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# Management Functions at the Household Level in Rural Bangladesh: Application and Outcome

Mazumder, Mazharul Hasan

University of Rajshahi

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**MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS AT THE HOUSEHOLD  
LEVEL IN RURAL BANGLADESH: APPLICATION AND  
OUTCOME**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE INSTITUTE OF BANGLADESH STUDIES  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**INSTITUTE OF BANGLADESH STUDIES (IBS)  
UNIVERSITY OF RAJSHAHI  
BANGLADESH**

## **LETTER OF DECLARATION**

I, Mazharul Hasan Mazumder, do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled “Management Functions at the Household Level in Bangladesh: Application and Outcome” is my original work, which I have done under the supervision of Jakir Hossain, PhD., Associate Professor, IBS, RU.

I also declare that it has not been submitted partially or wholly anywhere else for the award of any other degree. I have made due acknowledgements wherever I have borrowed or cited anything from other sources.

(Mazharul Hasan Mazumder)

PhD Fellow (2010-11)

IBS, RU.

## LETTER OF CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that Mazharul Hasan Mazumder, PhD Fellow (2010-11) of this Institute has completed his dissertation titled “Management Functions at the Household Level in Rural Bangladesh: Application and Outcome” under my active supervision.

I also certify that his dissertation has not been submitted either partly or fully elsewhere for award of any other degree.

Jakir Hossain, PhD  
Supervisor  
&  
Associate Professor  
IBS, RU.

## **ABSTRACT**

Proper application of Management Functions helps an organization to achieve its predetermined objectives in a successful manner by ensuring effective, efficient, and synergistic utilization of whatever resources the organization has at its disposal. In a country like Bangladesh where eight out of ten people live in rural areas (Islam 2002: 97), to ensure overall socio-economic development of the country would remain a far cry if development (i.e. wellbeing) of the rural households cannot be ensured.

In this village-based study I have attempted to find-out whether or not application of three core management functions such as decision-making, authority, and leadership can ensure wellbeing of rural households by utilizing the resources of the households. In order to do so I have taken a sample of one hundred and sixty households from three villages of three districts under three agro-ecological zones e.g. coastal, haor, and flood free.

I have categorized the households from two points of view viz. economic condition of the households and typology of the households. According to the economic condition, I have divided the sample households into three types e.g. poor households, moderate households, and rich households. Likewise, according to the household typology, I have classified the sample households into three types e.g. nuclear households, joint households, and extended households. Besides, I have divided the resources of the households into three broad types such as natural resources, economic resources and human resources.

Using both secondary data (gathered from secondary literature review) as well as primary data (collected from the sample households through questionnaire

survey, key informant interviews, observation method, case study, and focus group discussion) I have found the emergence of four new types of households viz. despotic households, super-trader households, glued-together households, and circumstantial glued-together households. I have also found that a significant number of these four new types of households can ensure wellbeing of the household members in the forms of enhanced capabilities, livelihood security, equity, and sustainability by ensuring utmost utilization of their resources through prudent application of the three management functions. In addition, I have identified a few areas where further research could be conducted in the days ahead.

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## ACRONYMS

ASA: Association for Social Advancement

BRAC: Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee

BBS: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics

BIWTC: Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation

CZPo: Coastal Zone Policy

DEPZ: Dhaka Export Processing Zone

FHH: Female Headed Household

FIVDB: Friends In Village Development Bangladesh

GAD: Gender and Development

HH: Household

HHH: Household Head

HIES: Household Income and Expenditure Survey

HYV: High Yielding Variety

LGED: Local Government & Engineering Department

MHH: Male Headed Households

NGO: Non Government Organization

REB: Rural Electrification Board

UHO: Upazilla Health Officer

## LIST OF BANGLA WORDS

Bou-Vat : A wedding reception hosted by the bride-side to entertain the bridegroom's relatives.

Chira : Specially processed flat dry rice used usually as breakfast.

Imam: The person who leads prayer in a mosque.

Kani : A measurement of land ( 1 kani is equal to 40 decimals).

Katha : A native thick cloth made by stitching together used especially in winter instead of blanket.

Khoi : A toasted paddy.

Maund: A unit of measurement. (1 maund = 37.5 kg.)

Moajjin: Who gives azaan five times a day in mosque.

Mora : A bamboo-made item with plastic-made top used to sit on.

Muhuri: Assistant to an Advocate

Muri : Toasted rice.

Pati : A rectangular shaped item made of cane or bamboo used for either sitting or sleeping purpose.

Pitha : Pie made of rice-powder.

Thakur: The person who conducts religious activities of the Hindu Community

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## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

At the end of day's work all of us – be we are a beggar or a businessperson, a teacher or a trader, a priest or a politician, and a manager or a mugger – return to our near and dear ones i.e. the 'family' (hereinafter referred to as 'household'). On the other hand, from cooking rice to manufacturing medicine, from riding a bicycle to flying a fighter-jet, or from making a kite to manufacturing nuclear warhead, nothing is actually possible without proper application of the key management functions. Management functions hitherto has been many in numbers. Yet the major functions include planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling. These major functions have been sub-divided into some other functions such as decision making, motivation, departmentation, communication, authority etc. However, in the corporate sector it has already been proved that proper application of management functions generate large dividends through ensuring successful accomplishment of preset goals and objectives. By the same token, I argue that since every household has its own goal, objective, and stake, if applied properly, the management functions of planning, organizing, actuating, leading, and controlling *per se* could lead toward household wellbeing. In this study I have focused on the application of three management functions viz. authority, decision-making, and leadership at the household level in rural Bangladesh along with their resulting outcome.

Household—a basic unit of social organization—is the primary unit of production and consumption. The household is both a microcosm of society and an active agent instituting change within that society. Prudent management of the

household is important because, as Franklin (2004) maintained, household is a social network instrumental to the formation and resilience of subjugated communities; it is deeply implicated not only in biological reproduction, but in the social reproduction of individuals where racial, class, and gender identities are constructed (Franklin, 2004, p. xiii). The predominant rural-agrarian nature of Bangladesh's society impels that the country's development is hardly attainable without due consideration of its rural community in general and the rural households in particular<sup>1</sup>. In this backdrop, the broad issue of this dissertation is whether and how application of key management functions leads toward wellbeing of the households in rural Bangladesh. This dissertation is divided into three major parts: Part – I comprises two chapters: chapter-1 covers the introductory aspects including the study context, problem statement and research questions, study objectives, conceptual framework of the study, methodological contours, along with the rationale, scope and limitations of the study, and chapter-2 presents brief description of the selected Agro-ecological Zones and the study villages. Part – II includes the issue of applicability of management functions and is divided into three chapters: chapter-3 contains household decision making, chapter-4 covers household authority, while chapter-5 includes household level leadership in rural Bangladesh. Part – III contains the outcomes resulting from the application of management functions and is divided into two chapters: chapter-6 presents the new forms of households resulted from the application of the three management functions, and chapter-7 covers household wellbeing. Finally, the concluding

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<sup>1</sup> Approximately 76.69% of Bangladesh's total population live in the rural areas and of the total number of households (i.e. 32173630), around 76.68% i.e. 24671590 households belong to the rural areas (The Bangladesh Population Census, 2011).

section of the dissertation sums-up the arguments and findings of the study along with their implications. It also explores the areas of further research that could be done on the subject matter in the future.

### **STUDY CONTEXT**

It is arguable that with the growth of industrialization, urbanization, and modernization, however, sharing of household resources indeed has been in threat in rural Bangladesh. Since the prime concern of every household is ensuring its members' wellbeing in the long run, the major concern of every member of the household then becomes ensuring utmost and synergistic utilization of whatever resources they have at their disposal in order to meet their minimum requirements. Key management functions e.g. *authority, decision-making, and leadership* play contributing role in this regard. It can also be said that management is a key-stone for proper production, distribution, and utilization of the household resources. Functions of Management play pivotal role in proactively addressing the dual issues of maximizing benefits of a household's individual members on the one hand, and household resource utilization on the other. This eventually influences not only in the short run but also in the long process of the rural Bangladeshi households' continued struggle for sustainable wellbeing.

### **Why “Household Management” Matters?**

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The history of Management reveals that functions of management were at first applied in the first and foremost type of organization in the history of human civilization i.e. the family. And since the advent of ancient human civilization

household management has been thought and rethought and questions raised if the core management functions can be effectively applied in other types of organization e.g. military, business, and religion in order to maximize their respective stakes, then why cannot the households be enabled to enhance their wellbeing in the similar process? Prima facie, answer to this question seems to be affirmative. Indeed, the current study has been undertaken in a plea to explore through a scientific process a realistic answer to this important question.

However, before delving into the core discussion, it seems rather imperative to narrate in brief the reasons why management of households is important. Or, put in a different manner, what would (or would not) happen, if households are not managed in a systematic and pragmatic way? Indeed, the importance of household management is of many folds a few of which are narrated below.

### ***Shift of Focus of Management Research***

As has been said earlier, *family* is *the* ancient most form of organization in which application of the management functions first started its journey. Management functions have increased—not in numbers only but in importance as well—with the gradual advancements of the human civilization, and this trend continues till date. Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution those management functions which were until then practiced only at the family level had been started to be replicated—with great success and precision—in the industrial plants and factories. The Industrial Revolution and its aftermath had given the management

functions remarkable scientific appearances to a significant extent, so much so that productivity of the industrial sector had improved dramatically. In the meantime, business tycoons of that time had started to hiring the then management *Gurus* from the Business Schools in order to bring about such changes in the process of management that would guarantee the industrialists continued growing dividends.

The resulting impact was remarkable increase in the amount of research and the volume of literature on the application and outcome of various aspects and issues of management, especially and exclusively in the industrial sector. But research on the changing application and outcome of management functions in the families—of both rural and urban areas—had remained highly scarce. Because, by then, the focus of the application and outcome of the management functions had already shifted from its original root (i.e. the family) to the industrial and other forms of organizational units. This shift of focus of the management functions' applicability largely impacted the rural agrarian countries across the world, especially the poor ones who are sometimes thought to be the innocent victims of the Industrial Revolution. Indeed, industrialization, and for that matter capitalism, had separated the economic activities from family life. The function of the home in productive work diminished in favor of the factory; henceforth the home became a center for family and personal life (Reedy and Woodhead, 1988:119). And it would be no exaggeration to argue that as a result, though unfortunately, the issue of 'management of the households' had got lost in the whirlpool of the growth of trade, commerce, business, capital and investment.

### *Changes in Family Structure and Functioning*

While elaborating the discussion on the nature and reality of the family in the industrial society. Worsely (1977) identified that the following three main changes have taken place in family structure and functioning over the past one or two centuries:

- The family has become a more isolated unit, relatively separate from wider set of kins, and functioning chiefly as a *conjugal* or *nuclear* unit.
- The family has either lost many of its functions or has become more specialized in these functions. In particular, the family has lost its central functions as a *productive unit* in the wider economy.
- Internally, relationships within the family have become more *egalitarian*, both between husband and wife and between parents and children (Worsely 1977: 08).

### *Reduction of Households' Economic Functions*

The economic functions of the households have become limited—for instance, once a unit where the members *produced jointly* (on a firm or in some form of domestic industry) as well as *consumed jointly*, the nuclear family has now simply become a unit of *consumption* only. Worsely (1977) had apprehended that in many respects, therefore, it would appear that the family is a much less important institution in modern society than it was in the past. The absence of application of the key management functions at the household level during the recent time has been prevalent in many ways. In Worsely's own language:

‘the growing participation of women in the labor-force has not been matched by an equal growth of male participation in the home... Furthermore, the long hours of housework are, as many feminists have stressed, unpaid and do not receive any recognition as productive labor in national income statistics’ (Worsely 1977: 15,17).

In conclusion Worsely had raised some vital questions, which require proper treatment. To legitimize the questions, Worsely at first told that “to talk of ‘the family in industrial society’ implies that in some way the family has changed with the process of industrialization.” Then he asks: what does this mean? Does this mean that industrialization *caused* certain changes in the family; or that certain changes in the family were a necessary (if not sufficient) precondition for industrialization to take place; or that, more vaguely, there is some degree of ‘fit’ between a certain type of family and a certain type of economy? (Worsely 1977: 19).

Arguably, in today’s world of stunning technological advancements, economic solvency alone cannot ensure household wellbeing; instead, prudent application of the key management functions viz. decision-making, authority, and leadership together enable the households to first attain and then sustain their wellbeing—which is the subject-matter of this envisaged research. This argument has been substantiated by many scholars. For instance, a clear picture of the aforesaid argument has been offered by Zaretsky (1976) who highlighted the nexus among capitalism, the family and the division of labor by gender. In this connection Zaretsky asserted that alike the pre-capitalist society, throughout most of the capitalist history the family has been the basic unit of ‘economic’



production – not the ‘wage-earning’ father but the household as a whole. While *within* the family there was an intense division of labor based on age, sex, and family status etc., any sort of division *between* the family and the world of commodity production was almost absent (Zaretsky 1976: 222). To quote Zaretsky at length:

‘So long as the family was a productive unit based upon private property, its members understood their domestic life and ‘personal’ relations to be rooted in their mutual labor... Just as capitalist development gave rise to the idea of the family as a separate realm from the economy, it created a ‘separate’ sphere of personal life, seemingly divorced from the mode of production... But under capitalism as ethic of personal fulfillment has become the property of the masses of people, though it has very different meanings for men and for women, and for different strata of the proletariat. Much of this search for personal meanings takes place within the family and is one reason for the persistence of the family in spite of the decline of many of its earlier functions’ (Zaretsky 1976: 223).

The very significance of the household is perhaps best articulated by Goode (1989). By contrasting with most tribal societies Goode argued that although the family is only a small part of the whole social structure of modern industrial societies, it is nevertheless a key element in them. Goode was of the opinion that modern society would collapse without the contributions of the family. The class system is also founded on the family. Most importantly, it is within the family that the child is first socialized to serve the needs of the society. A society will not survive unless its needs are met; only if individuals are motivated to serve the society’s needs will the society continue to operate, and the foundation for that motivation is laid by the family. Families are not isolated, self-enclosed social systems; and the other institutions of society, such as the military, the church, or

the school system, continually rediscover that they are not dealing with individuals, but with members of families (Goode 1989: 3). In the context of the rural Bangladeshi households Sadeque (1990) reveals:

‘... the *labor unit* in rural Bangladesh is not the *individual*, as in the market economies, but the *household* where almost all the able members irrespective of age or sex have to work and contribute to total household earnings. This was true not only of the self-employed households but also those which primarily depended on the sale of labor for earning livelihood’ (Sadeque 1990: 120).

### **Salient Features of the Households**

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Management of the households is also important on account of certain peculiarities (i.e. characteristic features) of this *very* social unit. Compared to other forms of organization viz. the military, the religious institutions, charitable entities, the household is unique not due to its composition, activities as well as their management but also the contributions it makes to the wider society.

However, the salient features of the household include: the household is the formally developed only institution that exist in all societies; everyone is both born into a family and belong to it and later founds one of his or her own; many household role responsibilities cannot usually be delegated to others, while in a work situation specialized obligations can be delegated; pervasive social pressures compels almost everyone to conform, or claim to conform, to household demands and duties; the household is not only an *expressive* or emotional social unit, but also an *instrumental* agency for the larger social structures, and all other institutions and agencies depend upon its contributions; households are *economic* units with respect to (re)production, allocation, and consumption; with reference

to *social control*, the household acts as a source of pressure on the individual to adjust to social values, norms, and practices (Goode 1989: 6); and finally households have variable amounts of both *cultural capital* and *social capital* (Béteille 1991 cited from Uberoi 1994: 443).

Moreover, in a significant development in reference to the household dimension of the family, there has been a conspicuous shift from the earlier preoccupation with *household morphology* (i.e. the classification of types of household composition) to an interest in the *household political economy* – how it actually functions as a unit of production, reproduction and consumption in the wider society (Uberoi 1994: 6). Here comes the relevance of the key management functions viz. *decision making, authority, and leadership*.

To ensure prudent management of the family household is utterly important because it can be viewed as a semi-closed system whose members are integrated and interdependent (Hill 1971, Sztompka 1974) and it is a task-performing unit that is responsible for the physical maintenance of its members; fulfilling that function involves the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services (Hill 1971). Nonetheless, of primary importance, the household, through its management of resources, responds with actions designed to restore or maintain an acceptable level of well-being in light of conditions that affect it but that are outside its control.

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## **Rural Bangladesh: the Present Day Scenario**

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The phrase ‘rural Bangladesh’ no longer means what it once did. The notion is somewhat out of date as the distinction between urban and rural life is no longer clear cut. Toufique and Turton (2002: 11) argued that powerful external economic forces, including those of globalization and the expansion of physical infrastructure—especially roads and bridges, rural electrification and the growth of marketing outlets—are are creating a rural landscape that is increasingly ‘urban’ in character and have radically transformed village life. New livelihood opportunities are emerging—often in the non-farm sector. The numbers of small shops, tailoring and other craft enterprises, rickshaw pullers, petty traders in villages and local bazaar centers have grown substantially. Remittances now form a critical part of the rural economy.

However, change is happening faster in some places than in others and for some people more than for others. A continuum rather than a divide is visible – from areas where traditional views and images still hold true to areas where a more modern picture is taking hold. Some people, too, have been unable to embrace the change and the new opportunities it brings. For many of the poor, who have little or no access to land, their primary asset remains their labor – a healthy pair of hands is critical to their livelihoods. But whether they are engaged in agricultural laboring or in the non-farm sector they continue to be marginalized from the development process.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT & RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In spite of the existing definitional ambiguities regarding ‘*family*’ and ‘*household*’ and the corresponding debate (discussed later in the thesis) among scholars, however, what becomes apparent from the available literature is that the functions of management such as *planning; organizing; staffing, leading, actuating; and controlling* have been very much in application at the households irrespective of household categories, typology and economic condition. Household activities including production/acquirement, distribution and consumption of resources, labor contribution, joint budgeting, and sharing mutual responsibilities etc. do require decision-making, leadership, and authority.

Existing knowledge as well as conventional wisdom indicate that at the household level application of management functions, especially decision-making, authority, and leadership has been prevalent. Noticeably, these functions are applied particularly in relation to production/acquirement, distribution, and utilization of resources at the household level. Many researchers, albeit mostly from sociological and anthropological points of view, have touched upon the dynamics of application of these three functions in the rural Bangladesh’s households. Available literature also point to the fact that the volume and number of research studies on the dynamics of application of these three functions in the rural Bangladeshi households, especially from a management point of view is scanty, if not nil. Hence, time is ripe to examine—from a multidisciplinary point of view—how the aforesaid three management functions are currently being applied in rural Bangladeshi households.

### **GENDER DIMENSIONS OF RURAL HOUSEHOLDS**

Gender discrimination among men and women is a common phenomenon in rural Bangladesh. Rowlands' remark is very relevant in the context of Bangladesh: 'women are housewives in a social context where men and other women expect them to remain housewives' (Rowlands 1997: 5). Indeed, gender relations are central to social processes and social organizations, and hence, to development, which is 'a complex process involving the social, economic, political and cultural betterment of individuals and of society itself' (Young 1988: 6). Gender and Development (GAD) theorists have highlighted the value systems which lead to a sexual division of labor. Of utmost importance, "an analysis of the process by which gender relations are negotiated and re-negotiated can assist in understanding the nature of households, of the constitution of the labor force, of the 'informal' economy, and other basic constructs of development analysis" (Rowlands 1997: 6).

In particular, a GAD approach illuminates the power relations between men and women, and the situation of subordination that most women face in most societies. Gender analysis also provides a critique of supposedly neutral institutions (Kabeer 1994: 225) and reveals the many manifestations of male bias (Elson 1991: 112) in the process of development. Furthermore, a focus on women head of households as beneficiaries might be put forward as a way to tackle the issue of women's non-involvement in household management. That may well increase women's participation in quantitative terms. It is very likely, however, that women's workload will have been increased; the onus is on women to make

the changes in their activity patterns in order to get involved. But the gender issues of women's non-participation are complex, and targeting women in this way may mean that fundamental questions about gender relations in society are not asked.

However, as a sequel to the foregoing discussion what follows next is a thin discussion of the three management functions namely decision-making, authority, and leadership—from the perspective of the present study—which, in turn, would lead towards the research questions answers to which I have endeavored to figure out throughout the study, and are presented later in this dissertation. But here it is to be noted that the significance of the nexus between the gender dimension of households and application as well as the outcome(s) of the aforesaid three management functions at the household level in rural Bangladesh would be elaborated in the introductory paragraphs of Part–II of this dissertation.

#### **DECISION MAKING WITHIN RURAL HOUSEHOLDS**

In the simplest sense, the management function of '*planning*' answers to the question: "*what to do?*" while *decision-making* is a major part of planning; given an awareness of an opportunity and a goal, the core of planning is really the decision process. The process leading to making a decision might be thought of as (1) premising, (2) indentifying alternatives, (3) the evaluation of alternatives in terms of the goals sought, and (4) the choosing of an alternative, that is, making a decision (Koontz and Weihrich 1989: 135).

As regards decision making at the rural household level, Jahangir (1985: 88) observes:

‘The village in Bangladesh, on one plane, is a decision making unit and on the other plane rarely decides about certain phenomenon. With regard to production and consumption and their interpersonal distribution most decisions are taken within the village. With regard to value system and hierarchies, and for instance, implementing land reform, the village rarely meets to take a formal decision.’

Indeed, at the household level, the household-head has to trade-off between the household needs and the available resources; that is, given the “bounded rationality,”<sup>2</sup> the household-head has to make some choices; s/he has to make decisions. The research question that arises from this is: *how does the household-head makes the trade-off between the household needs and household resources; that is, what is the pattern of decision-making at the household level?*

#### **AUTHORITY WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD**

The management functions of ‘*organizing*’ answers to the question: “*how to do?*”

Evidently *authority* makes *organizing* possible. Without authority—the power to exercise discretion in making decisions—properly placed in households’ key members, various sections of the household cannot become smoothly working units harmonized for the accomplishment of household objectives. Authority relationships, whether defined or not, are the factors that make organizing possible, facilitate sectional activities, and bring coordination to a household. Household authority refers to norms by which legitimate power is assigned on the household member who controls behavior in the household and makes important decisions about household matters. On the other hand, household power and

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<sup>2</sup> Bounded Rationality is the rational action limited because of lack of information, lack of time, or ability to analyze alternatives in the light of a goal sought, unclear goals, or the human tendency not to take risks in making a decision, “to play it safe.”



authority are different, but they are related concepts in structural relationships, which indicate domination, control, influence, compliance, resistance, subjugation, and decision making within the household.

Jansen (1999) revealed that there is a division of authority and division of labor within each household. Jansen portrayed the nature of authority assumed by the household head and its relationship with the decision made by the household head. The household head is the member of the household who has the final say in both the internal and external affairs of the household. The nature of the decisions that are taken by the household head will, of course, depend on the economic position of the household (Jansen 1999: 55). To quote Jansen in some detail:

‘There is much variation in the amount of authority the household head has and in the way decisions are reached and enforced. The authority the household head exercises will depend on how many other males there are in the household, their age and relationship to him. The authority of the household head will also depend on the strength of his personality and his abilities. The amount of authority of the household head is related to the size of landholding the household head possesses. The way the decisions are reached, whether by informal consultations among the household members or by directives from the household head, thus depends on the amount of authority the household head possesses’ (Jansen 1999: 55-6).

On the contrary, while evaluating the household as a small unit of power structure, Mashreque (1980) revealed that the head of the household exercises authority over the members as a guardian and social adviser, thus commanding the patriarchal authority in the *khana* (the household)...His authority in managing household affairs, allocating functions, regulating behavior and attitude and maintaining internal peace and external relation is supreme. The authority of the father over the dependents depends heavily upon the way he exercises leadership

in the household (Mashreque 1980: 92-3). Authority in the household depends on the status of the household members who control over property and resources. With this interpretation of authority in view and keeping in mind the prime concern of every household i.e. to ensure the fulfillment of the minimum requirements of the household members through utmost utilization of the household resources, the research question that comes to fore is: *what type of authority structures do exist in the rural Bangladeshi households and to what extent can authority of the household member(s) dictate the functioning of the households?*

#### **LEADERSHIP WITHIN HOUSEHOLDS**

Perhaps the most influential of the management functions is leadership. It is influential because leadership implies followership and people tend to follow those who offer a means of satisfying their own needs, wishes, and desires; hence, it is quite understandable that leadership involves motivation, leadership styles and approaches, and communication (Koontz and Wehrich 1989: 17). Another key responsibility of a leader is to ensure coordination among various sectors of households and their management. So to say, leaders, or household heads, are there to make decisions, and to do so they require authority.

The lessons of leadership apply not only to our organizations and community associations, but also to the family unit. A. J. Schuler (2003) in his article “Leadership in the Family” presents a few ideas and tips that flow from the study of organizations - including the family as an organization.

*The purpose of a household is to support the growth and development of its members.*

This is true for all household constellations, including traditional households of two biological parents and their offspring, as well as other varieties more common today. All members of the household should have their growth, development and health supported through the medium of the household, even the adults. Obviously, children have greater and more immediate needs, generally speaking, and it is best if adults choose to have children once they are mature and strong enough to defer their more personal, individual needs enough to attend to those of the children first. While all members have material needs that are likely to be met through the household – needs for food and shelter – all members also have personal and emotional needs to be met through the household as well – needs for understanding, support, encouragement and the development of individual talents among them.

*Leadership in the household involves balancing the needs of all members at the same time.*

Note that this point of view explicitly includes provision for the needs of adults, while many ideas of the household speak as if the sole purpose of a household is to provide exclusively for the needs of children. But some households do not include children, either because all the children are now adults or due to other choices or circumstances. Those households are still households, and whether or not children are present, leadership in the household involves the exercise of some

balance so that the needs of all members can be met as well and as creatively as possible at all times – that’s the hard part!

*In healthy households with children, adults gain support from other adults and not primarily from children.*

Yes, it’s great when a child comes over to an adult after a particularly long day and says, “I love you, Mommy,” sensing perhaps that Mom needs a hug. This is a great developmental exercise of empathy on the child’s part, and a sign of healthy growth. But adult parents, ideally, should be able to support each other well enough personally to be able to draw on each other for support and strength so that children can feel secure in their environment. This is what creates the conditions for healthy child development, and adults make a potentially grave error when they garner too much personal support from their children, rather than from other adults or adult partners. It can be tough for single parents to find other adult support, but friends and other adult household members can play a positive, healthy role in supporting single parents and, by proxy, their children. No matter what the family type, leadership in the household means letting the kids be kids so that adult fears and tensions can be handled together by other adults.

*Household can get off track when the needs of at least one adult begin to dominate those of other household members.*

At any given moment in time, one household member’s needs might dominate, for example, when someone is ill and requiring immediate medical care. But generally speaking, healthy, functioning households maintain a balance, while

problem households do not. Literature is replete with examples of households that get off track. Sometimes the needs of adults to have their households adhere to a preconceived ideal, however worthy, can interfere with a child's (particularly an adolescent's) need to go out into the world and learn some things on their own, mistakes and all. Leadership in the household involves, sometimes, knowing when to let go, while it also requires that we teach children when to defer to the needs of others, including their siblings, no matter what their immediate wants may be. This is part of the role of household with children to prepare those children for adult membership in civil society.

*Households can also get off track when the needs of one child or all children begin to dominate those of other household members.*

When a household with a special needs child struggles to maintain a healthy balance, outside resources and supports may be needed, as long as those supports are well chosen (these are always hard choices, and can include extended household members, of course, as part of the solution). But the point here is to say that there are times when the adult leader or leaders of a household need their own time. Adult partner/parents need time for each other to continue to get to know and understand each other outside of the context of their roles as parents, to renew and keep their relationships alive, in order to meet their own mutual growth and support needs, and also to provide the kind of strong foundation that allows for healthy child growth and development. Not to take such time, through whatever form it may take, is to fail in the household leadership role. The balancing act of household leadership requires attention to all members, and not

just to children. How often have we seen married partners become strangers to each other over the years as children grow, so that the relationship founders or ends when the nest becomes empty – or even sooner?

*Having a wider mission or purpose can be an aid to healthy household life.*

Purely from my own observation, Schular (2003) finds that households of all kinds tend to do better when they are animated by some purpose greater than themselves, without sacrificing their own essential growth needs. Schular has seen couples without children do very well when their relationships are animated by some common purpose, set of values or shared enterprise – for example, the owning and running of a bed and breakfast that provides hospitality and comfort to guests, and a medium for the expression of both partners’ talents, while also paying the couple’s bills, etc. Healthy intimate, partnered relationships may begin well through the usual (or unexpected!) attractions and desires, but they often are helped to last over time when they are founded on some shared sense of purpose that transcends the couple.

For many couples, the raising of children provides that purpose – sometimes a bit sooner than they may have planned! But for childless couples, too, some other jointly shared creative enterprise, mission or activity can help keep both partners growing together, challenging each other, discovering each other, etc. Even households with children fare better when children are raised with some set of values that transcends mere self-interest. While religious identity or

conviction can often supply this ingredient, non-religious, altruistic or creative endeavors can also perform the same function.

Often, these “wider missions” can emerge organically from the relationship of the two intimate/married partners involved, whether they are recognized or not. But one may wonder how much leadership in the household might be helped at times by articulating, or trying to make explicit, what those wider values or missions might be, in answer to the questions, “What are we about? What do we believe in?” The answers to such questions can be helpful guideposts for all involved in the household, as long as the answers do not become rigid clubs used in the end to stifle the continuing growth and development of all household members. Values statements, like a good mission statement for a corporation, should be relevant enough to add meaning and context in specific situations while broad enough to remain applicable through changing times and circumstances.

Indeed, leadership, authority, and decision-making are highly interdependent and intertwined. Existing knowledge indicate that there is no unique or ideal type of leadership style; at the household level, leadership style varies from household to household. Household leadership may take the form of patriarchal leadership as well as matriarchal leadership, and egalitarian as well as authoritative leadership. So to speak, the research question that arises is: *which form(s) of leadership found functional in rural Bangladeshi households, and does leadership style have any bearing on decision-making and on the success and failure of the decisions being made?*

However, taken together, the research questions that have arisen out of the foregoing discussion are:

- (i) what is the pattern of decision-making at the household level in rural Bangladesh?
- (ii) what type of authority structures do exist in the rural Bangladesh's households and to what extent can authority of the household member(s) dictate the functioning of the households? And
- (iii) which forms of leadership are found functional in rural Bangladesh's households, and do leadership types have any bearing on decision-making as well as on the success or failure of the decisions being made?

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

### **GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

In general, this study attempts to explore how the management functions such as decision-making, authority, and leadership are being applied in the households in rural Bangladesh, and to what extent their application determines the wellbeing of the respective households.

### **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

To be precise, the specific objectives of the present study are to:

- 1) identify the state of household level decision making in rural Bangladesh, and whether there exists any relationship among household category, decision making context, and the type(s) of the taken decision;



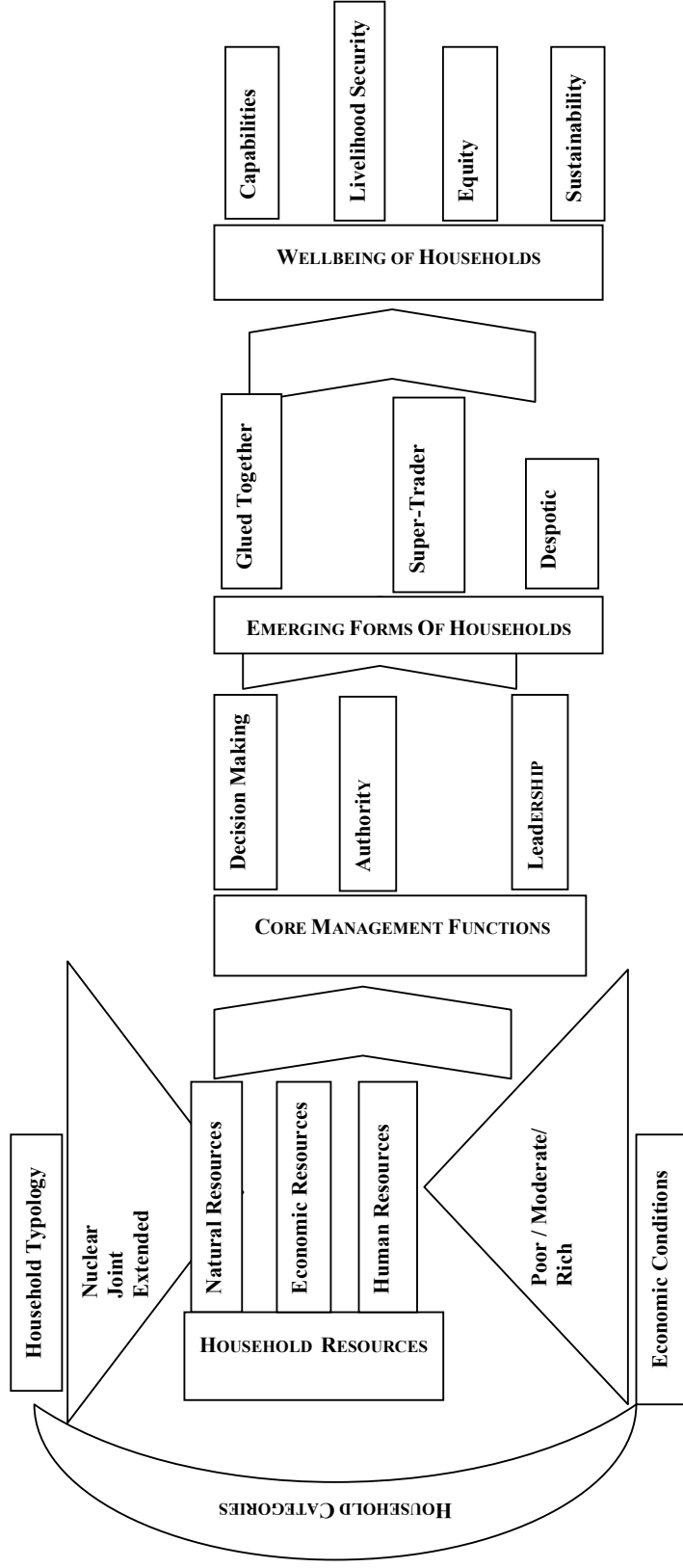
2) juxtapose the authority structure(s) prevailing in rural Bangladesh's households along with their subsequent outcome on the households' wellbeing / ill-being; and

3) find out the leadership styles being followed in the households of rural Bangladesh as well as the nexus (if any) among leadership style, authority structure, and decision making along with their consequent outcome(s).

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

It may apparently seem to be pretty easy a task to understand how do the key management functions together work as a catalyst for enhancing wellbeing of the households. But to understand the actual mechanism of ensuring equitable and sustainable wellbeing for the households in rural Bangladesh through applying the key management functions in the process of synergistic utilization of the household resources – physical, economic/financial, human, and social – demands a clear-cut conceptualization of the entire process, which is shown in Figure 1.1:

**FIGURE 1.1 : CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**



### TERMINOLOGICAL DEBATE ON THE ‘HOUSEHOLD’ AND THE ‘FAMILY’

Before elaborating the “leap-frog” that prudent household management could generate for sustainable wellbeing of the households, especially in the rural areas of Bangladesh, it would be convenient to first identify and discuss the multi-dimensional importance of the concept of “household”. However, at the outset it should be noted that substantial debate has been going on among the scholars on the definition of and difference between the terms *‘family’* and *‘household’*; some authors have used the term *‘family’*, while some others preferred the term *‘household,’* still other authors have used the terms *‘family’* and *‘household’* interchangeably. Jansen (1987: 321) remarked that it is a striking characteristic of studies of Bangladesh villages that the methodological aspects of identification and definition of the household unit have been little discussed. Many researchers used the terms “household” and “family” interchangeably.

In this context, White (1992) was of the opinion that the family household marks the crux of both class and gender relations. It is the basic unit to which people belong, and through which they enter into society. “Within development discourse, the emphasis is firmly on the ‘household’ rather than ‘family’: the basic unit is above all an economic one...To talk of the ‘family household’ itself begs a lot of questions. The “household” is not, of course equivalent to the ‘family’ : it may include non-family members such as resident workers, and the family stretches far beyond the household” (White 1992: 120-21).

