we compare the annual revenue collection target of the Upazila Parishads the actual amount of revenue collected. The data presented in Table 7.2 indicate that no Upazila Parishad under observation achieved its annual target of revenue in a period of five years in a roll. The amount of yearly revenue collected by the Upazila Parishads ranged from 31 per cent (Gangni in 1988-89) to 55 per cent (Savar in 1987-88) of revenue target stated in their budgets. Not only the selected Upazila Parishads failed to achieve their annual target of tevenue resulting poor collection, the other Upazila Parishads in Bangladesh was not exception to this. The revenue collection pattern of the Upazila Parishads throughout Bangladesh provides a more dismal picture.

Table 7.2 Showing Revenue Collection all over Against the Revenue Target.(Figures in percentages)

Upazila Parishad	Yearly revenue collection					
	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Average
Hathazari	53.00	54.24	55.00	54.00	52.50	53.75
Chandina	59.00	51.75	53.00	52.00	50.50	53.25
Savar	53.00	54.00	55.00	52.00	53.00	53.40
Dewangonj	40.00	51.25	52.75	47.00	50.25	48.25
Paikgacha	48.15	49.13	50.00	40.50	37.75	45.11
Gangni	35.17	35.15	35.37	31.00	36.00	34.54
Chirirbandar	41.18	40.3	35.55	35.00	36.15	37.64
Phulbari	33.25	35.33	36.25	34.00	35.50	34.87

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

The evaluation report on Upazila development activities prepared by the local Government Division's Inspection and Evaluation Wing for the fiscal year 1986-87 reveals that nearly one fourth of the total Upazila Parishads in Bangladesh could not raise any revenue from their jurisdiction. Only 53 Upazila Parishads raised taxes, which is above Tk. 10,000.00. However, the highest amount of tax collection was Tk. 1,70,000 and the average collection per upazila was Tk. 45,000 (Fourth Five-Year Plan, 1990 p. XVI). In the next year i.e. 1987-88 there was a slight improvement in the revenue collection, but the amount was also very negligible. During 1987-88 the ranges of local resource mobilization and the number of Upazila Parishads belonging to each range is shown in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3 Showing Ranges of Local Revenue Collection by the Upazila Parishads during 1987-88

Ranges in Tk.	No. of UZP	Per cent
0-10000	13	02.83
10,000-50,000	135	29.34
50,000-1,00,000	193	41.96
1,00,000-1,50,000	70	15.22
1,50,000-2,00,000	32	06.96
2,00,000-2,50,000	10	2.17
2,50,000-3,00,000	03	00.65
3,00,000 & +	04	00.87
Total	460	100.00

Source : Fourth Five-Year Plan, 1990, p. XVI- 4. Table 16.3.

The meager revenue collection of the selected Upazila Parishads from internal sources may further be explained if we work out per head revenue contribution by dividing total collected revenue with population size. Table 7.4 reveals this information.

It is evident from Table 7.4 that per head revenue contribution to the development fund of Upazila Parishads varied from one upazila to another upazila. The lowest per head revenue contribution was found in Phulbari (Tk. 1.64) and highest in Saver (Tk. 4.25). However, considering all selected upazilas on an average a person contributed yearly only Tk. 2.36 as tax to the fund of the Upazila Parishad. This amount of revenue was undoubtedly very meager and negligible for the management of upazila administration as well as for the development works at the upazila level.

Table 7.4 Five Yearly Average Per Head Revenue Contribution in Taka

Upazila Parishad	Total Population	Yearly Average Revenue Collection	Per-head Revenue Contribution
Hathazari	2,90,044	7,14,050	2.46
Chandina	2,14,222	5,01,185	2.34
Savar	2,61,904	11,12,871	4.25
Dewangonj	2,46,987	2,16,851	0.88
Paikhgacha	1,75,715	4,90,500	2.79
Gangni	1,86,498	2,19,672	1.18
Chirirbandar	1,84,664	5,00,120	2.71
Phulbari	1,03,577	1,70,106	1.64
Total :	16,63,611	39,25,355	2.36

Source: *Calculated from the Upazila Statistics (1979-80 to 1982-83), Vol. 1. and the records of Upazila Finance offices*

Causes for Meager Revenue Collection

In has been stated earlier that for the first time in the history or rural local government in Bangladesh, the Upazilz Parishads were given power to collect revenue from local sources. But our experience shows that the Upazila Parishads met with various problems about revenue collection. It has been already stated that the Upazila Parishads collected a major share of their revenue by leasing *hats* and *bazars*. The leases for *hats* and *bazaars* were given by public auction arranged every year with free access for the bidders. In fact, the lease price did not reflect the real value of markets. The lessees, as we have been reported, used all possible means to keep contestants away from auction including payoff, threat, violence and bribes. Even there was allegaton that the Upazila Parishad staff involved themselves in the process. The same problem was found in leasing *jalmahals* and ferry *ghats*, if any.

The Taxation Rules of 1983 in its second schedule listed 14 trades and professions for taxation (Appendix VI). This means that the Upazila Parishads were allowed to collect taxes only from these 14 trades and professions and a large number of professions such as lawyers,

mohurraries, barefoot doctors and others were excluded from the second schedule of the Taxation Rules of 1983. As a result, the Upazila Parishads were deprived of a good amount of revenue. The Upazila Parishad chairmen and the UNOs under observation held the view that on the average a Upazila Parishad could earn revenue around Tk. 35 thousands annually from these sources.

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

The Upazila Parishads were given power to collect fees from fairs, agricultural and industrial shows/exhibitions, and tournaments. But these sources, as we have been reported, were hardly profitable. As for the fair, the Upazila Parishad chairmen argued that it had already lost importance due to the growth of modern market system. According to them, rarely fairs were held in their localities. Sometimes fairs were held in their localities as a part of community tradition. They stated that the process was so spontaneous and informal that neither the organizers nor the Upazila Parishad office bearers were aware of this account. Consequently, there was no revenue collection from fairs in the selected upazilas. Agricultural and industrial shows/exhibitions were started as the medium of demonstrating country's progress in those areas. Our observation reveals that the emphasis has been shifted from demonstration to gambling, obscene dances, prostitution and other anti-social activities. So there was reluctance among the Upazila Parishad office bearers to organize such shows/exhibitions. As a result, there was no revenue collection on this account in the selected upazilas. The Upazila Parishads were empowered to

collect fees from tournaments, but it is not mentioned in the Taxation Rules that on what types of tournaments the Upazila Parishad could impose fees. Moreover, major tournaments, as experience from the selected upazilas shows, were held at the district levels and there is a tradition of holding tournaments informally in the village levels. So there was no collection of fees from tournaments by the selected Upazila Parishads.

According to he Local Government Ordinance 1982, a Upazila Parishad could obtain profit from its investments in local fishery farms, agricultural nurseries, gardens and other commercial establishments. A Upazila Parishad could collect rents from its properties including land, godowns and houses used for offices and accommodations. A Upazila Parishad was also allowed to receive donation made by the members of public or the local authorities but in practice, as our data reveal, except the rent of houses, the other sources represented a very dismal picture. Save Saver, the Upazila Parishads under the study neither earned profit from investment nor received any donation money made by the local people and the local authorities.

It is evident from the above discussion that the Upazila Parishads studied by us met with various problems relating to revenue collection. Nevertheless, the Upazila Parishad being a new institution had no elaborate and efficient administrative setup to raise revenue properly. Moreover, the Upazila Parishads generally did not follow the principles and mechanism suggested by the government about local revenue collection. The Upazila Parishad (Taxation) Rules 1983 laid down these principles and mechanism, the important of which are given below:

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

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

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

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

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

f. In order to recover the arrears of taxes the Upazila Parishad chairman was legally empowered to issue the warrant of distress and sale of movable property through auction (The Taxation Rules 1983 quoted in Manual III, 78-83).

In the upazilas under observation the above principles and mechanism were not exercised in levying and raising taxes. Tax assessors were not appointed to assess the taxes. Simply on the basis of supposition yearly target of tax collection was fixed while preparing the budget. However, taxes were collected by appointing tax collectors on payment of certain percentage of commission to be fixed by the Upazila Parishad. Since the taxes were imposed without making assessment of field position, there were many objections from the taxpayers, and the objections were hardly heeded by the Upazila Parishads. As a result, a significant amount of taxes remained unrealized. Moreover, there were efforts among the taxpayers to evade taxes. The Upazila Parishads examined by us were unwilling to take necessary action against the defaulters and those who would evade taxes. To recover the arrears of tax dues, the Upazila Parishad chairman was empowered to issue warrant of distress and sale of movable property through auction but none of the Upazila Parishad chairmen of the selected upazilas exercised this power. Perhaps the main reason for this was political. The Upazila Parishad chairmen thought that the issue of warrant of distress against the people of their localities meant the loss of necessary support from them in the next election.

Revenue Surplus : Contribution of UZPs to Development Expenditure

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

The expenditure of the Upazila Parishad may broadly be divided into two categories namely, revenue expenditure and development expenditure. Since the Upazila Parishad was regarded as the agency of development at the local level, it had to spend its income for development works. This needs not to explain. A lion share of revenue expenditure of the Upazila Parishad was borne by the central government in the form of revenue grant for the payment of salaries, allowances and contingency expenditure of the officers and the staff deputed to it. The data collected by us reveal that a

Upazila Parishad on average received yearly one crore Taka as revenue grant. According to the local Government Ordinance 1982, the heads of expenditure that a Upazila Parishad had to meet with its own revenue are the following:

a. Payment of salaries and allowances to the employees of the Parishad including the honorarium of the nominated members.

b. The expenditure charged on the Parishad fund under the Local Government Ordinance 1982.

c. Fulfillment of every obligation and in the discharge of any duty imposed on the Parishad fund under the Local Government Ordinance of 1982 or under any other law.

d. The expenditure declared by the government to be an appropriate charge on the Parishad fund (The Local Government Ordinance 1982: Sec. 34).

The charged expenditure that the Parishad had to incur include:

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

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

c. Any sum required to satisfy any judgment, decree or award against the Parishad by any court or tribunal.

d. Any expenditure declared by the government to be changed (The Local Government Ordinance 1982 : Sec. 35).

However in practice, the selected Upazila Parishads with their revenue income met the following expenditure:

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

b. Tax, fees and rent collection.

c. Honorarium of the nominated members.

d. Internal audit.

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

f. Maintenance of and fuel for jeep.

g. Maintenance of and fuel for ambulance.

h. Land tax for the upazila complex areas.

i. Electricity and gas bills.

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

k. Discretionary fund of the Upazila Parishad chairman.

l. Office maintenance.

m. Purchase of furniture.

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

o. Miscellaneous and unexpected expenditure (Source: Compilation from the various records of the Upazila Parishads).

Table 7.5 Five Yearly Average Revenue Surplus and Revenue Expenditure of the Selected Upazila Parishads (Figures in Taka, but bracketed figures in percentages)

Upazila Parishad	Revenue Collection	Revenue Expenditure	Revenue Surplus
Hathazarri	7,14,050	5,30,373	1,83,677
	(100.00)	(74.28)	(25.72)
Chandina	5,01,185	3,55,565	1,45,600
	(100.00)	(70.95)	(29.05)
Savar	11,12,870	10,24,541	88,330
	(100.00)	(92.06)	(07.94)
Dewangong	2,16,851	1,91,081	25,770
	(100.00)	(88.11)	(11.89)
Paikgacha	4,90,500	3,59,900	1,30,600
	(100.00)	(73.37)	(26.63)
Gangni	2,19,672	2,13,972	5,700
	(100.00)	(97.41)	(02.59)
Chirirbandar	5,00,120	3,65,120	1,35,000
	(100.00)	(73.00)	(27.00)
Phulbari	1,70,106	1,65,197	4,909
	(100.00)	(97.11)	(02.89)
Grand Total	39,25,254	32, 05,759	7,19,586
	(100.00)	(83.78)	(16.22)

Source : Calculated from the records of the Upazila Finance offices

Our experience from the selected upazilas shows that under the heads mentioned above, the Upazila Parishads spent a major share of their revenue income. For this reason after meeting revenue expenditure there remained a negligible amount of revenue surplus for development expenditure. Five yearly average data projected in Table 7.5 explain this position.

Table 7.6 Showing Revenue Deficit or Revenue Surplus of Savar Upazila Parishad, 1985-86 to 1889-90 (Figures in Taka, but bracketed figure percentages)

Fiscal year	Total Revenue Collection	Total Revenue Expenditure	Revenue Surplus/Deficit
1985-86	10,67,064 (100.00)	10,67,064 (100.00)	Nil
1986-87	10,34,648 (100.00)	10,79,978 (104.38)	-45,330 (-4.38)
1987-88	13,66,120 (100.00)	12,09,841 (88,56)	1,56,279 (11.44)
1988-89	12,16,823 (100.00)	10,60,351 (87.14)	10,60,351 (12.86)
1989-90	8,79,705 (100.00)	7,50,806 (85.35)	1,28,899 (14.65)

Source: *Savar Upazila Finance office.*

The data projected in Table 7.5 show that the Upazila Parishads differed in the amount of revenue expenditure from 70.95 per cent (Chandina) to 97.41 per cent (Gangni). On the average a Upazila Parishad spent 83.78 per cent of its total local income for revenue expenditure. This means that after meeting revenue expenditure, a Upazila Parishad on the average spent 18.33 per cent of its locally collected revenue for development expenditure. Even it happened that there remained no revenue surplus and the Upazila Parishads ran deficit in revenue expenditure. The data of the Savar Upazila Parishads presented in Table 7.6 and 7.7 reveal that in the period of 5 years, the Upazila Parishads sometimes ran deficit in revenue expenditure, sometimes they had neither revenue surplus nor revenue deficit and sometimes they had revenue surplus with negligible amount.

Table 7.7 Showing Revenue Deficit or Revenue Surplus of Gangni Upazila Parishad, 1985-86 to 1889-90 (Figures in Taka, but bracketed figure percentages)

Fiscal Year	Total Revenue Collection	Total Revenue Expenditure	Revenue Surplus/Deficit
1985-86	2,07,940 (100.00)	2,16,282 (104.01)	-8,342 (-4.01)
1986-87	2,10,068 (100.00)	2,22,528 (105.93)	-12,460 (105.93)
1987-88	2,19,652 (100.00)	2,19,652 (100.00)	Nil
1988-89	2,40,880 (100.00)	2,20,100 (91,37)	20,780 (8.63)
1989-90	2,09,380 (100.00)	2,01,662 (96.31)	7,718 (03.69)

Source: *Gangni Upazila Finance offices*

Table 7.8 explains the real position of the Upazila Parishads about their contribution to development expenditure. It reveals from the data projected in Table 7.8 that on the average a Upazila Parishad spent annually for a person Tk.0.43 from its revenue surplus. In other words, the local financial contribution to the development expenditure at the upazila levels was very poor. In the face of meager revenue generation from internal sources, the Upazila Parishads were heavily dependent on the grants of the central government and other aids including the Food for Works Program (FFWP). But the FFWP and other aids were not integrated either with the Annual Development Plan (ADP) at the national level or with the Annual Upazila Development Plan (AUDP). At the local levels these are implemented by the Union Parishads. The Annual Upazila Development Plan constituted with revenue surplus of the Upazila Parishad and the block grant of the central government. Hence the FFWP and other aids were excluded from our study.

Table 7.8 Showing Five Yearly (1985-86 to 1989-90) Per-Head Development Expenditure met by the Selected Upazila Parishads with their Revenue Surplus (Figures in Taka)

Upazila Parishad	Revenue Surplus	Total Population	Per-head Dev. from Reve-Surplus
Hthazari	1,83,677	2,90,044	0.63
Chandina	1,45,600	2,14,222	0.68
Savar	88.330	2,61,904	0.33
Dewangonj	25,770	2,46,987	0.10
Paikhgacha	1,30,600	1,75,715	0.74
Gangni	5,700	1,86,498	0.03
Chirirbandar	1,35,000	1,84,664	0.73
Phulbari	4,909	1,03,577	0.05
Total :	7,19,586	16,63,611	0.43

Note : *Since the upazila system was in operation during nineteen eighties, the population data in the table have been used from the Census of 1981.*
Source: *Calculated from the records of Upazila Finance offices*

Government Grants

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

that, as the experience of Bangladesh shows, the central government took undue advantage to control the local government through conditional grant.

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

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

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

The block grants received by the selected Upazila Parishads for successive five years have been shown in Table 7.9.

Table 7.9 Block Grants Received by the Selected Upazila Parishads, 1985-86 to 1989-90 (Figures in Taka)

Upazila	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Average
Hathazari	2100000	3610950	4897000	1112000	1200000	2583990
Chandina	1600000	2571175	3750000	721300	900000	1908495
Savar	4640000	4403910	4939000	1730000	2000000	3542582
Dewangonj	2000000	3090920	4000000	900000	100000	2018184
Paikhgacha	2000000	1569315	2600000	800000	850000	1563863
Gangni	1700000	2199160	2500000	900000	1000000	1659832
Chirirbandar	1700000	2117550	2500000	900000	1000000	1643510
Phulbari	1000000	1109175	1500000	500000	500000	921835

Source: Calculated from the records of Upazila Finance offices

Let us now compare the position of the revenue surplus, by which the Upazila Parishads contributed to the development expenditure, with that of the block grants of the central government. Table 7.8 reveals this position. It is evident from Table 7.10 that 5 yearly average ratio percentages between block development grant of the central government and revenue surplus of the selected Upazila Parishads ranged from 92.29:7.71 (Paikgacha) to 99.66:0.34 (Gangni) But in. In considering the average ratio percentage of all the selected Upazila Parishads, it was 95.70:04.30. This means that out of the total development expenditure, the selected Upazila Parishads contributed only 4.30 per cent and the rest i.e., 95.70 per cent was the grant of the central government.

