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# Strengthening Local Governance through GO-NGO Collaboration: A Study on Sharique Project in Bangladesh

Mojumder, Mohammad Jahangir Hossain

University of Rajshahi

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**Strengthening Local Governance through  
GO-NGO Collaboration: A Study on Sharique  
Project in Bangladesh**

**PhD Dissertation**

**Mohammad Jahangir Hossain Mojumder**



**Institute of Bangladesh Studies  
University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh**

**October 2018**

# **Strengthening Local Governance through GO-NGO Collaboration: A Study on Sharique Project in Bangladesh**

A Dissertation Submitted to the Institute of Bangladesh  
Studies in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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**Institute of Bangladesh Studies  
University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh**

**October 2018**

## **Certificate**

This is to certify that the dissertation titled **Strengthening Local Governance through GO-NGO Collaboration: A Study on Sharique Project in Bangladesh** submitted to the Institute of Bangladesh Studies at the University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh by Mohammad Jahangir Hossain Mojumder, PhD Fellow of the session 2015-2016 for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy degree is an original research work done under my supervision and guidance. I have gone through the whole dissertation carefully. I believe that the researcher has worked with utmost sincerity for preparing this dissertation and the submission is, in my opinion, worthy of consideration for the award of PhD.

**(Dr. Pranab Kumar Panday)**

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## **Declaration**

I do hereby declare that the dissertation titled **Strengthening Local Governance through GO-NGO Collaboration: A Study on Sharique Project in Bangladesh** submitted to the Institute of Bangladesh Studies at the University of Rajshahi as a part of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree is my own original work. Neither the whole, nor any part of this dissertation has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualifications at this university or any other institutions. The sources of all the materials used or quoted have been duly indicated and acknowledged in the dissertation.

**(Mohammad Jahangir Hossain Mojumder)**

PhD Researcher

Session: 2015-2016

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Rajshahi  
October 2018

**Mohammad Jahangir Hossain Mojumder**

## **Abstract**

The main intention of this empirical study is to unearth the possible results of collaborative attempts (synergistic or incompatible) of Governmental Organisations (GOs) and Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), which are intended to strengthen democratic governance of the local government institutions in general and of the UPs in particular. Endeavours have been made to discover the existing efforts of the government and GOs and NGOs' collaborative efforts to establish citizen friendly local governance. In order to attain this objective, a collaborative effort named 'Sharique: A Local Governance Project' has been selected for the study due to the fact that it has been in operation since 2006 and working with both demand and supply side actors simultaneously. Thus, the study sheds light on the state of implementation of some of the most important provisions of the Local Government (Union Parishad) Act 2009 (hereinafter the UP Act of 2009) and UP operational manual of 2012 in broad spectrum, and institutionalisation of participatory planning and budgeting, holding officials accountable, dissemination of necessary information, ensuring fiscal autonomy and mainstreaming gender precisely. Primary and secondary sources of data have been used in the study. Qualitative data has been used dominantly while quantitative data has been used on a limited scale in order to understand the likely outcomes of collaboration.

The study has come up with a number of important findings. The first set of findings is related to the extensive initiatives of the government to strengthen the governance of local bodies. The most striking finding is that despite many initiatives, none of the regimes could strengthen the local government bodies at an optimum level as most of the reforms of the government stemmed from political rationales and concentrated on cosmetic conversions through bringing modification of functions and organizational structures of local government. That is why, the devolution of executive and economic power to the LGIs remains rhetorical and merely helping the course of lip services. However, the most recent laws of the land, particularly the UP act of 2009 includes specific provisions for participatory governance, implementation of Rights to Information (RTI), and Citizens Charter (CC), establishment of inclusive governance having a particular focus on reducing gender gap to conform to the arguments of good governance, social accountability and New Public Management (NPM) techniques.

The second set of results includes discussions on varied collaborative endeavours those were intended to strengthen governance mostly at the local level. This research exertion includes ten programmes in the study to examine commonalities among the schemes exhaustively. The results precisely reveal that these programmes invested their efforts targeting both supply and demand side actors for knowledge and awareness building, capacity building at individual, organisational and environmental level, developing



Community Based Organizations (CBOs), sensitising on gender, effective advocacy to take along shift in policies, agency building, increasing people engagement, etc. to ensure improved service delivery and direct representation of the folk in local governance.

The third comprehensive set of findings is based on five propositions, which include that extensive collaboration of Sharique project with UPs exert promising results in five areas: capacitation, people's direct participation, accountability and transparency, fiscal autonomy and gender mainstreaming. The findings reveal that the UPs, which are meaningfully engaged in collaborative partnership with Sharique project for SLG, display an encouraging shift towards better governance as compared to control areas. Evidences uncover the fact that citizens have become conversant on their rights and entitlements, as well as their opportunity to portray influential roles in decision making that affect their means of support and dignity. The results suggest that the participation of citizens has been boosted along with social inclusiveness to place demands. In response, the officials' receptiveness towards people's demands follows the route of an upward curve. To meet the increased demands, the UPs of collaborative areas reinforce their conscious efforts to collect an increased amount of revenue from their own derivations through increasing tax rate and tax bases, as well as spreading out non-tax sources, which result in increased own revenue receipt. Women do not stay out of the process, as they claim expanded areas in the realm of governance for prominently displaying their visible presence both as political agents and as principals. However, the processes are not hassle-free, as some daunting challenges of democratic governance at local level impede the seamless progressions. The challenges include tokenistic participation, ominous presence of '*partyarchy*' and patron-client culture, fragile shape of downward accountability, compromise in upward accountability, low level of fiscal autonomy with small own proceeds and substantial dependency on national government revenues, prevalence state of patriarchy and insubstantial state of cognitive and functional capacity of women members.