Indicating the apparent debate on the *household* and the *family*, one researcher argues, ‘...it holds true that we have yet to develop a substantial

theoretical body of work concerning households' Franklin (2004: xiii). In this regard, Mary Beaudry's (1989) observation carries significant weight:

'if one uses the anthropological definition of households that stresses the dynamics of this highly variable social grouping as the yardstick for evaluating what has been done, it is clear that domestic sites of the historical period have seldom been examined from what can truly be called a household-oriented perspective' (Beaudry 1989: 84).

On the other hand, Bessaignet (1963: 71) and Hara (1967: 140) used *family* in the sense of the *household*. The former used '*family*' to refer to a household having a common residence in a homestead and sharing a common kitchen. To the latter, '*family*' was a cluster of relatives sharing a single cooking hearth. Beach *et al.* (1966) have not distinguished between '*household*' and '*family*', whereas Mukherjee (1971: 41) made a distinction on economic ground: 'A *family* represents a unit of the social organization of people and is essentially determined by an analysis of the lineage structure and the kin-grouping. But a *household* describes an economic unit...' On the other hand, Shah (1973: 138) and Bhuiyan (1978: 88-90) found a fundamental difference between *household* and *family*. Their point is that a 'family' comprises members having blood relationship, but a 'household' may comprise persons such as relatives, servants and lodging-master (i.e. house tutor) . Members of a family may live in different places but members of a household must live in the same place and share the same kitchen.

The Bengali meaning of 'household' is '*khana*' and that of 'family' is '*paribar*.' The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (1988) noted that 'in some instances, there may be more than one household in a single house or in one

dwelling arrangement' (BBS 1988: 22). Similarly, a household may have more than one house or structure or shed. But Sadeque (1990: 27) differed with both Shah and Bhuiyan by saying that 'this is not true of households whose members reside together in a homestead and take food in a single kitchen,' and had used the concept of *household* in his study, on the ground that the term *family* may not be very helpful for systematic discussion. Following Shah, Bhuiyan defined the *households* as a residential and domestic unit composed of one or more persons normally residing in the same *bāri* (homestead) and eating food cooked at a single *chulā* (hearth). Besides, a UN publication (1964: 9) recommended the concept of '*private household*' in order to use the same as a sample unit, unit of observation or enumeration and unit of analysis.

From another standpoint, a household is defined as a "task-oriented residence unit" (Netting, Wilk & Arnould 1984: xx). The family, on the other hand, is a kinship group that may or may not reside in the same dwelling (Netting, Wilk & Arnould 1984: xx). A family household shares a dwelling unit, has at least some goals in common, and pools its resources to achieve those goals. (Each individual in the household does not have his or her own soap, for example, as is common in nonfamily households). Included in this definition are traditional households (a couple and their minor children), single-person households, single-parent households, and domestic partnerships. Focusing on family households is appropriate because, as several authors have noted, it is this unit that is the buffer between the individual and the larger society (Deacon & Firebaugh 1988, Paolucci, Hall & Axinn 1977, Schmink 1984). However, for the purpose of this

study, I have defined ‘household’ as ‘a residential unit composed of one or more persons who live in the same homestead area<sup>3</sup> or, in some cases, under the same roof and eat food cooked at a single hearth’. Nonetheless, for the purpose of clarity I have used the terms ‘household’ and ‘family’ interchangeably throughout the dissertation.

### **HOUSEHOLD RESOURCES**

From the management point of view, resources are considered consisting of six items (the 6 M’s) viz. man, money, method, machine, material, and market. But in the proposed study resources that a household can possess are broadly divided as:

- *Natural resources* — the natural resource stocks (soil, water, air, genetic resources etc.) and environmental services (hydrological cycle, pollution sinks etc) from which resource flows and services useful for livelihoods are derived.
- *Economic or financial resources* — the capital base (cash, credit/debt, savings, and other economic assets, including basic infrastructure and production equipment and technologies) which are essential for the, pursuit of any livelihood strategy.

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<sup>3</sup> Homestead area includes land under household residence with all its structures, courtyard, entrance and exit passage. In this study the land adjacent to residence and used for temporary or perennial crops, ponds & tanks, and compact plantation is excluded from homestead area.

- ***Human resources*** — the skills, knowledge, ability to labor and good health and physical capability important for the successful pursuit of different livelihood strategies.
- ***Social resources*** — the social resources (networks, social claims, social relations, affiliations, associations) upon which people draw when pursuing different livelihood strategies requiring coordinated actions. ‘The social capital of the family consists of the networks and relations that may be activated for maintaining and furthering the interests of the family as a whole or of its individual members’ (Béteille 1991, cited from Uberoi 1994: 443).

#### **HOUSEHOLD CATEGORIES**

In order for the current study to make fruitful and realistic, households are categorized into two ways—Household typology category and Economic condition category, which are again subdivided into three classes respectively such as nuclear households, supplementary-nuclear households, and joint/extended households; and rich households, moderate households, and poor households.

Despite the absence of consensus amongst the scholars regarding *the ideal* category of Household Typology, as a researcher, I have got no respite; for the purpose of this study, I must demarcate the Household Typology category that I would maintain in my research. For the purpose of this study, however, households are clustered into two categories—*Economic-condition category* and *Household*

*Typology category*—each of which has been further divided into three types as follows:

***The Economic-condition Category***

◇ *Poor Households*

◇ *Moderate Households*

◇ *Rich Households*

***The Household Typology Category***

◇ *Nuclear Household*

◇ *Joint Household*

◇ *Extended Household*

The above types of households are defined below. It is to be noted that for the purpose of simplicity households under the ‘economic condition category’ are defined on the basis of ‘land ownership’ criterion and those of the ‘household typology category’ are defined on the basis of ‘number of household member’ criterion.

***Poor Households***

A poor household is defined as that household which have arable land of not more than 40 decimals .



***Moderate Households***

The type of household which owns a total arable land from 41 decimals to 80 decimals are defined as moderate or middle-class households.

***Rich Households***

Those households which own more than 80 decimals of arable land are defined as rich households.

***Nuclear Households***

A nuclear household consists of a husband and a wife with or without children. It may also be a household of a widowed mother living together with her unmarried sons. They usually live in one house and always have a common hearth.

***Joint Households***

In a joint household the kin of three or more generations live under one roof and share all land and property. Such a household normally consists of brothers, their parents, unmarried sisters, wives and children. They cook at a common hearth, store grain in a common granary, and share a common budget. The head of a joint household is the eldest male member or some other responsible male member of the household. In some special cases, the eldest female member can also be the household head. Chowdhury (1992) argued that the traditional joint household structure in rural Bangladesh is breaking down over the last few decades due to poverty, attitude of self-interest, quarrels, maladjustment and so on. These are

gradually being replaced by nuclear households. Normally, a joint household breaks-up after the death of the father, when brothers seek separation and division of property (Chowdhury 1992: 59).

### ***Extended Household***

Extended household is a group of nuclear households and related individuals from several generations who reside together in the same household, but their hearths are separate. In this type of household, the constituting units do not own land and property commonly, although they live in the same *bari* (homestead). Each independent unit of the extended household is practically free from the control of the other units. Major decisions are, however, taken in consultation with the senior members of other units. According to Chowdhury, nuclear households become extended through the addition of daughters-in-law and their children and other lineals or collaterals (Chowdhury 1992: 59).

### **FACTORS INFLUENCING HOUSEHOLDS' CATEGORIZATION**

Especially when the purpose of (de)limiting categorization of the households is for a doctoral research, things become worse due to a few factors which are illustrated underneath briefly.

#### ***a) Disintegration of Households***

It is really difficult to say how far modern economy, spread of education and other civic facilities have changed the types of household in the rural Bangladeshi society Sarker (1997: 48). Anthropological studies done so far give the indication

that the traditional joint and extended households are disintegrating into nuclear and supplementary-nuclear households in the rural society of Bangladesh, and hence, kinship ties in the Bangladeshi rural households are somewhat less-binding (see for details: Bertocci 1970, Zaidi 1970, Ellickson 1972, Sarker 1976, Zaman 1978, and Aziz 1979).

***b) Absence of Unique Categorization of Household Typology***

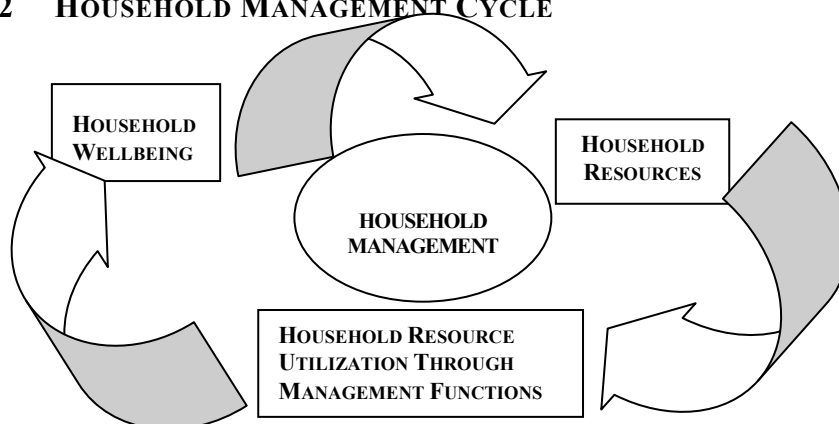
There is no specific in-depth micro-level study on family typology in rural Bangladesh (Karim 1990: 65). That is why, social scientists (e.g. Bertocci 1970 and Karim 1990) have adopted Pauline Kolenda's typology in regard to Bangladesh society. Following Kolenda's category Karim had identified seven types of families such as nuclear family, sub-nuclear family, supplementary nuclear family, lineal joint family, collateral joint family, lineal collateral joint family, and a single-person family (Karim 1990: 66-7). Four types of families were discussed by L. H. Morgan (1996) these are: the Consanguine family, the Punaluan family, the Syndyasmian and the Patriarchal families, and the Monogamian family. In addition to these, Conklin suggested another type of household i.e. the modified extended household (Conklin 1987: 798-804), whereas Khanum explored another type of household namely the circumstantial households (Khanum 2001: 490). Normally an individual belongs to two nuclear families; the one in which he is reared (i.e. the family of orientation) and the one in which he functions as a parent (i.e. the family of procreation) (Beals and Hojjer 1971: 90).

## KEY MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS

Before elaborating the key management functions, it is essential to explain what I mean by the term “management.” *Management* is a distinct process consisting of the functions of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling, performed to determine and accomplish stated objectives (i.e. the end results) with the use of human beings and other resources (Terry and Franklin 1999: 19). Stressing the importance of management Koontz and Weihrich (1989) noted that one of the most important human activities is managing. Ever since people began forming groups to accomplish aims they could not achieve as individuals, managing has been essential to ensure the coordination of individual efforts.

In this study, however, the term “management” is defined as *the process of achieving the predefined goals and objectives – i.e. sustainable household wellbeing – by ensuring effective, efficient, and synergistic utilization of the resources viz. physical, economic/financial, human, and social through the application of key management functions such as decision making, authority, and leadership*. Indeed, application of these core management functions is rather obvious at the household level, for it is the unit of production, distribution, and consumption of resources, which is managed through the distinct process shown in Figure 1.2:

**FIGURE 1.2 HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT CYCLE**



To put in a nutshell, conceptually, ‘*planning*’ answers to the question: “*what to do?*”, ‘*organizing*’ answers to the question: “*how to do?*”, and ‘*actuating*’ answers to the question: “*by whom to do?*” But ‘*controlling*’ as such does not address any straightforward question. Indeed, planning and controlling are inseparable—the Siamese twins of management. Any attempt to control without plans is meaningless, since there is no way for people to tell whether they are going towards where they want to go (the result of the task of control) unless they first know exactly where they actually want to go (part of the task of planning). Plans thus furnish the standards of control. To be precise, authority—the legitimate base of power—is the legal right to command action by others and to enforce compliance (Koontz and Weihrich 1989: 219). Although, in number, management functions are aplenty, indeed only a few of those functions actually play the vital role in the process of managing. These are decision making (and for that matter planning), authority, and leadership; and what follows next is a description of these three key management functions.

### **DECISION MAKING**

Planning involves selecting missions and objectives and the actions to achieve them; it requires decision-making, that is, choosing future courses of action from among alternatives. Koontz and Weihrich (1989) argued that no real plan exists until a decision—a *commitment of human or material resources, direction, or reputation*—has been made. Before a decision is made, all we have is a planning study, an analysis, or a proposal, but not real plan. Given an awareness of an

opportunity and a goal, the core of planning is really the decision process. Decision-making thus can be said the integral part of planning. It should, therefore, be sufficient to explore the current status of practice of decision-making in order to understand the dynamics of planning at the household level in rural Bangladesh.

#### **AUTHORITY**

To be precise, *authority* is the cement of organization structure, the thread that makes it possible, the means by which groups of activities can be placed under a manager and coordinational units can be promoted. It is the tool by which a manager is able to exercise discretion and to create an environment for individual performance. Authority is the degree of discretion in organizational position conferring on persons occupying these positions the right to use their judgment in decision-making (Koontz & Weihrich 1988: 660). Indeed, the interplay between authority and decision-making denotes that without having authority, decision-making is not possible.

But existing literature and conventional wisdom suggest that some people can have authority without any formal or legal right, which can be gained through persuasion, sanction, request, coercion, constraint, or even force. These people have power which empowers them to position themselves as the leader of their respective households. Mandelbaum (1972) presented the nature of authority structure at the household level in India. He argued that ‘hierarchical authority within a family rests on the biological facts. Parents have to exert authority to socialize their children. Human males, if only because they are larger and stronger

than females, possess a certain, if limited, authority in their families. Putting special emphasis on household authority, the Indian villagers presume that within the household interaction usually takes place between a superior and a subordinate,' (Mandelbaum 1972: 37-8). He had quoted Gore as saying, "the men have the more decisive authority in the traditional Indian family as compared with women. And elders have greater authority as compared with young persons," (Mandelbaum 1972: 38). If this is the case in Indian households, how does the same picture look like in rural Bangladesh's households?

#### **LEADERSHIP**

Leadership is both a *process* and a *property*. As a '*process*'—focusing on what leaders actually do—leadership is the use of non-coercive influence to shape the group or organization's goals, motivate behavior toward the achievement of those goals, and help define group or organizational culture. And as a '*property*', leadership is the set of characteristics attributed to individuals who are perceived to be leaders. Thus leaders are people who can influence the behaviors of others without having to rely on force or people whom others accept as leaders (Griffin 2005: 550-1). But Koontz and Wehrich (1989: 658) were of the opinion that leadership is influence, the art or process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly and enthusiastically toward the achievement of group goals. Leaders act to help a group to attain its objectives through the maximum application of its capabilities. Leadership is the relationship in which one person influences others to work together willingly on related task to attain goals desired by the leader and/or group (Terry and Franklin 1999: 235).

### *The Five Levels of Leadership*

Becoming an effective leader is a lot like being in the stock market. We do not make our fortune in a day; we make it daily, a little bit at a time. What matters most is what we do day after day, over the long haul. The secret to leadership success is investing in our leadership development, much like letting our assets compound. The final result is “Leadership Growth” over time.

Leaders are not born; they are made. The process of leadership is long, complicated and has made elements. Respect, dignity, discipline, people skills, vision, emotional strength, opportunity, preparedness and experience are just some of the intangible elements which come into play when talking leadership.

We can, over a period of time, increase our leadership potential if we can understand and accept the five levels of leadership. They are:

#### **Level One – Leadership From Position.**

This is the basic level of leadership. At this level people follow you because they have to. Your ability to lead people is totally geared to your position and does not exceed beyond the lines of your job description or the authority granted to you by the company and your boss. Your security with the company is based on title and position, not talent. To be an effective leader at this level know your job, be prepared to accept responsibility, exercise authority with caution, assess the



strengths and short comings of your people, do more than what is expected and challenge people with interesting and tough assignments.

It is important that we recognize that Positional Level is the doorway to leadership and every successful leader must pass through this doorway.

### **Level Two – Leadership From Respect.**

At the respect level of leadership people follow you because they want to. The core of Leadership From Respect is that people want to know that you care, before they care about what you know. People see you as a professional partner, sharing the same goals and the same challenges along the way. Leadership will flourish at the respect because respect will breed lasting trusted professional relationships and that, in turn will provided the basis for effective leadership.

To be effective at the respect level, possess a genuine concern for your people. It is important that you see life through their eyes. Deal with wisely with difficult people and make employees successful by setting them up for success. Since leadership from respect is built on professional relationships, it forms the foundation for leadership success.

### **Level Three – Leadership From Results.**

People follow you because of what you have done for the company. People admire you for your accomplishments and respect your tenacity. At this point leadership becomes Fun. Going to work is fun, work related challenges are seen to be

opportunities for a more stable work environment and all tasks have a purpose in the minds of the employees. Good things happen at the results level. Making profit, low employee turnover, higher employee morale and solving problems with ease are some of the items that become evident at this level.

To be an effective leader at this level be prepared to initiate and accept responsibility for growth by developing a purpose and seeing it through to completion. Develop accountability for results, beginning with yourself and ending with your people. Make the difficult decisions that will result in positive long term gains while championing change as a change agent and understanding the process of change. Leadership from results is built on admiration for the leader.

#### **Level Four – Leadership From People Development.**

People follow you because of what you have done for them. It is a leader's responsibility to develop their people to do the work that is expected to contribute future growth opportunities to the company and the people who serve it. People are loyal to you because they see firsthand personal growth opportunities for them as well as, the company. Leadership success is underscored by a win – win scenario and a high commitment to success. To be effective at this level place a priority on developing people. Focus your attention on the fact that people are your most valuable asset and your leadership success will depend on your ability to surround yourself with an inner core of competent people who compliment

your leadership style and goals. Leadership from people development is built on loyalty.

**Level Five – Leadership From Mentorship.**

People follow you because they respect you. As a leader you are bigger than life and your success is shown through a life of accomplishments. People seek you out after you have left the company because you have left an indelible mark on the organization and the employees. Although less than five per cent of all leaders will get to this level of leadership it is a level worth striving for.

In summary, everyone can become a better leader. It is important to keep in mind that the higher someone goes up the leadership scale, the longer it takes to accomplish results, the higher the commitment will be and it is imperative that we know what level we are on with our people and the company.

Apparently, the household functions that the many definitions of the term highlight include, but not limited to, production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services, labor contribution, division of labor, joint budgeting etc. Performing these functions would not be possible without proper adherence to the core principles and functions of management. It is, therefore, that the proposed study would attempt to explore the nature and extent of applications of the aforesaid three management functions viz. decision making, authority, and leadership in rural Bangladeshi households along with their respective outcomes.

### **EMERGING FORMS OF HOUSEHOLDS**

When the three core management functions are properly applied in the pursuit of ensuring utmost utilization of the resources of the two categories of households in rural Bangladesh, the result that might come out is three new forms<sup>4</sup> of households – e.g. glued-together households, super-trader households, and despotic households, which are defined below:

#### **THE GLUED-TOGETHER HOUSEHOLDS**

Glued-together households are those households in which the individual household members do not have any individuality; no individual decisions, individual identity, etc., but only household decision, household welfare.

#### **THE SUPER-TRADER HOUSEHOLDS**

In a super-trader household individual household members relentlessly pursue their individual interests and utilities, and in doing so they enter into trades at implicit prices resulting in marriages and the working of the household. The relationship between different members of a super-trader household takes the form of ‘as if’ market transactions at implicit prices.<sup>5</sup>

#### **THE DESPOTIC HOUSEHOLDS**

In a despotic household a despotic head of the household takes all decisions and others household members just obey him or her.

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<sup>4</sup> The terms have been taken from Sen (1983) as cited in Uberoi (1994).

<sup>5</sup> It is noteworthy that the issue of consumption and welfare of children remains outside this trading format, since they are not parties to ‘as if’ market conditions but are, nevertheless, affected by them.

**WELLBEING OF THE HOUSEHOLD**

Households' wellbeing can be of as many as four types such as enhanced capabilities, livelihood security, equity, and sustainability.

**CAPABILITIES**

Household members' capabilities include:

- individual capabilities and
- group capabilities

**LIVELIHOOD SECURITY**

It is basic to household wellbeing for all members. Livelihood can be defined as adequate stocks and flows of food and cash to meet basic needs and to support household wellbeing, whereas security refers to secure rights, physical safety and reliable access to resources, food and income, and basic services.

**EQUITY**

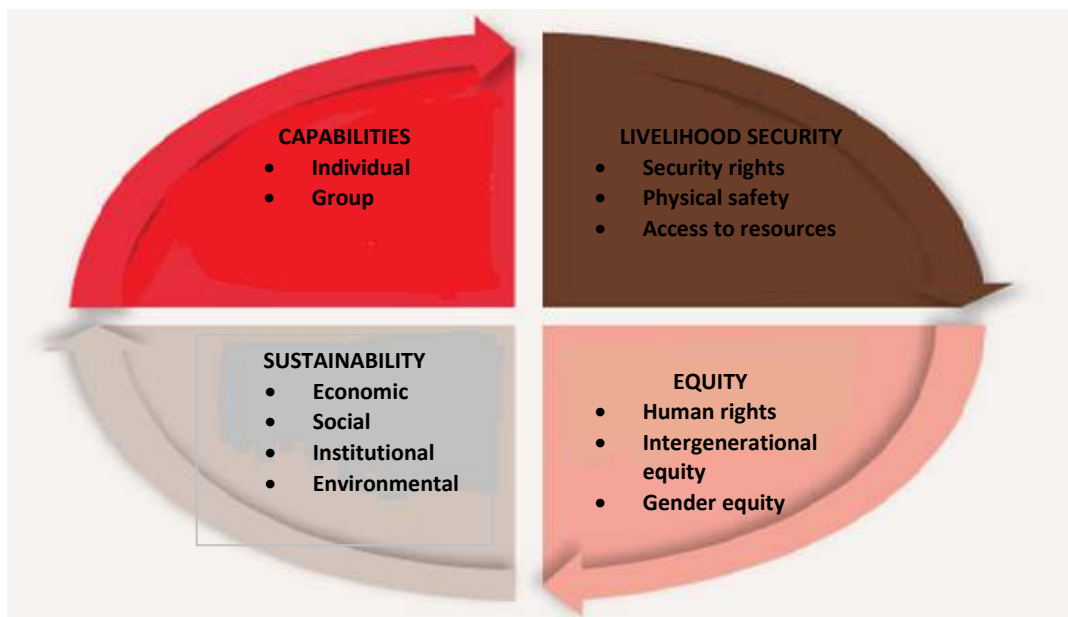
Equity qualifies all initiatives in development. Equity here includes human rights, intergenerational equity and gender equity as well as the reversal of putting the last first and the first last, to be considered in all contexts.

**SUSTAINABILITY**

To be good, conditions and change must be sustainable—economically, socially, institutionally, and environmentally. Sustainability here means that long-term perspectives should apply to all policies and actions, with considerable wellbeing and sustainable livelihood as objectives for the household members—both present and future generations.

For a better understanding the concept of household wellbeing can be depicted as the following framework:

**Figure 1.3 Strategic Framework of Household Wellbeing**



### **WORKING DEFINITIONS**

In this dissertation I have used a few terms such as management, management functions, household, household management, decision making, authority, and leadership, quite frequently which need to be defined in line with the way they are used. These terms are defined below:

**MANAGEMENT**

Management is the effective, efficient, and synergistic utilization of the scarce resources — i.e. natural capital, economic or financial capital, human capital, and social capital—through decision making, authority, and leadership in order to attain sustainable wellbeing of the household.

**MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS**

Simply put, management functions mean the tasks that managers perform in order to ensure development of their respective units viz. family, household, factory, and organizations through accomplishing the predefined goals and objectives. Number of management functions in this study has been confined to decision making, authority, and leadership.

**HOUSEHOLD**

A household is a residential unit composed of one or more persons who live in the same homestead or in some cases under the same roof and eat food cooked at a single hearth.

**HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT**

The concept of household management is confined in this research to effective, efficient, and synergistic utilization of the household resources through decision making, authority, and leadership to mitigate, in the fullest capacity, the minimum requirements of the household members so as to ensure household wellbeing.

**DECISION-MAKING**

Decision making is defined as the selection from among alternatives of a course of action; it is at the core of planning. A plan cannot be said to exist unless a decision — a commitment of resources, direction, or reputation — has been made. Decision making is only a step in planning, even when done quickly and with little thought or when it influences action for only a few minutes. It is also part of everyone's daily life.

**AUTHORITY**

Authority is the cement of organization structure, the thread that makes it possible, the means by which groups of activities can be placed under a manager and coordinating units can be promoted. It is the tool by which a manager is able to exercise discretion and to create an environment for individual performance. Evidence suggests that authority should derive from the consent of the governed.

**LEADERSHIP**

Leadership is influence, the art or process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly and enthusiastically toward the achievement of group goals. Leaders act to help a group attain objectives through the maximum application of its capabilities.

**HOUSEHOLD APPLICATION**

As the term indicates, 'household application' simply refers to the use of management functions so as to fulfill the basic/minimum needs of household members through utmost utilization of the household resources.



## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Arguably, due to its multidisciplinary nature the proposed study has necessitated the conduct of a “socio-managerial” research on the subject-matter with the aid of simple anthropological methods in conjunction with management tools. That is, in this study application and outcome of management functions at the household level in rural Bangladesh have been tested by using anthropological research techniques. Intensive field work has been done in the study villages. As the researcher I myself have stayed in the villages in order to gain firsthand experience about the villagers, the village itself including its past history, current state, and future prospects. I have spent significant amount of time in the villages in order to build strong rapport with the villagers so that they do not consider me as an stranger. I have done this in order to bring out close-to-the-truth information about the villages and the issues under my study.

### **RESEARCH FRAME**

#### ***Data Types***

Both qualitative and quantitative data have been collected and used in the study, although the volume of quantitative data has been lesser than that of the qualitative data.

#### ***Data Sources***

Primary sources of information for this study included questionnaire survey conducted on the sample household heads or his/her spouse, focus group discussions with both sample household heads or his/her spouse and heads or their representatives from the households which were not included in the survey, and key informant interviews of different individuals such as Imams of mosques, *Thakurs/Puruhits* of the Hindu community, schools teachers, health workers, members of Union Parishads, local influential persons, and local shopkeepers; a substantial portion of the information came from review of secondary literature on the subject matter.

### ***Data Collection Techniques***

Information is the determining factor of research and one useful technique of primary data collection is to collect information directly from the study area through the use of questionnaire (Rahman 2012: 24). Techniques that I have used in collecting necessary information were Secondary Literature Review, Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), Focus Group Discussion (FGD), the observation method, questionnaire survey of sample households, and key informant interviews (KIIs). In addition, I have used the Case Study method as well.

### **Secondary Literature Review (SLR)**

In order to gain a thorough understanding of the nature of practice of authority, decision making, and leadership at the households in rural Bangladesh, a thorough review of available secondary literature has been done. Secondary information

sources included published as well as unpublished research reports, monographs, books, websites, articles, databases, newspaper reports etc. The analysis ensued through the secondary literature review provided the basis for questionnaires and guidelines for the sample survey and focus group discussions.

#### **Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA)**

With the aid of RRA I have conducted a micro-census of the study villages from which I have collected information about different aspects of the study villages such as number and types of houses, number of members per household, configuration of the villages e.g. how many *paras* are there in each village, number of mosques, ponds, educational and religious institutions etc.

#### **Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

I have conducted a total of eight focus group discussions which have provided a significant part of the qualitative information used in the dissertation. Number of participants of the FGDs, joined upon open invitation, ranged from ten to fourteen persons, while the number of questions discussed was kept limited to five to seven. Before conducting the FGDs, I have prepared a checklist comprising general and specific questions. General, unstructured, and open-ended questions enabled the participants to respond from different standpoints. FGDs were conducted in the evening and on holidays so that the regular activities of the participants were not hindered. Village wise distribution of numbers of conducted FGDs along with the checklist are given in Appendix 1 and Appendix 4.

### **Key Informant Interview (KII)**

A total of 20 persons were interviewed as key informants. These interviews took place in the form of conversation although I have used a previously prepared checklist of issues to be raised. But during the interview key informants have also raised some important aspects regarding the subject matter of the interview. Key informants included Imams of mosques, *Thakurs/Puruhits* of the Hindu community, schools teachers, health workers, members of Union Parishads, local influential persons, and local shopkeepers. Village wise distribution of key informants interviews (KIIs) that I have conducted and the respective checklist are given in Appendix 2 and Appendix 4.

### **Case Studies**

Case studies highlight such issues which other techniques such as Questionnaire Survey, FGD, KII etc. cannot cover in detail. That is why I have conducted case studies also. Number of case studies corresponds to the three core issues of my study viz. household-level authority, decision making, and leadership. These case studies have been inserted at appropriate parts of the dissertation.

### ***Study Area Selection***

Selecting the study area is not so easy a task. Especially for social science research, there is no unique formulae of selecting the area (region) to be studied.

Nevertheless, for the purpose of this research the study area has been limited to three villages from three Agro-Ecological Zones (AEZ)<sup>6</sup>—Coastal, Haor, and Flood Free. The location of the study villages are shown in the following table 1.1:

**Table 1.1 : AEZ wise distribution of study villages.**

AEZ	District	Upazila	Village
Coastal	Bhola	Sadar	Kalikanagar
Haor	Sunamgonj	Bishwambarpur	Sonapur
Flood Free	Comilla	Sadar	Bhabanipur

### **SAMPLE FRAME**

Using the two-stage sampling method, three AEZs, three districts are selected purposively, while the three Upazilas and the villages from each Upazila are selected through simple random sampling. The unit of analysis of the study is Household. Determination of an ideal or representative sample size has been subject to debate<sup>7</sup>. For this study I have taken a sample of one hundred and sixty households from the three villages though, due to some compelling reasons, the number of surveyed households is slightly greater than the actual sample size calculated by sample size determination equation. Sample size variations are shown in Appendix 3.

<sup>6</sup> There has been serious debate regarding the number of Bangladesh's AEZs. For instance, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCNN), Bangladesh Country Office, under the FAO initiative has demarcated Bangladesh into 30 major AEZs, which have been then divided into 88 sub-zones. International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), on the other hand, identified 30 AEZs. Again, Solaiman (1990) for his study had chosen six AEZs: flood-prone, flood free, haor, hill-tracts, barind, and coastal; one village from each location was selected for the study. In my study I have followed Solaiman but limited my study area to three AEZs viz. Coastal, Haor, and Flood free.

<sup>7</sup> Statisticians argue that there is no "the" formulae of determining appropriate sample size; the many formula that are being used are *ad-hoc* in nature. Approximately 76.69% of Bangladesh's total population live in the rural areas and of the total number of households (i.e. 32173630), around 76.68% i.e. 24671590 households belong to the rural areas (The Bangladesh Population Census, 2011).

**SAMPLE SURVEY**

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was prepared in such a manner that the core research issues are properly addressed. The questionnaire included both open-ended questions so that the respondents can answer in any way they like and close-ended questions in order to restrict the respondents to a choice among alternatives/scales. The closed questions combined both direct questions requiring numerical answers, simple two-category questions, multiple choice questions and scaled (0 to 5) questions. Moreover, double-barreled questions that may lead to different answers to their respective supplementary questions were avoided by including several separate questions. In addition, the questionnaires were designed in both positively and negatively worded questions in order to minimize the tendency of respondents to mechanically circle the points towards one end of the scale. The draft questionnaire was pretested in the first week of January 2012 in a village named Chalia under Sadar Upazila of Sylhet district. After the pretest a few questions were modified before the questionnaire was finalized.

I have collected information from Sonapur village in Sunagonj District from 12 January 2012 till 29 January 2012; from Kalikanagar village in Bhola District from 02 February 2012 till 12 February 2012, and finally from Bhabanipur village in Comilla District from 13 April 2012 to 24 April 2012. However, during the sample survey I have divided each village into clusters, each cluster comprising ten households. Number of clusters from each village that were covered in the questionnaire survey was proportionate to the number of households

of each study village. Distribution of clusters and households from each village is shown in table 1.2:

**Table 1.2: Number of Households surveyed from each village**

Village	No. of Households	No. of Clusters	Clusters Taken	No. of Sample Households
Bhabanipur	55	6	3	30
Kalikanagar	122	13	8	80
Sonapur	78	8	5	50
Total	255			160

#### **VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF DATA**

Rahman (2012) argues that impartiality and objectivity of information are very important, sensitive, and significant issue. Indeed impartiality, perfection, and reliability of information largely depend on the level of motivation and ethics of the data collector. In order to ensure validity and reliability of information I have taken adequate measures during the collection and processing of information. Biased and fictitious information were avoided as much as possible. Only the relevant, accurate, unbiased and representative information were preserved for analysis. Use of ambiguous and controversial information were also avoided. For primary data, answers of the respondent that I have collected are presumed to be reliable. For secondary data, all public documents are presumed to be correct until those are disproved by competent court or authority.

## **DATA ANALYSES AND PRESENTATION**

### ***Data Processing***

Data analysis process included (a) registration of questionnaires, and (b) scrutiny of the collected data in line with the research questions and objectives. After receiving the filled-in questionnaires from the field, I have entered them into registration books and kept into files, and classified them in accordance with the objectives of the study. I have edited and checked the interview questionnaires with utmost care with the view of verifying that the survey questionnaires had been correctly filled-in, answers have consistencies with one another and all the questions have been asked, answered, and noted properly. During each interview, I wrote abbreviated notes. On the same day of the interview, these raw field notes were re-written in elaborated formats. I have reviewed the filled-in questionnaires and my written notes at regular intervals, qualitative data was reviewed as well.

### ***Data Analysis***

The qualitative nature of the study does not require nor permit use of any type of computerized processing technique such as SPSS etc. I have analyzed the collected information mostly in descriptive form. While doing so, in some cases, I have compared them with previously done research which enabled me to draw my own conclusion. In a few cases, I have used simple mathematical tools such as percentage etc.



## **STUDY RATIONALE**

As has been noted earlier, although there has been no dearth of research done on the various aspects of rural Bangladesh's households, but I have failed to find out any study that deals with the application of management functions at the household level in rural Bangladesh. Again, there is no denying the fact that some researchers—as part of their prime research issue—have touched upon the issues such as household authority, household leadership and decision making, etc. But the perspectives from which those studies had been undertaken had varied. For example, some scholars had looked at the villages from economic and technological perspectives, others had followed socio-cultural, kinship and stratification perspectives, while still others had looked through agro-ecological, organizational and development perspectives.

In the economic perspective the focus had been mostly on economic structure, differentiation and production relations. Those who looked into technological perspective concentrated their attention mainly on its adoption and impact on different socio-economic groupings. Sociologists, on the other hand, had looked into the social stratification, social conflict, rural power structure, kinship pattern, beliefs and attitudes, and the roles of women. Policy oriented studies and those on development perspectives had focused on the rural organization, landholdings and tenure pattern, and the impact of development interventions. It is, therefore, that the present study deals exclusively with the application of three management functions at the household level in rural Bangladesh along with their resulting outcome.

However, being the researcher I must elaborate the rationale of the present study, and I like to do this in three segments — e.g. spatial distribution and timing of the village studies conducted so far, reasons of focusing on the rural family households, and the motive of emphasizing the issue of resource utilization at the rural Bangladesh's family households.

#### **SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION, TIMING, AND SUBJECT MATTER OF THE VILLAGE STUDIES**

Evidently, the village studies that have been done so far suffer from quite a few shortcomings such as inequitable spatial distribution, backdated in the sense that most of the village studies were done during the periods of 1970s, 1980s, and to some extent in the 1990s when foreign donors financed those studies; and as a result, subject matter of many—if not all—of those studies were directly or indirectly prescribed by the respective donors<sup>8</sup>.

#### **WHY RURAL FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS?**

Since a village is consisted of households, households' development means development of villages; and developed villages mean prosperous Bangladesh. To be developed, a household along with its chores and activities must be well-managed. In a patriarchal rural society like ours good management cannot be ensured unless equality and participation arise among the key household members. In such a backdrop, this study is worth undertaking.

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<sup>8</sup> In his seminal work entitled "*Annotation of Village Studies in Bangladesh and West Bengal: A Review of Socio-Economic Trends over 1942-88*" Shapan Adnan (1990) has presented a detail account of this.