Table 7.10 Showing Five Yearly Average Amount of Revenue Surplus and Block Grant, 1985-86 to 1989-90 (Figures in Taka, but bracketed figures in percentages)

Upazila	Revenue surplus	Block grant	Total
Hathazari	1,83,677	25,83,990	27,67,667
	(06.64)	(93.36)	(100.00)
Chandina	1,45,600	19,08,495	20,54,095
	(07.09)	(92.91)	(100.00)
Savar	88,330	35,42,582	36,30,912
	(02.43)	(97.57)	(100.00)
Dewangongj	25,770	21,98,184	22,23,954
	(01.16)	(98.84)	(100.00)
Paikgacha	1,30,600	15,63,863	16,94,463
	(07.71)	(92.29)	(100.00)
Gangni	5,700	16,59,832	16,65,532
	(0.343)	(99.66)	(100.00)
Chirirbandar	1,35,000	16,43,510	17,78,510
	(07.59)	(92.41)	(100.00)
Phulbari	4,909	9,21,835	9,26,744
	(0.53)	(99.47)	(100.00)
Grand total	7,19,586	1,60,22,201	1,67,41,786
	(04.30)	(95.70)	(100.00)

Source: Calculated from the records of the Upazila Finance Offices

It is clear from the above discussion that local revenue collection of the Upazila Parishads was very meager. As a result, they were totally dependent on the central government for the fund of their development expenditure.

Chapter 8

Upazila Development Planning

Decentralization, as discussed in chapter two, requires local level planning; and local level planning not only facilitates popular participation in development process but also provides opportunities for planning and implementing schemes according to the needs of the locality. Here the observation of CARR is very noteworthy when it made recommendation for devolutionary decentralization at district, thana and union levels. CARR held view that elected local government at these levels would concurrently be supported by decentralized planning and budgetary system to plan and implement projects of local importance without the usual delay that existed in the previous centralized planning and budgetary mechanism. CARR further expressed opinion that without adequate decentralization of planning and budgetary system, the measure for effective devolution of authority would be an exercise in futility (The Report of CARR: iv).

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

Past Local Level Planning Process

Divisional Planning

Divisional planning was introduced in the country when the Divisional Council was established at the divisional level under the basic democracy system. Besides coordinating the activities of subordinate local councils, the Divisional Council also formulated and recommended to the government development schemes of divisional importance. But the system of nominated membership and the control exercised by the bureaucracy did not promise anything great through this body. "It met its end unhonoured and unsung because of its built-in failures as a local government institution" (Chowdhury 1987:5). However, the planning process was reintroduced at the divisional level when Zia established the Divisional Development Board in 1976. Again the government committed the same mistake and made the Board under the bureaucratic control and dominance. The Board was headed by the Divisional Commissioner and consisted of the Deputy Commissioners of the districts within the division and three full

time members appointed by the government. The martial law government of 1982 appointed the Zonal Martial Law Administrator as chairman of the Board. The Divisional Board was abolished in 1986. However, in respect of development planning, the Divisional Board was given the following functions:

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

ii. To approve of the projects and schemes involving not more than 1 million Taka (later raised to 2 million) each and to submit other schemes to the government for approval.

iii. To execute approved projects and schemes.

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

v.   To grant loans, on such terms and conditions as may be prescribed, to any person for setting up or development of cottage industries (Hye 1982:20).

The Divisional Board had fund comprising the following:

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

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

iii. Receipts from any other sources (Hye 1982: 20-21).

District Planning

The district in Bangladesh represents the most important administrative unit at the sub-national level and it has a well-established administrative network representing the national government. Although currently there is no local government at the district level, it had a long experience in local government since 1885. The district level local government had been quite active and effective in planning, executing and maintaining rural roads network and other facilities including health and education.

Under the basic democracy system, the district level local government, now called Zila Parishad, was required to prepare the Five-Year Plan. The Five-Year Plan was prepared according to the guidelines supplied by the government. The engineering staff and the secretary to the Zila Parishad were given training about the techniques of plan formulation. The preparation of the Five-Year Plan required field survey, consultation of local people, local bodies at the lower level, and technical departments/ agencies which were related to the items of works included in the plan i.e.

Water Development Board, Roads and Highways Department, Ministry of Agriculture, etc. The Five-Year Plan of the Zila Parishad contained the details of on-going projects and the projects to be undertaken during the next five years arranged in order of priority and the fund for their implementation. The Zila Parishad was also instructed to prepare its plan keeping in view the objectives of the national Five-Year Plan.

The Zila Parishad was also required to prepare the Annual Plan as a part of the Five Year Plan and implemented the same with the clearance of the approving authority i.e. the Divisional Commissioner. Projects were selected on the basis of priority and not on regional basis. In order to prepare the Annual Plan, the Zila Parishad was advised to assume 50 per cent increase over previous year's allocation of funds from the government and it had to commit 25 per cent of their own income for the maintenance of completed projects. In taking up projects, the Zila Parishad was not supposed to take up new projects until the previous incomplete projects were completed. The Zila Parishad was also advised to give emphasis on developing road network connecting backward areas. In this respect, the Parishad had to adhere to the technical specifications of roads, bridges given in the guidelines provided by the Ministry (Hye 1982:24-29).

Although the Zila Parishad had a long experience in local level planning, the actual activities undertaken by it failed to mobilize the people and create enthusiasm among them to participate in the development process. This is because the bureaucracy dominated the Zila Parishad. As a result, the decision taken regarding the development plan did not reflect the needs of the people, particularly the rural poor. It also did not create scope for popular participation in the development process. Moreover, the district level planning was limited to Rural Works Program only. The Zila Parishad was responsible for other activities like agriculture, health, education, etc. but these were not included in the district plan. In fact, it was a plan for roads and bridges.

Thana Level Planning

Under the basic democracy system the Thana Council later called the Thana Parishad was required to prepare a Five Year Plan and a plan book with the joint efforts of the thana level officers and the Union Parishad chairmen who were the ex-officio representative members of the Thana Parishad. This system continued until the introduction of the upazila scheme. A model book was supplied to the Thana Parishad by the government in connection with the formulation of plan.

The thana level planning was set up within the framework of Comilla model. But all of the four components of Comilla model were not

included in the thana level planning. It covered only two components of Rural Works Program, namely (a) drainage and embankment, and (b) rural roads and irrigation. The two components included the following functions:

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

b. Construction of new *kutcha* roads.

c. Conversion of *Kutcha* roads into *pucca* roads.

d. Construction and reconstruction of bridges and culverts.

e. Re-excavation of canals meant for irrigation and drainage.

f. Excavation of irrigation canals.

g. Repair of *bunds* (dam) and embankments (Faizullah 1988:38).

The schemes under the thana plan originated in the ward committee meeting called by the respective ward member of the Union Parishad. Each ward member consulted the people of his constituency regarding the problems requiring solution and then placed them in the ward meeting. Out of the discussion in the ward meeting, the important problems emerged. The next step of planning was associated with the discussion in the meeting of the Union Parishad. The proposals submitted by the ward members were discussed and finalized in the meeting of the Union Parishad. The schemes were arranged in order of priority. If the schemes were to be executed under the union Rural Works Program, these were sent to the Circle Officer (Dev.). After the preparation of necessary cost estimate and preliminary examination by the Circle Officer (Dev.), these were put before the Thana Parishad. After discussion in the meeting of the Thana Parishad, the schemes were selected for execution in the year on the basis of priority. If it was decided that the schemes were to be executed by the Thana Parishad, these were sent to the district approving authority.

Documentary, the outcome of above planning process resulted in the preparation of a thana plan book (Faizullah 1988:41). Thus, the thana level planning was confined to processing schemes generated from below and preparing a plan book for the approval of the district authority. The Circle Officer (Dev.) was mainly responsible for the preparation of the thana plan. In this connection, he was assisted by the Thana Overseer of Rural Works Program and often by the Section Officer of Water Development Board. The district approving authority was headed by the Deputy Commissioner and consisted of the chairmen of the Thana Parishads and the heads of offices of the nation building departments at the district level. The arrangement for approving the schemes under the thana plan was intended for the following reasons:

i. Proper coordination of inter-thana projects by the higher level that facilitated a proper network of road system without any overlapping

ii. As higher and superior engineering and technical skill were available at the district for ensuring proper planning, preparation of estimates and designs, and better utilization of funds sanctioned by the government could be ensured (Faizullah 1988:40).

The thana level planning suffered stress immediately after independence in 1971. Soon after the political change in 1975, the thana again emerged as an important unit of rural development planning and administration. During the period of General Zia, Rural Works Program played a pioneering role in this regard and dominated the thana scene so far as the systematic local level planning was concerned. The thana plan book embodied methodology, which was followed by the officers and the Union Parishad chairmen.

The thana level planning had several limitations. Like the district planning, it was confined mainly to the Rural Works Program. So it was not a comprehensive plan covering all socioeconomic and infrastructure activities. Secondly, the thana plan was not integrated with the district plan. Thirdly, it is true that there was a provision to facilitate people's participation in the planning process at the thana level. But the dominance of the government officers in decision- making process was so pronounced and the educational level of the people's representatives so low that the ideal of participatory development was hardly realized (Hye 1982:45-46). Finally, the Thana Parishad, as mentioned above, was not given power to raise revenue for its development expenditure. The finance for planning at the thana level was entirely dependent on the national government.

Union Level Planning

Union is the lowest unit of local government in the rural areas of Bangladesh. Though the union level local government, now called the Union Parishad, is an old institution like the Zila Parishad, the systematic development plan for the union was started in the early 1960s under the basic democracy system. The union plan covered two major components of Rural Works Program, namely (a) drainage and embankment and (b) roads, bridges and culverts. Later irrigation was included in it. The union plan book, supplied to the Union Parishad by the government, contained the details of the manner in which the plan book and the maps were to be prepared. The union plan book and maps were to be prepared by the officers concerned. Before the union plan was prepared, the Union Parishad members and the ward committees were consulted. The union plan book

drawn up from 1976 to 1982 included 9 maps for drains, irrigation and embankments; and 19 maps for roads, bridges and culverts. These among others contained the following information:

i.   Present situation;

ii. projects to be undertaken during the plan period;

iii. portfolio of projects approved by the Thana Development Committee in order of priority; and

iv. projects to be completed in each year (Rahman 1986:55).

In addition to Rural Works Program and irrigation, the Union Parishad was involved in other development projects that were not shown in its five-year plan.

   Though the Union Parishad enjoyed some powers to raise revenue, it was not so autonomous as is needed for local government. It could not collect the taxes properly. Therefore, the Union Parishad was entirely dependent on the grants of the central government for its development expenditure. The direct involvement of government officers in the preparation of the union plan did not allow local expertise to develop.

Upazila Development Planning

Legal Aspects

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

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

ii. Such plans shall be subject to the sanction of the government and shall provide for: (a) the manner in which the plans shall be financed, executed, implemented and supervised; (b) the agency through which the plans executed and implemented; and (c) such other matters as are may be necessary.

iii. The government may direct that any specified item of income of a Parishad shall wholly or in part be earmarked for and applied in the implementation of a development plan (Manual, Vol. 1:12).

Thus, the Local Government Ordinance of 1982 provided the Upazila Parishad with authority to prepare and implement the development plan for a period as may be specified by the government. Initially, the preparation of plan was not a statutory obligation. It was made obligatory

in July 1983 when the Bangladesh Planning Commission issued Guidelines to the Upazila Parishad for the utilization of development assistance grants provided by the national government through the Annual Development Program (ADP). The Guidelines were amended in 1985 and 1988. With regard to the formulation of the Upazila Development Plan, the Guidelines states:

> (The) Upazila Parishad should prepare an Upazila Development Plan and maintain a plan book on the lines so long maintained by most of the development circles and keep it continuously updated and for each financial year shall prepare an Annual Upazila Development Program (AUDP) (Guidelines, 1983:4).

It is clear from the above that it was essential for the Upazila Parishad to prepare an Upazila Development Plan and maintain an updated plan book. There was no mention of five-year development plan in the Guidelines. The five-year development plan became an integral part of upazila development planning when the Local Government Ministry adopted the Guidelines as administrative Instructions. Section 1 of the Instructions provides:

> (The) Upazila Parishad should prepare a Five Year Development Plan; and maintain the Upazila Plan Book on the line of the Thana Plan Book so long maintained by the Development Circles. The Plan Book should be updated every year (Manual, Vol. III:101).

Scope

The Resolution 1982 that provided the basis of the upazila scheme also determined the scope of upazila development plan. The Resolution, as mentioned earlier, divided the government functions at the upazila level into retained and transferred subjects. The transferred subjects formed the scope of upazila development plan. Planning, designing and implementation of all transferred subjects require considerable expertise, skill and knowledge that were inadequate at the upazila level. So it was decided that upazila development activities to be planned and implemented by the Upazila Parishad would center on the following sectors, each of which consists of several items:

1. **Sector: Agriculture and Irrigation**

Items:

Intensive crops programs, demonstration of farms, seeds fisheries, development of social program, digging of tanks, reclamation of derelict tank, rural forestry including road side plantation and horticulture,

development of poultry and live-stock, drainage and irrigation, small flood embankment, and small irrigation.

2. Sector: Small and Cottage Industries

Items:

Workshop program, skill development, training and extension, income generation activities, etc.

Physical Infrastructure

3. Sector: Transport and Communication

Items:

Road construction, Rural Works Program; construction, reconstruction and development of small bridges, culverts, etc.

4. Sector: Housing and Physical Planning

Items:

Development of *haats* and *bazars*, development of storage facilities, development of community centers, management for supplying drinking water in the rural areas, constructions of low cost sanitation units.

Socioeconomic infrastructure

5. Sector: Development of Education (Primary)

Items:

Development of educational institutions, construction of building and playgrounds, and supply of teaching aids.

5. Sector: Child development

Items:

Development of children in connection with body, mind and culture.

6. Sector: Health and Social Welfare

Items:

Health measures, family planning, social welfare including youth welfare and women welfare.

7. Sector: Sports and Culture

Items:

Promotion of games, sports, cultural activities, etc.

8. **Sector: Miscellaneous**

Items:

Birth and death registration services and disaster relief (Guidelines as amended in 1988:4-5).

It is clear from the above that the scope of upazila development planning was quite wide and broad based. The scope further was to be widened by including newer activities that the Upazila Parishad would like to initiate and undertake or that the government would like to initiate and entrust to the Upazila Parishad.

Strategies for Planning

It is provided in the Guidelines that the plan for programs and projects undertaken by the Upazila Parishad must be in conformity with the objective and priority of the national government as reflected in the national Five Year Plan and the Annual Development Program. The government in the following languages has defined the national priority:

> The priority sectors are food and agriculture, population control, energy resource development and basic education and skill training. The government wants to concentrate on rural development where agricultural activities predominate and educational needs are acute. Employment opportunities are to be created and income for greatest number generated. Thus, rural non-farm activities and skills training become matters of priority (GOB 1994:145).

It is also provided in the Guidelines that a project proposed and selected must be within the framework of Upazila Development Plan. Generally speaking, the Upazila Parishad was directed to undertake only those projects which would be planned and implemented within the resources available to it, and which were not adequately covered by the national projects. To generate quick returns and to avoid inflationary stress, the Upazila Parishad was instructed to take up those projects which are immediately productive in nature and which would be completed within two years. Total cost of schemes of any year would not usually be more than double the funds available in that year. In addition, the expenditure on a project would not exceed one third of the allocation of a particular sector in the Annual Upazila Development Program (AUDP).

In order to ensure judicious utilization of scarce resources, the Upazila Parishad was advised to avoid lumpy projects and undertake a number of small but viable projects providing benefit to the largest number of people. It was also expected that, while taking up development projects, the

Upazila Parishad would give emphasis on the promotion of employment generation including self-employment and income earning activities. It was also expected that the Parishad would give priority to the development of growth centers. This included the development of *haats* and *bazaars,* rural roads connecting growth centers and upazila headquarters, construction of small bridges and culverts to facilitate communication and to promote commercial activities. In undertaking development programs, the Upazila Parishad was required to consider those projects that would supplement and complement the priorities of the national government and the development of backward areas.

Since an effective planning largely depends on reliable and quantitative statistics, socioeconomic survey and study are essential. This not only ensures planned and effective utilization of funds but also helps avoid haphazard investments. Hence, it is stated in the Guidelines/ Instructions that the Upazila Parishad should undertake socioeconomic surveys and studies concerning their areas, so that it can prepare plans and undertake projects properly. It is also stated in the Guidelines/ Instructions that the Upazila Parishad would perform such tasks with the help of the local departmental officers, and no consultant would be engaged for this purpose. In order to prepare plan, survey and study would be conducted particularly on the following components:

a. Physical infrastructure of roads, bridges, culverts, connecting important growth centers and markets of the upazila.

b. Upazila irrigation and flood protection plan.

c. Agriculture land use and crop production plan.

d. Plan for production oriented socioeconomic schemes on self-employment and income generation activities.

e. Social development plans including health, family planning, education, etc. (Manual, Vol. III:101).

Rules for Utilization of Development Fund

While describing different sectors and various items of activities, the Guidelines specified the allocation for the expenditure of development fund in order to ensure its proper and efficient utilization. The Guidelines prepared in 1993 and modified twice reveals the manner in which the block development grant was to be allocated among the various sectors of developmental activities under the Annual Upazila Development Program. So Upazila Parishads were not allowed to allocate and spend development fund according to their own choice. An indicative pattern of sector-wise allocation of fund for different activities is given in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1 Sector-wise Allocation Pattern of AUDP (Figures in percentage)

Sector	Before June 1985		June 1985-July 1988		From July 1988	
	Mini-mum	Maxi-mum	Mini-mum	Maxi-mum	Mini-mum	Maxi-mum
Agriculture & industry	30	40				
a. Agriculture and irrigation			15	25	12	20
b. Small and cottage industries			05	10	05	10
Physical Infrastructure	25	35				
c. Transport and communication			17.5	30	15	25
d. Housing and physical planning			10	17.5	10	17.5
Socioeconomic Infrasracture	17.5	27.5				
e. Educational development			05	12.5	05	12.5
f. Child development			-	-	07.5	15
g. Health and social welfare			07.5	15	05.5	07.5
h. Sport and culture			02.5	07.5	02.5	07.5
i. Miscellaneous			02.5	05	02.5	07.5

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

Upazila Development Planning in Practice:

Planning Without Plan

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

Five -Year Plan and Annual Plan

The Five-Year Plan and the Annul Plan are integral parts of planning process. The Annual Plan is an instrument for the implementation of Five Year Plan. It contains detailed information of projects, programs and policies from year to year. In other words, the task of Annul Plan is to undertake and implement the phasing of Five Year Plan (Islam 1977: 105).

As mentioned above, the Upazila Parishad was required to prepare a Five Year plan and an Annual Development Plan. But the Upazila Parishads we surveyed did not prepare any such plans. As reasons, the chairmen and the UNOs stated that they were not supplied with any elaborate guidelines or model plan book for this purpose. However, our observation reveals other reasons also. Firstly, the preparation of plan was a technical job that needed special training. At the upazila levels there were officers dealing with local development functions, and according to rules, it

was their task to prepare plans relating to their areas of responsibility; but they were not given training in this regard as we have seen in chapter seven (Table 7.24). Therefore, it was meaningless to expect that the upazila level officers would perform the task of plan preparation without giving them training to develop their skills and expertise. Secondly, our discussion with the officers reveals that most of them had no clear concept of planning.

Decentralized planning requires a strong institutionalized team to be at work to prepare such plan. It is stipulated in the Guidelines that Five Year and Annual Development Plans would be prepared by the Upazila Parishad, but the mechanism for setting up such planning team was neither provided in it nor by any other law. So, there was no guide for the Upazila Parishad or its functionaries as to the art of plan preparation. Thus in the absence of firm directions from the government, the efficient organizational network was not established at the upazila level for the preparation of plan.

AUDP: Project Identification, Preparation and Approval

The Annual Development Program is the link between the Annual Plan and the annual budget. The Annual Development Program, as is adumbrated in the Annual Plan, specifies expenditures on items and projects approved for inclusion as development expenditures, which form the integral part of the annual budget (Islam 1977:105-106). As per rules, it was essential for the Upazila Parishad to prepare its Annual Development Program in order to use yearly development grants given by the national government. Before the commencement of each financial year, the Upazila Parishad was required to prepare and sanction, in a prescribed manner, a statement of its estimated receipts and expenditure i.e. budget for that year, and forward a copy of it to the government and the Deputy Commissioner concerned. These requirements compelled the Upazila Parishad to do some exercise in planning.

The Upazila Parishads under study prepared their Annual Development Programs and budgets regularly. However, the procedure for identification and selection of projects for the Annual Development Program was not according to rules prescribed by the government. According to rules, every project proposed and selected must be within the framework of Upazila Development Plan and therefore would be conceived of in advance and included in the list prepared at the beginning of the financial year. In addition, a project proposal required being prepared in a prescribed proforma, which contains the information under 18 different heads, about a project to be undertaken by the Upazila Parishad (Appendix-V1). The functional officer was responsible for preparing the project proposal and

placing the same for consideration of the Upazila Parishad. Before being finally approved by the Upazila Parishad, the project proposal required to be examined by the Project Selection Committee consisting of not more than seven members including the Upazila Parishad representative members and the officers headed by the UNO. It was essential for the Project Selection Committee to conduct site survey of the project areas, consult the Union Parishad chairmen, members and local elite. Proposed projects would then be scrutinized and technically analyzed by the sub-committees appointed by the Upazila Parishad.

The Upazila Parishad was the approving authority for its development projects. The decision to approve the projects was taken in the meeting of the Parishad by consensus. In case there was no consensus, the majority decision through voting prevailed. The officers attending the meetings of the Upazila Parishad could participate in discussion and render technical advice but they had no right to vote.

Our inquiry into the practices of project identification and selection reveals that the Upazila Parishads under review did not follow rules prescribed by the government. Rather the Parishads followed a system of their own in identifying and selecting the projects. On receiving letter of first installment of annual development assistance fund from the government, notices were served to all concerned for submitting projects to the Upazila Parishad. Accordingly, every UP chairman called meetings of his Parishad and according to the decision of the meeting; the projects were identified and selected. The Secretary of the Union Parishad prepared the list of projects and then it was sent to the UNO. Before submitting the list of project proposals, the Union Parishad chairmen who had good relations with the Upazila Parishad chairman generally consulted him. The officers concerned also submitted some projects after consulting the UNO. After receiving the projects, the UNO along with the Upazila Engineer prepared the list of all projects submitted, and placed them in the meeting of the Upazila Parishad for discussion and approval. Though the decision of approving the projects was taken in the meeting of the Upazila Parishad by consensus or by majority vote, it was observed that the Upazila Parishad chairman and the UNO played an important role in piloting the projects to be approved.

It is clear from the above discussion that the procedure adopted by the Upazila Parishads in identifying and selecting development projects did neither allow for an examination of existing situation of the locality nor provide the scope for popular participation. So the practices of project identification and selection under the upazila scheme failed to achieve the primary objective of decentralized planning i.e. people's participation and

ensure sound planning process in view of the need of the people of the area. What happened in the name of planning under the upazila scheme was simply an exercise of the preparation of projects and the estimates of cost. Even the simple format prescribed by the Planning Commission for the preparation of projects was not used in many cases. In reality, the upazila planning process was entirely a political one. In most cases, the effort was made to appease all unions within the upazila by distributing fund equally. But ultimately the union from which the Upazila Parishad chairman came and the unions with forceful UP chairmen received more projects.

It is evident from the above discussion that upazila development plan was predominantly an amalgam of projects proposed by the UP chairmen. Since the UP chairmen were local political leaders they tried to satisfy their own constituencies and usually they were concerned with the short-term goals of their areas. They were less concerned with the overall affairs of the upazila and the issues that were inter-union in nature. Therefore, it may be said that the Upazila Parishads implemented the projects of unions rather than any comprehensive Upazila Development Plan as conceived in the Guidelines provided by the government.

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

1. Distribution of grants to various cultural organizations/clubs without any particular projects.
2. Undertaking of projects exceeding Guidelines ceiling and undertaking of unnecessary and excess projects.
3. Expenditure on prizes for students, teachers and farmers.
4. Allocation of funds to the unions without considering their size and population.
5. Failure to submit evaluation reports of development projects in prescribed forms.
6. Failure to adopt project proforma prescribed by the Planning Commission.

7. Failure to allocate funds to prescribed sectors.

8. Failure to prepare Annual and Five Year Plans.

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

10. Purchase and repair of Upazila Parishad jeeps; and purchase of motorcycles by using the upazila development fund; and the vehicles are sometimes heavily misused.

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

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

13. Failure to submit statement regarding the revenue receipt.

14. Failure to approve the revised and additional expenditures.

15. Failure to submit various proceedings of the meetings of Upazila Parishads, copies of budget, manpower, etc. to the Ministry concerned (Quoted in Islam 1991:301-311).

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

i. Construction of cafeteria, restaurant or shopping centers.

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

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

iv. Construction/reconstruction of gate or boundary walls of Upazila Parishad building, s*hahedminar,* mosque, temple, church, etc.

v. Purchase of generator for electrification.

vi. Construction of new school/college/*madrasha.*

vii. Construction of any club or other association buildings.

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

ix. Construction of Tennis ground.

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

xi.   Purchase of land for new *hat* and *bazar*.

xii.   Expenditure on subjects retained by the national government.

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

xiv.   Direct purchase of land for digging pond or for playground of school.

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

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

xvii.   Undertaking of projects in municipal areas.

xviii. Establishment of kindergarten school.

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

xx.   Undertaking of schemes without considering the practical feasibility, priority, constraints of local resources, etc. (Guidelines as amended in 1985: Annexure 1).

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

Projects Undertaken

It has been stated in chapter six that revenue surplus of the Upazila Parishad and block grant of the central government constituted the upazila development fund. With this fund, the selected Upazila Parishads undertook a large number of development projects. Year-wise distribution of those projects is presented in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2 shows the number of projects undertaken by the selected Upazila Parishads in five successive fiscal years. It appears from the table that each Upazila Parishad undertook many projects in every year. In this connection the Upazila Parishad members, both official and non official were asked whether they thought that the available fund was enough for the implementation of projects undertaken by their Parishads. All replied

in the negative. But it is surprising to note that, in spite of their being aware of the limited fund, they selected and approved many projects for implementation. Although there had been a declining trend in the number of projects undertaken since 1988-89, this was not consistent with the available fund. Because, the Upazila Parishads were totally dependent on the grants of the government for development expenditure, and drastically the government reduced development grant from the fiscal year 1988-89. From this year, the Upazila Parishads under examination received development grant 60 per cent to 65 per cent less than before as we have seen in chapter seven (*Supra* Tables 7.9). But no Upazila Parishad minimized the number of projects according to the available fund. This was because the projects were selected and approved politically and consequently, their implementation suffered a great deal. The similar findings reveal from the study of Ali (1991:237) and Alam *et. al.* (1994:93).

Table 8.2 Year-wise Distribution of Projects Undertaken by the selected Eight Upazila Parishads

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

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

Another objective of decentralized planning under the upazila scheme as claimed by the then government was directed toward an all round development of the area and the participation of rural people, especially the majority poor in the development process. This, however, was not achieved. The identification and selection of development projects not only neglected popular participation but also failed to undertake projects of all round development of the area. Our data reveal that the development projects of the Upazila Parishads were confined largely to the infrastructure sectors, specially the physical infrastructure (Table 8.3). Many officers complained that most of the projects submitted by their offices were overlooked in favor of the projects relating to physical infrastructure.

Table 8.3 Distribution of Projects Undertaken in five Years by Sectors and Fund in the Selected Upazilas

Sector	No. of projects	Fund
1. Agriculture and Irrigation	479	20.41
2. Small and Cottage Industries	88	02.75
Physical Infrastructure		
3. Transport and Communication	905	45.57
4. Housing and Physical Planning	95	04.04
Souci-economic Infrastructure		
5. Education	501	17.35
6. Health and Social welfare	102	03.34
7. Sports and Culture	95	03.03
8. Child development	12	00.57
9. Miscellaneous	69	02.94
Total	2346	100.00

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

The predominance of physical infrastructure in upazila development planning may be explained in two ways. Firstly, the schemes related to physical infrastructure are easy to identify and implement and they provide the scope for quick utilization of fund. Secondly, while taking schemes it is usual consideration for the people's representatives that the schemes selected would carry demonstrative values of their leadership image. Scheme of physical infrastructure provides opportunities to demonstrate in their constituencies that as representatives of the people they are working for their localities. Thus conjuring up popular support of the Upazila Parishad chairmen and members were perhaps the main objective for taking more projects with regard to physical infrastructure.

Project Implementation Practice

Another important aspect of development planning is the execution/ implementation of projects. The implementation of projects is much more difficult than making their plan. Making plan for a project is an exercise of imagination, while its implementation is a struggle with reality (Lewis 1966:264).

According to the Guidelines, the officers at the upazila level were responsible for the overall implementation of the projects undertaken within their functional jurisdiction. But in fact, as our data reveal, the role of the officers concerned in the implementation phase was confined to occasional visit to the project sites only. There were rules that the projects costing less than Tk.20, 000 could be implemented by the Project Committees, and the projects costing Tk.20, 000 and above were required to be implemented by the contractors. This ceiling perhaps was the main reason for undertaking a large number of projects. The Union Parishad chairmen, who dominated the Project Committees, were in favor of

distributing fund against the projects costing below Tk. 20, 000 in order to implement them by the Project Committees.

According to rules, a Project Committee would have a chairman appointed by the Upazila Parishad. Apart from the representative members, the Committee would include social workers, unemployed educated youths, school teachers, *imams* of mosques, representatives of target group and other local personalities. Our inquiry into the records of the Upazila Parishads reveals that the Project Committees were formed for the implementation of projects. But in most cases, the Project Committees were not constituted in accordance with the rules. Since the Union Parishad chairmen by virtue of their post dominated the Project Committees and they had final say in the formation of Project Committees, they appointed people of their own liking. Even fictitious names were included in the lists of the Project Committee members. However, in either of the cases, whether the Project Committees were constituted properly or not, the poorer section of people were not included in the Project Committees (*infra* Table 8.8).

In the above we have seen that the Upazila Parishads undertook a large number of development projects. Let us now see how many of those projects were implemented by the Project Committees and how many by the contractors. Table 8.4 presents this information.

Table 8.4 reveals that, on the average 80.39 per cent of the total development projects undertaken by the Upazila Parishads were implemented by the Project Committees; and only 19.61 per cent, by the contractors. Since the Project Committees were dominated by the Union Parishad chairmen who were not trained (*supra* Table 6.14) in technical activity like project implementation, their performance in this regard was usually very poor.

Table 8.4 Distribution of Projects Implemented in Five Years by Project Committees (PCs) and Contractors in the Selected Upazilas

Upazila Parishad	By PCs		By Contractors		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Hathazari	276	75.00	92	25.00	368	100
Chandina	268	80.00	67	20.00	335	100
Savar	242	75.16	80	24.84	322	100
Dewangonj	231	85.24	40	14.76	271	100
Paikgacha	222	81.92	49	18.08	271	100
Gangni	214	83.93	41	16.07	255	100
Chirirbandar	244	83.00	50	17.00	294	100
Phulbari	189	82.17	41	17.83	230	100
Grand Total	1886	80.39	460	19.61	2346	100

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

Monitoring and Evaluation of Projects

The Instructions, issued by the Local Government Division, provided for instituting a Project Inspection Team consisting of the officials and the non-official members other than those involved in the Project Committees or directly involved in the works for implementing the projects. The Projects Inspection Team, headed by the UNO, was required to inspect the works of project implementation in the field level and place its inspection report before the Upazila Parishad. The Instructions also provided for instituting a Review Committee headed by the Upazila Parishad chairman. The Review Committee was required to monitor and review the implementation progress of development projects at least once a month and place its report in the meeting of the Upazila Parishad for observation and consideration.

The government officers at the higher levels were empowered to inspect and evaluate the development projects undertaken by the Upazila Parishads. The Deputy Commissioner being the Chief Executive of the district could inspect and give his observations and suggestions on particular projects and report it to the Cabinet Division, Local Government Division or other Ministries/Divisions/Agencies concerned. The Divisional Commissioner and other high officials of the government could also visit the upazilas to acquaint themselves with development activities of the Upazila Parishads and could make their relevant tour notes available to the Upazila Parishads and endorse copies of the same to the Ministry/ Division/Agency concerned.

Our investigations and inquiries into the working of the Upazila Parishads reveal that the Project Inspection Teams and the Review Committees were not instituted. So there was no formal mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of the projects. The officers at the upazila levels seldom visited the small projects, but they visited the big projects. The Deputy Commissioners concerned visited some projects. Sometimes the officials from the Ministry/Agency also visited the records of the Upazila Parishads about the development activities. In fact, the Union Parishad chairmen who generally were the chairmen of the Project Committees verbally reported the Upazila Parishad about the implementation progress of projects. The officers concerned also verbally reported the progress of works of projects implemented by the contractors. Thus, there was no formal standing body to evaluate the implementation of projects. Evaluation was done in a superficial way at the meetings of the Upazila

Parishads on verbal reports of the Union Parishad chairmen and the officers concerned. No formal mechanism was also used to measure the impact of projects implemented. So the superficial type of method for evaluation could not serve an input for further planning process. It was observed that sometimes the people expressed their dissatisfaction about the adverse effect of projects through complaints lodged with the Upazila Parishads. But in most cases their complaints were not heeded. Thus the opinions of common people about the impacts of projects were not sought. It was found that in many cases the development projects undertaken by the Upazila Parishads were not selected properly providing facilities for people's participation.

The performance of the Upazila Parishads was very poor. It not only entailed poor implementation of projects but also delayed their implementation. As a result, the projects undertaken generally were not completed as per the schedule. The reasons for poor implementation and not completing the works of project in due time were identified by the Upazila Parishad chairmen, members and the UNOs as the followings:

a. Delay of release of fund;

b. Insufficient fund;

c. Exhaustion of fund half-way through a project;

d. Lack of technical expertise; and

e. lack of proper supervision.

In addition to the reasons mentioned above, it was reported to us that misappropriation of fund was very rampant in all the upazilas surveyed by us. This had an adverse effect on proper implementation of the projects. But none of the Upzila Parishad chairmen, members and the UNOs mentioned this. It was widely believed that the members of the Project Committees, the officers concerned and others involved in the project implementation, adopted various forms of corruption particularly in embezzling project funds and taking kickbacks from the contractors for undue favor.

The poor performance of the Upazila Parishads in the planning process may also be seen if we analyze the capacity of the Parishads in using fund allocated to them. It was reported to us that the Upazila Parishads could not use the entire allocated fund in due time. The government report also reveals such unsatisfactory utilization of fund throughout the country by the Upazila Parishads as is shown in Table 8.5.

Table 8.5 Year-wise Utilization of Development Grant Allocated to the Upazila Parishads throughout Bangladesh

Year	Allocation amount in crore Taka	Utilization ratio in Percentage
1983-84	170.95	74
1984-85	200.00	81
1985-86	200.00	84
1986-87	160.00	44
1987-88	200.00	53
1988-89	70.00	66
1989-90	75.00	66

Source: Adapted from the Fourth Five-Year Plan 1990-95

The poor performance of the Upazila Parishads may further be seen if we review the adjustment position of fund advanced to the Project Committees. With regard to the advancement of fund, there were rules that in case of the schemes to be implemented by the contractors, no advance was to be made to them and in case of the schemes to be implemented by the Project Committees funds were to be advanced in installments. However, the condition was that the amount of any installment would not exceed 25 per cent of the total estimated cost. Second and subsequent advances could be made only after the adjustment of previous advances. In case of advance of TK 15,000, the adjustment required to be made after the spot verification of the project by technical staff not below the rank of Sub Assistant Engineer. Beyond this amount and in case of final adjustment, project works required to be certified by the Upazilla Engineer.

It reveals from the various records of the Upazila Parishads that a huge amount of fund advanced to the Project Committees remained unadjusted. The Upazila Parishad wise distribution of unadjusted fund is shown in Table 8.6.