### **WHY RESOURCE UTILIZATION OF RURAL FAMILY HOUSEHOLD?**

At this point, I should indicate as to why am I going to look especially at resource structure and behavior in the context of rural Bangladesh? One of the reasons is that it is believed that from a better understanding of the basic processes that govern the resource allocation and behavior in individual village communities implications can be drawn for policies designed to intensify, diversify, and more equitably distribute resources throughout all the villages of Bangladesh (BRAC 1983: 3).

### **SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

#### **SCOPE**

The study has covered only three villages from three agro-ecological zones (AEZs) from three different parts of Bangladesh in the plea of making some generalizations about the dynamics of managing rural Bangladesh's households. But there is no denying the fact that the generalizations could have been much 'down-to-earth' or 'close-to-reality' had few more villages from a couple of more AEZs been brought under the coverage of the study. But this is practically not possible nor is financially feasible to bring more villages under one study, for I had to complete the entire study within limited time and budget. Besides I have surveyed one hundred and sixty households out of two hundred and fifty-five households of the three villages. Distribution of the households that I have surveyed is shown in table#1.3.

**Table 1.3: Distribution of sample households according to Economic Condition and Household Typology.**

Name of the Village	No. of Households Surveyed	Poor	Moderate	Rich	Nuclear	Joint	Extended
Bhabanipur	30	3	22	5	25	4	1
Kalikanagar	80	26	48	6	71	7	2
Sonapur	50	17	29	4	41	5	4
Total	160	46	99	15	137	16	7

Source: Field Survey

### LIMITATIONS

This study is not beyond limitations. Limitations of my study are noted below:

- (i) The findings of my study are the outcome of an objectively designed survey and hence these are not necessarily expected to conform with results of researches conducted in other contexts.
- (ii) The study was conducted to gain insights on the application of three management functions viz. authority, decision making, and leadership at the household level in rural Bangladesh along with their respective outcome. For this reason, I had to ignore the practice of other management functions in rural Bangladesh's households.
- (iii) Basically the formation of households is a continuous process. Not only the joint households might split into nuclear households, but sometimes the nuclear households might rejoin their former extended households due to compelling reasons. In such a situation, I could have ascertained a percentage of such data as was valid for a certain period of time, e.g. during the time of actual fieldwork.

In spite of these limitations, however, I believe that the study has not only fulfilled its objectives but also opened new avenues for further research.

## **CONCLUSION**

In the aforesaid backdrop, in conclusion I argue that development of a society is largely subject to the development of the households of that society. One major concern for every household is to make sure that whatever resources the household has at its disposal are fully utilized so that the minimum requirements of the household members could be met. The three key functions of management viz. decision making, authority, and leadership, have been applied in order to perform the household chores as well as carry out the household activities in a way that would ensure sustainable wellbeing of the households in rural Bangladesh. Because, in order for an under-developed, agrarian country like Bangladesh to improve its socio-economic condition, there remains no option other than ensuring wellbeing of the households in a judicious manner.

With the same token, I argue that since majority of the country's population live in the rural villages, it is imperative to understand the nature and challenges of the rural households. The study has generated new insights on the nature of management functions being applied in rural Bangladesh's households, and these new insights would not only help the policy makers to formulate policies conducive to the development of the rural households of Bangladesh, but also contribute to the existing knowledge about rural Bangladesh in general and the nature of application of management functions of authority, decision making, and leadership at the household level in rural Bangladesh in particular.

## CHAPTER 2 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY VILLAGES

### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I give a compendious description of the villages that I have studied. This description includes a brief history of the villages, population, education and literacy, profession and occupation, settlement and house types, religion and language, and development infrastructure. But before describing the characteristics of the villages a brief description of the respective agro-ecological zones is worth mentioning.

### THE HAOR REGION : SUNAMGONJ

Bangladesh is characterized by diverse natural landscapes. A large seasonal wetland—locally known as the *Haor*, covers the North-Eastern parts of Bangladesh. The wetlands are created by local rainfall and downstream flow of waters from North-Eastern Indian uplands through rivers including Someswari, Rakti, Jadukata, Peaign, and Barak. These geologically depressed wetlands lie 10 to 12 feet above sea level. During the rainy season the wetlands looks like a bowl or dish. In the dry season comparatively elevated land stands around the tray or haor basin. The Haor Basin extends across seven districts of Bangladesh viz. Netrokona, Kishorgonj, Sunamgonj, Sylhet, Habigonj, Moulvi Bazar, and Brahmanbaria, and covers an area of about 2417 Sq. Kms. Official accounts suggest that there are 395 individual units of wetlands in the region of which 20 are in Habigonj district, 4 in Moulvi Bazar, 43 in Sylhet, 133 in Sunamgonj, 122 in Kishorgonj, 80 in Netrokona, and 3 in Brahmanbaria.

The physical processes, nature and environment, economy and social structure, poverty and livelihood security issues in the Haor region are different compared to other regions of the country. Though there are changing landscapes of Bangladesh across the traditional six seasons, Haor has only two seasons—one is the rainy season and the other is dry season. Despite having immense potentialities for development, the area still remain backward in many respects.

### **The Rainy Season**

From May to October the rainy season stands here and water spate from the Meghalaya plateau cause to submerge vast area and turns the area into a large wetland. During this period flood devastates the lives and livelihoods of Haor people. People then live in small settlements called *Hati* in the Haor basin and which are 10 to 15 feet high from the adjoining areas/flat plain. During the rainy season the *Hatis* look like small islands floating in the sea. People lead miserable life in the Haor. They are compelled to live with domestic animals in the same room.

Moreover, massive wave actions destruct their *Hati* and people have to take long and short term initiatives to protect *Hati* from erosion spending their last coin. Most often they fail to protect their living space from the waves and strong current during rainy season. A respondent said, “ we have to make fences around the settlements every year. It costs us about BDT10,000 to make only 20 feet of fence. We have to live in a very small space during the rainy season;

communication systems become very poor at that time. We face different kinds of damage due to flooding every year.”

Another respondent told, “women are the worst affected groups during flood season in the Haor area. We need guide walls to protect our settlements.” “Building a protection embankment is our prime demand; if built, this embankment will help us to live safely. Thus, altogether we need to spend around 4 million taka to protect our village. If the government or NGOs supported us in our efforts, our settlements could be protected permanently,” opined another respondent.

### **The Dry Season**

Usually the dry season extends from November to April in the area. Livelihoods security of local people mainly depends on *Boro* paddy cultivation in the dry season. The soil gets replenished every year with nutrients from flood water, which helps people produce a good harvest. But due to the exploitative character of local money lenders, people rarely get the full benefit from the harvest. One has to pay, for instance, BDT1500 in the dry season against BDT1000 loan taken in the rainy season. In the words of a respondent, “farmers are unable to reap the full benefits of their produced crops because the landlords and money-lenders take the largest portion of the harvest. In extreme cases, we have to provide 5 maunds (200kgs.) of paddy in order to borrow BDT1000. If the loan is not paid by paddy, we have to endure a very high interest rate. This is the main difficulty facing the farmers of this village. The bank officers ask for bribes; we have to pay about BDT200 as bribe for getting a loan of BDT1000.”



“Sometimes we are compelled to sell paddy at BDT400 per maund (40kgs.) when the expected rate is BDT600/700. Bank loans are useful for us; but the loan processing mechanism is always a hassle. Sometimes the bank asks the ordinary farmers (e.g. the share-croppers) to submit land rental papers. Organizing these papers is difficult for us since land rental contacts are sometimes based on traditional methods, which may not be paper based. It would be a great help if then bank approved loans by recognizing us as farmers and not asking us to submit land contract papers,” said a farmer. Another farmer Nurul Islam said, “I can earn BDT100 per day when employment is available and I can maintain my family somehow with it. But I can hardly earn BDT50 per day it becomes difficult for me to buy food for my family.”

Lack of proper sanitation facilities and the unhygienic environment in the *Haor* region cause many types of diseases and health problems. Inadequate medical facilities, lack of medicine, low level of doctor-people ration and poor communication systems are the major impediments for improving health care in the region. Sometimes critically ill patients do not get emergency treatment due to the above mentioned limitations. In such worst situation they have nothing to do but to wait relying upon miracle and fortune to be cured. A village doctor has told, “we can provide only primary health services to the people in the initial stage. But the critically ill patients are sent to Jamalgonj, Salla, or Sunamgonj.”

According to the Upazilla Health Officer, “The situation is worse for women facing any health problems; sometimes they have to travel a long distance

to avail the health care service that we could offer at upazilla level. Pregnant women face many kinds of problems and even death due to lack of proper medical facilities at the right time. As a result, the maternal and child death rate is high in the *Haor* region. To sum-up, we could say that achieving the MDGs could be a big challenge in this region if these problems persist in the long-term.”

### **Education**

Education is one of the most important fundamental rights of people. Unfortunately there are not adequate educational facilities in this area. Inadequate educational infrastructure, time-demanding distance from home to school and poor communication systems make education nearly impossible for the *Haor* children. During the rainy season children do not get any transport facilities to go to school. Parents are also scared to send their children to school during this time, fearing accidents on the waterways. These unfavorable conditions mean that children are prevented from receiving education in the schools. Unfortunately, there is no arrangement for food for the hungry children while they wait to return home. The *Haor* children, future of the nation, do not know about their own future.

### **Communication**

Flood waters cover the *Haor* region for about seven months of the year (i.e. from April to October). Therefore, communication is the major problem of this region. Country boats and trawlers (engine boats) form the main mode of transport during this time during the rainy season. During the dry season, most people travel on foot. Wetland characteristics and strong waves during the rainy season permit only

limited construction of road networks. Local people opined that one-half of the problems of this region would automatically be solved if the communication system can be improved. Submersible roads could be ideal for the region and would help to transfer paddy from the field to home as well. On the other hand, BIWTC can introduce sea-tuck route across the *Haor* region.

### **Fishing Rights**

Most of the people in the *Haor* region depend on fishing for their living during the rainy season. But the lion's share of the produce goes to the local landlords through a variety of different means. The current government wetlands leasing out system favors local landlords and excludes common fishermen communities from accessing fishery resources. A local fisherman said, "I practice agriculture during the dry period and in the rainy season I catch fish. But I cannot catch fish properly due to oppression by the lease holders. During this time different types of payments are charged for getting fishing rights in the open waters. We the poor fishermen face different types of problems because of this leasing out process."

In the words of another fisherman, "we are poor people. Our main problem is that we do not have the opportunity to earn enough money for living. We cannot repair our nets. If we go to the open water for fishing the leaseholders' men demand money from us but we have no money that we can give them." A person interested to lease fishery said, "I visited the land office several times to get a fishery lease, but I failed. He who offers a bribe to the high officials gets it. But the weak fishermen like us never get it. When I first joined the cooperative the

cost of leasing one fishery was only one and a half lakh taka, but now-a-days it costs about thirty lakhs taka. How can I manage to get it?”

Members of the fishermen’s cooperative said, “if we get financial help or if our samity (cooperative) is economically well off then we may try to get jalmohal leasing opportunity. The only problem is that there is no cash money at the disposal of our cooperative.”

### **Land Right**

Erosion of homesteads by strong waves and flood-currents is a major challenge in the haor area and leaves many people homeless. 26% of total agricultural khaslands of the country exists in the *Haor* districts. Different kind of problems persists in leasing out of Khaslands among the people. Maximum Khaslands are occupied by the rich and powerful community. Though few landless people get allocation of Khaslands they cannot hold it due to this power antagonism. One resident of the study village informed, “My residence was in old Badhagabar village in Ajmireegonj Upazila in Habigonj district. During the flood of 1988, my house was washed away and I had to come to this area. After that I applied for a piece of land as a landless poor to the government. But I did not get the land which I currently occupy. Somebody else got it and I requested him to hand over the ownership of the land as I was already living there. Finally he agreed to transfer the ownership of the land in exchange for money.”

Another local inhabitant has informed, “I was allocated with a plot in Gandakpur Mauza in 2000. The size of the plot is 50 decimals. The person who is

occupying the land is not willing to hand it over. He has filed a court case against my ownership of the land. So, I have been unable to take possession of the plot since this piece of land has been an issue of dispute. This situation has been going on for eight years. Sunil member, resident of Nadipur is now occupying it.”

### **Prospects**

The lists of the problems is endless in the *Haors*. But it could be developed as a source of assets for the national economic development of Bangladesh, if proper plans and initiatives were put in place. The Upazila Engineer, LGED has said, “Water is the origin of both problem and possibility in this area. We have no shortage of fresh water. If we could make better use of this fresh water, we might be able to strengthen our economic activity. Only one crop is cultivated in this region and almost every year the production of paddy is plentiful. In this area “Boro” paddy is cultivated on 27 thousand hectares of land. Last year about 7300 hectares of land was brought under a high-yielding variety (HYV) and the huge production of paddy has made this region a food surplus area. But outside the growing season the community spends almost six months without any work. If we consider this issue and are able to provide work to this huge number of people, then the economic activity of this area will be rejuvenated.

Besides, considering the water resources available, goose farming could be expanded. Within 3 to 4 months a goose gains 3/3.5 kg weight and its local market value is approximately BDT400. In this region, geese could be raised commercially in huge numbers. There is only one obstacle which needs to be overcome: breeding chicks appears to be very difficult. The number of chicks

which are currently produced by traditional ways is not sufficient for commercial venture. But somehow if a hatchery was established for chick breeding it would be possible to raise plenty of geese in this area. Moreover, at the household level people of this locality raise another variety of duck named “Khaki Kemble” for production of eggs. We have tried to motivate local people with the assistance of the Department of Livestock to intensify this practice. If it were possible to commercialize the egg production, it could be a big success. Thus it would be possible to provide jobs to the unemployed people who spend almost six months without any work. In addition to the natural fishery in this region, the people would be immensely benefited if cage culture fisheries were established.”

“The unemployment problem of this area could be resolved if community fishery methods were started in the region by motivating the local fishermen. Even people from other places would be attracted to get employment in this area. In addition, there is a desperate need to set up a fish processing plant in this region in order to ensure easy and proper marketing of the fish harvest. But this will only be possible when the communication system is well established. Indeed, it becomes hard for a fisherman to make progress with that tiny amount of income.,” said Mr. Shabab Mia, Chairman of the Dakshin (south) Badaghat Union of Bishwambarpur Upazilla under Sunamgonj district.

There is no doubt that the *Haor* basin has number of problems, but also huge potentials. The main challenge is to find ways to overcome the existing problems. In spite of having many problems, the *Haor* region possesses huge economic potentialities if its water and human resources could be utilized

properly. Habibulla, a farmer of village Sonapur, has said, “in the previous years it took BDT7000 – 8000 to build 10 feet protection wall. Now we are free from this regular expenditure because of permanent wall built by FIVBD.”

A comprehensive plan needs to be put in place to transform the *Haor* region into an enabling environment for improving the living standards of its inhabitants. It is not possible for any national or international development agency alone to bring forth this change. The Government of Bangladesh should make a comprehensive plan and investigate the areas where other agencies and NGOs could assist them as partners. Implementation of this kind of plan will help to improve the lives of *Haor* people. And at the same time it will help the government to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

#### **THE COASTAL ZONE: BHOLA**

According to the coastal zone policy (CZPo) 2005 of the Government of Bangladesh, the whole coast runs parallel to the Bay of Bengal, forming 710 km long coastline and 19 districts out of 64 are in the coastal zone covering a total of 147 upazillas of the country. Out of these 19 districts, only 12 districts meet the sea or lower estuary directly.

The zone is divided into exposed and interior coast according to the position of land. The upazillas that face the coast or river estuary are treated as exposed coastal zone. Total number of upazillas that fall on exposed coastal zone is 48 in 12 districts. A total of 99 upazillas that are located behind the exposed coast are treated as interior coast. The exposed coast embraces the sea directly and

is subject to be affected highly by the anticipated sea level rise. The coastal zone covers 47,201 square kilometer land area, which is 32 percent of total landmass of the country (Islam 2004:xvii). Water area covers 370.4 km (200 nautical miles) from the coastline (UNCLOS 1982, Article 57), estuaries and the internal river water. The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is also treated as a coastal zone of its own.

The southern part of Bangladesh falls under coastal zone that receives discharge of numerous rivers, including Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM) river system, creating one of the most productive ecosystems of the world. Except Chittagong-Cox's Bazar, all parts of the coastal zone are plain land with extensive river networks and accreted land, which is known in Bangladesh as *char land*. India is at the west of the zone whereas Myanmar is at the east of the coast. Pramanik (1983 cited in Islam 2001:9) has divided the Bangladesh coastal zone into three regions namely eastern, central and western coastal region. However, the shape of the coastal zone is quite unstable and changing time to time due to erosion and accretion.

### **Eastern Coastal Zone**

The eastern coastal zone starts from Bodormokam, the southern tip of mainland to the Feni river estuary. This zone is very narrow. A series of small hills are run parallel to this zone. Karnafully, Sangu and Matamuhury river falls into the Bay of Bengal in this area. The Naf river falls to the Bay of Bengal dividing Bangladesh from Myanmar. Soil characteristics of the eastern coastal zone are dominated by



submerged sands and mudflats (Islam 2001:9). The submerged sand of the zone has formed a long sandy beach of 145 km from Cox's Bazar towards Teknaf. Two of the country's most important sandy beaches from tourists' perspective, namely Patenga and Cox's Bazar are located in this coastal zone. Fish farming, fishing in the bay, salt production and tourism are main economic activities of the zone.

### **Central Coastal Zone**

Central coastal zone extends from Feni river estuary to the eastern corner of the Sundarbans, covering Noakhali, Barisal, Bhola and Patuakhali districts. The zone receives a large volume of discharge from the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna river system, forming high volume of silty deposition. More than 70% of the sediment load of the region is silt; with an additional 10% sand (Coleman 1969 cited in Allison *et al.* 2003:317–342). Because of the sediment discharge and strong current, the morphology of the zone is very dynamic and thus erosion and accretion rates in the area are very high. Numerous islands are located in the area including the country's only island district Bhola. Many islands have been formed in last few years in the area by the process of land accretion. At the same time many have been eroded or disappeared (Rahman *et al.* 1993, Pramanik 1988 cited in SDNP 2004). Kuakata, an attractive sandy beach, is located at the zone under Khepupara upazilla of Patuakhali district

### **Western Coastal Zone**

The western coastal zone is covered by the Sundarbans mangrove forest, covering greater Khulna and part of Patuakhali district. Because of presence of mangrove

forest, the zone is relatively stable in terms of soil erosion. Mangrove swamps, tidal flats, natural levees and tidal creeks are characteristics of the zone. Mangroves of the area support feeding and breeding grounds for fish and shrimps species, enriching the area in fisheries bio-diversity. The area lies at 0.9 to 2.1 meter above mean sea level (Iftekhhar & Islam 2004:139-146). Soil characteristics of the western coastal zone are silty loams or alluvium. Islam (2003) mentioned that mangrove dominated coastal areas have developed on soil formations of recent origin consisting of alluvium washed down from the Himalayas. The zone also has tourist attraction in the Sundarbans (Islam 2003:763-796).

#### **THE FLOOD-FREE ZONE: COMILLA**

Comilla is a district of Bangladesh located about 100 kilometers south east of Dhaka. Established as a district of Bengal by the British in 1790, it included the Sub-divisions of Brahmanbaria and Chandpur which eventually became separate districts in 1984.

Comilla District, with an area of 3085.17 sq km, is bounded by Brahmanbaria and Narayanganj districts on the north, Noakhali and Feni districts on the south, Tripura (state of India) on the east, Munshiganj and Chandpur districts on the west. Annual average temperature maximum 34.3°C, minimum 12.7°C; annual rainfall 2551 mm. The District of Comilla has an elevation of 10 meters above sea level<sup>9</sup>. According to another source Comilla district has 12

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.gazetteering.com/asia/bangladesh/chittagong/1337193-comilla-district.html>. Accessed 11 January 2013.

meters elevation above the sea level<sup>10</sup>. Main rivers are Meghna, Gumti and Dakatia. Comilla Town stands on the bank of the Gumti river.

Mainly based on agriculture, the economy of Comilla has been flourished through trade and cottage industries, especially the 'Khadi' textile as well. For the economic development of the region the "Bangladesh Export Promotion Zone Authority" has established the "Comilla Export Processing Zone" spread over an area of 104.44 hectares (258.1 acres) in the Comilla old Airport Area. Comilla is famous for cottage industries including potteries of Bijoypur. Other cottage industries include bamboo and cane works, *Shital Pati*, hooka, and *madur* (mat) made of *murta* tree.

The Comilla region was once under ancient Samatat and was joined with Tripura State. This district came under the reign of the kings of the Harikela in the ninth century AD. Lalmai Mainamati was ruled by Deva dynasty (eighth century AD), and Chandra dynasty (during tenth and mid eleventh century AD). It came under the rule of East India Company in 1765. This district was established as Tripura district in 1790. It was renamed Comilla in 1960. Chandpur and Brahmanbaria subdivisions of this district were transformed into districts in 1984. Comilla district has 5 municipalities, 54 wards, 148 mahallas, 12 upazilas, 1 thana, 180 union parishads, 2704 mouzas and 3624 villages.

Total population 4586879; male 49.33%, female 50.61%; Muslim 93.85%, Hindu 5.9%, Buddhist 0.13%, Christian 0.03% and others 0.09%. Ethnic nationals:

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.maps-streetview.com/Bangladesh/Comilla/> Accessed 11 January 2013.

Tipra and Rishi (characteristically Mongalite), on the border of Tripura State. Average literacy 33.1%; male 40.2% and female 26%.

Main occupations of the region include agriculture 43.28%, commerce 11.6%, service 10.78%, transport 3.36%, agricultural labourer 15.89%, wage labourer 2.46%, construction 1.03%, and others 11.6%.

As regards land use pattern, total cultivable land 243596.93 hectares, of which single crop 18.05%, double crop 63.99% and treble crop land 17.96%. Besides, with regard to land control, among the peasants 30% are landless, 46% small, 20% intermediate and 4% rich. Main crops include paddy, jute, wheat, mustard seed, brinjal. And among *main fruits* mango, jackfruit, banana, coconut, palm, guava and blackberry are prominent. In addition, people of the region are also involved in fishery, dairy, and poultry farming also.

Considering the climate, soil and land type it is noteworthy that while there are six seasons in a Bangla year namely summer, monsoon, autumn/fall, dewy, winter, and spring, only three seasons viz. winter, summer, and rainy season are important in the region for cultivation. Summer starts in the months of Falgun/Chaitra and starts up to Jaisthya. Monsoon starts in the month of Ashar and stays up to the month of Vadra. During the summer the temperature of this region is very high but the rainfall is moderate. Winter season is cool without rain.

Soil conditions are strongly acidic, structured gray sandy loams to clays, developed in piedmont aprons and valleys in areas adjoining or within the north-

eastern hilly region (piedmont is the underlying rock formation in this area. In this region soil is very fertile for production of paddy, arum, and other vegetables. According to a Block Supervisor of the Department of Agriculture Extension, “cropping intensity in this region is about three hundred percent” (Barua *et al.* 2004:7-8).

However, in the remaining part of this chapter I am going to give a description of the three villages from which I have collected necessary information for my study.

#### **VILLAGE KALIKANAGAR OF BHOLA**

##### **Location and History**

The village is located under the Kachia Union of Bhola Sadar Upazila and is about seven kilometer away from the upazila headquarter. The village is surrounded by Nij Kachia village to the north, Dhonia Union to the south, Bhabanipur village to the west and river Meghna to the east. The village exists as a single unit; there is no para in the village. But *Mizi bari*, *Khan Bari*, and *Dutta Bari* are influential in the village. The village is easily reachable by rickshaw and auto-bike.

No written record of the village history could be traced due to unavailability of necessary records in the Union Parishad and the Tahsil Office. Some elder people give some accounts of the early history of this region. Their narrations are based on the stories told by village elders of their father’s and forefather’s journeys through the wilderness to seek new opportunities. Despite the problems with oral history caused by the limitation of memory and the distortion of time, some valuable generalization can be drawn from that source.

However, Bhola was at first established as a sub-division of Noakhali district in the year 1845 and later on was included in Barisal district in 1869. Villagers tell that their ancestors established human settlement in the village about two hundred years ago.

One significant aspect is that due to river erosion like other villages situated across the coast line Kalikanagar has also lost its original shape and size. As because the village stands at the bank of the river Meghna, it is badly damaged by river erosion. Villagers opine that the village that exists at present was not here even a decade ago, and it was not so small in size even. Due to river erosion, educational institutions, religious institutions, and even local government institutions (e.g. Union Parishad) have already been shifted several times. For example, at present office of the Union Parishad has been shifted to a room at the Kharki High School in Guramiar Hat. Local people said that unless a strong concrete-dam is soon built across the embankment of the river Meghna, even the entire Kachia Union would be gone in the river.

### **Population**

In the field survey it was revealed that in the village the total number of households was 122 and the total number of population is 715 of whom some one hundred and ten people do not live in the village. The average household size of the village is 5.86, which is significantly higher than the national average size of rural household (4.46). Of the total population of the village, 321 are male and 339 are female with a sex ratio of 106.

In this village there is no one-person household, whereas number of households comprising 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8<sup>+</sup> persons are 6, 10, 27, 39, 19, 16, and 5 households respectively. This means that in the village majority of the households comprise five members. On the other hand, majority of the population (172 persons) of the village falls in the age group of 30-49 years, while number of people in the age groups of 0-4 years and 5-9 years are 107 and 137 respectively. On the other hand, only 12 persons and 11 persons fall respectively in the age groups of 60-64 years and 65<sup>+</sup> years. This means that aging is not a problem in the village.

### **Marital Status**

Of the people aged 10 years and above the total number of male is 217 of whom 81 persons never got married, 135 persons are married, and only one person is widower. On the other hand, the total number of female aged 10 years and above is 195 of whom 48 persons never got married, 138 persons are married, and nine persons are widowed. There is no divorced/separated male or female in the village.

### **Education and Literacy**

The village has only one Primary School named Dattabari Government Primary School. The Kharki High School is located at Guramiar Hat which is one kilometer away from the village. For Higher Secondary education villagers have to send their wards to Bhola town. With regard to literacy rate in Kalikanagar, of the people aged 7 years and above, only 57 persons of both sex (number of male is 29

and that of female is 28) are literate<sup>11</sup> while 411 persons are illiterate. This implies that illiteracy is a problem in the village. Literacy rate of both sex is 12.2% and the same rate for male and female are 11.8% and 12.6% respectively. In the village of the total population aged 3-5 years only 3 males attend schools and only 1 female attends schools, but 33 males and 28 females of the same age group do not attend school.

Of the population aged 6-10 years 38 males and 45 females attend school, but 27 males and 10 females do not attend schools; and of the people aged 11-14 years, 12 males and 17 females attend schools but 15 males and 5 females do not attend schools. Of the people aged 15-19 years, 7 males and 4 females attend schools while 22 males and 14 females do not attend schools. The poor educational condition of the village becomes apparent from the fact that of the people aged 20-24 years only three males and one female continue education but 10 males and 31 females of the same age group do not study. Similarly, people aged 25-29 only one male and two females continue education and 16 males and 34 females of the same age group discontinue education. The scenario of education and literacy of this village as well as the two other villages is shown later in this chapter in Table 2.3.

### **Profession and Occupation**

Of the population aged 7 years and above, 111 males and 4 females are employed, 20 males and 1 female are looking for work, whereas 4 males and 119 females are

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<sup>11</sup> Literacy means they can write and read a letter.



engaged in household work while 49 males and 33 females do not work at all. In the village, a total of 111 males and 4 females aged 7 years and above do not attend schools but are employed. Of them 59 males and 3 females are engaged in the agricultural sector, whereas 52 males and 1 female are engaged in the service sector. No people of this category are engaged in the industry sector. A total of one hundred and ten people of the village have migrated to Dhaka, Chittagong, and other cities to earn their livelihoods. Some of the villagers have migrated to the Saudi Arabia, Oman, Maldives, and the UAE.

### **Religion and Language**

All the people of the village Kalikanagar are muslim by religion and all of them speak Bangla though in local dialect.

### **Settlement and House Types**

In the village there are one hundred and fifty-six houses of which there is no pukka and semi-pukka house, ten houses both walls and roofs are fully made of corrugated iron sheets with wooden structures (these houses belong to the rich households), 136 of the houses are kutcha i.e. made of mud wall and corrugated iron sheet or thatched roofs and ten houses are jhupri (i.e. thatched cottages). Some seventy-nine households are owned, 43 are rent free, while no households are rented.

### **Household Types**

Distribution of the households of the village according to the two categories mentioned in Chapter 1 is shown in the following table 1.4:

**Table 1.4 : Types of Households of Kalikanagar Village<sup>12</sup>**

<b>Economic Condition Category</b>	<b>Household Number</b>	<b>Household Typology Category</b>	<b>Household Number</b>
Poor	36	Nuclear	109
Moderate	67	Joint	10
Rich	19	Extended	3
Total	122	Total	122

Source: Field Survey

### **Water and Sanitation**

There is no water-sealed sanitary toilets in the village but 55 toilets are non-water sealed sanitary and 67 are non-sanitary toilets. Of the total households, 81 households use tube-wells as sources of drinking water and the rest 41 households use other sources of drinking water.

### **Development Infrastructure**

A earthen road has passed through the village connecting it with the Guramiar Hat. The nearest bazaar (i.e. Guramiar Hat) is about one kilometer away from the village. The villagers have to go to Bhola town for medical treatment. Only six households have electricity connections. Others use kerosene lamps at night and use cow-dung, paddy-straw, and woods for cooking purpose.

### **Livelihood Strategy**

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<sup>12</sup> The total number of female headed households (FHH) in the village was fourteen out of which eight households were included in my study.

Agriculture is the main source of earning for the villagers and paddy is the main cash crop. Usually the villagers grow paddy in three seasons viz. Aus, Aman, Boro. Volume of production of Boro is greater than the two other types. But if flash flood occurs farmers cannot harvest their Boro paddy. In such cases, they suffer seriously, and earn their livelihoods by borrowing money from relatives or taking loans from NGOs. A few NGOs such as Grameen Jono Unnoyon, BRAC, ASA, and Heed Bangladesh have operations in the area. During Winter farmers grow kharif crops such as wheat, chili, brinjal etc. Those villagers who have no arable land either work as day labor or rickshaw puller. During the monsoon they catch fishes. But nowadays fishes are not found in adequate quantity to meet the requirements of the household members.

## VILLAGE BHABANIPUR OF COMILLA

### **Location and History**

Bhabanipur village is located under Barapara Union of Comilla Sadar Dakshin (south) Upazila and is about ten kilometer south from Comilla town. It is situated just beside the west side of Dhaka-Chandpur highway and Dhaka-Chittagong rail line. It is less than a quarter kilometer away from Bejoypur bazaar where the Union Parishad office is situated. The village is surrounded by Haroshpur village and Lalmai pahar (hill) in the west, Tulatoli and Durgapur villages in the east, Barapara village in the south and Bejoypur Bazaar in the north.

No authentic history of the establishment of the village is traceable. Villagers told that once upon a time a queen named Rani Bhabani had ruled out this region. One descendent of the queen at first started to live in this place and after the name of the queen the village was named as Bhabanipur. From another standpoint it can be argued that since the village is nearby Lalmai Pahar and Lalmai Mainamati was ruled by Deva dynasty (eighth century AD), and Chandra dynasty (during tenth and mid eleventh century AD), Bhabanipur might be an ancient village.

### **Population**

In village Bhabanipur there are 57 households where a total of 325 people live of whom number of male is 146 persons and number of female is 179 persons, with a sex ratio of 82. Average household size is 5.70, which is significantly higher than

the national average. Of the total number of villagers about forty-five persons live outside the village for earning purpose.

In Bhabanipur there is no one-person household. But the number of households comprising 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 & more persons are two, six, thirteen, sixteen, ten, four, and six households respectively. These figures indicate that majority of the households of Bhabanipur comprise four to five persons. In terms of age distribution, number of people of the age groups of 0-4 years, 5-9 years, 10-14 years, 15-19 years, 20-24 years, 25-29 years, 30-49 years, 50-59 years, 60-64 years, and above 65 years are 31, 51, 42, 33, 33, 27, 53, 18, 14, and 24 persons respectively.

### **Marital Status**

The number of people aged 10 years and above are 104 males 139 females. Of the males 45 persons never married, 55 persons got married, and 4 males are widower, and of the females 59 persons never got married, 69 got married, 11 persons are widowed, and there is no divorced or separated male or female in the village.

### **Education and Literacy**

In terms of literacy, among the people aged 7 years and above a total of 164 people are literate but 76 people are illiterate. Of the males of this age group 69 are literate and 42 are illiterate, whereas the same figures for the females are 95 and 34 respectively. Literacy rate of both sex in the village is 68.3%, whereas the rate for male is 62.2% and for female is 73.6%. The scenario of school attendance

by age group in village Bhabanipur is such that no male but only seven females aged three to five years attend schools while six males and five females of the same age group do not attend school. Likewise, 23 males and 25 females aged 6-10 years go to schools, but three males and no female of this age group do not attend school. Of the people aged 11-14 years six males and sixteen females do attend schools while only one male and no female of this age group do not go to schools.

Similarly, twelve males and equal number of females aged 15-19 years continue education but two males and equal number of females do not continue their education. Of the people aged 20-24 years, only four males and five females continue education but four males and fifteen females of this age group have stopped education. Literacy scenario of the people aged 25-29 years in Bhabanipur is frustrating<sup>13</sup>; two males and three females of this age group continue education whereas eight males and fourteen females of the same age group have stopped education. One female of the age group 25-29 years who continue education has been studying MBBS at a private medical college in Comilla town, and two others are studying Master's. What becomes apparent from the above data is that female literacy rate is higher than that of male in village Bhabanipur. It is noteworthy that in Bhabanipur a total of forty-five people including twenty males and twenty-five females aged seven years and above do not attend school.

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<sup>13</sup> I coin the term 'frustrating' because within four km<sup>2</sup> there are three private colleges of which two colleges offer Bachelor degree and the rest is an intermediate girl's college. Moreover the village is very near to the Comilla town in where a good number of colleges (e.g. Comilla Victoria College) exist, and also Comilla University.

### **Profession and Occupation**

As regards employment status of the inhabitants of Bhabanipur it is found that as many as twenty-two males but no female aged seven years and above are employed. Another significant finding is that no male but twenty-six females of this age group are engaged in household work. This, however, does not mean that males of this village are reluctant to participate in household work, but that they are engaged in employment in the formal sector like teaching, physician, tailoring, and business, etc.

### **Religion and Language**

Alike Kalikanagar all the people of the village Bhabanipur are muslim by religion and they too speak Bangla as their mother tongue.

### **Settlement and House Types**

In Bhabanipur 33 houses are *pucka* i.e. completely made of bricks, sixteen houses are *semi-pucka* i.e. walls made of bricks but roofs of corrugated iron sheets, and only five houses are *kutchha* i.e. walls made of mud but roofs of corrugated iron sheets. In the village there are five water-sealed sanitary toilets, 47 non water-sealed sanitary toilets, and three non sanitary toilets. In Bhabanipur source of drinking water for all the households is tube-wells. As many as 47 households have their own tube-wells, while other households collect drinking water from their neighbors' tube-wells.

## Household Types

Distribution of the households of the village according to the two categories mentioned in Chapter 1 is shown in table 1.5:

**Table 1.5 Types of Households of Bhabanipur Village<sup>14</sup>**

Economic Condition Category	Household Number	Household Typology Category	Household Number
Poor	4	Nuclear	48
Moderate	37	Joint	7
Rich	16	Extended	2
Total	57	Total	57

Source: Field Survey

## Development Infrastructure

The village is spread from east to west and has only one *para*. A pukka road from Dhaka-Chandpur highway has gone through the middle of the village. Four *baris* are prominent in the village, these are *master bari*, *dakter* (doctor) *bari*, *dorji* (tailor) *bari*, and *molla bari*. No significant clashes have taken place among these *baris* in the recent past. Another significant aspect of the village is that all the households have electricity connections. The village got electricity in the year 1978. And in the year 2004 the village got gas connection; eleven households use gas to cook food. Besides, all the houses are personally owned.