Table 8.6 presents the picture of adjustment position of fund advanced by the Upazila Parishads to the Project Committees during the period of successive five fiscal years from 1983-1984 to 1988-89 i.e. since the inception of the upazila scheme till June 1989. It is evident from the table that among the eight upazilas only Savar is found in a better position in respect of fund adjustment. In Savar upazila, 70 per cent of fund advanced to the Project Committees was adjusted and 30 percent remained unadjusted. The adjustment picture of fund is very dismal in the case of Hathazari upazila. In Hathazari, 93 per cent fund advanced to the Project Committees remained unadjusted and only 7 per cent was found adjusted. From the creation of upazila till June 1989 Hathazari Upazila Parishad

advanced Tk. 1,31,77,803 to the Project Committees. Out of the total advanced amount only Tk. 9,29,436.00 (7.05 per cent) were adjusted and the rest Tk. 1,22,48,367 (92.95 per cent) remained unadjusted (*Protibedan,* Report for advances from the development fund up to 1988-1989, Hathazari Upazila Parishad 1990).

Table 8.6 Showing Unadjusted Fund Advanced to the PCs from 1983-84 to 1988-89 in the Selected Upazilas (Figures in percentages)

Upazila	Adjusted	Unadjusted	Total
Hathazari	07	93	100
Chandina	60	40	100
Savar	70	30	100
Dewangonj	58	42	100
Paikgacha	44	56	100
Gangni	54	46	100
Chirirbandar	59	41	100
Phulbari	61	39	100

Source: Compiled from the records of the Upazila Parishads

It is very surprising to note that where there were rules that 25 per cent of the total estimated cost of a project could be advanced to a Project Committee and the second and subsequent advances could be made only after adjustment of the previous advances. How did a huge amount of fund advanced to the Project Committees remain unadjusted? This is because the second and the subsequent advances of fund were made politically without adjustment of the previous advances.

Now a question arises: whether the unadjusted funds were misappropriated or really spent for the development projects? The representative members of the Upazila Parishads and the UNOs gave explanation to this question by stating that the funds advanced to the Project Committees were in fact spent for the allotted projects. According to them, the funds remained unadjusted in the official records of the Upazila Parishads because of not submitting the adjustment document of the funds properly. But which is correct: the official records of the Upazila Parishads or the statement of the representative members and the UNOs? This needs further investigation, which we could not due to the time constraint.

Chapter 9

People's Participation

It has been elaborately discussed in chapter seven that there was little scope for the participation of common people in development process at the upazila level. This does it mean that there was complete absence of popular participation in the upazila development planning process. Let us discuss what the villagers under observation think of it. The present chapter is devoted to analyze their views regarding their participation in upazila development planning process. Before analyzing their views it is essential to discuss their socioeconomic background, which has close relation to the question of participation.

Socioeconomic Background of the Villagers

Age

Age is in important factor to assess the role of a respondent. A minor boy cannot reply the question. Similarly the case is with a too old man. The villagers under observation belonged to different age groups. The age of the villagers ranged from 21-59. For the advantage of analysis we devided the age data into four groups and presented in Table 9.1. The data on age composition depict that the highest percentage from the rich villagers (39.88 per cent) and the majority (53.02 per cent) from the middle-income category were in the age group of 31-40 years. In the case of the poor category the highest percentage (37.70 per cent) was within the age group of 21-30.

Table 9.1 Distribution of the Villagers by Age

Category of Villagers	Age in years				
	21-30	31-40	41-50	51 & +	Total
Rich	20	67	46	35	168
	(11.91)	(39.88)	(27.38)	(20.83)	(100.00)
Middle income	33	123	45	31	232
	(14.22)	(53.02)	(19.40)	(13.36)	(100.00)
Poor	190	147	125	42	504
	(37.70)	(29.17)	(24.80)	(08.33)	(100.00)
Grand total:	243	337	216	108	904
	(26.88)	(37.28)	(23.89)	(11.95)	(100.00)

Note: *Figures in brackets indicate percentages*
Source: *Fieldwork*

Education

The data on educational level of the villagers projected in Table 9.2 reveal that the rich people were better educated than the middle-income earners Similarly the middle-income earners also were better educated than the poor villages. Of the rich villagers 7.14 per cent had no formal education and this percentage was higher among the middle-income earners. Out of the total middle income earners 12.50 per cent had no formal education. On the other hand, the majority of the poor villagers consisting of 52.38 per cent belonged to those people who had no formal education.

According to the census of 1981 the literacy of Bangladesh is 23.8 per cent for the population of 5 years and above; and according to the census of 1991 the literacy is 32.4 per cent for the population of 7 years and above. In considering the literacy, the literacy of the villagers under observation is higher than the literacy throughout Bangladesh.

Table 9.2 Distribution of the Villagers by Education

| Category of Villagers | Educational level | | | | | |
	No education	Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Graduation & +	Total
Rich	12	28	67	49	12	168
	(07.14)	(16.67)	(39.88)	(29.17)	(07.14)	(100.00)
Middle income	29	59	92	37	15	232
	(12.50)	(25.43)	(39.65)	(15.95)	(06.47)	(100.00)
Poor	264	137	67	25	11	504
	(52.38)	(27.18)	(13.30)	(04.96)	(02.18)	(100.00)
Grand Total:	305	224	226	111	38	904
	(33.74)	(24.78)	(25.00)	(12.28)	(04.20)	(100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages
Source: Fieldwork

Occupation

In terms of occupation, the data projected in Table 9.3 show that the majority of the rich consisting of 52.98 per cent and also the majority of the middle-income category villagers comprising 51.72 per cent were engaged in cultivation as their principal occupation. On the other hand, the majority of the poor villagers constituting 54.96 per cent were day laborers. The rest of the villagers from all categories maintained business, teaching and other occupations including law practice, government service, contract business, deed writing, *imamati* (the work for leading prayer in the mosque), fishing and blacksmithery.

Table 9.3 Distribution of Villagers by Occupation

Category of Villagers	Occupation					
	Agriculture	Business	Teaching	Labor	Other	Total
Rich	89	51	16	-	12	168
	(52.98)	(30.36)	(09.52)		(07.14)	(100.00)
Middle income	120	38	47	-	27	232
	(51.72)	(16.38)	(20.26)		(11.64)	(100.00)
Poor	89	49	40	277	49	504
	(17.66)	(09.72)	(07.94)	(54.96)	(09.72)	(100.00)
Grand Total:	298	138	103	277	88	904
	(32.97)	(15.27)	(11.39)	(30.64)	(09.73)	(100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages
Source: Fieldwork

Land

Regarding the ownership of land, the data presented in Table 9.4 reveal that an overwhelming majority among the rich villagers consisting of 75.60 per cent; and also 38.99 per cent from the middle income category villagers owned land 6 acres and above. On the other hand, the majority from the poor people constituting 53.57 per cent possessed no land and the rest comprising 46.43 per cent owned land below 3 acres. No body from the poor villagers owned land 3 acres and above.

Table 9.4 Distribution of the Villagers by Ownership of Land

Category of Villagers	Land in acre				
	No land	Below 3	Below 6	6 & +	Total
Rich	-	04	37	127	168
		(02.38)	(22.02)	(75.60)	(100.00)
Middle Income	-	57	85	90	232
		(24.57)	(36.64)	(38.79)	(100.00)
Poor	270	234	-	-	508
	(53.57)	(46.43)			(100.00)
Grand Total:	270	295	122	217	904
	(29.87)	(32.63)	(13.50)	(24.00)	(100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages
Source: Fieldwork

Participation: Views of the Villagers

It has been mentioned elsewhere that the main thrust of decentralized planning is to facilitate participation of the common people in development process. But under the conditions of above mentioned socioeconomic and educational background of the villagers, mentioned above, we cannot

expect their participation in real sense in the development process. The educational background is so poor that a preponderant majority of them had no idea of upazila development planning. Only a few of them had full idea and some had an elementary idea of such planning. The data on the idea of the villagers about development planning have been presented in Table 9.5.

Table 9.5 Distribution of the Villagers about the Idea of Upazila Development Planning

Villagers	No idea	Some idea	Full idea	Total
Rich	125	34	09	168
	(74.40)	(20.24)	(05.36)	(100.00)
Middle income	185	40	07	232
	(79.74)	(17.24)	(03.02)	(100.00)
Poor	463	39	02	504
	(91.86)	(07.74)	(00.40)	(100.00)
Grand Total :	773	113	18	904
	(85.51)	(12.50)	(01.99)	(100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages
Source: Fieldwork

Participation: Project Identification/Selection

In order to know the views of the villagers regarding their participation in upazila development process, they were asked that whether they were consulted when the development projects were identified in their area and selected for implementation. Their responses are shown in Table 9.6.

Table 9.6 Responses of the Villagers whether they were consulted During the Time of Project Identification/Selection

Category of Villagers	Consultation			Total
	No	Yes	No response	
Rich	141	19	08	168
	(83.93)	(11.31)	(04.76)	(100.00)
Middle income	199	16	17	232
	(85.77)	(06.90)	(07.33)	(100.00)
Poor	438	07	59	504
	(86.90)	(01.39)	(11.71)	(100.00)
Grand : Total	778	42	84	904
	(86.06)	(04.64)	(09.29)	(100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages
Source: Filed work

It reveals from Table 9.6 that some of the villagers from all categories refrained from replying the question. A negligible percentage of them stated that they were consulted. Out of the total villagers interviewed, only 1.39 per cent, 6.90 per cent and 11.31 per cent respectively from the poor, the middle-income earners and the rich categories stated that they were consulted at the time of project identification and selection. The rest of the villagers constituting a preponderant majority from all categories expressed opinion that they were not consulted during the time of project identification and selection. They expressed opinion that if they were consulted before the identification of development projects in their areas they could give suggestions to make the projects more beneficial to the people and thus the adverse effects of the projects could be avoided.

In fact, there was no scope in the organizational structure of the upazila decentralization to involve the common people in process of project identification/selection process. The common people came to know the projects only during the time of project implementation stage.

Participation: Project Implementation

Again the villagers were asked that weather they had participation in the project implementation stage. The majority of them opined that like the project identification/selection, they had also no participation in project implementation (Table 9.7). Their percentage, however, was comparatively lower than the percentage of those who reported that they had no participation in project identification/selection. In other words, the percentage of those who claimed to have their participation in project implementation was higher than that of those villagers who expressed opinion in favor of their participation in project identification/selection process.

Table 9.7 Responses of the Villagers about their Participation in Project Implementation

Category of villagers	Participation in project implementation			
	No	Yes	No response	Total
Rich	136 (80.95)	32 (19.05)	-	168 (100.00)
Middle Income	189 (81.47)	43 (18.53)	-	232 (100.00)
Poor	276 (54.76)	169 (33.53)	59 (11.71)	504 (100.00)
Grand Total:	604 (66.81)	244 (26.99)	59 (06.53)	904 (100.00)

Note: *Figures in brackets indicate percentages*
Source: *Fieldwork*

Interestingly enough, of the villagers who claimed to have their participation in project implementation the percentage of the poor villagers was greater than that of other categories.

Table 9.8 Nature of Participation in Project Implementation by the Villagers

Form of Participation	Category of villagers claimed for participation			
	Rich	Middle income	Poor	Total
As Member of PC	16	11	10	37
	(48.49)	(26.19)	(05.92)	(100.00)
As Contractor	09	08	-	17
	(27.27)	(19.05)		(100.00)
As supervisor	08	23	07	38
	(24.24)	(54.76)	(04.14)	(100.00)
As laborer	-	-	152	152
			(100.00)	(100.00)
Grand Total:	33	42	169	244
	(13.53)	(17.21)	(69.26)	(100.00)

Note: figures in brackets indicate percentages
Source: Fieldwork

A closer scrutiny further reveals that although 33.53 per cent poor have participation in project implementation (Table 9.7) their participation was confined to the manual labor (Table 9.8). It is evident from Table 9.8 villagers claimed to that out of the total 169 poor villagers who claimed for participation in project implementation, 152 i.e. 89.94 per cent participated as paid laborers, not as free laborers.

Participation: Monitoring and Evaluation

The third stage of development planning is monitoring and evaluation of the projects undertaken. In this stage, people's participation is necessary to identify the problems and constraints that may crop up during the implementation stage. Their involvement in monitoring and evaluation is also essential to identify not only how many people but also what types of people benefit from a particular project. This also helps to reduce mismanagement of resources in a project. As a result, the government personnel as well as the people's representatives become accountable to the people. Our data on this point reveal that there was also no scope for people's participation in monitoring and evaluation of the projects implemented under the upazila scheme. None of the people interviewed by us reported that they had participation in any way in monitoring and evaluation of the projects.

Participation: Sharing Benefit

Participation of the common people in sharing the benefit of development projects is essential for decentralized system. Since people's participation in benefit sharing means equitable sharing of the benefit of development, it is regarded as the heart of decentralized development policies and programs. Voluntary and willing participation is possible only if the people benefit from such participation. Often people do not see the benefit directly and therefore loose interest in programs and projects. They think the projects as the own only when they share the benefits of the projects.

In this connection, the villagers were asked whether they were benefited by the development projects undertaken by the Upazila Parishads. Their responses are projected in Table 9.9. The data projected in Table 9.9 indicate that more than three fourths of the total villagers under observation were not benefited by the upazila development projects. This percentage was higher among the poor villagers. Of the total poor 90.08 per cent were of opinion that they were not benefited. The same view was held by 52.98 per cent and 70.69 per cent respectively from the rich and the mid-income earning villagers. In other words, the benefits of development projects undertaken by the Upazila Parishads were enjoyed by 47.02 per cent rich people and also by 29.31 per cent influential mid-income earning villagers.

Table 9.9 Responses of the Villagers whether they were Benefited by the Upazila Development Projects

Category of Villagers	Benefited		
	No	Yes	Total
Rich	89	79	168
	(52.98)	(47.02)	(100.00)
Middle Income	164	68	232
	(70.69)	(29.31)	(100.00)
Poor	454	50	504
	(90.08)	(09.92)	(100.00)
Grand Total:	707	197	904
	(78.21)	(21.79)	(100.00)

Note: *Figures in brackets indicate percentages*
Source: *Fieldwork*

Only a negligible percentage of the poor villagers consisting of 9.92 per cent were benefited by the upazila development projects. Thus a vast majority of the rural poor was deprived of the benefits of development under the upazila decentralization. This does mean that they were not benefited at all. If they were not directly, they were benefited indirectly. The poor villagers opined that the road projects implemented by the

Upazila Parishads in their area benefited them indirectly in a number of ways specially by providing communication facilities. The development projects undertaken by the Upazila Parishads created more employment opportunities for them. Again the villagers were asked whether there had been positive change in their socioeconomic conditions after the introduction of the upazila scheme of decentralization. Their responses are presented in Table 9.10. The data projected in Table 9.10 indicate that there was no sign of improvement in the socioeconomic conditions of the majority villagers in general (60.40 per cent) during the time of upazila scheme. Nevertheless, the economic condition of a sizable percentage of the villagers especially the mid-income group and the poor became worse.

Table 9.10 Responses of the Villagers whether there had been Improvement upon their Socioeconomic Conditions

Category of Villagers	No change	Some improvement	Remarkable improvement	Became worse	Total
Rich	82	50	16	20	168
	(48.81)	(29.76)	(09.52)	(11.91)	(100.00)
Middle Income	108	67	19	38	232
	(46.55)	(28.88)	(08.19)	(16.38)	(100.00)
Poor	356	33	16	99	504
	(70.63)	(06.55)	(03.18)	(19.64)	(100.00)
Grand Total:	546	150	51	157	904
	(60.40)	(16.59)	(05.64)	(17.37)	(100.00)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages
Source: Fieldwork

Thus upazila scheme failed to prevent the number of rural poor from its increasing trend. It is very noteworthy that the villagers who claimed that their socioeconomic conditions improved remarkably belonged to the group of people who accepted business as main occupation. The villagers who claimed some improvement in their socioeconomic conditions belonged to the group of people who accepted teaching or service as main occupation. Thus the data as collected by us from the villagers reveal that the socioeconomic conditions of the farmers and the day laborers constituting the bulk of the population in the rural society remained unchanged.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

Decentralization is a popular topic of study following worldwide tendency of nation states to adopt it as a strategy of development administration. Since a modern government has to perform diverse and complex activities that cannot be administered satisfactorily from the center, decentralization appears to be the solution. The central government, far away from the localities, may not have adequate knowledge about the local conditions and problems. It is expected that local problems can better be identified locally and their solutions can be suggested according to the local needs, characteristics and capabilities. Thus decentralization in one form or another prevails in all countries whether developed or developing, but the developing countries have been showing more interest in it. Nowadays decentralization is a well-known and widely practiced administrative reform measure in the developing countries, and its popularity as a strategy of rural development is increasing day by day.

The developing countries were the colonies of western powers. The colonial rulers were reluctant to implement administrative reforms that would go against their colonial policies. After achieving independence, the developing countries have adopted decentralization policies, and thereby reorganized their local government bodies. But the implementation of decentralization policy is not an easy task. To implement decentralization policies, the developing countries are encountered with a number of difficulties. Of the difficulties, the most important are their colonial histories, strong central control, mass illiteracy and severity of socioeconomic problems.

The rural Bangladesh is not an exception to the global trend of decentralization. Like other developing countries, Bangladesh is beset with the above-mentioned difficulties in implementing decentralization policies. The factors and conditions, which are conducive to achieve decentralization in real sense, do not properly exist in Bangladesh. Among these conditions, democratic environment and political commitment that are regarded as the most important have been found absent in Bangladesh. Till 1991 Bangladesh administration had been going on in a political framework without people's participation through the elected government. The different military governments organized local government differently

according to their own interests. As a result, there have emerged no consensus on this issue; and search for and experiment in the newer structures of local government has not yet ceased in Bangladesh.

The British laid down the foundation of local government in modern sense in the subcontinent. The Bengal Village *Chaukidari* Act 1870, passed in response to the resolution of Lord Mayo, provided Union *Panchyat* at the rural areas of Bengal. In 1882, Lord Ripon desired a network of local government system throughout the country. Accordingly, the Local Self-Government Act 1885 was passed which provided three-tier system of rural local government comprising Union Committee, Local Board and District Board respectively at union, subdivision and district levels. During the British period the final Act in this connection was the Bengal Village Self-Government Act 1919. This Act also was passed in response to the recommendations of the Montague-Chelmsford Report. The Act made no change in the three-tier system of local government, except renaming Union Committee as Union Board. However the middle tier, namely the Local Board was abolished in 1936.

East Bengal now Bangladesh inherited a two-tier system of rural local government consisting of Union Board and District Board that were operating during the last days of the British rule. The governments during the parliamentary democracy era (1947-58) made no change in the inherited two-tier system of local government. The radical change was made when the military took over Pakistan in October 1958. The coup d'etat leader General Ayub, who declared Pakistan unsuitable for parliamentary democracy, introduced basic democracy according to which four-tier system of rural local government in a pyramidal structure was established. These were Divisional Council, District Council, Thana Council and Union Council. A major motive behind the basic democracy was to legitimize Ayub regime and create political support for him particularly in the rural areas.

After the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971, the government headed by Mujib practically did nothing for local government institutions except making change in the nomenclature. When the government became unpopular and it was approaching toward a grave crisis, one party presidential rule was introduced in place of parliamentary system. Instead of organizing the local government institutions at thana and district levels, the government made attempt to introduce party oriented local administration at these two levels. The government also made attempt to abolish Union Parishad and introduce multipurpose cooperatives in the villages. This plan, however, was not materialized. Zia followed the

presidential form of government introduced by Mujib, but he made some changes in it. In place of one party rule, he introduced multiparty politics. Concerning the local government, Zia was akin to Ayub. Like Ayub, Zia established four-tier system of local government, but with a change. Instead of division, Zia brought the local government to the village levels. Ershad followed Lord Ripon and organized three-tier system of local government in which the upazila scheme was the key unit, the operational aspect of which we have analyzed in the previous chapters.

We have stated in chapter eight that like the earlier local government, the upazila scheme of local government could not bring significant positive change in the socioeconomic conditions of the rural people. It also could not facilitate the scope of their participation in development process. However, after eight years of its journey with an elected chairman, the fate of the upazila scheme received the same consequence as the basic democracy and the *Gram Sarkar*. Immediate after the fall of Ershad, the upazila scheme became inoperative, and ultimately with the installation of government headed by Begum Khaleda Zia in 1991 it was abolished by an ordinance known as the Local Government (Upazila Parishad and Upazila Administration Reorganization) [Repeal] Ordinance 1991.

It may not be denied that eight years' time is not enough for the evaluation of performance of upazila decentralization. In the same way it may not be denied that if there was political commitment of Ershad to introduce decentralization at the local levels, he would follow the suggestion of CAAR and introduced upazila decentralization gradually with experimental basis taking the developed upazilas having higher local revenue generation. For, upazila administration involved annual expenditure of a big amount of ADP allocation for the recruitment and adjustment of officials, construction of office buildings and other accommodations for newly created offices, and so on. Ershad did not follow gradual approach. He made so hurry that in a short span of time thanas were upgraded into upazilas and subdivisions into districts. By making hurry, Ershad planed to create support of the people particularly the people in the rural areas to the policies and programs of his government. His plan achieved a success for that moment. The demands for upgrading thanas into upazilas, and the creation of new districts in the places of subdivisions, were articulated from different corners. This was perhaps the creation of upazilas and new districts meant the supply of more fund to the local levels. This, however, helped Ershad in holding referendum for assuming the office of the Presidency. After winning the referendum held in 1984, Ershad came out politically more powerful than ever before. He could now claim that the people had endorsed his policies and programs.

With this political strength, it became easier for him to hold the Upazila Parishad chairmen election, and subsequently, the elections of the parliament and the President.

Major Findings and Observations of the Study

This study has uncovered a number of findings, the most important of which are presented below:

Historically, Bangladesh local government has always been dependent on the desire of the chief executive of the country. He has been the sole authority to decide whether local government will exist in the country or not. If it should exist, at what level(s)? How will the institution(s) of local government be composed of? Should they be composed of the elected representatives or the appointed officials or the nominated persons or an admixture of any two or all the three? How much power and functions will be transferred from the center to the local government? In a democratic polity these problems are settled by the constitution and/or the Act of the parliament. In Bangladesh these questions have always been decided by the ordinances or orders of the chief executive of the country.

Bangladesh has always been weak local governments and strong center run by the governments instituted without democratic process. Weak local governments have always been viewed favorably by the strong center. Consequently, administrative reforms suffered from the unwillingness of the central government to decentralize powers at the local levels through devolutionary process in order to promote and strengthen the local government institutions.

After the departure of the British, local government reforms, so far carried on, were undertaken by the military regimes, not by the civilian regimes. As a result, the military rulers from the center have imposed the local government institutions, and like the colonial manner they have controlled these institutions through the bureaucrats. Thus, historically, the relationship between the central government and the local government in Bangladesh has been characterized by the bureaucratic dominance and control.

Since the later part of the united Pakistan period when the military took over the country, an unhealthy trend of using the local government institutions for narrow political purpose of the ruling power holders has been noticed. So, following the change in the ruling power at the center there has been a change in the structure of local government. Due to frequent changes, the local government has been suffering from the lack of consistent policy of the government and this, in turn, shakes people's

confidence about the local government. As a result, the local government institutions could not develop in the sense that they are perceived by the local people "as organizations providing services that satisfy their needs and as government units over which they have some influence" (Rondinelli 1981:138).

Administrative system that Bangladesh inherited is commonly described as colonial, because it is rooted in the colonial heritage. The British rulers provided nomination system in the constitution of local government. The Pakistani rulers followed the same practice. Their purposes were to extend control over the local bodies by the nominated members together with the officials. With the same objective, the nomination system in the constitution of local government has been following in Bangladesh. Nomination system, as practiced in Bangladesh, is a direct breach of the principles of democracy and local government.

The upazila scheme of local government was the continuation of the changes in local government system following the change in the ruling power at the center by the military take over in 1982. The main characteristics that marked the upazila scheme distinguished from the previous reforms were elected chairman, distribution of responsibilities between the center and the local government, and subordination of bureaucracy to democracy. Regarding the political leadership, no change was found in the upazila system. Usually the political leadership of local bodies in Bangladesh circulates among the economically well-to-do people who come from the group of large size landholders. The experience of the upazila scheme of local government reveals the same finding. The Upazila Parishad chairmen and members, as our data indicate (*supra* Tables 6.8 and 6.9), belonged to the upper strata of the rural community, and most of the rural poor remained outside the jurisdiction of the Upazila Parishads. Thus the hold of a few rich people on the mechanism of local power structure is not a healthy sign for democratic setup and rural development in the country.

The local government should have personnel of its own to enable it perform functions entrusted to it. The Upazila Parishad had no personnel of its own. The officials of the central government were deputed to it to carry out its functions. The officials were accountable to the Upazila Parishad for their responsibilities and, at the same time, they were under the control of their respective line ministries for transfer, promotion and discipline. This dual loyalty of the officials, who traditionally enjoyed considerable power over the local government, created some problems when the elected chairmen took over charges from the UNOs who primarily acted as the

chairmen of the Upazila Parishads. Thus a cold war began between the officials and the people's representatives, particularly between the chairmen and the UNOs. However, with the passage of time and particularly after the second election of the Upazila Parishad chairmen, the officials as we observed in the eight upazilas gradually adapted themselves to the spirit of democracy. This, however, does not mean that the officials had lost their traditional dominance completely. On the one hand, the upazila scheme provided civilian supremacy, and on the other hand, it strengthened bureaucracy by posting senior officials at the local levels.

The local government should also have strong financial base of its own not only for planning and development, but also for maintaining its autonomy. The present study reveals that though the Upazila Parishad was given power to generate revenue from several local sources, those sources were encountered with various problems. There was no initiative from the government to remove the problems. The Upazila Parishad actors, particularly, the chairmen, due to their political motives, showed little interest in raising local revenue properly. As a result, revenue collection of the Upazila Parishad remained very low. In the face of meager revenue collection, the Upazila Parishad was absolutely dependent on the central government for grants. As the ruling power at the center uses the local government for narrow political purpose, it is more interested in building support in the countrywide than in promoting self-reliance at the local levels. So the local government, dependent on the center for its finance, usually gives its political support to the center; and as such it does not become a structure that can exist on its local resource mobilization base. "To say that the center has consciously debilitated local authorities and prevented them from raising their own revenues to maintain such a dependency would be altogether too much" (Blair, 1989:235).

In the upazila decentralized administration, there was no accountability to anyone for resource mobilization, either for raising revenue or for spending it. Also there was neither appropriate mechanism for revenue collection nor was any penalty provision for not collecting and realizing revenues properly. Although there were rules and regulations for spending the fund granted by the central government, these were hardly followed. Hence corruption including nepotism, misuse and misallocation of fund, and misappropriation of tenders became endemic at the upazila levels. So corruption free society, as was claimed by Ershad during the time of introducing decentralization measure, was a far cry. This not only hampered rural development process, but also endangered the growth of sincere and honest leadership at the local levels.

Decentralized planning is one of the main objectives of decentralization, but planning at the upazila level was neglected from the very beginning. Decentralized planning requires a strong team to be at work to prepare such plan. It was stipulated in the Guidelines issued by the Planning Commission that the Upazila Parishad would prepare five-year plan and annual development program, but the mechanism for setting up such planning team was not provided in it. Furthermore, the government did not supply any model plan book to the Upazila Parishad as it was supplied to the former Thana Parishad. The Upazila Parishad was advised to follow the earlier thana plan book, but it was confined to Rural Works Programs only. So thana plan book was not so much helpful in preparing upazila plan that covered all socioeconomic and infrastructure activities. Consequently, no Upazila Parishad could prepare five-year plan. In the absence of five-year plan, the Upazila Annual Development Program was prepared in a piecemeal fashion.

In preparing the Upazila Annual Development Program, the Upazila Parishad was required to follow the instructions issued by the government about project selection, allocation of funds among the various projects and execution of projects. Our experience in the eight upazilas shows that these were followed more in breach than in observance. The block allocation of development grant provided by the government to the Upazila Parishad was generally divided union wise. The Union Parishad chairmen, because of being representative members of the Upazila Parishad, would submit the lists of schemes covering the share of their fund. The majority of the scheme was of the nature of physical infrastructure. The lists of schemes proposed were generally approved by the Upazila Parishad in its meeting without proper examination. So it may be said that the plans of projects were formulated not so much according to the local needs and resources, but on the bargaining powers and pressures of the Union Parishad chairmen in the meetings of the Upazila Parishad.

In real sense, people's participation in development activities undertaken by the Upazila Parishad was almost absent, because the common people were not involved in any stage of development planning process. They came to know about the projects at the stage of implementation, and their participation in this stage was limited to hired labor. Among the reasons responsible for this, two were very significant. First, the procedure and mechanism adopted by the Upazila Parishad in undertaking development projects provided little scope of people's participation in genuine sense. Second, the rural poor are not conscious of the importance of their participation in development process due to illiteracy and extreme poverty.

Thus under the upazila scheme of local government most of the rural poor was kept in dark about development planning process at the upazila levels. In fact, planning functions at the upazila levels were the responsibility of politicians or/and civil servants. Hence the rural elite who had close relation with them influenced the selection of development projects and their implementation. As a result, the upazila level development process had not benefited the majority poor people as much as it did in the case of the well-to-do people.

However, these are the limitations of upazila scheme of local government introduced by Ershad. Considering the limitations, the present discussion may be concluded with a question: Did the upazila scheme fail in its objectives or it had some achievement? The upazila scheme in our consideration did not fail totally, rather it contributed much in the following subjects, which are also among the objectives of local government:

i.   The upazila scheme of local government contributed a lot to institutionalize democracy at the sub-national levels. It created much enthusiasm among the rural people to participate in the Upazila Parishad chairman elections. The number of contesting candidates for Upazila Parishad chairmanship in the elections of 1983 and 1988 as well as the turnout in the elections bears the evidence.

ii. Unlike the previous system the upazila scheme made bureaucracy to some extent subordinate to the democracy. For the first time in the history of local government the official was brought under the control of elected chairmen.

iii. It contributed to the development of infrastructure at the sub-national levels. With the introduction of upazila scheme many buildings were constructed at the upazila headquarters to facilitate the official and residential accommodations. New employment facilities were created. All upazila headquarters were electrified and linked with Dhaka, the capital city. Thus the upazila scheme expedited the growth of urbanization and minimized the rate of rural-urban migration.

     The above are the limitations and contributions of upazila scheme of local government. The main problems of rural local government in Bangladesh may be identified as follows:

iv. Frequent changes in the local government structure with the change of political power at the national level.

v.   Complete dependence of local government on national government for fund.

vi. Predominance of government officials.

vii. Inadequate mobilization of local resources.

viii. Misuse and misappropriation of development fund.

ix. Finally, the absence of rural people's participation in development projects undertaken by the local government bodies.

The above problems are not only for Bangladesh. These, more or less, prevail in most of the developing countries. The problems, however, may be minimized if a stable and sound local government system is established. To establish stable and sound local government system in Bangladesh, at least, three preconditions are very essential. they are (a) maintenance of democratic political in the country; (b) constitutional guarantee for local government; and (c) national consensus on the number of tiers of local government.

a. Maintenance of Democratic Political Process

Local government, organized on the spirit of devolution, is a subsystem of greater political system of a country. It has roots in democracy. Without democratic setup at the national level, the local government institutions cannot grow and develop in the real sense. Fortunately, democratic government has been established at the national level of Bangladesh recently. Now political leaders, both from the ruling party and the opposition, should remain united on one issue that democratic political process in the country must be maintained at any cost so that authoritarian rule as in 1975 or the military intervention in politics may not take place. Unfortunately, in the past political leaders of the country never agreed on this issue; and in one way or other, some of them cooperated the military whenever they took over the reins of the government.

b. Constitutional Guarantee

In a democratic country local government is generally a legal entity formed either from the constitution or an Act of parliament. The constitutional guarantee is not a substitute for public esteem for local government. "Nevertheless constitutional recognition can be helpful and is an indicator of the position enjoyed by local government in the body politic of the country" (Siddiqui ed. 1992:315). In many countries including India and Pakistan, local government bodies have constitutional recognition. In the original constitution of Bangladesh (1972) local government was accorded a high status and dealt with elaborately. The provisions relating to local government were abolished in 1975, when one party authoritarian rule was promulgated under the Fourth Amendment of the constitution. The

abolished provisions under the Fourth Amendment were revived word for word with effect from September 18, 1991, on which the Twelfth Amendment of the constitution was made. Now as per the provisions of the constitution there are two requirements for local government. First, local government is to be constituted in all administrative units, and second, it is entrusted to a body composed of elected persons, although special representation may be given to the peasants, workers and women (Article 9).

c. National Consensus

It should be mentioned here that a mere constitutional cover for local government is not enough in a country like Bangladesh where constitution is frequently amended and suspended. There must be a national consensus among the different power holders and their contenders about the central political setup as well as the local political setup. Fortunately, a national consensus on the central political setup was made in 1991. Like the central political setup, national consensus is also essential on the local government institutions. It is unfortunate that as yet no national consensus has emerged on this issue. Furthermore, there is a sharp difference among the national leaders both from the party in power and the opposition as to the tiers of local government, and the levels at which the local government bodies should be instituted. Article 59 of the Bangladesh constitution stipulates "local government in every administrative unit of the Republic shall be entrusted to bodies composed of persons elected in accordance with law". 'Administrative unit' has been defined in Article 152 (1) of the constitution as a district or other area designated by law as an 'administrative unit' for the purposes of Article 59 of the constitution. Thus according to the constitution, only district is an administrative unit where local government with the meaning of Article 59 is required to be instituted. It is surprising to note that the district level local government, which has constitutional recognition, has not yet been constituted in the country.

Union has a long experience in local government since the British rule in India, and upazila has experience in local government since the later part of the united Pakistan period, but they have no constitutional recognition as administrative units. So the local government institutions at the union and upazila levels are not according to the sense of Article 59, and hence they were altered, reorganized and restructured by the various governments according to their own interests. It is, therefore, necessary to have a national consensus whether union and upazila are administrative units, and this has to be incorporated in the constitution. In short, the local government bodies in Bangladesh, based on national consensus, should be

organized with the laws of the constitution and/or legislature, not by the ordinance as it was done in the past.

Recommendations

Political and administrative Reorganization

Local government is the sub-system of greater political system. So the question of local government is closely related to national political system. In a unitary state the local government works under the central government and in federal state the local government works under the provincial government.

At present it is assumed that the population of Bangladesh crossed 125 million. There is unequal economic development in different regions/ divisions. Under the conditions we propose to divide Bangladesh into different provinces. We also propose to abolish divisions as the unit of administration and in place of each division provincial government may be established.

To us the division seems to be an unnecessary unit of administration. It may be recalled here that division was created in 1829 for revenue administration. With the passage of time, and the gradual reducing importance of revenue functions, division became the unit of general administration. Moreover, in the face of district administration, which later became the focal unit of administration, division lost importance. For this reason, the Bengal Administration Inquiry Committee (1944-45) recommended for the abolition of division. Similarly, the Administrative and Services Reorganization Committee instituted in 1972, and the Committee for Administrative Reorganization/Reform of 1982 identified division as an unnecessary unit of administration; and they suggested its abolition. It is, however, very surprising to note that no government of Bangladesh took initiative to abolish division. The reason is that all governments used local government as their power base through the bureaucracy; and division as the highest seat for bureaucratic administration at the field levels served the same purpose.

We also propose to revive the term 'upazila' that was changed by the BNP government of 1991. It may be mentioned here that 'upazila' has become a popular name with the people. The 'upazila' concept is more meaningful than that of thana, which had been introduced as the unit of police administration during the British period. Although thana got a new focus of development administration in 1960s, it had to be shorn of its police; and before the introduction of the upazila scheme in 1982 the role

of police remained predominant there. So we propose to revive upazila in place of thana in view of transparent spirit.

Four Tiers of Rural Local Government

Historically, Bangladesh has been a tier system in rural local government since 1885 when the Local Self Government Act of that year was passed. The number of tier, however, differed at different times; and this issue still remains unsolved. We propose for four-tier system of rural local government in Bangladesh. At the top, there will be the Zila Parishad at the district level, and at the bottom the Palli (Rural) Parishad or Gram (village) Parishad at the ward level. Between the Zila Parishad and the Palli/Gram Parishad there will be the Union Parishad at the union level and the Upazila Parishad at the upazila level.