## Livelihood Strategy

Although agriculture is the mainstay of their livelihood strategy, employment in the formal sector is also significant. As many as twelve males and two females have migrated to the European countries mainly in Italy, Germany, France, Malaysia and in the Saudi Arabia and the UAE in the middle east. Besides, two

<sup>14</sup> The total number of female headed households (FHH) in this village is eleven out of which three households have fallen under my sample.



males are serving in the Bangladesh army: one as Lieutenant Colonel in the medical core and another as a Subedar Major. There are two school teachers, three tailors, two businessmen having big stationary shops at Bejoypur bazaar. There is a homeopath doctor having his own chamber at Bejoypur bazaar.

## VILLAGE SONAPUR OF SUNAMGONJ

### **Location and History**

Sonapur is located under Dakshin (south) Badaghat Union of Bishwamvarpur Upazila in Sunamgonj district. It is about fifteen kilometers away from Bishwamvarpur Upazila headquarter and about one and a half kilometer south from the Union office. The village is surrounded by Laksmipur village in the south, Bagmara village in the north, Tridhorpur village in the east and Angaroli Haor in the west.

No authentic history of the origin of the village is traceable. Some elder villagers said that they have been living in the village for at least six to seven generations. This testimony in conjunction with the history of the establishment of Sunamgonj as a sub-division of Sylhet district indicate that the village might be at least hundred year's old. Indeed this village was once a part of Tridhorpur village and till now villagers of both Sonapur arrange different social and religious functions in conjunction with the villagers of Tridhorpur.

### **Population**

There are 78 households accommodating a population of 430 persons. Average size of households is 5.51, which is higher than the national average. Of the total inhabitants of the village number of male is 221 and that of female is 209 while the sex ratio is about 106.

In Sonapur there are three households comprising one person and three households comprising two-persons. In the village the numbers of households

comprising three, four, five, six, seven, and eight persons and more are ten, fourteen, sixteen, fifteen, eight, and ten respectively.

Number of people in the age groups of 0-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-49, 50-59, 60-64, and 65 years and above in the village are 70, 68, 45, 30, 35, 45, 89, 20, 12, and 16 persons respectively. These figures point to the fact that majority of the people of the village fall in the age group of 30-49 years and most of the people are relatively young, and that aging is not a critical problem in village Sonapur.

### **Marital Status**

With regard to marital status, it is notable that in Sonapur number of males and females aged 10 years and above are 146 and 136 respectively. Of the males of this group 61 persons never got married while the same figure for females is 33. Number of married males and females of this age group 85 and 84 respectively. No male of the village is either widower or divorced or separated. But some 19 females are widowed but none are divorced or separated.

### **Education and Literacy**

Considering the education scenario in Sonapur it can be said that of the people aged seven years and above 25 persons of both sex are literate but 296 persons are illiterate. Of the literate people number of male is fourteen and that of female is eleven. On the contrary, of the total illiterate people, the number of male is 155 persons and the number of female is 141. Rate of literacy of both sex is 7.8% while that of male is 8.3% and female is 7.2%. Of the population aged 3-5 years only one male and no female do attend schools, but fourteen males and thirty females of

the same age group do not attend schools. Besides, eighteen males and twelve females aged 6-10 years do attend schools but fifteen males and same number of females of this age group do not attend schools.

Among the people aged 11-14 years three males and four females do attend schools but fourteen males and twelve females of the same age group do not attend schools. Likewise, two males and four females aged 15-19 years attend schools but fourteen males and eight females of the same age group do not attend schools. In the age group of 20-24 years only one male but no female do attend schools whereas fourteen males and sixteen females of this age group do not attend schools. The scenario is more precarious for the people aged 25-29 years because no male and female of this age group do attend schools but 21 males and 22 females of this age group do not attend schools.

The combined scenario of education and literacy of the three villages is shown in the following table 1.6:

**Table 1.6: Level of education and literacy of the population (aged six years and above) of the three villages.**

Literacy Level	Name of the villages		
	Bhabanipur	Kalikanagar	Sonapur
Illiterate <sup>15</sup>	76	411	296
Up to Class-V	48	83	21
Class-VI to IX	22	29	07
SSC	24	11	06
HSC	09	04	03
Bachelor and Above	05	03	01

Source: Field Survey

## Profession and Occupation

<sup>15</sup> Including people who can write their names.

With regard to the employment status of the people aged 7 years and above who do not attend schools, it is revealed that a total of 241 people of both sex do not attend schools of which there are 119 males and 122 females. Of them, 98 males and 13 females are employed; only one male but no female is looking for work; three males and 97 females are engaged in household work, whereas seventeen males and twelve females do not work. A total of 111 persons of both sex aged seven years and above do not attend schools but are employed, of them number of male is 98 and female is thirteen. Of this age group, a total of 97 males and eleven females are engaged in agriculture, and one male and two females are engaged in the service sector.

### **Religion and Language**

In terms of religious status almost equal number of Muslim people and Hindu people live in the village. But no Christian, Buddhist or people of other religion live in the village.

### **Settlement and House Types**

In Sonapur there is no *pucka* (totally brick made) or *semi-pucka* (walls made of bricks but roofs of corrugated iron sheets) houses, seventy-four houses are *kutcha* (i.e. walls made of muds, bamboo, and canes with roofs made of corrugated iron sheets) and there is only one house is *jhupri* (thatched cottages).

### **Household Types**

Distribution of the households of the village according to the two categories mentioned in Chapter 1 is shown in the following table:

**Table : 1.7 Types of Households of Sonapur Village<sup>16</sup>**

<b>Economic Condition Category</b>	<b>Household Number</b>	<b>Household Typology Category</b>	<b>Household Number</b>
Poor	25	Nuclear	62
Moderate	38	Joint	9
Rich	15	Extended	7
Total	78		78

Source: Field Survey

### **Water and Sanitation**

There is no water-sealed sanitary toilet in the village and only one toilet is non-water-sealed sanitary toilet. A total of seventy-four toilets are non-sanitary. All the households in the village drink tube-well water. Nine households have electricity connections, and all the houses are personally owned.

### **Development Infrastructure**

An earthen road passes across the village. Households of both the Muslim and Hindu people exist together. This bears the testimony of presence of communal harmony in the village. Both Hindu and Muslim people celebrate various social and cultural festivals together. Villagers of Sonapur perform religious activities jointly with the villagers of Tridhorpur. There is no electricity in the village. About eight to ten rich families use solar panels as source of energy for domestic purpose. There is no mosque or school in the village. On the whole, this village is an ideal example of sound communal harmony.

<sup>16</sup> In the village there are nine households headed by females. Of them five households have fallen under my sample households.

### Livelihood Strategy

The villagers can grow paddy only once i.e. Boro crop. The main variety of paddy is T. Aman. These are transplanted in the month of Poush and harvested in the month of Boishakh. In some years when flash flood occurs early this lone crop cannot be harvested. However, the other six months the villagers earn their livelihoods either by catching fish or as Barki Labor i.e. collecting stones from the rivers. Even though the rich villagers can pass the six months of monsoon by financing their livelihoods from other sources, lives of the poor villagers become very difficult. Due to leasing out system of the *Haors* by the government, small, poor villagers have to catch fish under tremendous restrictions.

### Sample Distribution of Household Categories

The following table 1.8 shows village wise distribution of sample household categories of all the three villages.

**Table 1.8 Village wise distribution of the sample household categories**

Village Name	No. of HHs Surveyed	Poor	Moderate	Rich	Nuclear	Joint	Extended
Bhabanipur	30	03	22	05	25	04	01
Kalikanagar	80	26	48	06	71	07	02
Sonapur	50	17	29	04	41	05	04
Total	160	46	99	15	137	16	07

Source: Field Survey

## **PART – II**

### **APPLICABILITY OF MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Household is the smallest unit of social organization and is the basic unit of kinship group in rural Bangladesh. In chapter-1 of this dissertation I argued that the prime concern of every household is to ensure wellbeing of its members through effective, efficient, and synergistic utilization of whatever resources it has at its disposal by applying the functions of management in a prudent manner. I have also argued that three new forms of households namely ‘glued-together’ households, ‘super-trader’ households, and ‘despotic’ households might emerge from the prudent application of mainly three management functions viz. decision making, authority, and leadership at the household level in rural Bangladesh. Indeed, management functions are applied at the household level in order to perform the underlying tasks of a household. So to speak, it is imperative to identify the tasks performed in a household. This, in conjunction with the women’s role in performing the household tasks, would be instrumental to explore the dynamics of application of the three management functions at the household level in rural Bangladesh along with their subsequent outcome.

#### **HOUSEHOLD FUNCTIONS**

It is rather very much reasonable that many tasks are performed in a household. Some of these tasks are internal, while some are external; some are routine/repetitive, yet some are occasional; and some are ordinary, still some are significant. There is no denying of the fact that performing these tasks require resources. Labor or human resource is one of them. Existing literature as well as



conventional wisdom suggest that, by nature, some of the household tasks are to be performed by men and some to be performed by women. In this regard the remark by Chowdhury (1992) is noteworthy: “there is a clear-cut division among the males and females in respect of work specially in rural society of Bangladesh” (Chowdhury 1992:61). Besides, he has developed the following chart showing the role of male and female members of the family with reference to rural Bangladesh:

**Chart 01 : Role differentiation in work**

Male	Female
1. Physical labor	1. Child bearing and rearing
a) Cultivation	2. Household work
b) Industrial labor	3. Outdoor physical labor by
c) Outdoor work against wages	poorest section of women and
	tribal women
2. Sedentary labor	4. Small number of women work in
a) Work in trade and service	office, establishments and factories
sector	
b) Work in office and	
establishment	
c) Professional pursuits and	
duties	

Source: Anwarullah Chowdhury, ‘Family in Bangladesh,’ Bangkok: UNESCO, 1992: 61.

However, In this study I have divided the tasks or functions of a household into two broad categories: *chores* and *non-chores*. Included in the chores category are: child bearing and rearing, take-caring baby/elderly, cleaning homesteads, washing clothes, cooking and serving food, and rearing domestic animals,

livestock and poultry. And the non-chore category includes marriage, production and distribution of resources, buying and/or selling of assets, budgeting, lease and/or mortgage of land, settlement of disputes and quarrels, education, healthcare, and nutrition etc. I have done this categorization of household activities with the view to examine the applicability of the three management functions viz. decision making, authority, and leadership at the household level in rural Bangladesh as well as their subsequent outcome.

**WOMEN'S ROLE IN RURAL HOUSEHOLDS: THE SECLUDED HEROINES**

“Home is the girl's prison and the woman's workhouse.”

George Bernard Shaw, 1903<sup>17</sup>

It is not possible to discard or deny the fact that in a country where one-half of the population is women<sup>18</sup>, to bring about sustainable socio-economic development is not possible without taking into account or giving due value to the service those women render for the country in general and for their respective households in particular. Although apparently there seems to be no dearth of government initiatives to empower the women of the country, but, in practice, condition of the country's women, especially those of the rural areas is nothing but what George Bernard Shaw had meant in the above quotation. Indeed, in a patriarchal society like Bangladesh it seems to be rather ambitious to expect women's unhindered participation in all spheres of social life.

Nonetheless, due to the activities of various NGOs and the widespread publicity of the rights of the women by the electronic media, recently the condition of especially the rural women has started to change. By virtue of NGO activities and media coverage women are becoming aware of their rights. This is, beyond doubt, expected to bring about meaningful changes in the lives and mindset of the women-folk of rural Bangladesh though it may take some time.

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<sup>17</sup> This adage is taken from 'Household Chores and Household Choices: Theorizing the Domestic Sphere in Historical Archaeology,' edited by Keri S. Barile & James C. Brandon, The University of Alabama Press, 2004, p.1

<sup>18</sup> According to the Population Census Report 2011 of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, of the total population of the country 15,25,18,015 persons (projected as of 16 July 2012) 49.94% are female and 50.06% are male.

Nonetheless, the persisting backwardness of the rural women has been found to be true in works done by many researchers.

Hussain *et al.* (1988), for instance, were of the opinion that ‘women in rural households in Bangladesh perform multiple functions. These include pre- and post-harvest activities, housekeeping, child bearing and rearing; they also participate largely in homestead agriculture. But these are not adequately recognized or cannot create significant impact on the national economy for a number of reasons, one of which is faulty national income statistics which fail to recognize or take into account the valuable expenditure-saving and income-earning activities of women. Other reasons are associated with the socio-economic backwardness of the women themselves’ (Hussain *et al.* 1988:332). This view is supported by Worsely (1977): ‘the long hours of housework are unpaid and do not receive any recognition as productive labor in national income statistics’ (Worsely 1977:17).

Almost similar conclusion has been drawn by another researcher: ‘no woman’s task is that highly evaluated across a wide range of societies, not even childbearing or lactation’ (Goode 1989:74). Arens and Beurden (1980) suggest that women’s work is not recognized because it is seen as ‘supplementary’ (Arens and Beurden 1980:34). On the other hand, White (1992) argues that of course, it is possible to regard male activities as ‘primary’ and female as ‘secondary.’ Thus men grow the rice, women process it; men build the house, women maintain them; men purchase food and women cook it. Some local cultural images also support this: conception, for example, is often described as the male seed falling into the

fecund, but ultimately passive, soil of the woman's body. On the other hand, in Bangladesh women's work is quite openly recognized as fundamental to the household and is quite consciously calculated between women themselves (White 1992:121).

Another of the recurring themes in the literature on women's work in Bangladesh is its 'invisibility.' This is partly because it is done behind the homestead walls. It is typically women who process and store crops, help tend livestock and vegetables, gather fuel and water, look after the house and the family, watch that stocks do not run down, and so on. At the same time, women are presented as relying wholly on male provision. This leads them to conceal aspects of their work either by representing what they do in culturally acceptable ways, or by actual secrecy. In such a backdrop White (1992) observes that: 'in the day-to-day management of their households women engage in a mesh of activities which underlies and interweaves with what is done openly. This leads them to count as illicit and exceptional, strategies that are essential to getting their business done. These appear *ad hoc*, and women tend not to formulate them even to themselves, but they may nonetheless be quite systematic' (White 1992:123). However, the following case study of Rahela portrays a glimpse of the destitute and ill-fated nature of the lives of Bangladesh's rural women.

### Case Study 01 : The unrecognized contributions of Rahela

Rahela (pseudo name), 33, is a mother of one son and two daughters. Seventeen years ago she was given marriage to Zainal (pseudo name), 40, by her parents. Only a few months after their marriage Zainal's father had separated him from his (Zainal's father) family. Zainal is the eldest among his siblings—one younger brother and two sisters. At the time of separation Zainal had got a small house to live in and only five decimals of cultivable land. Within a year and a half—even before understanding the harsh chemistry of conjugal life—she gave birth to a daughter, Razia (pseudo name). The piece of land that Zainal inherited from his father was just insufficient to ensure them food for the whole year. Because they could cultivate paddy only once in a year, for the village is situated near *Angarali Haor* in Bishwambarpur Upazila under the District of Sunamgonj. Both Zainal and Rahela along with their little daughter had to remain half- or unfed for days during the six months of monsoon. Although other males including Zainal's own brothers and father could catch fish from the Haor, Zainal was not efficient to do so. Zainal was a pious man, yet popular among the villagers for his unique jokes. However, to add to their misery, within four years after their marriage a son, Zabed (pseudo name), was born. With a family of four members, now Rahela could not see anything but a dark future. Rahela's father was a marginal peasant and he was unable to provide any sort of support to Rahela.

In such a backdrop, in the plea of making an alternative source of income Rahela took a risk, amidst of Zainal's continuous disagreement. Rahela had borrowed Tk. Seven hundred from a relative and bought four ducks at Tk. five hundred and with the help of Zainal made a *khoar*<sup>19</sup> for the ducks with the rest of Tk. Two hundred. Within about two months three of the ducks started to lay eggs, which Rahela stored for reproduction. Since Rahela did not have any hen, she used her mother-in-law's hen to produce the first batch of seven baby-ducks. Within next two years Rahela had owned twenty-three more ducks. Besides, during the leisure time, Rahela made fish-nets and sold them. Meanwhile they again gave birth to another daughter, Rabeya (pseudo name).

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<sup>19</sup> A cell made of wood and CI sheet for the ducks.

During the dry season Rahela herself did all the pre-harvest works as much as possible by maintaining *pardah*<sup>20</sup>, and also most of the post-harvest works so as to employ as less paid labor as possible in order to reduce cost of production. But Zainal was so lazy a man that he preferred to roam around the village telling jokes thereby making people laugh than to help his wife. Besides, five to six years ago she bought a cow and now she has a total of four cows and a calf. She owns around one hundred and sixty ducks and dozens of chickens. Upon permission from her father-in-law, Rahela had added an extra room to their house for the cows. She had also built a separate *ghar* (house) for the ducks, but she has to pay her father-in-law Tk. 100 per month for the land on which she built the ducks' house. Spending the money that she had saved by selling eggs and ducks, and a cow, last year (i.e. in 2011) she had also bought fifteen decimals of cultivable land. Now she is planning to buy some land from her father-in-law to build another house, for the grown-up children. Now Razia is a student of class-IX and Zabeed studies in class-VI. "In order to look after my cows, ducks, and chickens I cannot remember when I spent a single night at my parent's home. Even if I stayed for one or two days with my parents, I left Razia at home to look after the cows and ducks," says Rahela. However, for the last couple of months Zainal now and then had been telling Rahela that he would marry again. But Rahela thought that Zainal was making fun with her.

But the irony of fate is that a couple of months ago when Rahela's father died, she along with Zainal and their children went to her natal house. In the afternoon, after the completion of the funeral of Rahela's father, Zainal started to leave his father-in-law's house. Because if he also stays at Rahela's natal house for the night, nobody would bring the cows, ducks, and chickens to home. Rahela insisted Zainal to take Razia with him, but Zainal declined. The following day Zainal had sold three cows, some one hundred and thirty ducks, and around thirty chickens in her absence. When the buyers were taking the cows, ducks, and chickens away from Zainal's home, Karim, a neighbor of Zainal asked why he was selling all these things, Zainal told Karim that Rahela had told him to do so because from now on they would be living at Rahela's parent's home. In the afternoon Zainal left his home. Two days after the death of Rahel's father, she

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<sup>20</sup> *Purdah* literally means *curtain* or *veil* and in Bangladesh it stands for the system of seclusion of Muslim women from outsiders.

came back to her husband's home only to discover that all her assets that she had pooled together for years by giving her own physical labor. Shocked by the incidence created by Zainal, Rahela became speechless. Several times, Razia tried to reach her father's mobile but could not do so because the mobile was switched-off. The next morning Zainal came back to his home with a young girl and told Rahela that she is his new wife. Without finding any other alternative Rahela went to her father-in-law to inform him about what Zainal has done. To the utter dismay of Rahela, Zainal's father told her that since as per the Islamic rule a Muslim man can have four wives at a time, Zainal did nothing wrong by bringing home his second wife!

Getting no support and help from Zainal's parents and brothers and the villagers, Rahela directly asked Zainal why he had done so. But the words that Zainal uttered in reply were so much harsh and shocking for Rahela that everything that she had done in the last seventeen years or so was proved, by a few seconds, to be false to her. Rahela tried to utter the words which Zainal used in reply: "you did nothing other than cooking, eating, and sleeping. I myself had expanded the wealth-base of my own family". He also said, "if you don't like it, you can go back to your mother. If you raise any further question, then I shall divorce you and will bring another new wife to my family. I shall do whatever I would wish to do because I am a man. If necessary, I shall sell the land also." Rahela believes that the only mistake that she has done was to registrar the piece of land she bought in Zainal's name! Severely shocked by the two events (viz. death of Rahela's father and the second marriage of Zainal) happened within a period of only three days, Rahela is now so broken-hearted that she cannot understand what she really should do. With his new wife Zainal is now living in Rahela's room, while Rahela is staying with her children in the other room. Hapless Rahela says, "I am not sorry for my cows, ducks, chickens, or the tree which Zainal had sold, nor for the fact that he had brought-in another wife, but for the fact that so far not a single person in the village has come to console me and recognize the sheer truth that it is me who has given hard labor for years in order to improve my family's economic condition!" "I am confident that God will surely do the justice to me," says a pale and broken Rahela.



The essence of the above case study of Rahela is, in my view, that the contributions that a woman accumulates by hard labor of years after years can be discarded by a man in a sleight of hand. When I told Rahela that if she wants she (being the first wife) can take legal steps against Zainal for getting married second time without taking her prior permission, she replied that: “now I have no confidence in man’s justice system, I have given-up everything in the hands of Almighty God and I am sure He will do justice for me.” This sort of submissive attitude of women needs to be changed, if they are to get the appreciation they deserve.

Besides, referring to the gender distribution of household tasks, White (1992) noted that ‘the household in rural Bangladesh is founded on the family links between members, and this is central to the distribution of different roles and responsibilities within it’ (White 1992:121). It is, therefore, crystal clear that the gender division of labor, which is widely remarked to be unusually strict in Bangladesh, it is in practice amenable to considerable variation. This is, of course, not peculiar to Bangladesh; the gender division of labor is typically characterized by some cross-over of activity, it is the responsibility for what gets done (who gets blamed when it isn’t) that constitutes the crucial factor (Oakley 1974: 28). Women’s work is affected by wider patterns of change in economy and society. As long as women’s family membership remains their key resources, however, changes in tasks are unlikely to result in fundamental shifts in male-female power relations.

In this part of the dissertation I discuss, according to the findings of my study, the applicability of the three management functions at the household level in rural Bangladesh. This part is divided into three chapters. In chapter-3 I elaborate the dynamics of decision making at the household level in rural Bangladesh. Chapter-4 contains the practice of authority in rural Bangladesh's households. And chapter-5 discusses household leadership in the context of rural Bangladesh.

### CHAPTER 3

## HOUSEHOLD-LEVEL DECISION-MAKING IN RURAL BANGLADESH

### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I discuss, based on the findings of my fieldwork, the state of applicability of decision-making in the households of the three villages namely Kalikanagar of Bhola district, Sonapur of Sunamgonj district, and Bhabanipur of Comilla district, which comprise my study area. I have explained the household level decision-making in rural Bangladesh on the basis of decision-making types, decision-making strategies and the decision-making issues. Central to this discussion are the household functions which I have mentioned earlier in this part of the dissertation. However, before commencing the discussion based on the findings of my fieldwork, I would like to present a theoretical snapshot of the overarching management function of decision-making.

Decision-making is a process that involves searching the environment for conditions requiring a decision, developing and analyzing possible alternatives, and then selecting a particular alternative that seems feasible in the given context (Rue & Byars 1983:57). Indeed, many people believe that managing is decision making.<sup>21</sup> Moore (1996) belongs to the same school of thought advocated by Simon, for he does not seem to find any difference between ‘management’ and ‘decision making’. According to Moore, “Management means decision-making,” (Moore 1996:407). Likewise, Clough (1996) also supports the views of Simon and Moore, which becomes apparent from his definition of the term “management”: “

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<sup>21</sup> The most famous proponent of this view is H. A. Simon. See *The New Science of Management Decision*. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1960.

it is the art and science of decision-making and leadership” (Clough 1996:408). Decision making does not begin until someone recognizes the necessity for a decision, which requires managers to be able to recognize problems and opportunities (Reitz & Jewell 1985:308). Decision, however, does not come out of the blue; it is to be made or taken by somebody. In order to make decisions, the decision-maker has to follow certain strategy or approach, which is termed as ‘decision-making strategy.’

#### **DECISION-MAKING STRATEGY**

In regard to decision-making strategy, Davis (1976<sub>a</sub>), in his seminal review of household decision-making, proposed a conceptualization of various strategies household members use to attain their shared or unshared objectives. Four of the strategies are especially relevant to decision making at the household level. The strategies, or processes, are: being coerced, coalition formation, accepting the household 's specialist/expert recommendation, and group problem solving. Arguably, all four strategies are unique to household decision making.

The first one is *coercion*, or forcing an individual to unwillingly perform a behavior.

The second one is *coalition formation*, which occurs when a majority of household members implore an individual or minority to join the majority in their choice. For example, the lone smoker in the household may face extreme pressure to provide a smoke-free environment for the other members of the household.

Third one is *group problem solving approach*, which assumes multiple inputs from various household members will lead to a better decision regarding

any issue of the household than an individual could independently achieve. An example might be resolving any dispute, say, land dispute with other households, or quarrels between household members, in which household members share their opinions and thoughts about the problem.

The fourth and final strategy is *accepting the household 's specialist/expert recommendation*. In this strategy, some household members often adopt a role as "expert" or "specialist" and the concomitant authority to prescribe solutions of problems facing other members of the household.

It is noteworthy that in a bid to know the way rural people make decisions about various aspects of their households I have used the above mentioned four decision-making strategies advocated by Davis.

#### **DECISION-MAKING STYLES**

A decision making style is an information-processing pattern characteristic of an individual decision maker. It comes about through an interaction of intelligence, personality, and reinforcement history. Driver & Rowe (1979) have proposed two fundamental dimensions along which these styles vary. The two dimensions are: complexity or amount of information used and focus or number of alternatives developed. These two dimensions form a matrix of four decision making styles: decisive, flexible, hierarchic, integrative, which is shown in figure 1.4.

**Figure 1.4: Decision-Making Styles**

		<b>Complexity: Amount of Information Used</b>	
		Moderately Low	High
<b>Focus:</b> Number of Alternatives Developed	One	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Decisive</b></p> <p>Example: Harry S Truman</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Hierarchic</b></p> <p>Example: Richard M Nixon</p>
	Many	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Flexible</b></p> <p>Example: Franklin D Roosevelt</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Integrative</b></p> <p>Example: Adlai Stevenson</p>

Source: M. J. Driver & A. J. Rowe, "Decision-making Styles: A New Approach to Management Decision Making." In G. L. Cooper (ed.) *Behavioral Problems in Organizations*. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall Inc. (1979: 151)

According to Driver and Rowe, however, the *decisive decision maker* looks for just enough information to identify a satisfactory alternative; this style is 'action-oriented.' On the other hand, the *flexible decision maker* shows a preference for having a number of options by generating a number of alternatives from which to choose. Besides, the *hierarchical decision maker* searches for and evaluates a great deal of information about a small number of alternatives; this is 'information-oriented.' Finally, the *integrative decision maker* is intellectually oriented; he or she gathers information and generates several alternatives before deciding. Driver and Rowe suggest that every individual has a dominant and a back up style. Better decisions are made if one of a decision maker's style fits the requirements of a situation.

In addition to the four decision making strategies, Davis (1976<sub>b</sub>) also reviews existing research on household decision making in terms of three questions:

- (a) Which family members are involved in economic decisions?
- (b) What is the nature of family decision processes? And
- (c) Are decision outcomes affected by differences in family role structure and decision strategies?

Davis (1976<sub>b</sub>) discusses the problem areas in the literature related to each of these questions, including an overemphasis on decision roles rather than processes and outcome. He also presents a brief descriptions of alternative decision-making strategies (role structure, budgets, problem-solving, persuasion, and bargaining). According to him, an important question for future research is: “the impact of the family's unique decision-environment on household management of consumption and savings.”

#### **ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS**

The first question that the respondents were asked is about the decision-making style they follow. In reply majority of the respondents belonging to the moderate and rich households told that they do not always follow one particular style; rather, the style of decision-making depends on the issue and context of decision to be made. For example: in case of emergency situation such as giving medication to an ill member of the household they choose the ‘decisive style.’ But if the decision to be made is about, say, marriage of a son or daughter, or purchase or sell of any assets, then they prefer the ‘integrative style.’ But almost all the respondents of the poor households told that they use the ‘decisive style,’ because

they neither have too many alternatives to choose from among nor have abundant information to examine the viability of the decision alternatives.

Besides, majority of the respondents of the poor class and about one-half respondents of the moderate economic class of Sonapur village informed that especially during the six months of rainy season (May to October), they can either catch fish or can work as day laborers for lifting stones from the rivers. During that season they prefer the 'flexible style' because for both fish-catching and stone-lifting, they get a couple of alternatives to choose from among. On the contrary, most of the respondents of Kalikanagar village informed that when facing situation like river erosion, they get nothing to do other than following the 'decisive style' because in such type of situations they become compelled to evacuate their houses and save whatever portable assets they have at their disposal. In similar kind of sudden disasters, a few respondents from the rich households of Kalikanagar village – who can afford to rent house in Bhola or Barisal town – follow the 'hierarchic style.'

On the basis of the information obtained from face-to-face interview, focus group discussion (FGD), and key informant interviews (KII) it is my conclusion that there exists a relationship between decision making strategy and economic condition of the households. Because, the fact that the poor households prefer the 'decisive strategy' (as opined by the respondents mentioned earlier in this chapter) is due to the fact that to gather information requires money which members of the poor households cannot afford to spend.



In response to the question ‘who usually makes the household decisions,’ however, the answers received from majority of the respondents irrespective of their economic condition were quite similar to the findings of previous research works; that is, it is the eldest male member (husband or the eldest son) who makes the household decisions. One striking finding of my study is that even in the female headed households<sup>22</sup> only three female heads (one of Bhabanipur and two of Sonapur) make their decisions themselves. Other female household heads depend, directly or indirectly, on the males (brothers, fathers, husbands’ brother) in making household related decisions. When asked why the female household heads do not make their decisions themselves, the women replied that they are apprehensive of taking any lead in the decision making process because of the risks involved. They are not socialized to develop traits of undertaking risk which, to a large extent, is responsible for shying away from financial responsibilities. Hence, it would be no exaggeration to argue that the women themselves are to blame to a large extent for their downtrodden position even at the household level.

As to who undertakes the responsibility of the regular decision maker in his or her absence, it is revealed that the next adult male member of the household deals with the situations which require decisions. In some instances, males of the neighboring households also make decisions in emergency situations in the absence of the regular decision maker. Unless compelled by the situation, instances of females replacing the regular decision maker (usually a male) are found to be rare in the sample households.

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<sup>22</sup> The number of female-headed households (FHH) that I have found in my study sample are three households in Bhabanipur, five households (including one Hindu household) in Sonapur and eight households in Kalikanagar.

Apropos of the strategy that the respondents follow in making household related decisions I was told that they do not follow one particular strategy for granted. Instead, choice of the strategy depends on the issue about which the decision is to be made as well as the context in which decision making would take place. Examples given by a few respondents would make the matter clear. Abdul Latif (pseudo name)<sup>23</sup>, a respondent of Bhabanipur village has said:

“after completing his HSC examination, my only son started to behave in unusual ways. Every morning after having breakfast he went to Bejoypur bazaar and returned home at around 1 or 2 PM to have his lunch. Soon after eating lunch he again left and returned at around 11 or 11.30 PM. When I asked him what does he do in the bazaar, he kept silent. Then I myself enquired about his activities and found that he plays cards with some local bad boys. I and my wife started to convince him to avoid bad companies and to take preparation for getting admitted in Honors Class at Comilla Victoria College. But he was ignoring us and continued his abnormal life style. I myself collected the application form for admission test, but he did not sit for the examination. Then without getting no other alternative, we forced him to go abroad. He again denied our decision. He said he would do business because he does not like study, but we knew he could not do so. In such a situation, with the help of one of his maternal uncles, we sent him to Malaysia. After going to Malaysia now he is sending us money on regular basis. It is my realization that if that time we did not send him to Malaysia forcefully, he might have become spoiled.”

It is quite clear that in order to save his son from being spoiled, Mr. Latif has chosen the ‘coercion strategy.’

The story of Malek Mizi (pseudo name), a respondent of Kalikanagar village is another example.

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<sup>23</sup> While giving me information during face-to-face interview many of the respondents had requested me to not to use their actual names. The reason for this might be that the respondents wanted to avoid any sort of social stigma.

“Couple of years ago, the youngest of my two daughters – who then has just passed the SSC examination – got involved in a relationship with a boy from our neighboring village. That boy was not doing anything, neither pursuing education nor doing any income generating work. He was an activist of a political party. Moreover, in terms of social status, there is gulf of difference between our family and the boy’s family. The boy was coming to our home quite frequently, even at odd times in order to meet my daughter. Ours is joint family. One day when the boy came to our home my younger brother asked him the reason of his coming our home so frequently. In reply, the boy behaved very badly with my brother. That night I, my wife, two of my brothers along with their wives set together to discuss about the matter. At one stage of our discussion, the wife of my younger brother had called my daughter and asked her the reason why that boy comes to our home. In reply my daughter said she want to marry him. Her response silenced us. I had another unmarried daughter who was elder than this one. That night we decided to send my daughter at my sister’s house in Dhaka. Next day my wife and my younger brother took my daughter to Dhaka. We kept her there for two and a half years. Now the problem is over and we all are happy now. We have set the date of her marriage with a banker who lives in Dhaka.”

The above story of Malek Mizi is an example of ‘group problem solving strategy.’

On the whole, it was my observation during the field work that there exists a relationship between household type and decision making strategy. For the nuclear households the strategy of being coercive seems to be much more easier than joint or extended households. Let me give an example: in a nuclear household when, say, a father forces his son or daughter to do something which the boy or the girl does not want to do, realizing the gravity of the situation and the force that the father is giving to his child, the mother might not come forward to stand in favor of the child. But if the same situation occurs in a joint or extended

household, then there is every chance that the grandfather or grandmother would rush towards the incident to rescue the grandson or granddaughter from the father's ruthless behavior or punishment without even understanding the relevance and necessity of the coercion or punishment. On the contrary, the strategies of 'coalition formation' and 'group problem solving' might be better options for the joint or extended households.

However, in regular or normal situations for issues like household budgeting or enrolling wards to schools, the onus of decision making lies with the household head. This is true for majority of the respondents from nuclear households. But, in joint and extended households, the household heads do take opinions of other adult members of the households before finalizing the decision. In the households headed by men I have found not a single instance where the wife is solely responsible for making financial decisions. There exists differences of perceptions regarding sharing of financial decision making by men and women. In majority of the cases decisions regarding management of the income, making major investments, and purchases have been done by men. This finding of mine is quite similar to the remarks by Goode: 'In day-to-day activities, some wives may seem to control almost everything, but when a more important decision issue arises (e.g. buying a house or making investments), their husbands take control. Thus, the weightiness of the decision may affect who makes it' (Goode 1989: 83).

### *Women's Participation in Household Decision-Making*

In response to the question whether the women should give opportunity to participate in the household decision making process, respondents gave mixed responses. Majority of the respondents from the Bhabanipur village have answered in the affirmative. They admit that women should have rights to express their opinions regarding household related affairs because results of a decision equally impact both male and female members of the households. But large number of respondents from the Kalikanagar village did not agree with the question. According to them, women's activities should be limited within the household or at best homestead. They will look after the children; prepare, cook, and serve food; keep the house clean; and take care of the aged persons. It is men's duty to do works outside the homestead. Of the eight female household heads whom I have interviewed only three females do all their works – be it within or outside the household – themselves. The rest five female heads get their outside-the-homestead work like selling crops, buying essential things done by males of the neighboring households. More than one-half respondents of Sonapur village told that they do consult with the adult female members of the households especially the wives before taking any decision. Respondents of the Hindu households of Sonapur village told that the women themselves do not show any interest to take part in the household decision making process.

### *Women's Economic Solvency & Participation in Decision-Making*

It is understandable that women's participation in economic activity not only means an increase in their income but is expected to generate some secondary

influences in the lives and attitudes of these women. As women are earning money and organizing economic activities, they are expected to have a more prominent role in household's decision-making apropos of expenditure of income and other related household matters. Such an active participation by women may help to develop their personality and strengthen their position in the household as well as help the household by making it possible to make more judicious decisions.

But in practice it is utterly difficult to collect information and thereby make any judgment on such an issue. Within the household, however, the husband and the wife may have various importance in various types of decision-making. With a view to get a picture of this I have collected information on decision-making with respect to: (i) marriage of son or daughter, (ii) taking child, (iii) budgeting, (iv) purchasing the daily necessities, and (v) Choosing doctor for treatment. These areas of decision-making reflect a varying degree of important activities. In assessing the role of wife I classify the responses to two groups such that the wife is important in decision-making if it was reported that the decision is taken (i) mainly by the wife, or (ii) with an equal emphasis on the opinion of the husband and the wife. The wife is not important as a decision-maker if the decision is taken only by the husband or mainly by the husband. Besides, I have classified the women into three groups such as unemployed women, women who has got assets from their natal families, and women who is employed.