The Palli/Gram Parishad will be instituted at the ward level. It should be mentioned here that before 1993 every union was divided into three wards. The division of a union into three wards was made in 1973 when the Union Parishad election of that year was held. To institute the Gram Parishad we propose to divide every union into nine wards. The Palli/Gram Parishad will consist of twelve members. Of the twelve members, one fourth, i.e., three must be women. The voters of entire ward would elect the members, but the members of the Gram Parishad and the member of the Union Parishad elected from the ward would elect the female members. The Union Parishad member elected from the ward would act as the chairman of the Palli/Gram Parishad.

The Union Parishad will consist of one chairman, nine members-one from each of the nine wards and three female members. The voters of entire union; will elect the chairman. The members will be elected by the voters or their respective wards. The female members would be elected by the members and the chairman of the Union Parishad according to law, provided that not more than one female member would be elected from a ward. The Agriculture Block Supervisor, the Health Worker, and the Family Planning Worker at the union level would be the non-voting members of the Union Parishad.

The Upazila Parishad will consist of an elected chairman, the chairmen of the Union Parishads within the upazila, the chairman of the Pourashava if any, or a commissioner of the Pourashava to be nominated by the chairman, and two or three female members provided that their number would not exceed one fourth of total number of the ex-officio representative members. The chairman would be elected directly by the voters of entire upazila. The female members would be elected by the

chairman of the Upazila Parishad, the chairmen of the Union Parishads and the commissioner/chairman of the Pourashava provided that not more than one female member would be elected from a union. The officials working at the upazila level would be the non-voting members of the Parishad. The UNO would act as the chief executive officer of the Upazila Parishad.

The Zila Parishad will consist of an elected chairman, the chairmen of the Upazila Parishads within the district, the chairman/chairmen of the Pourashava(s) at the district headquarters, and two or three female members provided that their number would not exceed one fourth of the representative members. The voters of entire district would elect the chairman of the Zila Parishad; and he will be given the status of a Deputy Minister. The female members would be elected by the chairman of the Zila Parishad, the chairmen of the Upazila Parishads and the chairman/chairmen of the Pourashava (s) provided that not more than one female member would be elected from a upazila. The officials working at the district level would be the non-voting members of the Zila Parishad. The Deputy Commissioner would act as the chief executive officer of the Zila Parishad.

Rationale of Four-Tier System

As per the provision of the Bangladesh constitution, the institution of local government body is essential at all administrative units. The constitution has recognized district as an administrative unit; hence local government is a mandatory at the district level. District has a long experience in local government. The district local government has been quite active and effective in planning, executing and maintaining rural road network and other facilities including health and education, because each district has already been an established administrative network since the British period.

Upazila and union are not administrative units in the sense of the constitution, but the local government bodies at these two levels have become integral part of local government system in Bangladesh. The Thana Council, introduced under the basic democracy system and later renamed as the Thana Parishad and finally the Upazila Parishad headed by an elected chairman, has occupied an important place in the local government system of the country. It can not be denied that thana since its conversion into a development circle in 1960s, and especially, after its up-gradation into upazila, has acquired almost all characteristics of an administrative unit next to district. The various reports of the Committees appointed by the government, and also the various studies undertaken in different times upheld the need for local government body at the upazila level. It is true that there were many loopholes in the working of the Upazila Parishad, as

we have analyzed it in the previous chapters. It is also true that no better local government has ever been introduced at the thana level as the Upazila Parishad. Similarly, no criticism was directed toward upazila as a seat of local government. The political parties did not oppose elected local government at this level. About the upazila decentralization they argued that as it divided the areas of function at this level between the central government and the local government; so it was a constitutional issue, which would be decided by the sovereign parliament, not by the ordinance of the military government. Their opposition became severe when March 25, 1984 was announced as the date for the Upazila Parishad chairmen elections. Their opposition was mainly for two reasons. First, once the politically elected Upazila Parishad chairmen were installed in office, they could be used as an electoral college to elect the parliament and the President as it was happened during the basic democracy period. Second, the elected Upazila Parishad chairmen being completely dependent on the government for development funds, they might align with the government, and thus would provide a strong political power base for Ershad at the local levels (Ali, 1988:63).

In fact, the political parties did not oppose the upazila scheme of local government at the thana level, rather they opposed the regime of Ershad. This became evident when the second election of the Upazila chairmen election was held in early 1990. Although there was a movement launched by the political parties during the first election of the Upazila Parishad chairmen, but during the second election there was no serious movement against it, rather the people demonstrated much enthusiasm about the upazila scheme and election of the Upazila Parishad chairmen.

The enthusiasm of the people regarding the elections of the Upazila Parishad chairmen both in 1993 and 1990, and also their demand for upgrading thanas into upazilas and creating new districts (for details, see the daily newspapers of that period) indicates that the upazila scheme of local government was acceptable to them. The UP chairmen who were the Upazila Parishad representative members supported the upazila scheme, because it had given them more power in development activities which their counterparts never enjoined before. Initially, however, there was conflict between the officials especially the UNOs and the people's representatives especially the Union Parishad chairman. But with the passage of time, the officials accommodated themselves gradually with the spirit of democracy, as we have stated it in chapter six. It is, however, very surprising that soon after coming to power, the government of Khaleda abolished the upazila scheme creating institutional vacuum at the thana level.

The Union Parishad till now, except for a brief period of *Gram Sarkar*, is the lowest tier of rural local government in Bangladesh. The Union Parishad has a long history in local democracy of the country. This institution is the oldest one that was established more than a century ago. Over the years, there have been many changes in the structure, composition and functions of local government institutions, but the Union Parishad has remained almost the same. It is only the local government body that has been functioning with democratic setup. For its democratic character, the people generally have confidence on capability of the Union Parishad to serve them well, although there are some criticisms against it.

The main objective of local government is to provide services to the local people. It is assumed that the smaller size of local body, the greater is the efficiency of services rendered. Secondly, the smaller unit of local body ensures decentralization and people's participation. Thirdly, the smaller local body offers proper forum to the poorer and the disadvantageous sections to participate in local decision-making process, and planning and implementation of development projects undertaken in their area. Thus below union, the local government at the village level is necessary for the village people who constitute about 77 per cent of the population of the country. However, the problem is that the concept of village is an elusive one. Sometimes it refers to a ward, sometimes *mouza* (revenue unit) and sometimes *para*, a part of a village. For this reason, the number of villages varies from one union to another, and the area of a village also varies from one village to another. Since the identity of village is elusive one, and the number of villages is not uniform in unions, the village local government, i.e., the Gram Parishad may be instituted at the ward level dividing a union into nine wards. We think this will create no such type of problem.

It may be argued that the Palli/Gram Parishad may not be a proper body to provide services to the villagers, and it would lead to quarrels and intrigues among them. This view is not only based on negative attitude, but against the principles of democracy. Union has a big area. On an average, a union consists of an area of 33.3 squire kilometers. So it may not be possible for the villagers to go to the union office easily and frequently, whenever they face problem. On the other hand, the Palli/Gram Parishad would be nearer to them and it would be within their easy reach because an average area of a Palli/Gram Parishad is 3.7 squire kilometers. Being its area small the Palli/Gram Parishad would easily help the villagers to be involved in the democratic process through participation in governance, development and social welfare activities of their area. This is not so easy for a Union Parishad as its area is nine times bigger than the area of a Palli/Gram Parishad. So the establishment of the Gram Parishad bellow the

union level, would be a big leap forward in involving the villagers in the democratic process. However, the noble objective of the Palli/Gram Parishad will bound to be frustrated, if its election would be held openly by the executive authority as it was done in case of the Gram Sarkar. In other words, like the elections of other local government bodies, the election of the Palli/Gram Parishad should be held under the authority of the Election Commission through secret vote. If this basic requirement of free and fare election is not met, there is possibility of quarrels and intrigues among the villagers during the open election. Furthermore, an election conducted by the executive authority may be politically influenced.

Some Important Issues For Proposed Local Government

Power and Functions

There are two contradictory views on the scope of power and functions of local government. The first view is that local government should have limited power and functions relating to civic amenities only. The second view is that local government is a subsystem of a greater political system; hence it cannot be isolated from the larger development process. The second view has gained more popularity in the developing countries, especially, due to recent emphasis on local level planning and people's participation.

In greater involvement of local government bodies in development functions, there is possibility for their turning into an arm of the central government, unless they have capacity in managing development functions and mobilizing local resources required for such involvement. So before transferring development functions to the local government bodies in our country, a commission may be instituted to recommend the power and functions , which should be transferred from the center to the local government bodies. The commission also will suggest the sources of revenue of the local government bodies and the manner of revenue collection. Until rules are framed according to the recommendations of the commission or otherwise, the power and functions of the Zila Parishad may be operated by the Local Government (Zila Parishad) Act 1988; and the powers and functions of the Hill Tract districts, by their respective acts passed in 1989. Similarly, the power and functions of the Upazila and Union Parishads may be exercised by different ordinances promulgated, and rules framed during the period of Ershad.

Until new laws are framed, the Gram Parishad will perform the following functions:

i.   To supervise primary school, *madrasha* and *maktab*, and encourage the guardians to send their children to the educational institutions. Also to create eagerness among the villagers toward adult education.

ii. To create awareness among the villagers about health and sanitation, and family planning.

iii. To help in selecting and implementing development projects undertaken by the local government and the central government on the basis of popular participation.

iv. To supervise the effectiveness of rules regarding divorce and dowry, and the persecution of women and children.

v.   To create mass movement against terrorism, robbery, theft, and corruption practiced by the officials and the people's representatives.

vi. To encourage the farmers to use pesticides and to adopt modern technology for scientific cultivation.

vii. To help the Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) and other organizations working for the socioeconomic development of the people in their area.

viii. To conduct socioeconomic survey of households. The survey will be conducted after every five years.

ix. In edition to the above, the Gram Parishad may perform other voluntary functions of local development.

In order to be an effective institution, a local government must have its own fund. At the initial stage it would not be possible for the Gram Parishad to generate its own fund by imposing taxes, but gradually certain tax base may be given to it to earn its income. Until such time as it is capable of imposing and collecting taxes, the Palli/Gram Parishad may be given some grants by the Union Parishad or/and the government for the expenses of office management and stationeries. Until the office building is constructed, the office of a primary school may be used for the official purpose of the Palli/Gram Parishad.

Election of Female Members

Although women constitute about a half of the population in Bangladesh, their participation both at national and local decision making processes is very negligible; and thus they enjoy peripheral status. This is because women in Bangladesh are traditionally confined to the household works and they are excluded from corporate life of the community. Consequently, with exception of a few, generally, women do not get encouraged to contest in the election. In order to ensure a minimum female representation in the

national legislature, the constitution of Bangladesh, promulgated in 1972, made provision for reservation of fifteen seats in the parliament exclusively for female members who were to be elected by the members of the parliament. The reservation of female seats was fixed for ten years. In the Seventh Amendment of the constitution more fifteen years for reservation of female members was extended; and the number of reserved seat was increased from fifteen to thirty.

We think that like the election of the national legislature, the same privileges should be extended to women about the local government election. One fourth of total seats of the members in the local government bodies may be reserved for women. The female members for reserved seats will be elected by the members according to law. The provision for reserved seats for women, however, would not bar them to contest for general seats. It may be mentioned here that previously there was a provision for reservation of female seats in the local government bodies through nomination system. The nomination system should not be reintroduced. This not only goes against the principles of democracy, but also opens the door of corruption like favoritism and nepotism.

There is a proposal, which is widely discussed in the country that like the general members, the female members for reserved seats in the local government bodies would be elected by adult franchise. About the Union Parishad election, the Local Government Review Commission 1991 already recommended the same proposal. The proposal no doubt has got democratic merit, but this will create constituency problem. The constituency of a female member for reserved seat will be bigger than that of a member, because one fourth of total seats of the members are reserved for women. It is, therefore, safe and wise to follow the practice of the election for female seats in the parliament; and the female members for reserved seats in the local bodies are to be elected by the general members. However the system of reservation for female seats should be temporary as it is the case with the female seats in the Parliament. The reservation of female seats should be abolished as soon as women become competent enough to contest the election. It is our duty to extend all sorts of facilities to women so that they become able to compete with men in the election.

Ex-officio Membership

Ex-officio membership means holding of a position or post in an institution by a person in addition to his main function. "Ex-officio members include representative, associate, official and co-opted members and/or persons from other institutions, namely, teachers, office bearers of social organizations, etc."(Syddiqui ed. 1994:251). The provisions for ex-officio

membership are not a new phenomenon in Bangladesh. Similar provisions are found in the local government bodies of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. In our country, the provisions for ex-officio membership in the local government bodies have been in existence since the latter part of the 19th century when the Local Self-Government Act 1885 was introduced. During the Pakistan period the Basic Democracies Order of 1969 and after the emergence of Bangladesh, the Local Government Ordinance 1976, the Local Government Ordinance (Upazila Parishad and Upazila Administration Reorganization) Ordinance 1982, and the Local Government (Zila Parishad) 1988 provided ex-officio membership in the local government bodies.

There are, however, two views on the provision of ex-officio membership in the local bodies. One view is that ex-officio membership is contradictory to the principles of democracy. So the local government bodies should be composed of elected members only. The other view is that ex-officio membership in the local bodies is helpful to the development works. The ex-officio members from the government officials can render skilled services in planning and implementation of development projects undertaken by the local bodies. In a developing country like Bangladesh, the elected functionaries to the local bodies are generally non-skilled and untrained for development works. If ex-officio members from the officials and the elected members of local government bodies work together, the pace of development work will expedite. Hence we propose for ex-officio membership from the officials to the local government bodies in Bangladesh. However, their number should be kept to a minimum, and they should not be given voting right so that the elected functionaries can predominate. We also propose for ex-officio representative members in the local government bodies for better coordination among these bodies and avoiding election expenditure.

Population and Area of Local Government Unit

For easy and proper management, an optimum size of population and area of the local government unit is very important. In Bangladesh the number of population in the local government units and their areas differ very widely. The latest size and population characteristics of union, upazila and zila are given below:

Average size of zila and its population	:	2319 sq. km. and 1.7 million
Average size of upazila and its population	:	303 sq. km. and 0.22 million
Average size of union and its population	:	33.3 sq. km. and .025 million
Variation in zila size	:	16.08 sq. km. to 6,116.13 sq. km.
Variation in upazila size	:	2.06 sq. km. to 1,906.03 sq. km.

Variation in union size   : 1.86 sq. km. to 1,771.55 sq. km.
Variation in zila population   : 243,849 to 61,45,554.
Variation in upazila population   : 15,984 to 6,76,955.
Variation in union population   : 1,122 to 1,25,113.
Variation of the number of zila   : 15 to 17 per division.
Variation in the number of upazila   : 2 to 14 per district
Variation in the number of union   :   2 to 26 per upazila.

From the above discussion it is evident that the number of population and the areas of the local government units not only vary greatly, but also the number of units varies greatly under a particular upper unit. There is a district, which consists of 2 upazilas, and also there is a district, which consists of 14 upazilas. Similarly, the number of unions under the upazilas ranges from 2 to 26. The uneven size of population as well as the areas of local government units needs to be reorganized into an optimum position as far as possible. We propose to reorganize the population and area of zila, upazila and union without increasing and decreasing their present number, otherwise, this will create severe problems.

Local Government Commission

To supervise, and if necessary, to control the functions of the local government bodies, an independent commission styled as the Local Government Commission may be instituted. The Commission shall be a statutory body, free from the control of the ministry concerned. At the national level, the ministry simply will formulate the policies about the local government bodies and will exercise no control over the jurisdiction of the Commission. In this arrangement, the present Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of the Local Government Division may be transferred to the realm of the Commission.

The Commission will consist of a Chairman and three Members. The Chairman and the Members may be appointed by the government from among the professors, retired judges, retired secretaries, lawyers, researchers and others who are specialists in local government. The Chairman may be given the status of the State Minister and the Members, the status of the Secretary. The Chairman and the Members may be appointed for a period of five years.

The main tasks of the Local Government Commission would be to supervise and review the functions of the local governments, and take necessary actions if they act violating rules band regulations framed for them. The Commission also will be responsible to examine the financial discipline of the local governments, and submit the integrated and

consolidated audit report to the government. It also will identify the problems of the local governments and submit to the government the recommendations to solve the problems. In order to perform these functions, the Commission may be given power to employ sufficient officers at both central and field levels who would inspect, monitor and evaluate the functions of the local governments and give their particular opinions, if any, to the Commission. The Commission would be the final authority to take decision in this regard. It also would take necessary step to strengthen the local governments. In short, the Commission would act as the guardian of the local governments so that their autonomy may be ensured and they become viable institutions.

Training for Local Government Functionaries

The success of local government is largely dependent on the way the functionaries perform their functions especially the development ones. Training is a process by which individuals can acquire knowledge and skills for accomplishing the task set for them by the organization. It is, therefore, necessary for them to be trained to perform their functions properly. But our data from the eight upazilas indicate that almost all the local government functionaries both people representatives and government officials were not trained in their line. Thus training for local government functionaries in Bangladesh is an important issue, not only to develop their capabilities but also to make the local government bodies viable institutions for development.

In Bangladesh, the National Institute of Local Government (NILG) located at Dhaka is the only training institution, which imparts training to the local government functionaries. According to a study (Syddique ed., 1994:312) the total number of local government functionaries is about 90,000. Of them 70,000 are the people's representatives and the rest are the officials. The NILG since its inception in 1969 could so far only train 14,000 functionaries. We propose to institute more local government training institutions in other divisions also.

Government controlled Local Government Service

It has been stated in chapter five that local government personnel system in Bangladesh is an admixture of separate personnel system and unified personnel system. Under the separate personnel system a local authority is empowered to appoint and administer personnel and they are not transferable to any other authority. Class-IV employees belong to this category. They are locally recruited and administered, and they are not transferable to any other authority. Under the unified personnel system,

the national government constitutes a common personnel service for all local government bodies with a provision for deputation from the central government at the key positions. Here the officials are transferable to different authorities. The common personnel service consists of three categories of functionaries, namely class-I, class-II and class-III. Class-I officials are transferable within the country, class-II within the division and class-III employees within the district.