The results that I have got show that in all spheres of decision-making, the pattern of influence in various groups is not the same. But one clear conclusion emerges from the findings: the housewives who do not earn have the least

participation in household decision-making. The women having assets from their natal houses are in a better position than the housewives who are unemployed though they are less important than the employed women. In addition, importance of the women doing jobs in the private sector or in NGOs is much less than the women doing government jobs.

These findings of my study conforms, to some extent, with the findings of Afsaruddin (2003), who is of the opinion that: “the traditional concept of womanhood dependent entirely on male partners is gradually changing and now to some extent the decision making power is being taken over by the womenfolk. This has been greatly contributed by the rapid development of readymade garment industries in Bangladesh and micro-credit provided by specialized agencies as well as NGOs. The NGOs played a very positive role in empowerment of women.”

## **CONCLUSION**

The foregoing discussion of this chapter has depicted the current scenario of the applicability of the management function of decision-making at the household level in rural Bangladesh. Household level decision-making has been discussed in terms of decision-making strategies, decision-making styles, and decision issues with a focus on the gender dimension of decision-making. It has become clear that there exists a relationship between household level decision-making strategies and household types as well as household-level decision-making styles and the economic condition of the household. This chapter also bears the testimony that there exists a relationship between women’s economic condition and their scope of getting involved in the decision-making process regarding household affairs.

These findings about household decision-making would help to explore the state of applicability of authority at the household level in rural Bangladesh, which is the subject matter of the next chapter of this dissertation.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **HOUSEHOLD-LEVEL AUTHORITY IN RURAL BANGLADESH**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter 3 I have discussed about the applicability of the management function of decision-making at the household level in rural Bangladesh by explaining the nexus among household category, context as well as types of decision-making. In this chapter I juxtapose the authority structure(s) prevailing in rural Bangladesh's households along with their subsequent outcome on the households' wellbeing / ill-being. Specifically, I have examined household authority structures in terms of household typology and economic condition, household hierarchy, delegation of authority, authority of female household members, and parent-child relationship. At the outset, however, I present theoretical interpretations and prior research findings on household authority. This includes a brief overview of delegation of authority, types of authority structures, and household hierarchy.

#### **AUTHORITY: THEORETICAL INTERPRETATIONS & PRIOR RESEARCH FINDINGS**

In its simplest form, authority is the ability to affect the behavior of others against their wishes; it is the ability to sway someone who yields power. It is only one of the many bases of power, that it is entrenched in the patriarchy. Authority is a matter of legitimacy and as right it exists not in one who exercises it but in the one who accepts it. At the household level, patriarchy maintains and perpetuates authority. Besides, power and authority operate at both micro and macro levels. At the societal level, power and authority accrue specifically to those who are incumbent in elite roles, particularly in dominant social institutions. At the

household level power exists when husbands or any individual male can gain compliance from wives or other females with whom they (the males) personally interact. Authority exists when women feel obliged to comply with the requests or demands of the male partners.

Sarker (1997) asserts that authority within the household depends upon the structure, composition, and function of the household. It is vested in the person who undertakes the responsibility for maintenance of the household and plays a dominant role in decision-making regarding any affair of the household irrespective of sex, wither individually or jointly by both the husband and the wife. Thus, according to him, the concept of authority undertakes to assign power in the household (Sarker 1997: 49). He is of the opinion that: ‘inspite of the varying position of men and women in society we have defined the authority structure of the household in relation to the process and mechanism of control and distribution of resources in the household and the decision-making role of husbands and wives,’ (Sarker 1997: 53).

On the other hand, Cook, Hunsaker, and Coffey (1997) define authority as the right to make decisions and commit resources based on one’s position within the hierarchy of the unit (e.g. a business organization or a household). With authority come responsibility and accountability, where accountability means the manager is answerable for the setting of appropriate goals, the efficient allocation of resources, and task accomplishment within the unit (Cook, Hunsaker, and Coffey 1997: 463). This view is quite similar to that of Mandebaum (1972): ‘with household authority goes responsibility. The superior is obliged to look after the

welfare of his charges so that they will not suffer, either by their own misjudgment or because of untoward circumstances. The general ideal, as revealed by Mandelbaum, is that a man should respect and obey his elder brother as he would his father and should treat his elder brother's wife as an elder sister' (Mandelbaum 1997: 40). By the same token, Orenstein (1965) points that: 'the oldest male of the highest generation is supposed to receive the most respect and obedience, the female at the opposite role, the most protection and care,' (Orenstein 1965: 47-48).

Authority is one of the many factors affecting power within the household because it has a special importance due to the role it plays in explaining the persistence of power. Indeed, authority is one of the sources of power that legitimizes a person occupying certain social position to exercise power on others. In a patriarchal system man who is hierarchically above tend to dominate those who are in the lower parts of the hierarchy. Within the household, males occupying certain culturally defined roles such as father, grandfather, brother, uncles, husband etc. are entitled with the right to decide on matters for women and other men.

Within the household structure, authority is found to be accepted unconsciously as a part of the belief system. For instance, as in the case of a wife who thinks it as sacrilegious to doubt her husband's authority. Conflict theories of family violence articulate the links between authority and power and identify violence as a likely outcome when the two phenomena are discordant. Since authority involves voluntary compliance to another person's wishes and power involves the ability to carry out one's own will despite resistance, conflict in

households often occurs when one person has the authority to demand certain behavior from others but not the power to do so in the face of resistance.

However, the gender inequality is not usually based on the fact that women lack rights, but on the fact that their rights are apt to define women's sphere in a way that leaves men with more general access to power. Apparently the more extensive the male authority in a society, the more specific and less powerful are the rights that women possess. As a result, patriarchy promotes power asymmetry and a 'culture against women' in which women are socialized to sacrifice their priorities in the interest of the male members. Hartmann (1976) argues that men tend to exert more authority through their experience in the authority structure in the society. The male authority is reinforced through socialization leading to the ubiquity of assigning extra-familial jobs to men and the consequent development of 'women's sphere,' (Mc Namara & Wemple 1977). From another standpoint it can be said that members of different types of households are socialized into different household authority roles and relationships. These differing household authority relations, in turn, directly affect the influence of different members of the household.

While studying power, authority, and decision-making in working couple families in south India, Vijayalakshmi (1997) reveals that notwithstanding the women's new economic status, the patriarchal system of exercising power and authority is to be found in most families that he studied. He argues that it is not only the male or husband exercising greater power and authority within the household, but also males from outside it. Thus, although majority of the couples

that Vijayalakshmi studied lived in nuclear households, it is found that male relatives from the kin network outside the household wielding greater power and authority over the working women. As a result, even the women themselves preferred to maintain peace and harmony in the family by subscribing to an ideology endorsed by the wider kin group and submitting to the existing pattern of power and authority (Vijayalakshmi 1997:99).

In her study Vijayalakshmi finds authority to be stratified within the family on the basis of gender and age. In her words:

‘The role accorded to men is based on the prevalent authority structure. The couples continue to consider that the man of the house should be the main breadwinner of the family. In spite of the changed circumstances where women also earn substantially, both men and women consider that men should manage finances and other pecuniary matters. Men have a better leverage in the power balance with the finance being controlled by them and women preferring to keep away from this role. It is not the earning role alone but the control of the income is more important for the women to have a leverage in bargaining power. Even if women keep the money they earned, its use is decided by men’ (Vijayalakshmi 1997:99-100).

The patriarchal authority, according to Vijayalakshmi’s finding, is given a legal underpinning with most of the couples considering husband as the legal representative of the household. One of her striking finding is that more women than men favored uni-legal representation, with men being the legal representative of the household. And apropos of certain role-dimensions such as man being the

chief breadwinner of the household, it is the women who subscribe to this view than the men themselves do. By the same token, women consider it be the role of men to advance in career and life, represent the household interests, and be responsible for taking all major decisions.

The fact that it is the women themselves who is to blame for their comparatively lower status in the household hierarchy has been supported by Vijayalakshmi's study. For instance, she finds that 'a majority of the working women endorse the roles which undermines their own status within the household. Seventy nine percent of them feel that it is the primary role of the wife to take care of the household. Similarly women were expected to be good homemakers, hostess and keep up family traditions. Over three-fourth of the female respondents feel that the interest of the husband should get preference over that of the wife,' (Vijayalakshmi 1997:101-102). Thus, if, for example, Waller's (1951) Theory of Least Interest is to be applied here we find that the person with less interest in household vis-à-vis career will have more power. A majority of women showed more interest in the family than their job or career.

Apropos of the prevailing authority structure in Bangladesh existing literature (e.g. Chowdhury 1992, Jansen 1999, and Sarker 1997) as well as the conventional wisdom suggest that the pattern of authority relations within the household are highly authoritarian and gender-biased. For instance, the husband is found to be dominant in all the spheres of authority. And as has been showed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, decision-making within the household rests largely

with men. Besides, on several occasions the study by Vijayalakshmi has also pointed out that women themselves recognize the higher authority of men.

#### **DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY**

Delegation is the establishment of a pattern of authority between a superior and one or more subordinates. Specifically, delegation is the process by which managers assign a portion of their total workload to others (Griffin 1997: 306). The primary reason for delegating authority is to enable the manager to get more work done within a shorter period of time. Subordinates to whom authority is delegated help to ease the manager's burden by doing major portions of the manager's work. At the household level, however, elder members of the households delegate the authority of some works to the younger members, or husband to the wife.

In theory, however, the process of delegation involves the following three steps:

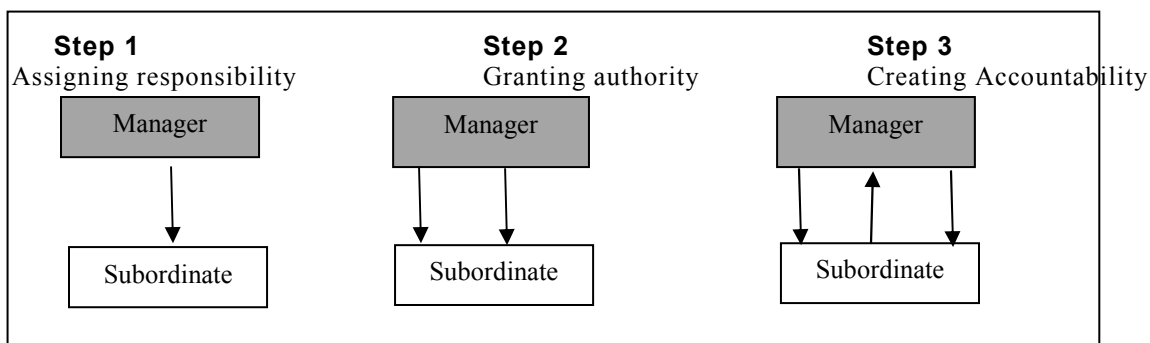
*First*, the manager assigns responsibility of doing a job to the subordinate.

*Second*, along with the responsibility, the individual is also given authority to do the job. And

*Finally*, the manager establishes the subordinate's accountability—that is, the subordinate accepts and obligation to carry out the task assigned by the manager.

Figure 1.5 shows the process of delegating authority:

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**Figure 1.5 Steps in the Delegation Process**

Source: Griffin (1997: 306)

It is noteworthy that unlike other types of organizations, at the household level the leader of the household (i.e. the household head) has to delegate authority of doing some works to other members of the household for compelling reasons. At the same time, it must be remembered that there are some works which cannot be delegated to others.

#### **TYPES OF HOUSEHOLD AUTHORITY STRUCTURES**

Researchers so far have identified three types of authority structures at the household level. These are patriarchal authority, matriarchal authority, and egalitarian authority.

The *authority structure* of the household is *patriarchal* where authority is vested on the father or any responsible, adult male member of the household.

The household is of *matriarchal authority structure* when authority is vested on the mother or any other responsible, adult female member of the household.



And finally, the *authority structure* of the household is *egalitarian* where the husband and wife share equal authority and responsibility of decision-making regarding household related affairs.

In this connection, Sarker (1997) reports that the authority structure of 68.1 percent households that he studied had patriarchal authority structure. On the contrary, 9.9 percent households of his sample had matriarchal authority structure, while 22 percent households had egalitarian authority structures (Sarker 1997: 50). Based on the analysis of the findings of his study Sarker concludes that: ‘though the authority structure of the family in rural Bangladesh is patriarchal in nature, the egalitarian authority system is increasing with the spread of female literacy, participation of women in economic activities outside the home, and women’s mobility,’ (Sarker 1997: 52).

The analysis of Chowdhury (1992) also supports the findings of Sarker. To quote Chowdhury at some length:

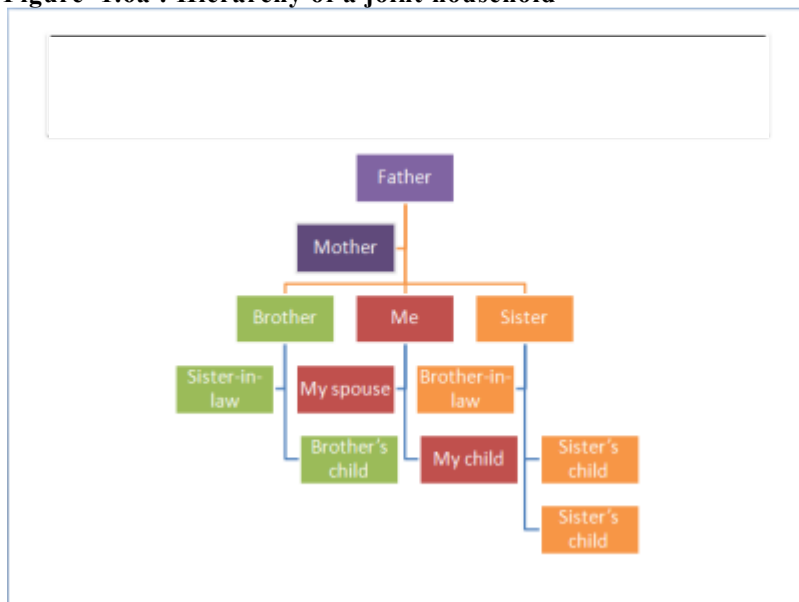
‘families in Bangladesh are patriarchal. The father exercises authority over the entire family without consciously appearing to be authoritative, restrictive, or stern. The father expects that his son would get an education for good job in order to care for his parents in their older age. In the context of village culture, the role and status of a daughter were different from those of the son. The son is expected to support and look after the comfort of his parents in their older age. The status of the son in the family, therefore, is higher because of the expectation that he would be useful to the parents as long as they live, whereas the daughters were to leave the parents after their marriage. A daughter in a traditional village family is not expected to provide financial support to her parents. Rather, it would be a matter of shame to accept financial help from a daughter or her husband’ (Chowdhury 1992: 66).

Mangleburg, Grewal, and Bristol (1999) argue that *household type* can be viewed as an antecedent condition of socialization processes, which focus on *household authority relations*, or dimensions of status roles and relations in the family. 'The degree of hierarchy is also contingent on the length of time that children are exposed to a specific pattern of role-status socialization. In general, the greater the time that children are exposed to a specific authority role model, the greater is children's learning of that particular pattern of authority. With hierarchical role models, children learn that authority roles are structured into superordinate-subordinate positions. With non-hierarchical role models, children do not learn the superordinate-subordinate structure of authority,' Mangleburg, Grewal, and Bristol (1999:381).

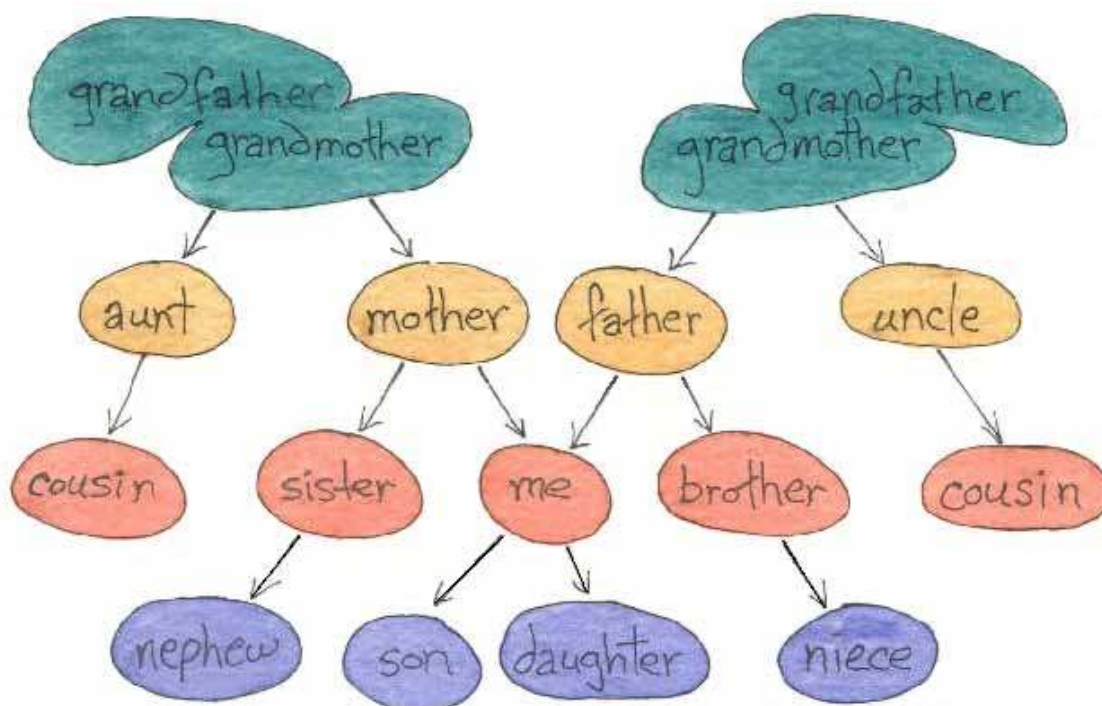
#### **AUTHORITY AND HOUSEHOLD HIERARCHY**

A hierarchy is a grouping of things into levels. There is a "top" level and then a series of lower levels under it. Households can be shown as hierarchies, with grandparents at the top-level, parents and their brothers and sisters at the next level, and children on a lower-level, depending on the type of household. The concept of 'household hierarchy' can be depicted diagrammatically as follows:

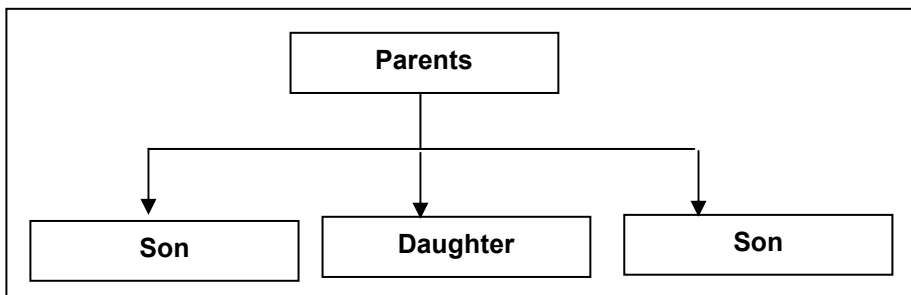
**Figure 1.6a : Hierarchy of a joint household**



**Figure 1.6b : Hierarchy of an extended household**



Source of Diagrams 1.6a & 1.6b: <http://www.google.com.bd/search?q=family+hierarchy>.

**Figure 1.6c : Hierarchy of a nuclear household**

Source: Drawn by the researcher.

As has been depicted in the above three diagrams (viz. 1.6a, 1.6b & 1.6c), hierarchy of nuclear household (Diagram 1.6c) is more flat than the hierarchy of joint household, and the hierarchy of joint household (Diagram 1.6a) is flat compared to the hierarchy of extended household (Diagram 1.6b). It is mentionable that the degree of authority assumed by a household member corresponds to the level of the hierarchy he or she belongs. For instance, members of the top tier have more authority than the members of the middle tier. Similarly, members of the middle tier possess more authority than members of the bottom tier of the household hierarchy. Again, the degree of authority of the members of the same tier also varies. For instance, although parents belong to the same tier, in a patriarchal society like ours, husband possesses more authority than the wife. Among brothers, authority rests with the elder. Among brothers and sisters, brother's authority is greater than that of the sister.

Likewise, 'within the realm of women's activities, a woman's authority usually depends on the position of her husband in the household's authority. The wife of the senior man is the paramount authority in women's affairs subject to the

presence of his mother in the household, who must be heard out patiently and respectfully,' (Ross 1961: 55, 132). In this respect, Sarma (1951) notes that 'as in any human relationship, the weight of influence in a household may be wielded by a forceful personality, say a youngest brother, even though he does not have an acknowledged position of power in the household structure,' (Sarma 1951: 52). On the other hand Mandelbaum (1972) observes that the formal hierarchy is clear and influential at the household level. All understand that a man should have authority over his wife and children; that a woman should exert control over her unmarried daughters and her daughters-in-law; that a senior brother has legitimate authority over his younger siblings in the household. Each person's dominance yields to the presence of higher household authority (Mandelbaum 1952: 40).

According to Nock's (1988) Theory of Hierarchy in the family, hierarchy is concerned with the nature of status relations, or authority roles, in the family. At one extreme, parent-child role relations are characterized by high hierarchy, which is "a structured authority pattern in which children are categorically inferior to adults" (Nock 1988: 958). In contrast, in lower hierarchy families, there is greater equality in parent-child status relations. And according to Nock, hierarchy varies with different family types (this has been proved to be true in the above diagrams – Diagram 4.2a, 4.2b & 4.2c) . Specifically, it is the family structure that allows certain types of parent-child authority relationships to exist and develop.

In the household, hierarchy is indicated by various aspects of household status roles and relations. In particular, Nock suggests that the extent of parent's cooperation and support of each other's views in relation to children (or parental

coalition formation) is reflective of status roles in the household. Also, the extent to which differences in the status of parents and children exist suggests different patterns of parent-child authority (or parent-child authoritarianism). For example, in some households, children may be treated more as equals to parents whereas, in others, children may be viewed as subordinate to parents' authority. Logically, these dimensions of household authority relations are likely to be affected by household type. Thus, household type is expected to be related to differences in parental coalition formation and parent-child authoritarianism, and these two dimensions of household authority relations are expected to affect children's influence in household- and child-related decisions.

#### **SIGNIFICANCE OF HOUSEHOLD HIERARCHY**

Family or household is not an static entity. Rather, its formation as an institution is a continuous process. A joint household becomes a nuclear one due to death or separation of household member(s) e.g. an adult male leaving the joint household to start living separately in his own nuclear household with his newly married wife. Likewise, a nuclear household may also become a joint one, if the old parents join in their son's nuclear household, and so on. However, one of the most dramatic changes in families and households that has taken place over the last several decades across the world has been the growth of families consisting of one adult (father or mother) and his or her children.

In regard to the significance of household/family hierarchy, Nock (1988) presents a noteworthy finding. He finds that as adults, children from single-parent families have less success in school, lower earnings, and lower occupational

prestige than children reared in interact, two-parent families. An abundant literature supports such a claim even when controls are introduced for several things as the income of the single parent, the educational attainment of the single parent, the years spent in a single-parent family, the age at which the disruption of the child's family occurred (in the case of divorce or separation), the type of single-parent family (divorced/never-married parent), the child's race, and a host of other, seemingly important background factors. Still, the attainment deficits persist. Digging deep into the matter, Nock proposes that one reason why children of one-parent families achieve less as adults is that they lack exposure to hierarchical models of authority relations in their families. The family serves as the prototype of all authority relationships. By virtue of living in nonhierarchical families, children from single-parent households are handicapped in their ability to function in institutions that are fundamentally hierarchical, namely, education, the economy, and occupations. And this trend, I argue, has the potentiality of generating far-reaching impacts on our social equilibrium and harmony.

### **STUDY FINDINGS**

It has already been mentioned in chapter 2 and chapter 3 that I have collected necessary information on the subject matter of my study from a total of one hundred and sixty households of three villages from three districts belonging to three different agro-ecological zones. This chapter contains my findings on the applicability of the management function of 'authority' at the household level in rural Bangladesh. Instead of presenting the findings from three villages separately,

the following part of this chapter puts together my findings from the three different villages.

It is noteworthy that there are at least two issues based on which the authority in the domestic sphere can be measured. First, the pattern of decision-making regarding household affairs such as what to buy and from where, or where to build a house. Secondly, in a household there are many issues or areas in which the husband and wife may or may not agree. This may result from a certain decision that has been taken (or not taken) along with its resulting impacts. In the past open disagreements were either suppressed due to the presence of parents or parents-in-law or simply out of the respect for the family values and norms. But at present, not only the influence of the kin members has declined, but the disagreements are discussed much more openly between husbands and wives as well.

On the other hand, at the household level males can exercise their authority in several ways. *First*, the strategic position of men in the patriarchal household system can be reproduced in a number of ways. *Second*, the Least Interest Theory also signifies how men can wield greater power in the household. *Third*, the apparent autonomy that women gain by virtue of their economic status falls short of being of autonomous. Or, in other words, change in the economic status of the women does not bring them any meaningful social or economic status. For example, at the FGD sessions, when the male respondents were asked whether the female members (especially the wives) should be praised for the contribution they do for the household, significant number of respondents of all the three villages



replied almost in the same tone. If the answers by the male respondents are put together the inner meaning of their views becomes: “it is their (the wives’) duty to contribute to and work for the betterment of the household. This is nothing special that they would work, in addition to their regular domestic works<sup>24</sup>, to reduce the cost of production or increase the income of the household.” It is, therefore, safe to argue that although in principle women have equality in status, but in practice the traditional view of the status of women is very much prevalent in the patrilineal society of rural Bangladesh.

These facts, in turn, are further accentuated by women’s lack of interest in assuming household authority vis-à-vis their preference for domestic obligations to be priority. While the female respondents were asked why they do not want to hold authority, many of them replied that they are afraid that any sort of failure will result in a reprimand. Quite a few females respondents also opined that there are no rewards for accepting additional responsibility. According to some other female respondents, they simply want to avoid risk and, therefore, want their husbands to take all the responsibility as well as authority.

As regards the authority structure of the sample households, I found that of the nuclear households patriarchal authority structure prevails in around three-fourth households. Of the rest, more than one-half of the households have egalitarian authority structure, and the remaining households’ authority structure are matriarchal. The female headed households fall in the latter type. On the other

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<sup>24</sup> It has been observed that in all the three villages, during their leisure time women do some extra income generating works such as stitching *katha* using their old *sarees*, making *pati* (mats), *mora*, *hath-pakha*, which they sell. Women also collect paddy from the place where the paddy-straws are put to dry from which they make *pitha*, *chira*, *muri*, *khoi*, etc. to be eaten as breakfast. Although these extra works of the housewives have economic value, these are left unrecognized in our patriarchal society.

hand, of the joint households, authority structure of more than half of the households are patriarchal, more than one-fourth households' authority structure is egalitarian, and the rest of the households belong to matriarchal authority structure. Finally, of the extended households, well above one-half of the households' authority structure are patriarchal; one-fourth households have egalitarian authority structure; whereas more than one-tenth of the households maintain matriarchal authority structure.

Considering the authority structure from the standpoint of economic condition my findings reveal that patriarchal authority prevails in almost all the households of both rich and moderate economic condition. On the other hand, egalitarian authority structure dominates the poor households of all the three villages.

Although the changed economic status of women was supposed to give them a social space to claim an equal, if not independent, status in the household hierarchy, the findings of my study, however, show the opposite picture. For instance, while asked about how do the respondents make decisions and resolve disagreements between them and their spouses, the answers that they gave reveal that power relations within the household are not only highly authoritarian, but also male-dominant. The husband is found to be considered important not just because he happens to be the chief breadwinner and legal as well as social representative of the household, but also because of the 'strategic position' they occupy in the patriarchal system prevailing in our country. Indeed, the life of the

women in the three villages is somewhat confined to domestic affairs irrespective of the type and authority structure of the household.

Nonetheless, contrary to the findings of some previous studies (for instance, Blood & Wolfe 1960, Ramu 1988) that women in nuclear households wield more power, it is found that women continue to be lacking power and authority in running their own household affairs. As is evident from my study the source of control is not only the husband himself, but also from males of the husband's parental family. It is my observation that due to the way authority is at play in the study villages, despite having separate household, the power, and for that matter authority, of the wife relative to the husband does not increase as one could expect.

A very useful way of identifying the nature of intra-household authority practice is to ascertain whether geographical proximity of the kin members increase or decrease the control of husband over wife and vice-versa. Of the sample households that I have studied, parents of majority of the husbands live in the same village. Ironically, the male respondents have by and large attributed their wives' insistence as a reason for setting-up separate household. Indeed, one can easily note that the wives possess substantial power in convincing the husband to have a separate household, although the actual reasons are difficult to explore. The males tend to involve their parents in various household related matters more than the parents of their wives. Despite living in the vicinity of the wives' parents, it is seen that her parents do not tilt the power balance in her favor. This actually counterbalanced the power that the wife might have gained by dint of the

proximity of her parents. This is a clear indication of the authority pattern being autocratic and skewed towards the husband's kin relation.

Moreover, manifestation of authority becomes more visible in decisions on having children and the family planning method to be followed. The responses of the husbands indicated consultative decision-making regarding these issues. In stark contrast though both husbands and wives discussed these matters at length, ultimately, the final decision has always been taken by men. In this connection, "what he wanted" has been the common feeling expressed by many women.

All in all, one striking finding of my study is that parental authority is indeed unceasing as an ideal and is sustained in fact, though the actual duration and degree of this authority are very much affected by the households' economic circumstances. Within a household a son or a daughter must not (in fact cannot) flout parent's will, especially not the father's. If and when adult sons do not like to follow a parental order, they usually find out suitable as well as amicable ways to circumvent rather than to directly contradict it. A widowed mother may also wield considerable influence on her son and his family, as one educated woman from Bhabanipur village has testified: "when I was growing up, my father was the chief authority in our family on all official and financial matters. He was a Union Parishad Chairman and practically ruled the union like a king, and yet he would always go to his mother, who was virtually illiterate, for her final decision in any important family matters. My grandmother was the authority too in all household matters and my father left everything to her. For instance, in such matters as settling weddings my father and my mother made the preliminary choosing, then

my father would ask grandmother for her final node of approval.” In reality, the ideal of deference to parents is rarely questioned, which, in turn, endows the elders with an authority that is not even lightly ignored by their children.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the preceding discussion it is clear that the patriarchal ideology is prevailing in a variety of forms among the respondents of the three villages. Women continue to cooperate in order to avoid conflicting situation. I have found a few instances where women tried to raise their voices against the male authoritarianism which resulted in nothing but unpleasant arguments and in the end the women had to give-up much against their will.

So to speak, the final point that I like to make here is that the prevailing trend of patriarchal authoritarianism at the household level in rural Bangladesh is to be revised – if not reversed – to a large extent in order to ensure a level playing field for the women to improve their condition so that they can get opportunity to meaningfully contribute towards the wellbeing of the country as a whole and of the household in particular. Because it is the household from where women can start practicing the leadership role. And this is the subject matter of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### HOUSEHOLD-LEVEL LEADERSHIP IN RURAL BANGLADESH

#### INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter I have elaborated the ways that ‘authority’ has been at play in the sample households of the three villages which are covered by my study. The fact that ‘management’ is a process implies that it combines a set of interrelated functions. Of all the functions of management, decision-making, authority, and leadership are utterly interwoven, so much so that these three functions can neither be discussed nor be practiced in isolation, for at the core of these functions stands the phenomenon of ‘*power*<sup>25</sup>.’ A little explanation would make the point clear: the person who does not have *power* cannot make any decision; a person’s inability of *decision-making* implies that s/he does not have *authority*; and a person without having authority can never hold the position of *leadership*.

In a nutshell, in this chapter I have attempted to portray the leadership styles found to be practiced in the sample households of the three villages as well as to exemplify the nexus (if any) among leadership style, authority structure, and decision-making along with their consequent outcome(s). In other words, in this chapter I have elaborated the pros and cons of the applicability of the management function of leadership at the household level in the three villages from which I have collected necessary information for my dissertation. It is, however, noteworthy that I have exemplified the household level

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<sup>25</sup> The ability of ‘A’ (the power holder) to alter circumstances impacting on ‘B’ so that ‘B’ does what ‘A’ wants to be done.

leadership in terms of leadership style, nature of leader-follower relation, and leadership trait. And this I have done with reference to the Situational Theory advocated by Paul Hersey & Kenneth H. Blanchard (1993), Fred E. Fiedler's Contingency Theory of Leadership (1967), the Best-Fit Approach of Charles Handy (1993), Rensis Likert's Four Systems of Management (1961), the Leadership Theory of K. Lewin, R. Lippit, & R. White (1939). But, at the outset the meaning of the term 'leadership' needs to be made clear.

### **WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?**

"Leadership is something a person does, not something a person has," says Keith Davis. In this context, leadership is viewed as the ability to guide, direct, and lead people in an organization (be it a business enterprise, a charitable institution, or a family) towards the attainment of the organizational goals. Again, leadership is the ability, capacity, and potentiality to persuade and influence others to follow him or her. On the other hand, Peter F. Drucker (1996) says that: "leadership is a characteristic of an individual. It is the lifting of man's vision to higher status, the raising of man's performance to higher standards, and the building of man's personality beyond its normal limitations."

Again leadership can also be seen as a social process in which one individual influences the behavior of others without the use of threat or violence. Indeed, leadership can be viewed from three standpoints viz.:

- an attribute of a position – e.g. the household head;
- a characteristic of a person – i.e. a natural leaders; and

- a category of behavior.

However, from the position of leadership at work, the latter of the above standpoints is most applicable and can be considered as something one person does to influence the behavior of others. Authoritarian leaders get others to do things by giving them little scope to influence decisions. They use fear, threats, and their authority and personality to get their way. On the other hand, democratic leaders seek to persuade and consider the feelings of others and encourage their participation in decision-making. Although prior studies have shown that although the democratic style gives followers (the household members) more satisfaction and enables them to cooperate better, still there is a doubt whether or not decisions taken under this style of leadership are better.

### **Formal vs. Informal Leaders**

From the legal point of view, leaders can be grouped into two forms viz. *formal leaders* and *informal leaders*. Leadership is said to be formal if and when power and authority, as has been emphasized by Max Weber, are delegated. Moreover, formal leaders are appointed holding a particular rank or position. In a typical bureaucratic organization the formal leader may be either elected or selected by some process. Contrary to this, leadership is said to be informal if and when a leader can initiate action without having the same authority enjoyed by the formal leaders. Moreover, the informal leader is the natural leader, chosen or selected by the group to which s/he belongs. Thus, leadership is both a function or a status grouping.



### **WHICH SKILLS DOES A LEADER POSSESS?**

Since the prime focus of a leader is to successfully attaining the goals or completing the tasks determined by or set with the help of his or her group, in order to be effective a leader needs to build confidence and trust among the group members (i.e. the followers) so that s/he gets maximum cooperation from his or her group. This requires a special set of skills, which are noted below:

- adequate knowledge about the task to be performed in order to lead the group in an effective and efficient manner;
- proper knowledge about the group member along with their skills, strengths, and weaknesses;
- clear understanding of what is required from the group;
- ability to clearly and succinctly communicate with the group members;
- capacity of decision-making under pressure situation;
- clear-cut understanding of the human nature to appreciate the group members' attitude; and
- ability to motivate the group members.

A leaders has to have the aforesaid skills in order to satisfy the following three key requirements:

- (i) **the task needs** : the leader has to make sure that the core purpose – i.e. successful completion of the task – is fulfilled;

- (ii) **the group needs** : the leader has to foster and maintain team spirit and build morale among the team/group members so as to hold them together until the task is successfully completed; and finally
- (iii) **individual needs** : since it is quite natural that members of the team/group have their individual or personal needs and aspirations, the leader should not only try to identify those needs and aspirations but also try to satisfy them as far as possible.

### **CATEGORIES OF THE THEORIES OF LEADERSHIP**

Writers on Management have constructed many theories of leadership, which have defined the phenomenon of 'leadership' in terms of mainly leadership traits, activity, contingency, style, and continuum on the basis of which the theories of leadership can be broadly categorized as under:

- the trait-based theories
- the activity-based theories
- the contingency-based theories
- the style-based theories, and
- the continuum-based theories.

What follows next is a brief discussion of the theories that fall under the above five broad categories:

### **THE TRAIT-BASED THEORIES**

Prior to 1949, studies of leadership were based largely on an attempt to identify the traits that leaders possess. Starting with the "great man" theory that *'leaders are born and not made'* researchers have tried to identify the physical, mental, and

personal traits of various leaders. Indeed, various studies of leaders' traits have been made.

Ralph M. Stogdill (1974) found that various researchers identified five **physical traits** related to leadership ability such as energy, drive, appearance, and height; four **intelligence and ability traits**; sixteen **personality traits** such as adaptability, aggressiveness, enthusiasm, and self-confidence; six **task-related traits** such as achievement drive, persistence, and initiative; and nine **social traits** such as cooperativeness, interpersonal skills, and administrative ability.

Edwin Ghiseli (1971), on the other hand, noted significant correlations between leadership effectiveness and traits of intelligence, supervisory ability, initiative, self-assurance, and individuality in ways of doing work. At the same time, extremely high or low intelligence reduces the leader's effectiveness. However, not all the traits, and many non-leaders may possess most or all of them. But, unfortunately, the trait approach gives no guidance as to *how much* of any trait a person should have. Furthermore, the dozens of studies that have been made do not agree as to what traits are leadership traits or what their relationships are to actual instances of leadership. Of utmost importance, most of these so-called traits are really patterns of behavior. This means, the trait approach refers to what a leader is (Koontz & Weihrich 1989: 439-440).

#### **THE ACTIVITY-BASED THEORIES**

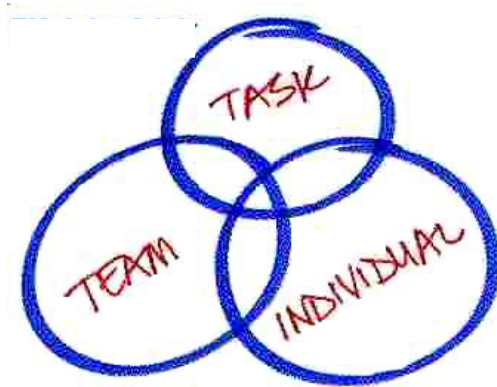
Another approach to understanding leadership success concentrates on what a leader does. Behavioral theories have emphasized the functions of the leader (i.e. what the leader does) and the style of the leader. According to these theories,

leadership is seen as an active process – a process of goal attainment involving complex relations between the leader and follower with actions performed both by and for the leader. If leadership is regarded as an activity, then practicing leadership means doing things. A leader, for example, will give orders, persuade and motivate people, and get tasks done.

Professor John Adair was one of the first academics to study leadership. Many of his studies looked at effective leadership in the armed forces. He showed that people can be trained to be good leaders. Before this research there was a widely held view that leaders were born not made. Adair saw leadership in terms of three overlapping circles represented by *task*, *team* and *individual*. In 1973 he developed the “Action-Centered Leadership model” – one of the Activity-Based Theories of Leadership – which is represented by 'three circles' diagram that illustrates Adair's three core management responsibilities of a leader:

- achieving the task
- managing the team or group
- managing individuals

**Figure 1.7 : The Action-Centered Leadership Model of John Adair.**



Source: <http://www.businessballs.com/action.htm>

The Action Centered Leadership model is Adair's best known work, in which the three elements – achieving *the task*, developing *the team* and developing *the individuals* – are mutually dependent, as well as being separately essential to the overall leadership role. Importantly as well, Adair sets out these core functions of leadership and says they are vital to the Action Centered Leadership model:

- **Planning** - seeking information, defining tasks, setting aims;
- **Initiating** - briefing, task allocation, setting standards;
- **Controlling** - maintaining standards, ensuring progress, ongoing decision-making;
- **Supporting** - individuals' contributions, encouraging, team spirit, reconciling, morale;
- **Informing** - clarifying tasks and plans, updating, receiving feedback and interpreting; and
- **Evaluating** - feasibility of ideas, performance, enabling self assessment

The Action-Centered Leadership model, therefore, does not stand alone; it must be part of an integrated approach to managing and leading, and also which should include a strong emphasis on applying these principles through training.

Nonetheless, according to Handy, the three elements can, at the same time, conflict with each other. For example, pressure on time and resources often increases pressure on a group to concentrate on the task, to the possible detriment of the people involved. But if group and individual needs are forgotten, much of the effort spent may be misdirected. In another example, taking time creating a good team spirit without applying effort to the task is likely to mean that the team will lose its focus through lack of achievement.

## **THE CONTINGENCY-BASED THEORIES**

Among the contingency- or situation-based theories of leadership, the most effective and much-cited ones – and which I have used in this dissertation – are Fred F. Fiedler’s “Contingency Theory of Leadership,” the “Situational Theory” by Paul Hersey and Kenneth H. Blanchard, and Charles Handy’s “Best-Fit Approach.” The next part of this chapter contains a brief account of these theories.

### **(A) FIEDLER’S CONTINGENCY THEORY OF LEADERSHIP**

This theory of leadership has been particularly influential and offers a systematic way of analyzing situations and then prescribing the most effective leadership responses to that situation. Fiedler has developed a new way of assessing leadership style based on the measurement of the leader’s (1) *Least Preferred Co-*

*worker* (LPC) score, and (2) *Assumed Similarity between Opposites* (ASO) score. In LPC, the score is obtained by asking the leaders to think of the person with whom they can work least well – their least preferred co-worker; and in ASO the score is obtained by asking the leaders to rate on the degree to which they see group members to be like themselves, on the assumption that people will like best, and work best with, those who are seen as most like themselves. Now the LPC scale is most commonly used in research. In developing this scale, respondents were asked the traits of a person with whom they could work least well. Then they are required to rate that person on 16 dimensions, each with a positive and negative aspect, such as the one shown in figure 1.8.

**Figure 1.8 : Fiedler’s LPC Score Sheet**

Positive	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Negative
Pleasant	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Unpleasant
Rejecting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Accepting
Helpful	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Frustrating
Gloomy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Cheerful

**Source:** Developed by the researcher based on the example given by Koontz & Wehrich (1989: 451).

According to Fiedler, the leaders who rate their LPC negatively get lower LPC scores and are said to be ‘**task-oriented leader.**’ Those who get high scores and see positive value, even in those they find it difficult to get-on with are said to be ‘**relationship-oriented leader.**’ These measures provide a new and original method of assessing a person’s ‘*leadership orientation.*’ This theory provides a basis for developing people as leaders. By making people aware of the factors

affecting the choice of leadership style and providing a basis for increased ‘**self awareness,**’ Fiedler’s theory gives a useful starting point for ‘**leadership training.**’

However, Fiedler’s contingency theory of leadership is not free from limitations. This theory, for instance, not only demonstrates that there is ‘*no ideal personality,*’ nor is there ‘*one best style*’ for a leader, but in order for anyone interested to apply it also requires to actually modify their behavior in line with the changes in the situation (if any).

#### **APPLICABILITY OF FIEDLER’S THEORY (STUDY FINDINGS)**

Field-level information purports that most of the leaders from the households of rich and moderate economic classes from all the three villages are task-oriented leaders. Because when asked to name a person with whom they can work least well, most of the household leaders of the rich and moderate economic classes told that especially in resource-related matters (e.g. selling crops, buying land, budgeting etc.) there is no such members in their respective households whom they feel comfortable to work or consult with. Among the reasons the leading and common ones include the question of secrecy. A few respondents identified the shortage of intelligence of the adult members as the reason of their feeling least well to work, consult or share ideas with.

In regard to the reasons of giving least preference to the wives, the almost unanimous response was the wives’ lack of common sense and stupidity as well as the tendency to give irrelevant and impractical logics even when the situation is grave. Very insignificant number of moderate and rich household heads informed



that instead of co-working or consulting with wives and male adults (father, sons and brothers), they rather feel more comfortable to take suggestions from their daughters. The reasons of this, according to the respondents, include the ability of the daughters to maintain secrecy and evaluate options, total loyalty to the fathers are found to be prominent.

Besides, while asked whether or not they feel it necessary to develop the sons and younger brothers as future leaders, a large number of moderate and rich household leaders was of the opinion that their predecessors did not give them any such lesson and that in course of time their sons and brothers would automatically learn the art and science of leadership from the harsh realities they would face from time to time.

In stark contrast, among the poor household leaders 'relationship-oriented leadership' was found to be very common. The prime reason of this phenomenon, according to the poor household leaders, was that the notion of LPC does not apply to them, for they have got no option other than working with their own household members. Hence, Fiedler's notion of ASO seems to match with their condition to a significant extent.

### **(B) HERSEY-BLANCHARD'S SITUATIONAL THEORY**

The situational theory of leadership articulated by Hersey and Blanchard is based on the amount of direction (i.e. task behavior) and amount of socio-emotional support (i.e. relationship behavior) that a leader must provide given the situation and the 'level of maturity' of the followers.

The extent to which the leader engages in spelling out the duties and responsibilities to an individual or group is called **task behavior**. This behavior involves telling people what to do, how to do it, when to do it, where to do it, and finally, who is to do it. In 'task behavior' the leader engages in one-way communication.

On the other hand, the extent to which the leader engages in two- or multi-way communications is known as **relationship behavior**. This includes listening, facilitating, and supportive behaviors. In 'relationship behavior' the leader engages in two-way communication by providing socio-emotional support.

**Maturity** is the willingness and ability of a person to take responsibility for directing their own behavior. People tend to have varying degree of maturity, depending on the specific task, function, or objective that a leader is attempting to accomplish through his or her efforts.

In order to determine the appropriate leadership style to be used in a given situation, leaders must first determine the maturity level of their followers in relation to the specific task that they are attempting to accomplish through the efforts of the followers. As the level of followers' maturity increases, leaders should begin to reduce their task-behavior and increase relationship-behavior until the followers reach a moderate level of maturity. As the followers begin to move into an above average level of maturity, leaders should decrease not only task-behavior but also relationship-behavior. Once the maturity level is identified, the appropriate leadership style can be determined from the following four styles of leadership:

- **High Task/Low Relationship Behavior (S1)** is referred to as ‘**telling**.’ The leader provides clear instructions and specific direction. This style is best matched with a low follower readiness level.
- **High Task/High Relationship Behavior (S2)** is termed ‘**selling**.’ The leader encourages two-way communication and helps build confidence and motivation among the employees, although the leader still has responsibility and does control decision-making. This style is best matched with a moderate follower readiness level.
- **High Relationship/ Low Task Behavior (S3)** refers to ‘**participating**.’ With this style, the leader and followers share decision-making and no longer need or expect the relationship to be directive. Alike S3, this style is also best matched with a moderate follower readiness level.
- **Low Relationship/Low Task Behavior (S4)** is labeled ‘**delegating**.’ This style is appropriate for leaders whose followers are ready to accomplish a particular task and are both competent and motivated to undertake full responsibility. This style is best matched with a high follower readiness level.

#### **APPLICABILITY OF THE THEORY (STUDY FINDINGS)**

In all the three villages that I have studied, it is observed that in most of the instances ‘S1’ or ‘**telling**’ style of leadership is found to be prevalent in majority of the households which belong to the rich and moderate economic classes. In a limited number of households belonging to this class ‘S2’ or ‘**selling**’ style of

leadership seems to be practiced. But neither 'S3' nor 'S4' style of leadership is found functional in the households belonging to the rich and moderate economic conditions. On the contrary, in the poor households of all the three villages 'S3' or '**participating**' style of leadership is widely practiced. In the poor households neither 'S1' nor 'S2' style of leadership was found functional.

**(C) THE BEST-FIT APPROACH OF CHARLES HANDY**

In 1993 Charles Handy advocated a pragmatic approach to study leadership.

According to him, in any situation a leader has to think about the following four sets of influence:

- (i) **the leader** along with the style of leadership (e.g. directive or supportive) that he or she prefers;
- (ii) **the subordinates** along with their preferred style of leadership in different circumstances;
- (iii) **the task** along with the jobs and its objectives; and
- (iv) **the environment** i.e. the leader's position of power in the organization along with the relationship with the group.

The 'best-fit approach' asserts that there is no such thing as a '*right*' style of leadership, but that balancing of the requirements of leader, subordinates and task and ensuring that they fit the environment result in effective leadership. And from the first three of the above mentioned four factors, Handy has developed a spectrum ranging from 'tight' to 'flexible,' which is shown below in Table 1.9.

**Table 1.9 The ‘best-fit’ spectrum proposed by Charles Handy**

Elements	Tight	Flexible
<b>The Leader</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preference for autocratic style</li> <li>▪ Arrogant &amp; contemptuous of subordinates</li> <li>▪ Dislikes uncertainty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preference for democratic style</li> <li>▪ Confident in subordinates</li> <li>▪ Dislikes stress</li> <li>▪ Accepts reasonable risk &amp; uncertainty</li> </ul>
<b>The Subordinates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Low opinion of own abilities</li> <li>▪ Do not like uncertainty in their work &amp; like to be ordered</li> <li>▪ Regard their work as trivial</li> <li>▪ Past experience in work leads to acceptance</li> <li>▪ Cultural factors lean them towards autocratic/dictatorial leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High opinion of own abilities</li> <li>▪ Like challenging, important work</li> <li>▪ Prepared to accept uncertainty &amp; longer timescales for results</li> <li>▪ Cultural factors favor independence</li> </ul>
<b>The Task</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Job requires no initiative, is routine &amp; repetitive or has a certain outcome</li> <li>▪ Short timescale for completion</li> <li>▪ Trivial tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Important tasks with a longer timescale</li> <li>▪ Problem-solving or decision-making involved</li> <li>▪ Complex work</li> </ul>

However, it is to be kept in mind that Handy’s ‘**best-fit**’ occurs where all the three factors stand at the same point in the spectrum, and that almost inevitably there will be a misfit, and change will be necessary. Besides, Handy’s fourth factor is the ‘**environment**’ which is defined in terms of power, organizational norms, the structure and technology of the organization as well as the variety of the tasks and subordinates. Essentially, the environment can be improved if:

- (i) the leaders are given a clear-cut role and power;
- (ii) organizational norms might be broken;
- (iii) organizational structure is not rigid; and
- (iv) subordinates in a work group are all of the same quality or type.

#### **APPLICABILITY OF HANDY’S THEORY (STUDY FINDINGS)**

It is somewhat difficult to apply the ‘best-fit’ theory advocated by Charles Handy at the household level because although household is an organization – in almost every respect – it is quite different from other types of organizations such as

business, non-business, public, private, charitable, and NGOs. Nonetheless, it has been my observation during the fieldwork that in all the three villages leadership style in most of the households of rich and moderate economic classes is ‘tight’ and that of the poor households is rather ‘flexible.’

#### **(D) LIKERT’S FOUR SYSTEMS OF MANAGEMENT**

Professor Rensis Likert and his associates at the University of Michigan have studied the patterns and styles of leaders and managers for three decades. In the course of these researches, Likert has developed certain ideas and approaches important to understanding leadership behavior. Since it appeals to human motivations, Likert views this approach as the most effective way to lead a group. Nonetheless, as guidelines for research and for the clarification of his concepts, Likert has suggested the four systems of management, which are presented below.

**System 1 : Exploitative Autocrat** – which is the epitome of the authoritarian style.

**System 2 : Benevolent Authoritative** – is basically a paternalistic style. There is a limited element of reward, but communication is restricted. Policy is made at the top, yet there is some restricted delegation within rigidly defined procedures.

**System 3 : Consultative** – the leader has some incomplete confidence in subordinates, listens to them but controls decision-making, motivates by reward and a level of involvement and will use the ideas and suggestions of subordinates constructively.

**System 4 : Participative-Group** – management gives economic rewards, rather than mere ‘pats on the head,’ utilizes full group-participation and involves teams

in goal setting, and improving work methods and communication flows up and down. There is a close psychological relationship between superiors and subordinates. Decision-making is permitted at all levels and is integrated into the formal structure with reference to the organizational chart. Each group overlaps and is linked to the rest of the organization by link pins that are members of more than one group.

As to the situation in which to apply what type of management style, however, Likert himself recognized that each style is relevant in some situations; for example, in a crisis, 'System 1' Approach is usually required. Alternatively, when introducing a new system of work, 'System 4' would be most effective. His research shows that effective managers are those who adopt either a 'System 3' or a 'System 4' leadership style. Both are seen as being based on trust and paying attention to the needs of both the organization and its people.

#### **APPLICABILITY OF LIKERT'S THEORY (STUDY FINDINGS)**

During the field work I have observed that in almost all the households of rich and moderate economic classes of all the three villages, System 1 and System 2 leadership styles are dominant. Besides, in only a small number of households belonging to the moderate economic condition System 3 style is found to be practiced. On the other hand, in the poor households of all the three villages System 3 leadership style is found dominant. In a very households of the poor economic class System 2 style of leadership is found to be practiced. But I have found no household in any village in which System 4 style of leadership is practiced.

**(E) THE THEORY OF LEADERSHIP BY LEWIN, WHITE & LIPPIT**

K. Lewin, R. Lippit and R. White (1939) argued that to research the effectiveness of various styles of leadership, it is necessary to hold the situation constant. They set-up an experiment, which concentrated on the impact of three leadership styles in task-oriented groups. The study involved directing groups of schoolchildren in four different clubs. They were carefully matched for IQ, popularity, energy and so on and all worked on the same project of making masks. They had three following types of leader assigned to them:

- (i) **Authoritarian** : this leader was to remain aloof and to use orders without consultation in directing the group activities.
- (ii) **Democratic** : this leader was to offer guidance, encourage the children and participate in the group.
- (iii) **Laissez-faire** : this leader gave the children knowledge, but did not become involved and generally participated little in the group's activities.

The results showed that the democratic leadership style seemed to be the most successful:

- (i) **Authoritarian** : groups became aggressive and/or apathetic, high dependence on leader, rebellious, attention-seeking, outbursts of horseplay but group got the work done.
- (ii) **Democratic** : personal friendly group, a lot of individual differences but strong group mindedness, steady work, better results.



(iii) **Laissez-faire** : the group lacked achievement, members asked lots of questions, unable to plan or reach a decision, played about but did not get a lot done.

#### **APPLICABILITY OF THE THEORY (STUDY FINDINGS)**

My study findings reveal that in majority of the households (around three-fourth) of the three villages, the leadership style is authoritarian. And all these households belong to the rich and moderate economic classes. Of the rest, in a good number of households some sort of democratic leadership has prevailed. Contrary to this, in almost all the poor households – except a few – democratic form of leadership has been found prevalent. And in rest of the households of the poor economic class, the style of leadership has been laissez-faire.

#### **LEADERSHIP BEYOND THEORETICAL JUSTIFICATIONS**

In addition to the abovementioned theoretical justification of household-level leadership in the three villages, I have attempted to explore the nature of applicability of leadership at the sample households from two points of view viz. (i) the relationship between a household member's economic strength and his or her likelihood of becoming the leader of the household; and (ii) the tendency of the household leader to balance among the needs of all the members of the household at the same time. Information on these two dimensions that I have collected during the field work can be summarized as under:

##### **(i) Household Leader and Economic Strength**

More than two-third respondents from the nuclear households have agreed that there is a positive relationship between earning power of a household member and his or her chance of becoming the household leader. One of the reasons behind this phenomenon, as I have observed, might be that since in a patriarchal society like ours the control of all the household resources of the nuclear households remains with the eldest male of the household, it is rather natural that he would be the leader of the household—not his wife.

But no such clear-cut conclusion could be drawn with regard to the joint and extended households. I have observed that in the joint and extended households, the determinant of a person's becoming the household member depends more on his position in the family hierarchy than on his economic strength. Because I have found such households in which the household head is not the main bread-earner of the household. For example, the son earns the income either by doing job in the formal sector or by producing crops, but the father (who, due to old age, cannot yield any income) leads the house – i.e. he holds the authority and hence makes the final decision on household related matters. Traditional family value system might also have played a role in this regard.

### **(ii) Household Leader's Tendency to Balance Household Members' Needs**

Keeping in mind the common economic problem of 'satisfying our insatiable wants with limited means,' while I asked whether or not the household head tries to balance the needs of all the members of the household at the same time, almost all the respondents, irrespective of their economic condition, replied in the

affirmative. But, at the same time, they reminded me of the harsh reality that in spite of their honest and sincere attempt to keep all the members of the household equally happy by satisfying all their needs, they cannot always do so on account of the persisting resource limitations. In this connection, responses given by the wife of the leader of a Hindu extended household of village Sonapur and the leader of a joint household of village Bhabanipur seem worth mentioning here.

**Example 01 :** Sheuli Das, 49 – the wife of Rajmohan Das, 53, who is the leader of their seventeen member extended household comprising four generations – has to look after all the internal household matters. They belong to the moderate economic class. At the time of interviewing her husband Rajmohan Das, out of curiosity, Sheuli came to join us. When I asked Rajmohan Das as to whether or not he tries to balance the needs of all the members of his extended household at the same time, he replied in the affirmative but said that, being the leader of the household, he always tries to do so though sometimes he becomes unable to do so due to the resource constraints. At this stage of our conversation Sheuli has interrupted us as saying: “suppose, when guests come to visit us I have to slaughter hens in order to entertain the guests. But after serving the guests it does not become always possible for me to give meat to all the members of the family. In such cases, I give meat to some members of the household. And the rest of the members get meat next time another guest comes to visit us and I slaughter a hen. I usually do not forget whom I gave meat first time and they do not get meat second time.”

**Example 02 :** Suruz Mia, aged around 58, is the Head of an eleven-member joint household of village Bhabanipur. Theirs is a lower middle-class household. While

asked the same question that I asked Rajmohan Das, he gave almost similar answer by citing an example: “the amount of cultivable land that we have is not sufficient enough to produce paddy and other crops to meet extra needs of the household members after ensuring the whole years food demand of the entire family. So, especially during Eid-ul-Fitr I cannot buy new clothes for every member of my family. What I do, instead, is that during one Eid I buy new clothes for some of the family members and for the other members I do not buy. During next Eid I buy new clothes for those members who did not get new clothes the previous year. This is how I have been maintaining my family members for years. This has become the tradition of my family because everybody is well aware of my capabilities. Without following such a system I could not have succeeded to maintain the harmonious balance of my family.”

## **CONCLUSION**

Household is the bed-rock for the well-being and development of its members. Households are the rightful foundation for planning and developing the socialization, education and support that young people need as they take on adult lives since they are the experts in knowing what they need to make things work for them. The central priority of the household for health, nutrition, education, and social care must be to ensure that every member of the household strengthens their own resilience. Indeed, household leadership does not mean that household members would do everything for themselves. Household leadership can only be attained when all members of the household are given a voice.

On the other hand, household leadership is based on the premise that household members are the experts in their own lives. Theoretically speaking,

household leadership is something to strive for them from the earliest possible stage, transition is a time when it comes into its own. Household leadership is based on the premise that all family members are of equal value and that household dynamics change as children move from one age and stage to another. Household leadership depends upon parents championing the voice and independence of their sons and daughters.

Information collected from the field survey hints to the fact that authoritarian form of leadership dominates in the sample households, especially in those which belong to the rich and moderate economic classes. And in the poor households, participatory style of leadership prevails to a large extent. In few of the poor households laissez-faire leadership is found to be existent to a very large extent. Moreover, findings presented in this chapter also indicate the presence of a nexus among leadership styles, authority structures, and decision-making types in the sample households of the three villages covered by the present study. In conclusion, however, I would like to say that there exists a strong, positive correlation between the households' economic condition and leadership style. Another aspect of leadership that I have observed during the field work is that whatever is the style or form of leadership in the households, the prime concern of every leader is to ensure wellbeing of the members of their respective households. And as an outcome of this orientation, the forms of households also change. The next part of this dissertation discusses the changes in household formation.

### **PART – III**

## **THE OUTCOMES OF APPLICATION OF THE MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS**

In part-II of this dissertation I have discussed the applicability of the three Management Functions viz. Decision-Making (chapter 3), Authority (chapter 4), and Leadership (chapter 5) at the household level in rural Bangladesh.

Considering household level decision-making in terms of decision-making strategies, decision-making styles, and decision issues with a focus on the gender dimension of decision-making, Chapter 3 showed that there exists a relationship between household level decision-making strategies and household types as well as household-level decision-making styles and the economic condition of the household. The chapter also revealed the nexus between women's economic condition and their scope of getting involved in the decision-making process regarding household affairs.

On the other hand, Chapter 4 has showed that the patriarchal form of authority – albeit in various forms – at the sample households in the three villages from which I have collected the required information. The chapter also asserts that women tend to cooperate (though not totally spontaneously) especially with their husbands in order to avoid conflicting situation. Besides, this chapter contains a few instances where women have tried to raise their voices against the male authoritarianism, which ultimately resulted in nothing but unpleasant arguments and in the end they (i.e. the women) had to give-up much against their will.

The final point that has been made in the chapter is that the existing trend of patriarchal authoritarianism at the household level in rural Bangladesh is to be

revised – if not reversed – to a large extent in order to ensure a level playing field for the women to improve their condition so that they can get opportunity to meaningfully contribute towards the wellbeing of the household in particular and of the country in general. Because, as has been argued in the chapter, it is the household from where women can start practicing the leadership role.

Finally, based on the information collected from the field survey, Chapter 5 of this dissertation points to the fact that authoritarian form of leadership dominates in the sample households, especially in those which belong to the rich and moderate economic classes. But, in the poor households, however, participatory style of leadership prevails to a large extent. In few of the poor households laissez-faire leadership style is found to be existent to a very large extent. Moreover, findings presented in this chapter also indicate the presence of a nexus among leadership styles, authority structures, and decision-making types in the sample households of the three villages covered by the present study. In conclusion, the chapter reveals a strong, positive correlation between the households' economic condition and leadership style. Another aspect of leadership that the chapter unearths is that whatever may be the style or form of leadership in the households, the prime concern of every leader is to ensure wellbeing of the members of their respective households. And as an outcome of this orientation, the forms of households also change.

The aforesaid findings on the applicability of the three management functions at the household level in the three villages from which I have collected necessary information used in this dissertation, taken together, result in some

outcomes which demand separate mentioning. In short, this part of the dissertation contains these outcomes, which I present in two chapters (e.g. chapter 6 and chapter 7). In chapter 6, I discuss the new forms of households while chapter 7 contains wellbeing of the households.



## CHAPTER 6 EMERGING FORMS OF HOUSEHOLDS IN RURAL BANGLADESH

### INTRODUCTION

Household (and for that matter ‘family’) is the microcosmic reflection of society, which is why a survey of any given society usually starts with the household. And home, which represents the physical and emotional space shared by the members of a family, may be considered the domestic archive of a nation (Bhattacharya: 2008). But, ironically, sociologists as well as anthropologists have apparently failed to develop not only a comprehensive definition of the terms ‘household’ and ‘family’ but also a unique categorization of this very important social institution.

Apropos of the above argument, Uberoi (1999) is of the opinion that: ‘undoubtedly, the analytical separation of the notion ‘household’ from that of ‘family’ has resulted in much needed clarification of many issues concerning the morphology of the household. But one cannot pretend that this distinction has settled all problematic issues, once and for all’ (Uberoi 1999: 389). Of prime importance, anthropologists and sociologists of the ‘family’ now see a need to go beyond mere description of the form or morphology of the ‘household’ to an examination of its functions and activities: ‘what it does, and how it works’ (Netting, Wilk, and Arnould 1984: xix). Indeed, these scholars are well aware that *physical location* (co-residence and commensality), *shared activities* (of production and consumption), and *kinship ties* (by birth and marriage) need not empirically or logically coincide (ibid.: xx)

Ethnographers, however, have documented many cases where the partitioning of the household (into separate residential or hearth groups) has not

been followed immediately by the partitioning of jointly-held property such as arable lands, fruit trees, wells, access roads, etc. In practice, however, some forms of property are not amenable to partition. Thus, the household defined in terms of shared activities of production and consumption may be a different and more amorphous unit than that defined simply by criteria of commensality and co-residence, but a restriction of interest to just the latter features, avoiding these troublesome complexities, many ultimately conceal more sociologically relevant that it discloses.

But describing the household structure in terms of the predominance of one type or the other, with all the value judgment that it implies, completely fails to capture the complexity of the data and the results in contemporary readings. For example, a household composed of a man, his wife, children, and widowed parent could be classified by some scholars as a 'nuclear household' (supplementary), and by others as a 'joint household' (depleted), by skewing interpretation of the data accordingly. Moreover, the nuclear/joint dichotomy obscures the more significant empirical reality of 'single person households' and 'non-parental households, of the different types of 'joint households,' and of the frequent attachment to the household, nuclear or joint, of other kin.

However, to go back to my argument of the failure of sociologists and anthropologists of developing a unique categorization of household, a few categories used by different researchers can be noted. For instance, in his study of leadership pattern in agrarian society Karim (1990: 66) has identified seven broad categories of households e.g. nuclear household, sub-nuclear household,

supplementary nuclear household, lineal joint household, collateral joint household, lineal collateral joint household, and single person household. On other hand, in studying the household patterns of a 'Bangladeshi village' in England, Khanum (2001: 496) explores two new types of households viz. 'circumstantial households' and 'conventional households.'

Furthermore, in his study of social structure and fertility behavior, Sarker (1997: 48) admits that the type of household structure depends upon the composition of its membership pattern which also varies from one society to another or even within the different segments of the same society. Moreover, type of household is not a static phenomenon, rather it is dynamic in nature due to factors like birth, death, marriage, separation, divorce, and migration of its members. He also asserts that it is difficult to say how far modern economy, spread of education and other civic facilities have changed the types of household in the rural society. Nonetheless, he has used four types of households such as nuclear households, supplementary nuclear households, joint households and extended households.

It is worth mentioning that the most widely used typology of household (family) forms is the one developed by Pauline Kolenda back in 1968. She identified as many as eleven household types, with a residual 'others' category. These are: nuclear households; supplemented nuclear households; sub-nuclear households; single person households; supplemented sub-nuclear households; collateral joint households; supplemented collateral joint households; lineal joint households; supplemented lineal joint households; lineal collateral joint

households; and supplemented lineal-collateral joint households. It is noticeable that for reasons unknown in her typology of the households Kolenda did not mention the extended household type. In fact, while studying household or family of especially the Indian sub-continent most of the researchers have either followed or used the household typology advocated by Kolenda. The household typology identified by A. M. Shah (1973<sub>a</sub>) also possesses the features similar to those of Kolenda.

Broadly speaking, the three types of households viz. nuclear, joint, and extended, which I have used in my study have their roots in the typology of Pauline Kolenda. But in addition to these three types of households, during the fieldwork I have noticed the presence of at least four different, if not new, types of households which are: Despotic Household, Super-trader Households, Glued-together Households, and Circumstantial Glued-together Households. Of these four household types, the first three types (e.g. Despotic, Super-trader, and Glued-together households) have been elaborated by Nobel Laureate Professor Amartya Sen back in the year 1983. But in the development discourse and related literature the fourth type of households i.e. the Circumstantial Glued-together Households is found to be discussed. In what follows next is description of these new forms of households.

#### **THE FOUR HOUSEHOLD FORMS: A NEW CHAPTER OF RURAL BANGLADESH'S HOUSEHOLD TYPOLOGY?**

As a unit of production, consumption, reproduction, and accumulation, the family (and for that matter the 'household') is profoundly impacted by any sort of

economic upheaval that transforms the environment within which households make their decisions as well as perform their all other functions. Indeed, these broader socio-political and economic environments provide the contexts for understanding changes in the family structures. The fact that the mere existence of households along with their roles in the functioning of the economy not only raise important and difficult issues for economic theory and policy, but also threaten some of the basic outcomes and opinions. And it is also true that ‘neoclassical economics treats the household as a unified whole’ (Rita: 2001).

In such a backdrop, Professor Amartya Sen (1983<sub>a</sub>) raises a fundamental question: Can the traditional lessons of price theory and market equilibrium be preserved, or at least neatly adapted without much loss, by making some special assumptions about how does the households function? The answer is, yes, but the assumptions are quite strong and farfetched. In order to explain what is involved, Professor Sen discusses three alternative ways, which are also the first three of the four new types of households that I have observed to be present in my study villages. These are:

**DESPOTIC HOUSEHOLDS: *THE THEORY***

In this type of household a despotic head of the household takes all decisions and other members of the household just obey. In such a context the household behavior becomes nothing but just a reflection of the head’s choice function, and household welfare—in terms of revealed preferences—is to be seen as the maxim and implicit in the head’s choices and preferences. The fact that the head (i.e. the despot) of the despotic household exerts total command over every single member

of the household means that the despot does possess absolute authority and power in the household. From the standpoint of the sources of social power, Michael Mann (1989) defines “despotic power” as “the range of actions that the ruler and his staff are empowered to attempt to implement without routine, institutionalized negotiation with civil society groups. A supreme despot, say a monarch whose claim to divinity is generally accepted can thus attempt virtually any action without ‘principled’ opposition,” Michael Mann (1989: 169-70). Although there is no denying of the fact that there are some insights to be gained from this model, Sen (Ibid.: 454-5) still suspects that it is difficult – if not impossible – to assume that in real world situations household heads at all have such complete and unchallenged command over all the economic actions of everyone in the household.

‘Further, even if the head did have such complete command, it would be absurd to think that this view of the welfare of the household should be the only view that counts in welfare analysis (e. g., in specifying Pareto optimality). Besides, the ‘subordinated’ and the ‘subjugated’ members of the household might obey the decisions and orders, but why should it be assumed that their views about their own welfare and about the household’s welfare should have no status?’ – questions Sen (Ibid.: 455). In addition, the rapidly growing literature on the position of women often accepts – indeed asserts – a variant of the descriptive view of the despotic household without, of course, seeing household welfare in terms of the despot’s objectives, choices, preferences, and bounded rationality.

## **DESPOTIC HOUSEHOLDS: THE PRACTICE<sup>26</sup>**

In the plea of exemplifying the entire chemistry of the four new types of households I present four different case studies, each for every type. For instance, the following case study of Md. Muhibur Rahman covers the pros and cons of the despotic form of household.

### **Case Study 02 : Leaving his Lorry's steering Muhib holds the steering of his family.**

Md. Muhibur Rahman<sup>27</sup>, aged about 49 years, hails from village Sonapur in Bishwambarpur upazila under Sunamgonj district. The events of his life, if combined together chronologically, becomes a unique example of what we call 'Despotic Household.'

“I am the eldest of the five children (three sons and two daughters) of my parents. Next child of my parents is my brother Md. Khalilur Rahman. After Khalil, born my two sisters Amena and Momena. And my parents' youngest child is my brother Md. Faridur Rahman. However, upon my grandfather's wish of seeing the wife of his grandson my father gave me marriage in 1982 when I was only 18 years old. Within a year of my marriage my father had separated me. In 1983 my first son Md. Mujibor Rahman was born. And just the next year my daughter Ayesha was born against me and my wife's wish (Muhib told in a shameful tone).

“I had inherited two cares (60 decimals) of agricultural land and a house from my father. After my marriage I started working hard round the year. Although our village is located in the Haor region and cash crop (paddy) can be

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<sup>26</sup> As I have noted earlier in this part of the dissertation that I have sensed the presence of a somewhat different set of household typology in my study villages during the field survey, I understood that by using interview or any other method I would not be able to collect information about my perceived household typology. Instead, I have used the technique of 'story-telling' with the heads of those households which came under my suspicion.

<sup>27</sup> Upon request of the respondent, characters of the Case Study are identified with pseudo names.

cultivated only once in a year, the total amount of paddy that I was able to produce was not only adequate enough for the whole year's food of my small family, but every season I could also sell some extra quantities of paddy. By saving the extra earning year after year he bought another three cares (90 decimals) of agricultural land. As a result, during the six months of rainy season when most of our neighbors were suffering tremendously, our condition was just the opposite.

“Although we live in the Haor region, neither me nor my two brothers were skillful enough to catch fish during the six months of rainy season. When I was about twenty years old, with the burden of a wife and two babies on my shoulder, during the six months of rainy season I started to stay in Sylhet town to work in a motor workshop. While acquiring the skills of repairing motor vehicles at the workshop, I also learned truck driving. And within two to three years I got driving license. After getting the driving license I left the workshop and started driving inter-district trucks. In 1986 and 1987 my second daughter Khadija and second son Md. Riazur Rahman were born..