There are arguments against and for a unified local government service constituted and controlled by the national government. No doubt, in such a service there is a complete surrender of local government autonomy. But in a country like Bangladesh the role national government in constituting and controlling a unified local government service cannot be avoided, because the local government bodies are totally dependent on the national government for fund. Hence we propose for retaining existing local government personnel system and instituting a permanent and autonomous Local Government Commission, which along with other functions will take care of local government personnel problems. However, whatever may be the mechanism to control local government, its main objectives should be to allow decentralization, ensure people's participation and give power to elected functionaries, while maintaining accountability and congenial relationship with the central government.

People's Participation

People's participation is considered to be the most important component of development process undertaken by the local government bodies. In Bangladesh due to the structural constraints of the local government bodies as well as the mechanism used for the selection and implementation of development projects, as we have seen earlier, the majority of the rural people were kept outside the purview of development process. It is thus proposed that the local government bodies should develop target group and undertake poverty oriented programs and projects whose direct beneficiaries will be the rural poor. Such initiative will be helpful in creating the scope of people's participation. In addition, traditional leaders may be used in motivation campaign to encourage people's participation in rural development programs.

Epilogue: Post Ershad
LG Reforms

Political Change and development

Demonstrations, protests, *hartals* and similar activities of anti-government movements are regular phenomena in the political arena of Bangladesh. Since independence every government of Bangladesh, civilian or military experienced with anti-government movement launched by the opposition forces. The government of General Ershad was not exception to this. But as the opposition forces were not united he could overcome all opposition movements, and ruled the country for about nine years. Even during the first half of 1990 it seemed that all movements aimed at unseating the government of Ershad gradually losing momentum. But when all opposition parties and student organizations united and launched movements against Ershad, he was compelled to resign. Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, took the charges of Presidency. This was the first transfer of power in Bangladesh through non-military means.

The fifth parliamentary election under the interim government of Shahabuddin Ahmed was held throughout the country in February 1991. All political parties participated in the election. Out of total 300 seats in the parliament the BNP won 140 seats and emerged as the largest single majority party in the election. The AL won 88 seats. The JP and JI respectively won 35 and 18 seats. The BNP headed by Khaleda Zia formed the government with the support of JI. The elections of 30 women seats in the parliament were held unopposed and the BNP and JI respectively won 28 and 2 seats. So strength of the BNP in the parliament rose to 168.

It may be said that the government of Khaleda more or less functioned smoothly for three years without crisis and the parliament met regularly. Within a short span of time the parliament passed the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendment Bills. According to the former the Acting President Shhabuddin Ahmed returned to his earlier post of Chief Justice, and according to the latter parliamentary democracy was revived that was killed in 1975 through the Fourth Amendment of the constitution.

Crisis in parliament started in March 1994 when the then Information Minister made a remark about the opposition MPs on the killing of Muslims in Palestinian city Hebrone The main opposition AL took the matter seriously walked out of the parliament in protest. Later on the JP and JI supported the AL Since then they always boycotted the parliament and never returned to it till its death. During the regime of Khleda in all 173 days were under *hartals* called by the oppositions.

It should be mentioned here that parliamentary elections held in Bangladesh after liberation were more or less rigged mostly by the ruling party musclemen through false balloting, terrorizing voters, hijacking ballot boxes, and capturing polling stations. "The trend of rigging was set in the first parliamentary election held in 1973, was intensified in the second and third parliamentary elections held in 1979 and 1986 respectively, and reached its climax in the fourth parliamentary election held in 1988" (Hakim, 1993:3). In all these elections the ruling party had a landslide victory. For ensuring fair, free and peaceful parliamentary elections in future, the JI demanded in 1986 the Non-Party Caretaker Government (NCG). The JI also submitted a bill on this issue in 1993 but it got no support from other opposition parties. However, after the Magura by-election of 1994 the demand for NCG became common to all opposition parties. The ruling BNP rejected the demand of NCG because it was unconstitutional. Consequently the distance between oppositions and government widened. The opposition MPs intensified their pressure on government by resigning *en masse* from parliament and demanding the resignation of Prime Minister. All negotiations from different personalities and foreign envoys failed. In the meantime the opposition MPs' absence from parliament expired constitutional 90-day deadline; and they lost their seats. However, the deadlock between ruling party and oppositions continued for two years. At last the government realized the intensity of movement against it, and accepted the demand of NCG. But it was too late because the formation of NCG needed the amendment of constitution and BNP had no two-thirds majority in the parliament to amend the constitution. As there was no way out of this crisis, the President dissolved the parliament and staged the sixth parliamentary elections in which no major opposition political parties participated. The new parliament consisting of 168 MPs from BNP passed hurriedly the Thirteenth Amendment Bill of constitution that contains the provision for NCG. Although the oppositions boycotted the election, threatened to resist it, and branded it as farcical and illegal, they accepted the NCG validated by the sixth parliament. Soon after passing the Thirteenth Amendment Bill of constitution the parliament was dissolved, Prime

Minister resigned and NCG was formed headed by Justice Habibur Rahman who retired last among the retired Chief Justices. Both BNP and opposition parties claimed it as their own victory. The BNP claimed its success in maintaining constitutional continuity; and oppositions claimed the success in that the settlement endorsed its demand for NCG (Akhter 2001:173).

The seventh parliamentary election was held in June 1996 under the NCG. All political parties participated in the election. But like that of 1991 no political parties obtained absolute majority in the election to form the government. The Al won 146 seats and emerged as the largest single majority. The BNP won 116 seats, and the JP and the JI won 32 and 3 seats respectively. The AI formed the government with the support of JP. Sheikh Hasina assumed the post of Prime Minister and invited others to join her government that she termed as government of consensus. The JP and JSD accepted the invitation and each got one ministry.

Soon after assuming power, the government of Hasina began to play unfair role in holding by-elections. The unfair role continued the entire period of her government. The style conducting elections by the Al government was no different from its earlier predecessors. Similarly like the earlier governments, the AL government took oppressive attitudes toward the oppositions. Many opposition leaders and workers were arrested under the Special Powers Act 1973. The oppression of government further nakedly exposed when in 2000 another repressive act known as the Public Security Act was passed. Hundreds of cases were filled against the opposition leaders and workers; and many were jailed. The government also bypassing parliament signed some treaties such as the Ganges Water Treaty with India and Chittaging Hill Tracts Peace Accord with *santibahini*. These treaties and the Public Security Act according to the oppositions were unequal, discriminatory, anti-national and anti-constitution. Finally the law and order situation of the country was deteriorated. Never in the history of Bangladesh had such deterioration occurred.

Against the above different issues the oppositions protested differently, such as walk out from the parliament, observing *hartals*, staging road marches and boycotting the parliament. Initially the oppositions launched movement against the government separately, and later they formed an alliance consisting of BNP, JI, JP and IOJ. But unlike the earlier governments, the government of Hasina completed its five-year tenure; and NCG headed by Justice Latifur Rahman was

instituted on July 15, 2001.The eighth parliamentary elections were held on October 1 and four-party alliance won more than two-thirds seats in the parliament. Four-party alliance government headed by Khaleda Zia was formed on October 10, 2001.

LG Reforms during Khaleda Regime

One of the outstanding features of rural local government in Bangladesh is frequent change in its structure. We have seen earlier in chapter four that this change took place with the change in the ruling power. General Ershad introduced three tier-system of rural local government in which Upazila Parishad was focal point of decentralization. The government of Khaleda followed practice of its predecessors and within a period of four months of taking office abolished Upazila Parishad through the Local Government (Upazila Parishad and Upazila Administration) (Repeal) Ordinance 1991, and "upazila" was renamed as thana. The government of Khaleda issued a notification on November 24, 1991 according to which the Local Government Structure Review (LGSR) Commission was constituted. It was headed by the then Information Minister, Barrister Nazmul Huda and consisting of 14 members. Later 3 members were cooped.

The LGSR Commission completed its tasks within a short period of time and submitted report to the government on July 30, 1992. The Commission recommended for two-tier system of rural local government, namely the Union Parishad and the Zila Parishad.

Union Parishad

A Union Parishad according to the LGSR Commission will consist of one chairman, nine members and three women members. For the purpose of nine members a union will be rearranged into nine wards, each of which will send one elected member to the Union Parishad. The chairman and three women members will be elected by the voters of entire union, provided that a ward will not send more than one woman member. The Union Parishad will have a five-year tenure.

The LGSR Commission suggested for integrating the Union Parishad with villages, and accordingly it recommended for constituting a *Gram Shava* (Village Assembly) at the union level. Ten persons elected by the voters from each and every village under a union will collectively form the *Gram Shava*. Of ten elected persons, two must be women, two farmers and two Union Parishad laborers/farm laborers. The *Gram Shava* will have a five-year tenure. The UP chairman will be the ex-officio chairman of the *Gram Shava* and the presence of UP members in its meeting is essential. In

the case of absence of UP chairman, the members will elect one among themselves to chair the meeting of *Gram Shava*. The *Gram Shava* will sit at least twice a year to approve the annual budget and development projects of Union Parishad and review its performance. The *Gram Shava* will also have power to remove Union Parishad chairman and/or member, if required, by two-thirds majority votes. There will also be a *Gram Unnayan* Committee (Village Development Committee) at the ward level consisting of the members of *Gram Shava* headed by UP member concerned.

Zila Parishad

The Zila Parishad, proposed by the Commission of 1991, is not a body elected directly by the voters. An electoral college consisting of the UP chairmen and members and the members of Gram Shavas in the zila would elect the chairman of a Zila Parishad. Each thana within the zila will send two representatives to the Zila Parishad who will be elected by the UP chairmen and members in that thana. The UP chairmen and members in the zila will also elect three women members for the Zila Parishad privided that not more than one woman will be elected from a thana. The Zila Parishad will have a five-year term. The chairman of a Zila Parishad may be removed by two-thirds majority votes of the members if required. The chairmen of the Paurashavas (Municipalities) within the district and, if required the officials at the district level would attend the meetings of the Zila Parishad. The LGSR Commission was silent about their voting power in the meetings. The MPs within the district will act as advisors to the Zila Parishad.

The LGSR Commission did not recognize thana for the unit of local government. It considered thana a coordinating unit and proposed for instituting the Thana *Unnayan* and *Samannoy* Committee (Thana Development and Coordination Committee) at this level. Its stated purpose is the coordination between the Union Parishads and the thana administration; and also between the Union Parishads and the Zila Parishad. The Committee will have an elected chairman and three elected women members. All UP members in the thana will elect the chairman and women members. The UP chairmen within the thana will be its ex-officio members. The officials working at the thana level will be members of this Committee without voting power. The MP(s)) in the thana will be advisor(s) to the Committee. The Commission suggested that until efficient local manpower is available, the UNOs and DCs would act as secretaries to the Thana *Unnayan* Committees and the Zila Parishads respectively.

The LGSR Commission did not suggest major chances in the local governments of urban areas, i.e. Pourashavas and City Corporations. It

simply suggested that the mayor of a City Corporations and the chairmen of a Pourashava respectively would be elected by all voters of the City Corporation and the Pourashava concerned. Similarly, the voters of their wards concerned would elect the commissioners of the City Corporation/Pourashava. There will be three woman commissioners in a Pourashava elected by its voters provided that not more than a woman commissioner will be elected from a ward. The Commission recommended for increasing the number of wards in the Pourshavas on population size in order to ensure accountability and increase efficiency for providing the services to the people easily.

The Commission of 1991 made no recommendations for the local government Parishads in the zilas of Chittagong Hill Tracts, because already a committee was working about the problems of this region. The Commission simply stated that the structure and functions of the Local Government Parishads of Chittagong Hill Tracts would remain the same as is stated in the three different acts of 1989 and subsequent amendments.

However, the distinctive features of recommendations proposed by the LGSR Commission are:

a. Two-tier system of local government in the rural areas;

b. Abolition of local government at thana level, and in its place Institution of Thana *Unnayan* and *Samannoy* Committee;

c. Institution of *Gram Shava* at union level;

d. Institution of Ward *Unnayan* Committee at ward level; and

e. Division of every union into nine wards.

The recommendations, however, were very complex. The local government body was made subordinate to the committee. The Commission suggested dual elected parallel bodies at union level, namely the Union Parishad and the *Gram Shava.* The past experience of dual parallel bodies at the thana level i.e. the Thana Parishad and the Thana Development Committee during the period of Zia was not congenial to smooth rural development administration as we mentioned earlier. The Thana *Unnayan* and *Samannoy* Committee according to LGSR Commission would consist of one elected chairman, three elected women members and the UP members who were also elected, but it was not given the status of local government.

Perhaps for these reasons, the government of Khaleda did not implement the recommendations for instituting the Ward *Unnayan* Committee and the *Gram Shava.* The government also did not organize

the Thana *Unnayan* and *Samannoy* Committee as per the proposal of the LGSR Commission. The government organized the Thana *Unnayan* and *Samannoy* Committee composing of all UP chairmen in the thana, three women members from among the UP women members nominated by the government and the government officials working at the thana level. The MP(s) acted as advisor(s) to the Thana *Unnayan* and *Samannoy* Committee. The Committee had no elected chairmen. The UP chairmen chaired its meetings by rotation according to the alphabetical order of their names (Notification of 26 September 1993). About the constitution of Union Parishad the government passed the local Government (Union Parishad) (Amendment) Act 1993. The Act of 1993 paved the way of dividing a union into nine wards and one elected member from each ward. It made provision for three seats of member reserved for the women who would be elected by the UP chairman and members. The Act extended the revenue collection power of Union Parishad (Second Schedule of 1993 Act). It also made provision for instituting standing committees for the Union Parishad. Since the next UP election was scheduled in September 1997 the government could not implement the Act of 1993. The government took no initiative for the formation of Zila Parishad.

LG Reforms during Hasina Regime

Soon after assuming power, the government of Hasina took the question of local government reforms and appointed a high-powered commission on September 1,1996 known as the Local Government Commission. The LG Commission was headed by advocate Rahmat Ali MP and consisting of seven members. The Commission submitted report in September 1997.

The Commission of 1996 recommended for four-tier of rural local government. They are (a) Palli/Gram Parishad, (b) Union Parishad, (c) Thana/Upazila Parishad and (d) Zila Parishad. Like the LGSR Commission the LG Commission made no recommendations for the local Government Parishads in the zilas of Chittagong Hill Tracts region.

The government of Hasina accepted the recommendations of the LG Commission and accordingly passed four separate acts for the constitution of four different local government bodies proposed by it. A short description of the**se** bodies is given below**:**

Gram Parishad

The Local Government (Gram Parishad) Act 1997 passed by the government on September 4 of that year specifies the constitution of Gram Parishad. Under the provision of this Act the Gram Parishad will

be instituted in every reorganized ward of a union according to the Act of 1993, i.e. there will be a Gram Parishad in each of the nine wards of a union. The Gram Parishad will consist of a chairman, nine members and three women members. The elected UP member from the ward will be the ex-officio chairman of Gram Parishad. The male and female members will be elected by the voters of the ward under the supervision of prescribed authority. But who will be the prescribed authority the Act said nothing about this. The tenure of Gram Parishad will be five years.

Like other Parishads of higher levels, the Gram Parishad has been empowered to constitute committee(s) if necessary. The Act of 1997 enumerated 14 functions of Gram Parishad, which are more or less similar to the functions of Palli Parishad proposed already by us. However, the Gram Parishad has not been organized and the Act of Gram Parishad has been challenged in the court.

Union Parishad

The Local Government (Union Parishad) Act 1997 passed by the government of the day declared union as administrative unit. The constitution of Union Parishad according to this Act remained the same as is stated in the Act of 1983 and the amendment Act of 1993. Only novelty of the Act of 1997 is the provision for direct election of three women members, one from each three wards. However, the elections to the Union Parishads under the Act of 1997 were held in September 1997.

Upazila Parishad

The Upazila Parishad Act 1998 passed by the seventh parliament on December 3, 1998 declared upazila as administrative unit.

According to the Act of 1998 a Upazila Parishad will consist of

a. A chairman;
b. Chairman/Chairmen of Pourashsva(s), if any;
c. UP chairmen in the upazila; and
d. Women members provided that their number would not exceed one third of the members stated in the category of 'a' and 'b'.

The voters of entire upazila will elect the chairman and the women members of Union Parishds and Pourashava(s), if any will elect the women members. The MP(s) within the upazila will act as advisor(s) to the Upazila Parishad. The UNO will act as its secretary. So in respect of composition, the Upazila Parishad under the Act of 1998 will be more democratic than its earlier counterpart, because there is no provision for nominated and

official members. The tenure of Upazila Parishad will be five years from the date of its first meeting. But after expiration of its five-year tenure, the Upazila Parishad will continue to function until the first meeting of new elected Upazila Parishad is held. It means that the Upazila Parishad under the Act of 1998 will be an institution having perpetual succession

Like the earlier one, the Upazila Parishad proposed in the Act of 1998 will have power to raise revenue from various sources (Fourth Scheduled of the Act 1998). It will also perform functions (Second Scheduled of the Act 1998) more or less similar to the functions of its earlier counterpart. The Act of 1998 enumerated ten ministries/ departments (Fifth Schedule) whose officers working at upazila level and their functions will be transferred to the Upazila Parishad. They were also transferred to the former Upazila Parishad. The only difference is that before upazila scheme the Rural Works Program and Food for Works Program were the subjects of Union Parishad and after upazila they were transferred to the Upazila Parishad and now (1998) again they have been given to the Union Parishad.

However, the Upazila Parishad under the Act of 1998 has not been instituted.

Zila Parishad

The government of Hasina passed the Zila Pzrishad Act on July 6, 2000. This Act will not be applied to zilas of Hill Tracts region because they have separate acts. According to the Zila Parishad Act of 2000, a Zila Parishad will consists of

a. A chairman;

b. Fifteen members; and

c. Five women members for five women reserved seats.