“The year 1988 was full of curse for us. That year's flood washed away all my paddies and my house was also damaged very much. Moreover, my wife conceived again and her condition was so critical that the big doctor of Bishwambarpur Upazila Health Complex advised me to take my wife to the Osmani Medical College Hospital in Sylhet. The baby died in the womb and to save my wife's life doctor's had done a surgery. My wife stayed at the hospital for more than four months. I had to spend a very big amount of money for my wife's treatment. In order to do that I had to sell one care of my agricultural land, and I had to borrow money from many people. Besides, I also lost my job. Moreover, my sister Amena's husband died in a road accident. With two daughters Amena returned to us. It was in that year that we for the first time could not afford to have three meals a day. After my wife left the hospital, I again started driving truck.

“My mother died earlier, perhaps in 1984. My father and my sister Amena and her two sisters took meals with my family. One day I went home from Sylhet in the afternoon. The next morning my father asked my sister Momena to come to our home with her husband. After eating dinner that night, my father called us all to him and told me : ‘Muhib, you are my eldest son. I know, my days are running



out. You give me the word that after my death you will keep Amena and her daughters with you; and will do justice to all.’ My father’s words silenced us all for a moment. My sisters started crying. But I kept my cool and replied that ‘yes, father, I will do that.’ One day later my father passed away. (Mr. Muhib started weeping).

“As I could not give time due to my job of truck driving, during the Boro season my wife could successfully handle all the agricultural works with hired labor. But the volume of production was just sufficient for the whole year’s food for the whole year. Other needs of my wife and children as well as of my sister and her daughters were met with the money I gave from time to time from my earning. I sent my sons and daughters to school. Life was tough that time.

“However, a maternal uncle of my wife was sending people overseas. With his help in February 1992 I went to Malaysia with driving visa. I managed to give Tk 50,000 and my father-in-law gave the rest one lakh taka. Initially I got a job of driving a van of a food processing company. But within seven to eight months, I got the job of driving a large Lorry of a construction company. And my monthly earning was also attractive. Since two months after my arrival in Malaysia I started sending money to my wife. At first she paid back Tk one lakh that I borrowed from my father-in-law. Within one and a half years, I bought two cares (60 decimals) of agricultural lands. The lands that I bought were registered in my wife’s name.

“In 1997 I came to Bangladesh on a leave of one month. I admitted my eldest son Mujibor in Class-ix at a Government High School in Sylhet town and he was staying in the hostel. That time I again bought two more cares (60 decimals) of agricultural land and registered the lands in my wife’s name. I also gave some money to my sister to build a separate house within our homestead, because her daughters were growing up. My brother Khalil tried to stop me from allowing Amena to build her separate house, but I did not listen to what Khalil said.

“From mid-1998 my wife started to inform me that Khalil is getting aggressive gradually. Khalil was insisting Amena to leave our homestead. One day my wife told me that Khalil had beaten Amena for not leaving our homestead. Next day Amena also informed me about Khalil’s non-stop torture on her. In

1999 Khalil passed SSC and was admitted in a big private college in HSC. My eldest daughter Ayesha was studying in Class-ix at Bishawmbarpur High School.

“Meanwhile, in 2001 Mujibor passed HSC and took admission in the same college in B. Com. Now and then I was getting news that my eldest son Mujibor got involved in politics of religion-based political party. I also came to know that he became a renowned student leader in the college. My wife was informing me that Mujibor does not go to village as regularly as he was going earlier. One day I talked with my son Mujibor and he told me that he is ok. He cannot go to village regularly due to the pressure of studies. I believed my son.

“But later I realized that he lied with me. Sometimes in February or March 2002, one of my brothers-in-law informed me that Mujibor was caught by Army from the college hostel with illegal arms and stolen motorcycle, and that he was sent to jail. I got shocked by the news. But I could not manage leave from my company to come to Bangladesh. My wife and her brothers wanted to try to bring Mujibor out of jail but I stopped them from doing so. My logic was that, the boy who can lie with me and can keep arms and drive stolen more cycle should live behind the bar. Besides telling my wife and her brothers to not try to get Mujibor released from jail, several I also made the same request to the leaders of the political party he belonged to

“In the mean time marriage proposals for my eldest daughter started to come. My youngest daughter Khadija and youngest son Riazur also passed SSC in 2003. Both of them wanted to study HSC in Sylhet town. But I could not decide what to do about them. Indeed, the bitter experience that my eldest son gave me discourage me to allow my youngest children to send to Sylhet town. Instead, I convinced both Khadija and Riazur to get admission in Sunamgonj College. Riazur went to college regularly from my younger sister-in-law’s house at Sunamgonj, but Khadija stayed with her mother in the village and seldom attended classes.

“During such a situation, one day when I was driving my lorry, suddenly my mind I asked me what would be the value of your working so hard staying away from your family, if your children are not guided properly? At the end of that week I informed my boss that I would not stay in Malaysia anymore, and it was my final decision. I still wonder, how my boss accepted my final proposal! And in July 2004, after staying in Malaysia for more than twelve years, I finally

returned to Bangladesh. Soon after returning to Bangladesh I at first gave my eldest daughter Ayesha marriage. At that time I was rather compelled by Ayesha, my youngest daughter Khadija and my wife to bring Mujibor out of jail before Ayesha's marriage. Hence, Mujibor got released. I also met with the top leaders of the party with which my eldest son Mujibor was involved to request them to and eventually succeeded to bring my son out of the vicious circle of bad politics. And I sent him to Dubai. Before sending Mujibor to Dubai I opened a joint-account (in me and my son's name) in a private commercial bank in Sunamgonj so that he can send money from Dubai but cannot spend without my consent. In January 2005 I built this new house. I also gave the marriage of the eldest daughter of my sister Amena and bought a Truck, which I myself drive. Unfortunately, though, while staying in Malaysia I got to know that my youngest daughter developed a relationship with a boy of our neighboring Hindu family. But it was impossible for me to accept such a relationship.

“Then one day in a family meeting, I declared that if anybody does not abide by my orders and instructions fully, then I would abandon them. I also instructed my daughter to think rationally and to try to live normal life, otherwise I would abandon her too. In November 2005, I also gave Khadija marriage. In 2007 I gave my eldest son Mujibor marriage and sent Riazur to Dubai with Mujibor. This time I again opened a joint-account (in Riaz and my name) in the same bank in which I opened the account for Mujibor in Sunamgonj And eventually normalcy was restored in my family. Now whenever I come to village I spend my time playing with my granddaughter (Mujibor's daughter).”

From the above case study of Muhibur Rahman some key points arise, which are noted below:

### ***Difference between Despotic Household and Authoritarian Household***

The main difference between the leader of a despotic household and an authoritarian leader of a household is, as I have noticed, that an authoritarian leader gives more importance on giving orders, but s/he does not always bother

much about whether the given order is properly implemented or not. But a despotic leader not only gives orders but at the same time makes it sure that the order is being carried out properly. To compare between a despotic leader and an authoritarian leader, let me give an example: an authoritarian leader functions like a Military General-turned-into a politician and thereby the Head of the State; but a despotic leader acts like a Chief Martial Law Administrator who runs a country under martial law.

### ***Characteristics of a despotic leader***

During the period of my fieldwork at Sonapur, especially when I was interviewing Md. Muhibor Rahman, I noticed the presence of a few uncommon characteristics in Mujibor. These characteristics, I believe, make a despotic leader different from an authoritative or autocratic leaders. In my view, a despotic leader:

- is bold and self confident
- can establish total command over others
- gives equal priority to giving orders and corresponding results
- does not take advice from any other person (an autocratic leader at times shares the problem with his or her closest person, say, wife or husband)
- never delegates any work, part or full (an authoritarian leader seldom delegates part of a work)

**SUPER-TRADER HOUSEHOLDS: *THE THEORY***

In his seminal work entitled “A treatise on the family” Gary Becker at first coined the term “super-trader” in the year 1981. Later on Professor Amartya Sen gave Becker’s model an expanded shape. Under ‘the economic approach’ of Gary Becker, individuals are assumed to be relentlessly pursuing their individual utilities, and in doing this they enter into trades at implicit prices resulting in marriages and the working of the household. While the individual utilities can include concern for others (this, according to Sen [Ibid.: 453], is an important departure from standard behavioral assumption) the process of utility maximization is carried out uncompromisingly—without constraints or proprietary norm or convention. The relationship between different members of such a ‘super-trader household’ takes the form of ‘*as if*’ market transactions at implicit prices.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, as has been advocated and debated by some scholars, the phenomenon of corporate-character of the household can prevail in this type of households.

Besides, Becker claims a long heritage for his approach, which is noted below:

“The economic approach has been refined during the last two hundred years. It now assumes that individuals maximize their utility from basic preferences that do not change rapidly over time, and that the behavior of different individuals is coordinated by explicit and implicit markets,” (Becker 1981: ix).

Even if the ‘economic approach’ has been refined in the last two hundred years, the approach still remains very much crude. It would rather be a very

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<sup>28</sup> It should be noted that the issue of consumption and welfare of children remains outside this trading format, since they are not parties to ‘as if’ market contracts but are, nevertheless, affected by them.

simplified view of an utterly complex relationship, if marriage is conceptualized merely as ‘a two-person enterprise with either of the members being the *entrepreneur* who *hires* the other and receives the residual *profits*,’ argues Becker (1974: 57-8). On the other hand, it cannot be argued that by seeing family relationships in this way, nobody could gain any meaningful insights. Among other characteristics of the household, trading transactions may be appeared as another one.

Furthermore, as has been remarked by Bernard Shaw that ‘all marriages are different like fingerprints,’ there is every possibility that an important clue to some significant aspects of many marriages might be provided by the Becker’s view of marriages. “What Becker does is to convert a wisecrack into a theory of all marriages and all family relations. What would have been a witty and insightful aphorism thus becomes a rather odd general theory,” Sen (Ibid.: 454) argues critically. However, in Becker’s world, market transactions take place within the household in an imagined way at imagined prices and imagined wages. But, in reality, actual market transactions work on the basis of a great complex of institutions for trading, negotiations, contract-making, and enforcement of contracts. Hence, to expect market-like equilibriums without markets is to assume that such institutions are, in fact, redundant, if not absurd.

**SUPER-TRADER HOUSEHOLDS: *THE PRACTICE***

Alike the way through which I have described the nature of despotic household, below I present a Case Study which, I believe, would bring-forth the salient characteristic features of the ‘super-trader’ form of household.

### Case Study 3 : The tale of a miserly and selfish Hashem

Abul Hashem<sup>29</sup>, approximately in his mid-fifty, is the head of nine-member household (his wife, three sons, two daughters, and two grandchildren). He is one of the rich persons in village Bhabanipur under Sadar Dakhshin (south) Upazila in Comilla District. According to birth year, his five children are: Halima Akhter (aged about 33 years), Abul Khair (31 years), Abul Hossain (28 years), Helena Akhter (27 years), and Abul Kashem (15 years).

Born in the year 1955, Mr. Hashem was the second eldest of his parents' eight children. Soon after his marriage in 1977 when he started his separate nuclear household, Mr. Hashem inherited ten decimal homestead land, four *kani* (160 decimals) agricultural land, and a partial share of a *Dighi* owned by his grandfather. When studying at class-vi in the nearby high school, Mr. Hashem stopped going to school. Then his father employed him in agricultural works. Besides working on their own agricultural land, he was also working as a day laborer for other farmers of the village. He started to save every single Taka that he could earn by working as day laborer. By the time he got married the amount of his savings stood at around ten thousand taka. At the time of marriage Mr. Hashem received a cash amount of five thousand taka and a bicycle from his father-in-law. To start his new life Mr. Hashem had to spend about nine thousand taka to build a house of mud-wall and thatched roof.

Mr. Hashem was able to work very hard. He started to produce paddy thrice in a year in the four *kani* agricultural land that he got from his father. However, three years after marriage his eldest daughter Halima was born in 1980. In addition to doing all the domestic works, his wife had also helped him in agricultural works like drying paddy-straws, drying and storing paddy to be sold during off-season at higher price, boiling and drying paddy to be used as food as well as husking paddy to produce rice. In the village he became known as '*kipta*' (miserly) Hashem. He went to the weekly bazaar after sunset so that he can buy his required items at cheaper rates. By the time his two sons Abul Khair (born in 1982) and Abul Hossain (born in 1985) were born, he had bought three more *kanis* of agricultural land. Indeed, he was so tightfisted that during the Eid-ul-Fitr

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<sup>29</sup> Upon request for anonymity by the respondent all the characters in this case are identified by pseudo names.

he rarely buy new clothes for his wife, children, and himself. During Eid-ul-Ajha he shared with others to buy cow to be slaughtered in the name of God.

However, when the marriage of his eldest daughter Halima was in process in 2002, one day a couple of people from the bridegroom's part came to settle the important marriage related issues such as amount of dower money, number of persons to come with the bridegroom etc., Mr. Hashem demanded that the amount of dower money must be three lakhs, that he cannot entertain more than 25/30 guests, and that he cannot give her daughter any gold. However, after a long discussion, the dower money was settled to be one lakh and fifty thousand taka, some 50 guests would come with the bridegroom. Mr. Hashem gave his daughter a pair of earring and his son-in-law a wrist watch. He invited one person from each family of the village. According to him, to complete Halima's marriage, he had to spend more than two lakh taka (this amount appears to be incorrect when commodity price in the year 2002 is considered). He did not like her daughter and son-in-law come to visit him frequently.

The same character of Abul Hashem has changed when came time of his eldest son Abul Khair's marriage in 2006. He insisted that the dower money would not be more than one lakh taka, that the bride's father must give the bridegroom two lakh taka in cash, that the bride must be given full set ornaments by her father, that the bride's father must give all furniture, freeze, colored TV, that at least one hundred guests would go with the bride, that the marriage ceremony be held in a community center and that he would not arrange *bou-vat* (wedding reception). However, at the end of long discussion, it was settled that the dower money would be two lakh taka, that bride's father would give a necklace, one pair of earring and two bracelets, that the bride would be given one lakh taka cash, a freeze and a colored TV. It was also decided that 50 guests would go with the bride, that the marriage ceremony would be held at the bride's home – not in a community center, and that the bride's father would arrange a wedding reception in which some thirty guests from bride's side would attend.

On the other hand, Mr. Hashem was giving pressure on his son Khair that he would bear the entire cost of his marriage. But Khair, who had passed only SSC, was working as runner of a local sub-post office for the last six years could save only three lakh taka. He knew that soon after his marriage his father would compel him to live and eat separately. Therefore, Khair agreed to give his father



only one lakh taka. The rest two lakh taka Khair kept to start his new separate life. At the end of the marriage ceremony it was calculated that Mr. Hashem himself had to spend only one lakh taka.

Besides, Abul Hossain, who went to Saudi Arab in 2005 send money to his sister Halima who saves it in her bank account. In Abul Khair's marriage he did not contribute even a single taka although his father Abul Hashem had requested him several times to send him some taka for Khair's marriage purpose. Later on, Hossain came to Bangladesh in the year 2010 and bought two *kani* agricultural land near the village of Halima's husband, and this was kept secret to Abul Hashem.

In 2009 Helena – the second daughter of Abul Hashem was given marriage too. After studying up to class eight she could not continue her study due to Abul Hashem's decision. She had learnt tailoring from a free training camp held in the nearby High School. And by making dresses she also earned good amount of money. "The amount of money that Abul Hashem knew Helena had earned was only one-fifth her actual income," I was told by Khair's wife.

In the recent years, villagers, relatives, sons and daughters – everybody insists Abul Hashem to go to perform Hajj. But he is not at all interested to spend 2.5 to 3 lakh taka to perform Hajj. Instead he has been trying to perform Hajj as a volunteer that the local MP sends every year. Abul Hashem is confident that ultimately he would be able to perform Hajj free of cost as a volunteer to be recruited by the MP. When I asked Abul Hashem as to why he is so interested to increase savings, he replied that: "listen gentleman, money is the second God; and if you have money people will admire you, otherwise not."

What has been apparent from the above case of Md. Abul Hashem is that in a super-trader household, every household member participates in a sick culture of increasing own stake. As a result of such an unhealthy competition among household members, the sense of humanity evaporates. And selfishness takes place.

### ***Characteristics of super-trader household***

The salient feature of a super-trader household is that in such type of households “I”-viewpoint supersedes “we”-viewpoint. From macro point of view, though such type of households might seem to be helpful for the country as a whole, but from micro point of view, it destroys the natural bondage among the household members.

**GLUED-TOGETHER HOUSEHOLDS: *THE THEORY***

In this type of households individualism is ignored altogether, instead the household is considered as a single unit in terms of which economic decisions are taken and economic processes function. This can make sense only if households do typically act in this way and if the individual members of the household have no individuality what so ever. There are then, no individual decisions, individuals unity, etc., but only household decisions, household welfare, etc., and the traditional theory is simply reinterpreted in terms of households wherever and whenever individuals figured previously.

This model of the ‘glued-together household’ is nothing if not neat. But neatness is a different virtue from realism of relevance. The all embracing integration needed for this is severe. Indeed, it boggles the mind to think of behavior without bringing in persons at all. The household does not think—the members of the household do—and the anthropomorphic view of the household can be adequate for perception and choice only under very severe assumptions of congruence. Furthermore, from the point of view of welfare economics and public policy, having no notion of personal wellbeing—only of household welfare—raises some disturbing questions. Living and dying, illness and health,

and joy and sufferings happen to persons, and welfare economics can scarcely ignore these personal conditions. It is, therefore, that to consider the wellbeing of only the households by excluding that of its members sounds absurd.

**GLUED-TOGETHER HOUSEHOLDS: *THE PRACTICE***

The following case study of Zoynob Bibi brings forth the practical character of a ‘glued-together’ household.

**Case Study 6.3 : Zoynob Bibi’s continued struggle glues-together her children.**

Zoynob Bibi, aged about seventy years, is the head of fourteen-member household including herself, her two sons and their wives, one daughter and her husband, and seven grandchildren in village Bhabanipur under Sadar Dakshin (south) Upazila under Comilla District. Her first son Boshir Uddin (aged 52 years), has three children: two daughters and a son; second son Rashid Uddin (aged 50 years) has four children: two sons and two daughters; first daughter Shefali Begum (aged 49 years) has one child: a son; third son Sultan Uddin (aged 45 years) has two children: one daughter and a son; and second daughter Sheuli Begum (aged 42 years) has five children: two daughters and three sons.

Boshir Uddin was married in 1987. Of his three children the first one is daughter Shila who was born in 1989 and was given marriage in 2011 at the age of 22 years; the second one is son Sohel who was born in 1990 went to Italy in 2010 at the age of 20 years; and the third child is daughter Mila who was born in 1995 now stays with her parents and grandmother.

Rashid Uddin was married in 1990. Of his four children the first one is son Jashim who was born in 1992 now works in a Korean company at DEPZ; the second and third are twin (son Bidyut works as a sales representative of a food manufacturing company in Comilla town and daughter Borsha) born in 1994; the fourth is a daughter Hena who was born in 2001 now reads in class-v and both Bidyut, Borsha and Hena stay with their parents and grandmother.

Shefali Begum was married in 1985 lives with her husband in her in-law’s home and has only one son Billal who was born in 1988 at present works as a Meter Reader of Comilla Polli Biddut Shamity under REB.

Sultan Uddin got married in 1991, and his father-in-law took him to Italy in 1992. He now lives in Italy with his wife and two children, and every two years come to Bangladesh to spend some time with his mother, siblings, nephew and nieces.

Sheuli Begum got married in 1993 and now has four children, of whom two are daughters and two are sons. The eldest child Ratna was born in 1994 and was given marriage in 2012. The rest are sons Nahid and Nabil, and daughter Kona. Sheuli, her husband and three children live with her mother at village Bhabanipur. This is because the brothers of Sheuli's husband were very arrogant and had beaten Sheuli's husband many times for silly reasons.

It is noteworthy that due to old age nowadays Zoynob Bibi almost always remains sick. After attempting two times I failed to talk with her due to her illness. However, in my third attempt I got her in fine mood and good physical condition. After exchanging a few introductory talks when I requested her to tell me the story of her long struggle Zoynob Bibi at first told me: "hearing my life story would bring you no good." When I requested her second time, she started telling me how she has come such a long way to reach this far. In her own words:

"At the time of my marriage in 1959 I was only 16 years old. My father was the President (now Chairman) of our union. He was rich, honest, and pious. I was the third of a total six children of my parents. I studied up to class-ix. And in spite of having tremendous interest to continue my education, I could not afford to do so for a few unavoidable reasons. My father-in-law was a poor peasant, and my mother-in-law had mental problems. My husband, about ten years senior to me, was the eldest among two sons and one daughter of my parents-in-law. Therefore, at that young age I had to do all the household works almost singlehandedly. Before marriage I did not know how to cut even a onion – let alone cooking rice and curry. My father-in-law gradually trained me up in the domestic works.

"My husband was a Station Master of Bangladesh Railway. His was a transferable job. He could come home once or at best two times in a month. Therefore, I did not have anybody to talk with, to share my pains. Due to the distance between my natal village and that of my in-law's as well as very awkward communication system, I could not also visit my natal home upon my wish. Almost every day I weeped secretly. However, in 1961 our first son Boshir

Uddin was born. My husband got the news of his becoming father of a male child seventeen days after Boshir's birth. Then after born our second son Rashid Uddin in 1963, first daughter Shefali Begum in 1964, third son Sultan Uddin in 1968. In between Shefali and Sultan in 1966 another daughter was born who died within 9 days of her birth.

“However, then came the year 1971. One day my husband came home in the afternoon. After eating dinner when we went onto bed he told me that he was going to India for getting war training and he also told me to not to inform my father-in-law about his joining the Liberation War. However, refusing my wholehearted requests, he left the village at midnight. The date was 10<sup>th</sup> of April. Before leaving, he caught my hands and told that he would try to maintain communication with me. He also told me that we shall meet again as soon as we achieve independence. That time I was carrying our youngest daughter Sheuli. In the month of July I got a letter from an unknown man from which we came to know that he has returned to Bangladesh and was doing war somewhere in Feni. I received five letters from him, the last one in the month of October. From that letter we came to know that he was fighting in Rangpur. In the first week of November Sheuli was born. On 24<sup>th</sup> of November a stranger came to us and informed that my husband had died on 17<sup>th</sup> of November. I and my father-in-law tried our best to get back his dead-body but we failed. A ‘silence of grave’ came to us.

“With the independence came curse for our family. The quantity of rice that my father-in-law could produce from his own small land as well as from sharecropping was by no means sufficient to feed a family of seven members. Many days we had to remain unfed or half-fed. My father wanted to help me but I did not allow him to do so. However, in 1974 I managed the job of a midwife at Baghmara Government Hospital, which was three miles away from our village. Every morning I woke-up very early to cook the day's food, feed the children and then went to the Hospital on foot and returned in the afternoon again on foot. After getting the a sort of sigh-of-relief came to my family. Besides the hospital's job, I also worked as midwife in the surrounding villages. By all my earnings and the produce of my father-in-law, taken together, I somehow succeeded to manage the family's basic needs.

“One thing I must mention that no matter I could give food to my children or not, I always gave them moral lesson to keep integrity and remain integrated under any circumstance. In 1976 my eldest son Boshir Uddin got a job in a government ration-dealer shop at Bejoypur Bazaar. In 1981 my second son Rashid Uddin got the job of Signal-man at the level crossing of Bangladesh railway. After Rashid’s getting the job, the economic condition improved a little bit.

“Meanwhile, in 1979 I got TK. 18,000 from my father as my share of the money that my father gained by selling the house that my father once bought at Lalbagh in Dhaka. By this amount my father-in-law bought me ten decimals of land to be utilized as homestead. In the mean time, I gave all my children marriage. And one year after my third son Sultan Uddin went to Italy, in 1993 he sent me money to build this house (The house in which I was listening to Zoynob Bibi’s life story). After my retirement in 1998 I spent the whole amount of my pension to build that one (Zoynob Bibi points to a building designed with modern architecture.)

“Boy, now, if you ask me how and why have I kept all my children and grandchildren together, I would say it is simply a matter of willpower and a result of the way I socialized my children ever since their childhood. Living together, eating together, crying together, and laughing together is something money cannot ever buy,” says an apparently happy looking old Zoynob Bibi.

From the above mentioned case study of Zoynob Bibi a few characteristics of the ‘Glued-Together’ type of household emerges, which are not found present in the ‘extended households’.

### ***Difference between ‘Glued-Together’ and ‘Extended’ Households***

Usually a couple of nuclear households join together to form an extended household. This means that, while belonging to an extended household, any or some members can, for instance, eat foods cooked in the different hearth. Members of an extended household can create separate funds or savings. But in a

glued-together household members not only eat food cooked in the same hearth but also contribute to create a joint (or common) fund. On the other hand, in a glued-together household, “we”-viewpoint prevails in its truest sense among the members. But in an extended household within “we”-viewpoint, the “I”-attitude might remain present. Socialization plays a very vital role in developing a ‘glued-together’ type of household.

#### **THE CIRCUMSTANTIAL GLUED-TOGETHER HOUSEHOLDS**

This type of household is formed when unwarranted incidents such as natural calamities take place. The assumptions and underlying principles of ‘glued-together households’ and ‘circumstantial glued-together households’ are same. The only difference is the duration of existence of these type of households.

For instance, in the coastal areas natural disasters such as river erosion may compel surviving families to form the ‘circumstantial glued-together households.’ Once the calamity or disaster period is over the ‘circumstantial glued-together households’ may again disintegrate into nuclear households. During the fieldwork I have found at least two cases of ‘circumstantial glued-together households.’ But, it could not be clearly ascertained whether or not the ‘circumstantial glued-together households’ are again disintegrated as soon as the natural disaster is over.

#### **CONCLUSION**

In summary, I would like to argue that in addition to the traditional forms of households, in rural Bangladesh there exist some new forms of households which require different types of decisions, authority structures, and leadership styles.

Moreover, although the factors responsible for the formation of these new forms of households might include behavioral, economic, emotional, as well as situational elements, the ultimate goal of these new forms of households is to ensure sustainable wellbeing of its members. Hence, the next chapter of this dissertation covers a thick description of the various aspects of household wellbeing.



## **CHAPTER 7**

### **HOUSEHOLD WELLBEING**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In the three chapters of Part – II of this dissertation (i.e. Chapter 3, Chapter 4, and Chapter 5) I have discussed the applicability of three core functions of Management at the household level in Rural Bangladesh. The first of the two chapters (Chapter 6) of Part – III of the dissertation has elaborated the four emerging forms of households viz. despotic households, super-trader households, glued-together households, and circumstantial glued-together households. In chapter 6, I have argued that whatever be the form of a household, the ultimate objective of every household is to ensure the wellbeing of its members. Being the last chapter of this part of the dissertation I present the state of wellbeing (or its opposite i.e. ill-being) at the household level in the three villages I have studied. However, before delving further into the main discussion I present a brief overview of the concept of “wellbeing” which, I think, would pave the way towards presenting the analysis based on the findings of my field work.

#### **WELLBEING: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Household Wellbeing is a two-word concept which needs to be defined at the outset. In chapter 1, I have already defined what I mean by the term “household” in this dissertation. Now definition of the term “wellbeing” requires mentioning.

#### **WELLBEING DEFINED**

The dictionary meaning of the term “wellbeing” is “general health and happiness,” and it includes emotional/physical/psychological wellbeing. But in development

discourse, the concept of “wellbeing” bears different connotation. Robert Chambers (2004), for example, offers a detail description of both wellbeing and its opposite, ill-being:

“Well-being can be described as the experience of good quality of life. Well-being and its opposite, ill-being, differ from wealth and poverty. Well-being and ill-being are words with equivalents in many languages. Unlike wealth, well-being is open to the whole range of human experience, social psychological, and spiritual as well as material. It has many elements. Each person can define it for herself or himself. Perhaps most people would agree to including living standards, access to basic services, security and freedom from fear, health, good relations with others, friendship, love, peace of mind, choice, creativity, fulfillment and fun. Extreme poverty and ill-being go together, but the link between wealth and well-being is weak or even negative: reducing poverty usually diminishes ill-being, amassing wealth does not assure well-being and may diminish it,” (Chambers 2004: 10).

#### **WHAT IS HOUSEHOLD WELLBEING?**

Apropos of household wellbeing, Neergaard and Venkatesh (1989) have examined the underlying motivations, factors, and processes involved in family/household management of well-being. From their research an holistic approach to family/household well-being emerged. According to them, families/households conceptualize the construct of overall well-being as being comprised of the interrelated dimensions of physical health, mental health, and material health. When examining overall well-being, Neergaard and Venkatesh (1989) explores that the role of materialism assumes a prominent position with the non-materialistic elements. There are some indications that heightened materialism may produce a deleterious effect on an individual's composite well-being. Material well-being may not operate in a complementary capacity with the other

components of well-being. The family/household members interviewed by Neergaard and Venkatesh consistently regard well-being as a tripartite concept, where the triad consists of physical health, mental health, and material health.

As was mentioned in Chapter 1, I have viewed household wellbeing as having four elements namely, capabilities, livelihood security, equity, and sustainability. The nature of these four elements along with the ways they impact the overall wellbeing of a household is presented below.

### **Capability**

In general, capability is the measure of the ability of an entity (department, organization, person, system, household etc.) to achieve its objectives, especially in relation to its overall mission. In development discourse capabilities are means to livelihood and well-being and this also refer to what people are capable of doing and being. They are means to livelihood and fulfillment; and their enlargement through learning, practice, training and education are means to better living as well as to well-being. In this study, however, I have seen capability as of two types viz. individual capabilities and group capabilities.

### **Livelihood Security**

In my study I have examined livelihood security in terms of secure rights, physical safety, and access to resources, food and income, and basic services, which includes tangible and intangible assets to offset risks, ease shocks, and meet

contingencies. It is noteworthy that *sustainable livelihoods* maintain or enhance resource productivity on a long-term basis, whereas *equitable livelihoods* maintain or enhance the livelihoods and well-being of other members of the household.

## **Equity**

Generally speaking, equity means fairness and impartiality towards all concerned, based on the principles of evenhanded dealing. Equity implies giving as much advantage, consideration, or latitude to one party as it is given to another. Along with economy, effectiveness, and efficiency, equity is essential for ensuring that extent and costs of funds, goods and services are fairly divided among their recipients. At the household level, however, the term ‘equity’ refers to such a tradition or custom, which ensures that the poor, weak, vulnerable, and exploited members of the household should come first. In my study I have investigated equity in terms of human rights, intergenerational equity, and gender equity.

## **Sustainability**

There may be as many definitions of sustainability as there are groups trying to define it. Nonetheless, all the definitions have to do with:

- Living within the limits
- Understanding the interconnections among economy, society, and environment
- Equitable distribution of resources and opportunities

Sustainability of wellbeing over time requires preserving different types of capital such as natural capital, human capital, economic capital, and social capital. In this study I have measured sustainability in terms of economic sustainability, social sustainability, institutional sustainability, and environmental sustainability.

### **STUDY FINDINGS**

At the outset I must mention that the concepts of wellbeing and ill-being have exceedingly substantiated as to the respondents' economic status which is closely linked with livelihood outcomes of the respondents of three villages.

#### **Wellbeing and Ill-being: the respondents' view**

As to what the respondents mean by the term "wellbeing," I have got different perspectives from three different categories of households viz. poor, moderate, and rich. According to the respondents from poor households, "*wellbeing means having good income sources that generate sufficient cash money in order to buy basic needs, land property in the village and in towns.*" That is, in the opinions of the respondents of poor economic condition, wellbeing refers to the ways of fulfilling the basic needs (e.g. food, cloth, shelter, education, and health) in a sustainable manner.

Likewise, respondents from the poor households define "ill-being" as the "*means having no income source whatsoever, or have income sources that are inadequate for subsistence, none or little arable land or enough homestead land for living in congenial environment, and have more unemployed household members. Idleness, disability, and illiteracy are also the conditions of ill-being.*"

On the contrary, respondents of moderate economic conditions have different views of wellbeing and ill-being. According to them, *“lack of opportunities of fulfilling the basic needs are ill-being, and having means to fulfill the basic needs are wellbeing.”*

To the respondents from rich households, *“wellbeing means having adequate income sources which make them economically solvent and stable, having quality education, enough homestead, and cultivable land.”* On the other hand, ill-being means, *“having no secured income source due to which they face food deficiency, cannot send their children to school in spite of having intentions, do not have house for living and lack of clothing.”*

### **Capability**

While asked to cite examples of both individual and group capabilities, the amalgam of responses given by respondents from the three villages reveals that individual capabilities include the ability of individual household members to satisfy his or her basic needs, to hold personal capacity to extend help to the needs of other members of the household. On the other hand, group capabilities include the combined strength of the household members to confidently face any sort of disaster – be it natural or man-made, the attitude to prefer collectivism instead of individualism.

One remarkable finding of my study is that individual capability is more prevalent in the super-trader households, whereas group capability is found to be exercised much in the glued-together households. Likewise, individual capabilities

is practiced more in the rich households than in the moderate and poor households, whereas group capabilities are practiced more in the moderate and poor households than in the rich households. Of the three villages covered by my study, group capabilities are practiced most widely in village Sonapur (situated in the Haor region) and village Kalikanagar (situated in the coastal region). In village Bhabanipur (situated in the flood-free region), group capabilities are superseded by individual capabilities. It is my perception that a reason behind this trend might be the fact that people from both Haor and Coastal regions have to survive by fighting against nature and its devastating behaviors. It is, therefore, not unusual that households belonging to the Haor region and the Coastal region do practice and give more emphasis on group capabilities than on individual capabilities.

### **Livelihood Security**

I have already mentioned earlier in this chapter that in this dissertation I examine livelihood security in terms of secure rights, physical safety, and access to resources, food and income, and basic services. However, when I asked the respondents to identify the areas of household that they think rights of the household members are or should be secured, I have got diverse responses. Respondents from the poor households of all the three villages, for instance, have told that their rights are secured if and when adequacy and availability of both foods as well as cash or kind needed to satisfy their basic needs are ensured. On the contrary, according to the respondents from households of both moderate and

rich economic conditions, their rights are secured if and when they get reasonable price of their produced crops on the one hand, and their crops are not damaged by natural calamity of any sort.

In regard to physical safety, respondents from Sonapur and Kalikanagar villages gave almost similar opinions: that is, their homestead be safe from flood water and river erosion. On the same issue, opinions of the respondents from all the three villages become similar at one point: that is, safety of their resources from the hands of thieves and dacoits. In this connection, respondents from village Sonapur informed that especially during the rainy season they become most vulnerable in terms of protecting their livestock – e.g. cows and goats etc. Because during the rainy season every village of the Haor region looks like a separate island and communication system among villages becomes worst. During the rainy season country-boats are the only means of communication. Group of dacoits with arms and weapons come to a village riding trawlers in order to loot cows and goats. Incidents of villagers giving their lives in the hands of the dacoits while trying to fight them to protect their cows and goats are not rare. Villagers usually do not get necessary support from the police during such incidents. As a result, in a bid to protect their livestock as well as other tangible and intangible assets villagers form a couple of groups who patrol the village during the night time so that dacoits cannot enter into the village.

Besides, when the issue of access to resources, food and income, and basic services comes under consideration, I have observed that, in except a few cases, female members of the households are the common victim. Not only that the



female members take meals after the male members have eaten, but females are also the sufferers on the issues like healthcare services. For example, if a male child becomes sick, the household head or other adult members do not waste time to give him proper and timely medication. But if a female member of the household becomes sick, seldom she receives modern treatment or is taken to a doctor. This observation is true in all the three villages.

### **Equity**

Although earlier in the chapter I have noted that at the household level the term 'equity' refers to such a tradition or custom, which ensures that the poor, weak, vulnerable, and exploited members of the household should come first, the reality does not purport the same. In my study I have investigated 'equity' in terms of human rights, intergenerational equity, and gender equity.

During the field work I have observed that violation of fundamental human rights has become a norm. For example, in order to have an idea about the prevailing condition of human rights and gender equity, I have used only one issue, that is, the female members right to vote. In response to my question as to whether the female members of the household can cast their votes in different elections, more than three-fourth respondents of village Kalikanagar and Sonapur opined that it is not much important for the females to cast their votes. When, as supplementary to their responses I said that to cast votes is one of the fundamental human rights of the females, the respondents told that, on the one hand, it is

difficult for the females to go to the election centers which are far away from their village, and since it takes a lot of time to cast vote, then who would look after the household affairs when the women would be out of home on the election day. But the females of village Bhabanipur do cast their votes in every election. This is, according to me, due to good communication system and close proximity between the village and the election center.

On the other hand, as regards intergenerational equity, I have observed that in most of the instances the elder members of the households are easy victims of this issue. During my field work I have observed that except very few number of cases, once the properties are being distributed among sons and daughters, old aged parents do not receive required care and attention from their sons and/or daughters-in-law. At the same time, where the old parents have not yet distributed their properties among their sons and daughters, they avail above par care and attention from their sons and daughters-in-law.

### **Sustainability**

Once attained, wellbeing must be sustained. But the theoretical notion that ‘in order for wellbeing to be sustained over time different types of capital such as natural capital, human capital, economic capital, and social capital need to be preserved’ does not match with the findings of my study. To elaborate the point I would like to mention here that preservation of natural capital has been a utopia at least for a good number of sample households of my study. Because, the natural capital, for example, includes the Haors which are supposed to belong to and taken

care of by the actual fishermen. But in reality the Haors have been leased-in by the non-fishermen traders. As a result of which the real fishermen are deprived of catching fish freely in the Haors thereby earn their livelihoods. On the other hand, due to use of modern (and in most of the cases adulterated) fertilizers and pesticides in the paddy fields during the dry season, the Haors no longer remain the reservoir of varieties of fishes. This means, one element of natural capital cannot be preserved. This also indicates that environmental sustainability of household wellbeing has been distorted.

On the other hand, when the question of preserving the human capital comes into consideration, a good number of respondents from each of the three villages are of the opinion that whenever a male child becomes adult and starts earning money, he gets married and then starts his independent nuclear household within soonest possible time. As a consequence, the parents who earlier have invested a lot of money, time, and effort behind that male child in return receive no payback once he (the male child) becomes an adult. This phenomenon not only means that human capital cannot be preserved as well, but also signifies that institutional sustainability of household wellbeing does not happen.

Likewise, to preserve economic capital has become impossible for a number of reasons. To make the point more clear let me cite two examples. In the first instance, Abdur Rahim (pseudo name) a boy of about 21 years has taken three Lakh taka from his father Abdul Karim (pseudo name) who is a rich peasant in village Sonapur in order to invest in the share market in the year 2009. In the initial months Rahim was earning huge returns from the investment. Induced by

the quick yet manifold return on investment, Rahim has not only reinvested his profits from the initial investment worth three lakh taka in the share market but also taken another four lakh taka from her sister (the money was sent by Rahim's brother-in-law who was working in Bahrain) to invest in the share market. Although Rahim has no knowledge about stock business, he was doing exceedingly well. But things started to go wrong when the stock price suddenly started to fall sharply in December 2010. Before understanding what is actually being happening, the total investment of Rahim worth about twelve lakh taka (including the principal seven lakhs plus profit of five lakhs) has jumped down to approximately two and a half lakh taka by January 2011. In such a situation, Rahim has stopped going home, but his brother-in-law has been giving pressure to Rahim's sister to get back his money from Rahim. Now Mr. Karim has got no option other than selling his arable land at a very lower price to pay-back his son-in-law's money in order to ensure that his sister's conjugal life runs smoothly.

In the second instance, Helal Uddin of village Bhabanipur has taken some one lakh taka from his grandfather to invest in Destiny2000 – an MLM Company. Obsessed by the sweet words of the Destiny-people he has engaged six more persons of his village in the same business. Their total investment was about eight lakh taka. Helal and the other six persons were told by the Destiny-people that a good number of trees has been bought in his and his associates' names at Bandarban under the Destiny Tree Plantation company, although no paper was given to them from the company. But a few months ago, Helal came to know that the government has stopped all the businesses of the Destiny Group for doing

fraudulent business. Helal, along with the other six persons whom Helal has motivated to invest, have been at a loss.

As a result of the incident, Helal has now been absconding. But everyday a few of those six persons come to Helal's father to get their money back. The Chairman of the Union Parishad has also tried to solve the matter in a amicable way. But at least two of the six persons are so arrogantly vocal that Helal's father is about to sell his grocery shop at Bejoypur Bazaar to repay their money. Because if Helal's father does not do so his long-earned reputation (i.e. social capital) in the locality would be damaged to an irrevocable extent. What becomes apparent from these two examples is that preserving economic capital has become impossible. This, in turn, denotes that economic as well as social sustainability of household wellbeing is also shattered on account of wrong and impractical decision-making.

However, the above-mentioned examples, when taken together, lead to the conclusion that at the household level wellbeing cannot be sustained over time neither economically, nor socially, nor institutionally, and nor even environmentally. In other words, there are examples of household well-being to be turning into household ill-being in the three villages that I have covered in my study.

## **CONCLUSION**

In summary, it is my finding that even if the three other elements of the strategic framework of household wellbeing – discussed in chapter 1 – such as capabilities, livelihood security, and equity work really well, the overall wellbeing of a

household might go in vain if and only if the fourth and final element i.e. sustainability cannot be ensured in the long run. In other words, if not sustained over time, the overall well-being of a household might turn into household ill-being. It is, therefore, that in order to ensure wellbeing of the household, coherence among all its four elements must be ensured at a time in a prudent manner. Otherwise, household wellbeing would remain a far cry.

## CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSION

### INTRODUCTION

‘Household management’ is a two-word noun-phrase to define which requires to separately define the two terms ‘household’ and ‘management.’ Although many definitions of the term ‘household’ are available in the development discourse, in this study I have defined ‘household’ as ‘a residential unit composed of one or more persons who live in the same homestead area or, in some cases, under the same roof and eat food cooked at a single hearth.’ And the term ‘management’ refers to ‘the process of ensuring effective, efficient, and synergistic utilization of the scarce resources – i.e. natural capital, economic or financial capital, human capital, and social capital – through the application of decision-making, authority, and leadership in order to attain the predetermined end result(s) i.e. sustainable wellbeing of the household. And by combining the definitions of the two terms ‘household’ and ‘management,’ the phenomenon ‘household management’ is defined as ‘the effective, efficient, and synergistic utilization of the household resources through decision-making, authority, and leadership in order to fulfill – in the fullest possible capacity – the minimum requirements or the basic needs of the household members and ensure household wellbeing thereby.’ To this end I argued that Functions of Management could play pivotal role in proactively addressing the dual issues of maximizing benefits of a household’s individual members on the one hand, and household resource utilization on the other. This

eventually influences not only in the short run but also in the long process of the rural Bangladeshi households' continued struggle for sustainable wellbeing.

As the title of the dissertation implies, in this study I have attempted to explore how the management functions such as decision-making, authority, and leadership are being applied in the households in rural Bangladesh, and to what extent their application determines the wellbeing of the respective households. Or, in other words, this study attempts to find-out whether or not household wellbeing can at first be attained and then sustained by utilizing the household resources e.g. natural resources, economic or financial resources, human resources, and social resources through the application of three core management functions viz. decision-making, authority, and leadership in the context of rural Bangladesh. In spite of the above mentioned core objective, the present study has an embedded question i.e. if the core management functions of planning, planning, organizing, actuating, controlling, and leading can be effectively applied in other types of organization e.g. military, business, and religion in order to maximize their respective stakes, then why cannot the households be enabled to enhance their wellbeing in the similar process? And even though, answer to this question, prima facie, seems to be affirmative, the current study has been undertaken in a plea to justify through a scientific process whether or not the aforesaid presumed answer to this all-important question is realistic and correct.

As a part of this, I elaborated the importance of household management by highlighting a few important trends of management practice at the household level. These included (i) the shift of focus of management research from the



household level to the corporate sector, (ii) changes occurred in the structure and functioning of the households, (iii) decline of the economic functions of households (in here I argued that in today's world of stunning technological advancements, economic solvency alone cannot ensure household wellbeing; instead, prudent application of the key management functions viz. decision-making, authority, and leadership together enable the households to first attain and then sustain their wellbeing), and finally, (iv) I have pointed out a few salient features of the household as the basic unit of production, distribution, consumption, and reproduction. I have also identified a glimpse of the outlook of today's rural Bangladesh by illustrating the changes that have taken place in the sphere of households during the last couple of decades.

While discussing the gender dimension of households in rural Bangladesh, I presented a comparison between the opinions of two prominent theorists of Gender and Development namely Young (1988) and Rowlands (1997). Young's argument was that gender relations are central to social processes and social organizations, and hence, to development, which is a really complex process involving the social, economic, political and cultural betterment of individuals and of society itself. On the contrary arguing that women in Bangladesh are housewives in a social context where men and other women expect them to remain housewives Rowlands was of the opinion that an analysis of the process by which gender relations are negotiated and re-negotiated can assist in understanding the nature of households, of the constitution of the labor force, of the 'informal' economy, and other basic constructs of development analysis.

Then I presented a thin description of the three management functions such as decision-making, authority, and leadership in the context of rural Bangladesh which has helped me to raise the research questions that I have addressed in my study. In the context of household level decision-making, I argued that the household-head has to trade-off between the household needs and the available resources; that is, given the “bounded rationality,” the household-head has to make some choices; s/he has to make decisions. In this backdrop, the research question that has arisen was: *what is the pattern of decision-making at the household level in rural Bangladesh?*

By ‘household authority’ I referred to the norms by which legitimate power is assigned on the household member who controls behavior in the household and makes important decisions about household matters. On the other hand, household power and authority are different, but they are related concepts in structural relationships, which indicate domination, control, influence, compliance, resistance, subjugation, and decision making within the household. In this connection, I presented the view of Eirik G. Jansen who revealed that there is a division of authority and division of labor within each household. Jansen also portrayed the nature of authority assumed by the household head and its relationship with the decision made by the household head. The household head is the member of the household who has the final say in both the internal and external affairs of the household. According to Jansen, the nature of the decisions that are taken by the household head will, of course, depend on the economic position of the household. I also presented the findings of Mashreque who

revealed that the head of the household exercises authority over the members as a guardian and social adviser, thus commanding the patriarchal authority in the *khana* (the household)...His authority in managing household affairs, allocating functions, regulating behavior and attitude and maintaining internal peace and external relation is supreme. The authority of the father over the dependents depends heavily upon the way he exercises leadership in the household, argued Mashreque. Combining the views of both Jansen and Mashreque the research question that I addressed was: *what type of authority structures do exist in the rural Bangladesh's households and to what extent can authority of the household member(s) dictate the functioning of the households?*

Apropos of household leadership I referred to the existing knowledge which indicates that there is no unique or ideal type of leadership style; at the household level, leadership style varies from household to household. Household leadership may take the form of patriarchal leadership as well as matriarchal leadership, and egalitarian as well as authoritative leadership. Hence, the research question that came to fore was: *which forms of leadership are found functional in rural Bangladesh's households, and do leadership types have any bearing on decision-making as well as on the success or failure of the decisions being made?*

Then I presented the conceptual framework of my study which began with the categorization of households into two broad categories such as (i) the category of household typology and (ii) the category of household economic condition. Under the 'household typology category' three types of households, namely, nuclear households, joint households, and extended households Likewise, under

the ‘economic condition category’ I have identified three different types of households such as poor households, moderate households, and rich households. At the same time I have identified three types of household resources viz. human, capital, natural capital, and social capital. In the conceptual framework I showed that both categories of households try to ensure effective and efficient utilization of their three types of resources by applying the three management functions namely, decision-making, authority, and leadership, which result in three emerging forms of households such as despotic households, super-trader households, and glued-together households. During the field study I have noticed the presence of the fourth type of households i.e. the circumstantial glued-together households. The ultimate objective of all these types of households is to ensure household wellbeing in the forms of capability, livelihood security, equity, and sustainability.

I have shown in Chapter 1 the apparent debate among the social scientists with regard to ‘household’ and ‘family,’ and I have noted in chapter 6 that sociologists as well as anthropologists so far have apparently failed not only to construct a comprehensive definition of the terms ‘household’ and/or ‘family,’ but also to develop a unique categorization of this very important social institution.

Nonetheless, in order to investigate into the subject matter of the study, especially to examine the applicability of the three management functions at the household level, I have collected relevant information from three villages from three different Agro-Ecological Zones (AEZs). The villages and the corresponding Agro-Ecological Zones are: village Bhabanipur from Sadar Dakshin (south) Upazila of Comilla District (“flood-free” AEZ), village Kalikanagar from Sadar

Upazila of Bhola District (“coastal” AEZ), and village Sonapur from Bishwambarpur Upazila of Sunamgonj District (“haor” AEZ). From these three villages I have collected information from a sample of one hundred and sixty households with the aid of the data collection tools of sample survey, face-to-face interview, key informants interview, focus group discussion, and case study. My collecting information from three different villages from three different AEZs instead of a singular village seems logical when the observation of Jahangir (1990) is taken into consideration:

“Since there are variations among villages, no single village is representative of social, economic, and political variables. Regional studies, on the one hand, gloss over important determinants of behavior and a single village study, in isolation, on the other hand, has no wider application. We, therefore, need at this stage, comparable village studies in order to develop an understanding of socially relevant issues,” (Jahangir 1990: 100).

### **SUMMARY OF THE KEY FINDINGS**

I have mentioned in chapter 1 that the essence of my study is to examine the applicability of three management functions viz. decision-making, authority, and leadership at the household level in rural Bangladesh along with their corresponding outcomes. In chapter 3, I have elaborated the dynamics of decision-making in the sample households of the three villages from which I have collected necessary first-hand data. Chapter 4 contains the state of household level authority in the three villages. And chapter 5 covers the household level leadership. However, what follows next is a summary of the findings of my study which I have articulated in chapter 3, chapter 4, and chapter 5.

In chapter 3, **household level decision-making** has been discussed in terms of decision-making strategies, decision-making styles, and decision issues with a focus on the gender dimension of decision-making. Information collected from the survey of the sample households, key informants' interview, and focus group discussion in conjunction with secondary literature review reveal that there exists a significant relationship between household level decision-making strategies and household types. For instance, for the nuclear households the strategy of being coercive seems to be much more easier than joint or extended households. On the contrary, the strategies of 'coalition formation' and 'group problem solving' might be better options for the joint or extended households.

Likewise, there also exists a relationship between household level decision-making styles and the economic condition of the household. For example, majority of the respondents belonging to the moderate and rich households told that they do not always follow one particular style; rather, the style of decision-making depends on the issue and context of decision to be made. On the other hand, respondents of the poor households told that they use the 'decisive style,' because they neither have too many alternatives to choose from among nor have abundant information to examine the viability of the decision alternatives.

My findings also bear the testimony of the existence of a relationship between the rural women's economic condition and their scope of getting involved in the decision-making process regarding household affairs. For instance, the housewives who do not earn have the least participation in household decision-making. The women having assets from their natal houses are in a better position

than the housewives who are unemployed though they are less important than the employed women. In addition, importance of the women doing jobs in the private sector or in NGOs is much less than the women doing government jobs.

Apropos of the **household-level authority** – discussed at length in chapter 4 – I have found that of the nuclear households that I have surveyed patriarchal authority structure prevails in around three-fourth households. Of the rest, more than one-half of the households have egalitarian authority structure, and the remaining households' authority structure is matriarchal. The female headed households fall in the latter type. On the other hand, of the joint households, authority structure of more than one-half of the households are patriarchal, more than one-fourth households' authority structure is egalitarian, and the rest of the households belong to matriarchal authority structure. Finally, of the extended households, well above one-half of the households' authority structure are patriarchal; one-fourth households have egalitarian authority structure; whereas more than one-tenth of the households maintain matriarchal authority structure.

Besides, considering the authority structure from the standpoint of economic condition my findings reveal that patriarchal authority prevails in almost all the households of both rich and moderate economic conditions. On the other hand, egalitarian authority structure dominates the poor households of all the three villages. Moreover, although the changed economic status of women was supposed to give them a social space to claim an equal, if not independent, status in the household hierarchy, the findings of my study, however, show the opposite picture. For instance, while asked about how do the respondents make decisions

and resolve disagreements between them and their spouses, the answers that they gave point to the fact that power relations within the household are not only highly authoritarian, but also male-dominant.

Furthermore, contrary to the findings of some previous studies that women in nuclear households wield more power, it is found that women continue to be lacking power and authority in running their own household affairs. It is my observation that due to the way authority is at play in the study villages, despite having separate household, the power, and for that matter authority, of the wife relative to the husband does not increase as one might expect. Moreover, a very useful way of identifying the nature of intra-household authority practice is to ascertain whether geographical proximity of the kin members increase or decrease the control of husband over wife and vice-versa.

In this backdrop, however, I observed that the males tend to involve their parents in various household related matters more than the parents of their wives. Despite living in the vicinity of the wives' parents, it is seen that parents of the wives do not tilt the power balance in their daughter's favor. This actually counterbalanced the power that the wife might have gained by dint of the proximity of her parents. And this is a clear indication of the authority pattern being autocratic and skewed towards the husband's kin relation.

Another striking finding of my study is that parental authority is indeed unceasing as an ideal and is sustained in fact, though the actual duration and degree of this authority are very much affected by the households' economic circumstances. In reality, the ideal of deference to parents is rarely questioned,



which, in turn, endows the elders with an authority that is not even slightly ignored by their children. It is, indeed, clear that the patriarchal ideology is prevailing in a variety of forms among the respondents of the three villages.

Further, women continue to cooperate in order to avoid conflicting situation in the household. I have found a few instances where women tried to raise their voices against the male authoritarianism which resulted in nothing but unpleasant arguments and in the end the women had to give-up much against their will. To say the least, the prevailing trend of patriarchal authoritarianism at the household level in rural Bangladesh is to be revised – if not reversed – to a large extent in order to ensure a level playing field for the women to improve their condition so that they can get opportunity to meaningfully contribute towards the wellbeing of the country as a whole and of the households in particular.

In regard to **household-level leadership** in rural Bangladesh it is noteworthy that I have exemplified the household level leadership in terms of leadership style, nature of leader-follower relation, and leadership trait. And I have done this on the basis of a few prominent theories of leadership, which I have elaborated earlier in chapter 5.

By analyzing the information collected from the field survey with the aid of different theories of leadership points to the fact that the authoritarian form of leadership dominates in the sample households, especially in those which belong to the rich and moderate economic classes. And in the poor households, participatory style of leadership prevails to a large extent. In few of the poor households laissez-faire leadership is also found to be existent to a good extent.

Moreover, findings presented in this chapter also indicate the presence of a nexus among leadership styles, authority structures, and decision-making types in the sample households of the three villages covered by the present study.

Above all, it is my opinion that there exists a strong, positive correlation between the households' economic condition and leadership style. Another aspect of leadership that I have observed during the field work is that whatever is the style or form of leadership in the households, the prime concern of every leader is to ensure wellbeing of the members of their respective households. And as an outcome of this orientation, the forms of households do change as well.

### **IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY FINDINGS**

In addition to the abovementioned findings regarding the applicability of the management functions of decision-making, authority, and leadership at the household level in rural Bangladesh, my study is unique in that it has brought forth some significant insights about the application of the three management functions in rural Bangladesh's households. These additions to the existing literature on household-level management include: (i) four **new/emerging types of households**<sup>30</sup> such as despotic household, super-trader household, glued-together household, and circumstantial glued-together household, which are found to be existent in today's Bangladesh; and (ii) **household wellbeing**.

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<sup>30</sup> Although Amartya Sen has coined, though from the vintage point of Economics, the first three of the four new forms of households (i.e. despotic family, the super-trader family, and the glued-together family) for the first time in his seminal work entitled "Economics and the family" in the year 1983, it is me who have noticed the presence of the fourth type of households i.e. the circumstantial glued together household for the first time.

It is mentionable that the four emerging forms of households have been discussed in detail in chapter 6 in which I argued that although the factors responsible for the formation of these new forms of households might include behavioral, economic, emotional, as well as situational elements, the ultimate goal of these new forms of households is to ensure sustainable wellbeing of its members.

The second and last concomitant outcome of the application of the three management functions is household wellbeing, which has been discussed in chapter 7 in which household wellbeing has been measured in terms of four elements such as capability, livelihood security, equity, and sustainability. Apropos of household wellbeing I argued that that even if the three other elements of the strategic framework of household wellbeing such as capabilities, livelihood security, and equity do work well, the overall wellbeing of a household might go in vain, if and only if the fourth and final element of household wellbeing i.e. sustainability cannot be ensured in the long run. In other words, if not sustained over time, the overall well-being of a household might turn into household ill-being. It is, therefore, that in order to ensure wellbeing of the household, coherence among all its four elements must be ensured at a time in a prudent manner.

## AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

The present study has shed light on the application of the management functions of decision-making, authority, and leadership at the households of three villages from three agro-ecological zones. Even though I have tried to cover all the aspects of the application of these three management functions, I have felt that there are opportunities to conduct research on some of the issues which I could not cover.

For example:

- (i) Since majority of my respondent happened to be males who opined that they give value to the opinions of the female members of the households, but my perception is that this might not be the case in reality. Therefore, a study could be conducted taking the female household members as the respondents.
- (ii) Another aspect that I could not cover exclusively in my study is whether or not there exists any relationship between the education level of the household head and his or her way of managing the household.
- (iii) During interviewing the female headed households (sixteen in number), it was my impression that, except those who have become (rather compelled to become) heads of their respective households due to the death of husband (seven in number), all of them are *de-facto* not *de-jure* household heads. Research might be conducted to unfold the reasons behind this phenomenon.
- (iv) In order to juxtapose whether or not there exists any difference – other things remaining unchanged – in the wellbeing of households between

the male headed households (MHH) and the female headed households (FHH) an extensive study might be done. And this should be done on the households of only one village so that sufficient time and other resources could be employed.

- (v) Households adapt by changing their structure so that information on the flexibility of household units over time is an important indicator of their ability to cope with economic stress and change. Hence, a holistic view might be applied to demarcate the impact of household dynamics on decision-making, authority, and leadership at the household level in rural Bangladesh
- (vi) Last – but not the least, I have pointed out in chapter 6 that there exists a fourth type of households i.e. the ‘circumstantial glued-together households.’ I have also suspected that it could not be ascertained whether this type of households disintegrate once again as soon as the reason (e.g. natural calamity, etc.) for which this type of household was formed phases-out. I am, therefore, of the opinion that research might also be done on these four new types of households, especially on (dis)integration of the ‘circumstantial glued-together households.’

## CONCLUSION

Eight out of ten people in Bangladesh live in rural areas. The landscape of Bangladesh has changed dramatically over the last decade. Infrastructural development has significantly changed the physical landscape in the rural areas. In response to improvements in markets, communications and, transport, people have forged new types of rural livelihood and, in doing so, have changed the ‘human’ landscape too.

Livelihoods are adapting to take advantage of the new opportunities afforded by improved infrastructure and communication. Many village households are now sufficiently connected to district headquarters, towns or bigger cities, to have created ‘rural livelihoods’ that are dependent on incomes derived in urban areas. Villages can therefore no longer be viewed as physically isolated or economically discrete communities.

In this study I have attempted to highlight how wellbeing of rural households can be ensured with the application of management functions of decision-making, authority, and leadership in the households of three villages from three agro-ecological zones. Having completed the study it is my observation that proper application of management functions can lead towards household wellbeing, but if sufficient attention is not given then this may also lead towards a disastrous ending as well.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1 : VILLAGE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF NUMBER OF CONDUCTED FGDs.

Name of Village	No. of FGDs Conducted (Figures in the parenthesis indicate participant number)
Bhabanipur	03 (12, 10 & 11)
Kalikanagar	04 (12, 08, 10 & 10)
Sonapur	04 (10, 12, 14 & 09)

### APPENDIX 2 : VILLAGE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF NUMBER OF CONDUCTED KIIs.

Name of Village	KI Number	Identity of the KIIs
Bhabanipur	05	Mosque's Imam, Shopkeeper, School Teacher, Member of Baropara Union Parishad, Muhuri.
Kalikanagar	08	Two rich peasants, Midwife, Health worker, One landless person, Chairman of Kachia Union, One moajjin, One cable operator
Sonapur	07	Midwife, Field worker of an NGO, Two male household heads who were not interviewed, Thakur, Retired primary school teacher, One housewife

### APPENDIX 3 : VARIED SAMPLE SIZES AT DIFFERENT CONFIDENCE LEVELS

Formulae	Confidence Level (C.L.)	Significance Level (S.L.)	Population (i.e. number of Households)	Sample Size
$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$ Where: n = required sample size N = population e = significance level	<b>95%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>24671590</b>	<b>399.99</b>
	<b>93%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>24671590</b>	<b>204.08</b>
	<b>92%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>24671590</b>	<b>156.25</b>
	<b>90%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>24671590</b>	<b>99.99</b>

N.B.: It is noteworthy that from the four sample sizes calculated in the above table, I have taken the sample size of 156.25 (at C. L. 92% and S. L. 8%).

**APPENDIX 4 : FGD & KII CHECKLIST****1. Household level decision-making**

1.1 Should every function of a household be done according to the prior decisions? How are the decisions actually made and who does it? Should opinions of both male and female adult members of the household be asked before making a decision?

1.2 What factors determine success or failure of a decision?

**2. Household level authority**

Do you think that authority should at times be delegated to other members of the household? Should authority be given to the female members (wife, mother, sister-in-law) of the household?

**3. Household level Leadership**

Do you think that the eldest male member of the household should always be the leader of the household? Or, the person who earns more than other household members be the household's leader? Do you think that leaders of households should always behave like a iron-men?

**4. Household Wellbeing & ill-being**

What do you understand by household 'well-being' and 'ill-being'? Should every household's ultimate goal be its well-being? How can household well-being be sustained over time? Should female members of the households get equal share of wellbeing?

**Thank You.**



**APPENDIX 5: QUESTIONNAIRE**

**INSTITUTE OF BANGLADESH STUDIES (IBS), RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY**

**QUESTIONNAIRE OF SAMPLE SURVEY FOR PHD RESEARCH ON  
“MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS AT THE HOUSEHOLD LEVEL IN RURAL  
BANGLADESH: APPLICATION AND OUTCOME ”**

( Information to be collected from this survey shall be used only for academic research purpose and all the principles & ethical standards of Social Science Research shall be maintained.<sup>31</sup>)

SAMPLE AREA OPENING	
Household Head's (HHH) Name	
Bāri Name	
Pārā / Mohollā	
Village	
Union	
Upazila / Thana	
District	Bhola <input type="checkbox"/> Comilla <input type="checkbox"/> Sunamgonj <input type="checkbox"/>

**QUESTIONNAIRE OF SAMPLE SURVEY**

**BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT HOUSEHOLD**

**1 Household and Household Related Information**

1.1 Respondent's Name: (auxiliary)

.....

1.2 Relationship with the Household Head:  Spouse  Others (specify  
.....)

1.3 Household Members' Religion:  Islam  Hindu  Christian   
Buddhist  Others (specify.....)

1.4 Household Members belong to any Ethnic Minority Group or Lower Caste?  No

Yes (Group/Caste

Name ... ..)

1.5 Household Type:  Nuclear  Joint  Extended

1.6 Household's Total Member: ..... Persons

1.7 Any member of your household live abroad?  Yes (How many? .... Nos.  
Which Country?.....)  No

<sup>31</sup> **Researcher:** Mazharul Hasan Mazumder, PhD Fellow (2010-11), IBS, RU.

### 1.8 Household's Member Related Data:

No.	Age	Sex	Educational Qualification	Marital Status	Occupation	Relation with Respondent
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						

## 2 Dwelling Related Data

2.1 Ownership of Home:  Own  Rented  Others (specify)

.....

2.2

Type of House	<input type="checkbox"/> Building	<input type="checkbox"/> Brickwall Tin-roof	<input type="checkbox"/> Mudwall Tin-roof	<input type="checkbox"/> Bamboo-wall Tinroof	<input type="checkbox"/> Jhupri
No. of rooms					

2.3 Source of Light in the Dwelling:  Electricity  Solar  Kerosene  Others (specify .....

2.4 Fuel Source:  Firewood  Cowdung/Straw/Leaves  Cylinder Gas  
 Natural Gas  Electricity  Kerosene  Others (specify) ...

2.5 Do the following items are there in the household?

<input type="checkbox"/> TV <input type="checkbox"/> Freeze <input type="checkbox"/> DVD Player <input type="checkbox"/> Audio Recorder/Player <input type="checkbox"/> Radio <input type="checkbox"/> Computer <input type="checkbox"/> Motor Cycle <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Private Car <input type="checkbox"/> Dish-connection <input type="checkbox"/> Have Nothing
---

2.6 Do the safe drinking water supply facilities available?  Yes  No

2.6.1 If Yes, what is the Source?  Tube well  Well  Others (specify)

.....

2.6.2 If No, why & how do you collect drinking water?

.....

2.7 Is there any problem/obstacle in getting/collecting safe drinking water?

Yes  No  Don't know

2.7.1 If Yes, what type of problem/obstacle do you face?

-----  
 -----  
 -----  
 2.7.2 If No, Why? .....

### 3 Household's Asset/Resource Related Data.

3.1 Amount of the household's total land

Total amount of land ..... decimal.     Homestead ..... decimal.      
 Arable land .....decimal.

3.2 No. of domestic animals:

<input type="checkbox"/> Cow .....	<input type="checkbox"/> (a) Own ....	<input type="checkbox"/> (b) Other's .....
<input type="checkbox"/> Goat .....	<input type="checkbox"/> (a) Own ....	<input type="checkbox"/> (b) Other's .....
<input type="checkbox"/> Buffalo .....	<input type="checkbox"/> (a) Own ....	<input type="checkbox"/> (b) Other's .....
<input type="checkbox"/> Chicken ....	<input type="checkbox"/> Duck ....	<input type="checkbox"/> Pigeon..... <input type="checkbox"/> Other

### 4 Household's Income & Expenditure Related Data.

4.1 What is the major source of household's income?

<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture: <input type="checkbox"/> Own land	<input type="checkbox"/> Sharecropping	<input type="checkbox"/> Lease	<input type="checkbox"/> Mortgaged
<input type="checkbox"/> Day laborer	<input type="checkbox"/> Business (specify): .....	<input type="checkbox"/> Job (specify): .....	
<input type="checkbox"/> Foreign remittance	<input type="checkbox"/> Poultry	<input type="checkbox"/> Fishery	<input type="checkbox"/> Others (specify):.....

4.2 Is there any other source of household's income?     YES     NO

4.2.1 If YES, what is the source? (may have more than ONE answer)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture: <input type="checkbox"/> Own land	<input type="checkbox"/> Sharecropping	<input type="checkbox"/> Lease
<input type="checkbox"/> Fixed Rent	<input type="checkbox"/> Day laborer	<input type="checkbox"/> Business (specify): ..... <input type="checkbox"/>
Job (specify): .....	Foreign remittance	<input type="checkbox"/> Poultry <input type="checkbox"/> Fishery
<input type="checkbox"/> Others (specify): .....		

4.3 Amount of the Household Head's total annual income? .....

Taka

4.4 No. of earning member except the Household Head? ..... Persons

4.5 Total amount of annual income of the household? .....

Taka

4.6 Total amount of annual expenditure of the household?

..... Taka

4.7 Is the income stable every month?     YES     NO

4.7.1 If NO: (a) Why? ..... (b) When does income fluctuate? .....

4.8 Does the household have any savings?     YES     NO

4.8.1 If YES, what do you do with that money?

- Deposit in bank     Give loan to others     Invest     Others

(specify): .....

4.9 How does the deficit of income-expenditure met?

<input type="checkbox"/> Taking loan	<b>Loan source?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Neighbors <input type="checkbox"/> Relatives <input type="checkbox"/> NGO <input type="checkbox"/> Bank <input type="checkbox"/> Money lenders <input type="checkbox"/> Others
<input type="checkbox"/> From savings <input type="checkbox"/> Selling household's assets <input type="checkbox"/> Others (specify): .....	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable.	

**HOUSEHOLD-LEVEL DECISION MAKING**

5.1 What is the decision making type in your household?

<input type="checkbox"/> Decisive <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible	<input type="checkbox"/> Hierarchic <input type="checkbox"/> Integrative
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5.2 Who usually makes decisions in your household?

.....

5.3 In the absence of the decision maker identified in Q#5.2, who replaces him/her? .....

5.4 Which strategy of decision making is followed in your household?

<input type="checkbox"/> By coercion	<input type="checkbox"/> By coalition formation	<input type="checkbox"/> By taking specialist's/expert's opinion <input type="checkbox"/> By group problem solving
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5.5 Does the way of decision-making change in the following situations?

(a) Regular/Normal situation (e.g. HH budgeting, Schooling etc.)  

YES    NO

If YES, what type of change? .....

If NO, why? .....

(b) Emergency situation (e.g. illness, birth/death, natural disaster etc.)

YES    NO

If YES, what type of change? .....

If NO, why? .....



## HOUSEHOLD-LEVEL AUTHORITY

6.1 What type of authority structure exists in your household?

- Patriarchal     Matriarchal     Egalitarian

6.2 Do you know how your children spend their time outside the household?  Yes     No

6.3 How frequently you enquire whether your children attends school/college?

- Never     rarely     At times     Not regularly     Quite regularly

6.4 Males should always have more authority than females. Do you agree?

- Strongly agree     Agree     Neither agree nor disagree     Disagree

Completely disagree

6.5 Males & females should have equal freedom & right in the household.

Do you agree?

- Strongly agree     Agree     Neither agree nor disagree     Disagree

Completely disagree

6.6 In your household do male & female members eat meals together?

Yes     No

If YES, Why? ..... If NO, Why? .....

6.7 Do you maintain hierarchical authority in your household?  Yes   

No

6.7.1 Do authority of HH members depend on their position in the family hierarchy?  Yes     No

6.7.2 Degree of authority of HH members decreases as their age increases.

Do you agree?

- Strongly agree     Agree     Neither agree nor disagree     Disagree

Completely disagree

6.8 Do you think that the degree of authority depends on economic solvency?  Yes     No

If YES, Why? ..... If NO, Why? .....

6.9 In your household do sons & daughters flout parent's will?  Yes   

No

If YES, what measure(s) do you take to redress it?

.....

6.10 In the absence of the HHH upon whom household's authority is delegated? .....

6.12 Do you involve your parents and parents-in-law in your HH related matters?

- Yes (When? ..... )     No (Why not? .....

6.13 How do you resolve the disagreements (if any) with spouse on household-related matters?

6.14 How do you make decisions on taking child & use of family planning methods?

- Singularly
- Jointly with spouse

**HOUSEHOLD-LEVEL LEADERSHIP**

7.1 What style of leadership is present in the household?

- Democratic
- Authoritative
- Patriarchal-Democratic
- Patriarchal- Authoritative
- Matriarchal-Democratic
- Matriarchal- Authoritative

7.2 Who is the leader in your household? .....

7.3 Do you think that all the members of the household equally respect the leader?

- Yes
- No
- [If NO, Why? .....

7.4 Do you think that the person has become the household's leader due to his earning power?  Yes  No [If NO, What the other reasons are? .....

7.5 Does the household leader consult with the spouse & other adult members while making a decision or devising a strategic plan for household matters/issues?

- Yes
- No
- If YES, to what extent?

<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> At times	<input type="checkbox"/> At regular intervals	<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently	<input type="checkbox"/> Always
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If NO, why?

.....

7.6 Does the HH leader try to balance among the needs of all HH members at the same time?

- Yes
- No
- [If Yes, does s/he always succeed? ..... If NO, why?

.....]

7.6.1 If s/he succeeds, what technique(s) does the HH leader follow to balancing the needs?

**HOUSEHOLD WELLBEING**

8.1 What do you understand by the terms “wellbeing” and “ill-being”?

8.2 Would you give examples of “individual capability” and “group capability”?

8.3 In which areas of household you think rights of HH members are or should be secured?

8.4 Can the female members of your HH cast their votes in different elections?

Yes  No [If NO, Why? .....]

8.5 Do you think that once you attain HH wellbeing, it should sustain over time?

Yes [If YES, why?.....]  No [If NO, Why? .....]

8.5.1 How do you ensure economic, social, institutional & environmental sustainability of HH wellbeing?

**THANK YOU**