The chairman and women members will be elected by an electoral college consisting of the mayor and commissioners of city corporation, if any, the chairmen of Upazila Parishads, the chairman/chairmen and commissioners of Pourashava(s) and the Union Parishad chairmen and members under the zila. The MPs within the zila will act as advisors to the Zila Parishad. The tenure of Zila Parishad will be five years from the date of its first meeting. But after expiring of its five-year tenure, the Zila Parishad will continue to function until the first meeting of new elected Zila Parishad is held. Thus the Zila Parishad is a body having perpetual succession. However, the Zila Parishad has never been constituted in the independent Bangladesh.

It should be recalled here that four-tier system of rural local government including village level one is not unknown in Bangladesh before the proposal of LG Commission of 1996. For the first time in the history of local government, four-tier system was introduced in our country under basic democracy system. Zia introduced three-tier system but it was made four-tier system when he introduced *Gram Sarkar* in the village levels. Ershad also was thinking of introducing Palli Parishad in the village level along with the existing three-tier system, but he could not get time to implement it. Before publishing the report of LG Commission, we also proposed for four-tier system of rural local government, namely Palli Parishad, Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad and Zila Parishad (Wahhab 1994:286-287, 1996: 187). However, the most important development of the present time is the consensus among the major political parties about the four tiers of rural local government including the revival of upazila scheme. The BNP, which abolished upazila Parishad in 1991 Promised to reintroduce it in the parliamentary election manifesto of 2001.

Appendices

Phases of Upgradation of Thanas into Upazilas

Phases	Dates	Number of thanas upgraded
First Phase	November 7, 1982	45
Second Phase	December 15, 1982	55
Third Phase	March 24, 1983	55
Fourth Phase	April 15,1983	57
Fifth Phase	July 2, 1983	51
Sixth Phase	August 1, 1983	47
Seventh Phase	September 14, 1983	50
Eight Phase	November 7, 1983	37
Ninth Phase	December 1, 1983	18
Tenth Phase	February 1, 1984	45

	Total:	460

Source: *Adapted from Yusuf Hyder, Development: The Upazila Way, Dhaka: Dhaka Prokashan, 1986, p.11.*

Illustrative List of Regulatory and Major Development

Functions Retained by the Government

1. Civil and Criminal judiciary

2. Administration and Management of central revenue like Income Tax, Customs and Excise, Land Revenue, Land Tax, etc.

3. Maintenance of Law and Order

4. Registration

5. Maintenance of essential supplies including food

6. Generation and distribution of electric power

7. Irrigation schemes involving more than one District

8. Technical education and education above Primary Level, viz. agricultural, engineering, medical, education, etc. High School, College and University education

9. Modernized District Hospitals and hospitals attached to the Medical Colleges

10. Research organizations like Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (C.S.I.R.) Laboratories

11. Large scale seed multiplication and dairy farms

12. Large scale industries

13. Inter-district and Inter-upazila means of communication, viz, posts, telegraph, telephones, railways, mechanically propelled road and inland after transport, highways, civil aviation, ports and shipping

14. Flood control and development of water resources

15. Marine fishing

16. Mining and mineral development

17. Compilation of national statistics

Taxes, Rates, Tolls and Fees that could be levied by the Union Parishad according to the Local Government Ordinance 1976

1. Tax on the annual value of buildings and lands or a union rate to be levied inn the prescribed manner.

2. Tax on hearths.

3. Tax on the transfer of immovable property.

4. Tax on the import of good for consumption, use or sale in a local area.

5. Tax on the export of goods from local area.

6. Tax on professions, trades and callings

7. Tax on births, marriages and feasts.

8. Tax on advertisements.

9. Tax on cinemas, dramatic and theatrical shows, and other entertainment and amusements.

10. Tax on animals.

11. Tax on vehicles (other than motor vehicles), including carts and bicycles and all kinds of boats.

12. Tolls on roads, bridges and ferries.

13. Lighting rate.

14. Drainage rate.

15. Rate for the remuneration of village police.

16. Rate for the execution of any works of public utility.

17. Conservancy rate.

18. Rate for the provision of water works or the supply of water.

19. Fees on applications for erection and re-erection of buildings.

20. School fees in respect of schools established or maintained by local *parishad.*

21. Fees for the use of benefits derived from any work of public utility maintained by a local *parishad.*

22. Fees at fairs, agricultural shows, industrial exhibitions, tournaments and other public gatherings.

23. Fees for markets.

24. Fees for licenses sanctions and permits granted by a local *parishad.*

25. Fees for specific services rendered by a local parishad.

26. Fees for the slaughtering of animals.

27. Any other tax which the government is empowered to levy. A specific community tax on the adult males for the construction of public work of general utility for the inhabitants of the local area concerned, unless the local parishad concerned exempts any person involved of doing voluntary labor or having it done on his behalf.

_____

Source: *Local Government Ordinance 1976, the Fourth Schedule.*

Taxes, Rates, Tolls and Fees that could be levied by the Union Parishad according to the Local Government (Union Parishad) Ordinance 1983

1. Rate on annual value of homestead and residential land adjacent thereto or union rate to be lived in the prescribed manner.

2. Rate for village police.

3. Fess on birth, marriage and fests (rate of fee on birth and marriage shall be a progressive one).

4. Community tax on adult males of the union for civil works aimed at providing or augmenting public welfare, unless the Union Parishad concerned exempts any person from paying this tax if such person voluntarily participates in such work or makes arrangement for getting his work done by someone else on his behalf.

5. Fees for specific welfare or maintenance of public utility service rendered by the Union Parishad.

Source: The Local Government (Union Parishad) Ordinance 1983, Second Schedule.

Table 1 Showing Revenue Collection of Hathazari Upazila Parishad, 1985-86 to 1989-90 (Figure in Taka but bracketed figures in percentages)

Sources	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Average
Haats, Bazaars	507,000 (79.78)	518,688 (78.97)	446,400 (62.48)	477,000 (56.84)	379,483 (52.40)	465,714 (66.09)
Licenses Permits	35,321 (05.56)	35,000 (05.33)	96,000 (13.43)	111,700 (13.31)	106,143 (14.65)	76,833 (10.45)
Rents, sell of forms etc.	93,174 (14.66)	103,136 (15.70)	172,100 (24.09)	250,500 (29.85)	238,605 (32.95)	171,503 (23.45)
Total	635,495 (100.00)	656,824 (100.00)	714,500 (100.00)	839,200 (100.00)	724,231 (100.00)	714,050 (100.00)

Source: Hathazari Upazila Finance office

Table 2 : Showing Revenue Collection of Chandina Upazila Parishad, 1985-86 to 1989-90 (Figure in Taka but bracketed figures in percentages)

Sources	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Average
Haats Bazaars	435,000 (88.41)	440,350 (88.18)	490,000 (88.93)	420,000 (88.70)	439,000 (89.59)	444,870 (88.77)
Licenses permits	22,000 (04.50)	23,000 (04.61)	23,991 (04.35)	23,500 (04.96)	23,000 (04.69)	23,098 (04.60)
Rents, sell of forms tc.	35,000 (07.11)	36,006 (07.21)	37,007 (06.72)	30.070 (06.34)	28,000 (05.72)	33,217 (06.63)
Total	492,000 (100.00)	499,356 (100.00)	550,998 (100.00)	473,570 (100.00)	490,000 (100.00)	501,185 (100.00)

Source: Chandina Upazila Finance office

Table 3 : Showing Revenue Collection of Savar Upazila Parishad, 1985-86 to 1989-90 (Figure in Taka but bracketed figures in percentages)

Sources	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Average
Haats Bazaars	714,617 (66.97)	475,914 (45.00)	738,600 (54.07)	676,470 (55.59)	516,750 (58.74)	624,481 (56.27)
Jalma-hals	7,441 (00.70)	10,490 (01.01)	8,205 (00.60)	2,368 (00.19)	2,138 (00.24)	61,128 (00.54)
Licenses permits	104,400 (09.78)	86,568 (08.37)	35,116 (02.57)	33,225 (02.73)	32,950 (03.75)	58,451 (05.44)
Investment profits	148,616 (13.93)	212,079 (20.50)	187,578 (13.73)	100,587 (08.73)	131,177 (14.91)	156,007 (12.26)
Rents, sell of forms etc.	91,936 (08.62)	249,597 (24.12)	396,621 (29.03)	404,173 (33.22)	196,690 (22.36)	267,804 (22.47)
Total	106,064 (100.00)	1034,642 (100.00)	1366,120 (100.00)	126,823 (100.00)	879,705 (100.00)	1112,871 (100.00)

Source: Savar Upazila Finance office

Table 4 : Showing Revenue Collection of Dewangonj Upazila Parishad, 1985-86 to 1989-90 (Figure in Taka but bracketed figures in percentages)

Sources	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Average
Haats Bazaars	130,000 (65.50)	189,700 (72.77)	148,000 (65.27)	100,700 (59.00)	100,601 (44.21)	133,800 (61.70)
Jalma-hals	8,500 (04.28)	9,001 (03.45)	9,750 (04.30)	7,500 (04.39)	7,000 (03.07)	8,350 (03.85)
Licenses permits	20,000 (10.07)	21,000 (08.05)	24,500 (10.81)	20,500 (12.00)	79,000 (34.71)	33,000 (15.22)
Rents, sell of forms etc.	40,000 (20.15)	41,005 (15.73)	44,500 (19.62)	42,000 (24.61)	41,000 (18.01)	41,701 (19.23)
Total	198,500 (100.00)	260,706 (100.00)	226,750 (100.00)	170,700 (100.00)	227,601 (100.00)	216,851 (100.00)

Source: Dewangonj Upazila Finance office

Table 5: Showing Revenue Collection of Paikgacha Upazila Parishad, 1985-86 to 1989-90 (Figure in Taka but bracketed figures in percentages)

Sources	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Average
Haats & Bazaars	275,00 (55.50)	281,000 (56.10)	290,000 (56.77)	271,000 (52.69)	270,000 (62.66)	277,400 (56.56)
Jalmahal & ferry ghat	45,000 (09.08)	46,000 (09.18)	48,000 (09.40)	44,560 (08.66)	45,600 (10.58)	45,832 (09.34)
Licenses permits	103,500 (20.89)	104.500 (20.87)	106,000 (20.75)	107,000 (20.80)	100,000 (23.20)	104,200 (21.24)
Rents, sell of forms etc.	72,000 (14.53)	69,350 (13.85)	66,850 (13.08)	91,790 (17,85)	15,350 (03.56)	63,068 (12.86)
Total	495,500 (100.00)	500,850 (100.00)	510,850 (100.00)	514,350 (100.00)	430,950 (100.00)	490,500 (100.00)

Source: Paikgacha Upazila Finance office

Table 6: Showing REvenue Collection of Gangni Upazila Prisha, 1985-86 to 1989-90 (Figure in Taka but bracketed figures in percentages)

Sources	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Average
Haats & Bazaars	150,890 (72.56)	160,688 (73.02)	167,802 (73.07)	161,520 (73.12)	160,890 (73.19)	160,358 (72.99)
Licenses permits	17,000 (08.18)	17,380 (07.90)	18,350 (07.99)	16,360 (07.41)	16,430 (07.48)	17,104 (07.79)
Rents, sell of forms etc.	40,050 (19.26)	42,000 (19.08)	43,500 (18.94)	43,000 (19.47)	42,500 (19.33)	42,210 (19.22)
Total	207,940 (100.00)	220,086 (100.00)	229,652 (100.00)	220,880 (100.00)	219,820 (100.00)	219,672 (100.00)

Source: Gangni Upazila Finance office.

Table 7 : Showing Revenue Collection of Chirirbandar Upazila Parishad, 1985-86 to 1989-90 (Figure in Taka but bracketed figures in percentages)

Sources	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Average
Haats, Bazaars	326,994 (64.10)	515,077 (73.61)	226,085 (56.46)	305,786 (62.40)	242,210 (60.50)	323,230 (64.63)
Jalmahals & ferry ghat	9,461 (01.86)	10,462 (01.50)	9,162 (02.29)	10,100 (02.06)	8,000 (02.00)	9,437 (01.89)
Licenses, permits	100,500 (19.70)	100,000 (14.29)	93,000 (23.23)	94,000 (19.19)	75,000 (18.73)	92,500 (18.49)
Rents, sell of forms etc.	73,175 (14.34)	74,169 (10.60)	72,159 (18.02)	80,126 (16.35)	75,134 (18.77)	74,953 (14.99)
Total	510,130 (100.00)	699,708 (100.00)	400,406 (100.00)	490,012 (100.00)	400,344 (100.00)	500,120 (100.00)

Source: Chirirbandar Upazila Finance office.

Table 8 : Showing REvenue Collection of Fulbari Upazila Parishad, 1985-86 to 1989-90 (Figure in Taka but bracketed figures in percentages)

Sources	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	Average
Haats, Bazaars	90,778 (55.43)	94,000 (55.74)	98,000 (56.75)	99,000 (57.39)	98,500 (56.97)	96,056 (56.46)
Jalmahals, ferry ghat	30,000 (18.32)	30.800 (18.26)	30,100 (17.43)	30,000 (17.39)	30,500 (17.64)	30,280 (17.80)
Licenses permits	14,000 (08.54)	14.050 (08.33)	14,600 (08.45)	14,500 (08.41)	14,800 (08.56)	14,390 (08.46)
Rents, sell of forms etc.	29,000 (17.71)	29,800 (17.67)	30,000 (17.37)	20,000 (16.81)	29,100 (16.83)	29,380 (17.28)
Total	163,778 (100.00)	168,650 (100.00)	172,700 (100.00)	172,500 (100.00)	172,900 (100.00)	170,106 (100.00)

Source: Fulbari Upazila Finance office

Appendix VI

The Items of Trades and Professions on which the Upazila Parishad was Empowered to Impose Annual Fees

No	Item	Maximum Taka
1.	a. Godown and Arath	20.00
	b. Cold storage	10.00
2.	a. Regular shops (excluding hawkers those buying and selling goods in open space) with structures.	
	i. Big (with investment above Taka 10.000	20.00
	ii. Small (with investment up to Taka 10,000)	10.00
	b. Hotel	50.00
	c. Restaurant	20.00
	d. Tea-stall	10.00
	e. Saloon and laundry	10.00
3.	Cinema hall	250.00
4.	Rice mill, flour mill, oil and saw mill (power driven) any other mills not covered.	50.00
5.	Mill and factory having up to the limit of 10 workers	50.00
6.	Mill and factory having number of workers above 10 but below 50.	100.00
7.	Mill and factory having number of workers from 50 to 100.	250.00
8.	Mill and factory having number of workers above 100	500.00
9.	Rickshaw	10.00
10.	Auto-rickshaw	20.00
11.	Taxi	50.00
12.	Bus, truck and launch (license to be obtained from the UZP from where these services are operated)	100.00
13.	Brickfield	100.00
14.	Rate chargeable for enlistment as Contractors	
	a. 1st Class (No limit)	500.00
	b. 2nd Class (up to Taka 4 lacs)	300.00
	c. 3rd Class (up to Taka 2.50 lacs)	100.00

Source: The Taxation Rules of 1983, Second Schedule

Appendix - VI

The Items of Trades and Professions on which the Upazila Parishad was Empowered to Impose Annual Fees

	Item		Maximum Taka
1.	a. Godown and Arath	:	20.00
	b. Cold storate	:	10.00
2.	a. Regular shops (excluding hawkers those buying and selling goods in open space) with structures.		
	1. Big (with investment above Taka 10,000)	:	20.00
	ii. Small (with investment up to Taka 10,000)	:	50.00
	b. Hotel	:	20.00
	c. Restaurant	:	10.00
	d. Tea-Stall	:	10.00
3.	Cinema hall	:	250.00
4.	Rice mill, flour mill, oil and saw mill (power driven) any Other mills mot covered.	:	50.00
5.	Mill and factory having up to the limit of 10 workers:		50.00
6.	Mill and factory having number of workers above 10 but below 50.	:	100.00
7.	Mill and factory having number of workers from 50 to 100.:		250.00
8.	Mill and factory having number of workers above 100:		500.00
9.	Rickshaw	:	10.00
10.	Auto-rickshaw	:	20.00
11.	Taxi	:	50.00
12.	Bus, truck and launch (license to be obtained from the UZP from where these services are operated)	:	100.00
13.	Brickfiedl	:	100.00
14.	Rate chargeable for enlistment as Contractors	:	
	a. 1st Class (No limit)	:	500.00
	b. 2nd Class (up to Taka 4 lacs)	:	300.00
	c. 3rd Class (up to Taka 2.50 lacs)	:	100.00

Appendix VII

1. Name of project:
2. Implementing Agency:
3. Nature, purpose, importance and justification:
4. Total cost and annual phasing:
5. Major physical items of work with estimated cost:

   Quantity   **Cost**
   a. land :
   b. Labor :
   c. Materials :
      i.   Bricks :
      ii. Cement :
      iii. Steel :
      iv. other items :
   a. Transportation :
   b. Land Development :
   c. Others :
6. Implementation Period :
   a. Date of Commencement :
   b. Date of Completion :
7. Location of the Project :
8. Source of Financing :
   a. Government :
   b. Local contribution :
   c. Others :
9. Modes of Implementation: contract/otherwise
10. Manpower Requirement :
    a. Skilled :
    b. Unskilled :
11. Arrangement for maintenance of project
    work or facilities after completion :
    i. Annual requirement of staff and their training:

    ii.   Annual requirement of spares and consumable and other materials for maintenance and repairs:

    iii. Annual recurring cost:

    iv. Proposed mode of financing the recurring cost and securing the necessary manpower and skills:

12. Is there a similar project of the national government or regional body in the upazila? If so, the reason for undertaking the proposed project may be indicated.

13. What other complementary investments by the Upazila *Parishad* or national government are necessary for deriving full benefit out of the proposed investment?

14. Does the Project require acquisition of land? If so, what arrangements have been made for land acquisition for the project.

15. Estimated/expected benefit due to implementation of the project:

    a.   In terms of money:

    b.   In terms of employment:

    c.   Socioeconomic well-being (please describe):

    d.   Estimated benefit/cost ratio:

16. How did the Project idea originated?

17. Has any survey/study been made before initiating the project?

18. Does the project strictly adhere to the guidelines for undertaking development schemes by the *Upazila* Parishad?

                                                  Signature of the Sponsoring Authority

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