The fourth set of experiential findings incorporates results regarding the collaboration practice itself and challenges of the same. Considerable evidences assist to detect development of social capital between officials of both Sharique and UPs, as well as between NGO officials and local citizens. The flourished social capital expedites the collaborative attempts, as the result suggests an increased level of social capital and lengthier period of stay of the programme in collaboration culminate in better outcomes. The formidable challenges of local level collaboration for SLG remain multidimensional including: making project outcome sustainable, institutionalisation and mainstreaming of the best practices of the project, the absence of statutory protection and policy

guidelines, meeting of growing demands for matching funds, incorporating political leaders and local level bureaucrats in the process of teamwork to mention the few.

Eventually, some practical suggestions for collaborative programmes have been forwarded as policy implications. Plausible suggestions invariably include: arrangement of government policy, and development of statutory documents to adequately support the possible GO-NGO collaboration for SLG, formation of potential tripartite committees of NGO and UP executives and dwellers to implement the project, and rigorously evaluate the project outcomes, inception of incentive mechanisms for citizen's engagement, mobilisation of enabling services and assistance from CSOs/NGOs, political leaders, civil servants at field platforms, line agency officials, and initialisation of partnership governance with the LGIs. All these challenges entail strong political commitment of the central government along with backings of other actors. In this regard, the study offers a standard model of conceivable GO-NGO collaboration at local level for successful promotion of SLG.

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## Abbreviations

a2i	Access to Information
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADP	Annual Development Programme
AL	Bangladesh Awami League
BARD	Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development
BBG	Basic Block Grant
BDO	Basic Democracy Order
BDT	Bangladesh Taka
BMDF	Bangladesh Municipal Development Fund
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advance Committee
BRDB	Bangladesh Rural Development Board
BRDTI	Bangladesh Rural Development Training Institute
BST	Bangladesh Standard Time
CapDev	National Basic Capacity Development
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CARR	Committee for Administrative Reform/Reorganization
CB	Capacity Building
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CC	Citizens Charter
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEP	Community Empowerment Programme
CFs	Citizen Forums
CNRS	Centre for Natural Resource Studies
CoS	Church of Sweden
CPD	Centre for Policy Dialogue
CSC	Community scorecard
CSG	Community Support Groups
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CTG	Non-party Caretaker Government
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DC	Deputy Commissioner
DCA	Dan Church Aid
DDLG	Deputy Director of Local Government
DESC	District e-Service Centres
DFID	Department for International Development
DLG	Democratic Local Governance
DLG	Director of Local Government
DSK	Dustha Swasthya Kendra
EBG	Expended Block Gran
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council

EPI	Expanded Programme for Immunisation
ERA	Efforts for Rural Advancement
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESMF	Environment and Social Management Framework
EU	European Union
FCC	Federation Coordination Committee
FFYP	Fifth Five Year Plan
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FY	Fiscal Year
FYP	Five Year Plan
GG	Good Governance
GIP	Governance Improvement Plans
GIS	Geographic Information System
GM	Gender mainstreaming
GO/s	Government Organisation/s
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GPSA	Global Partnership for Social Accountability
GR	Government Relief
GS	Gram Sarker
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Co-operation
Helvetas	Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation
HLP	Horizontal Learning Programme
IB	Institution Building
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDPAA	Development Policy Analysis and Advocacy
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IPF	Institute of Public Finance
JATRA	Journey for Advancement in Transparency, Representation and Accountability
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KABIKHA	Kajer Binimaye Khadya (Food for Work)
KABITA	Kajer Binimaye Taka (Taka for Work)
KII	Key Informant Interview
LA	Local Authority
LG	Local Government
LGD	Local Government Division
LGED	Local Government Engineering Department
LGI/s	Local Government Institute/s
LGLF	Local Government Legal Framework
LGO	Local Government Ordinance
(L) GOs	(Local) Government Organisations
LGRD	(Ministry of) Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives
LGS	Local Government System

LGSA	Local Governance Self-Assessment Plans
LGSP	Local Governance Support Project
LGSP-LIC	Local Governance Support Project – Learning and Innovation Component
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MGSP	Municipal Governance Support Project
MJF	Manusher Janya Foundation
MoF	Ministry of finance
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
MSP	Multi-Stakeholder Platform
MSP	Municipal Service Project
NGCAF	National Girl Child Advocacy Forum
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NICAR	National Implementation Committee for Administrative Reorganisation-Reform
NIE	Public Choice, New Institutional Economics
NILG	National Institute of Local Government
NISB	National Integrity Strategy of Bangladesh
NLs	Natural Leaders
NPM	New Public Management
NSA	Non-State Actor
OBM	Open Budget Meeting
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSS	Onion Skin Strategy
PAR	Participatory Action Researcher
PARC	Public Administration Reform Commission
PBG	Performance-Based Grant
PC	Planning Committee
PCC	Plan Coordination Committee
PFM	Public Finance Management
PIC	Public Information Centre
PIC	Project Implementation Committee
PLG	Pro-Poor (Good) Local Governance
PMO	Prime Minister Office
PSC	Project Supervising Committee
QS	Questionnaire Survey
RC	Regional Coordinator
RDA	Rural Development Academy
RDRS	Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service
RFQ	Request for Interest
RTI	Right to Information
SA	Social Accountability
SC	Standing Committee

SCOPE	Strengthening Community-Based Organizations for Pro-poor Democratic Governance
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDO	Sub-Divisional Officer
SEBA	Social Engagement for Budgetary Accountability
SETU	Social and Economic Transformation of the Ultra Poor
7th FYP	Seventh Five Year Plan
SFYP	Sixth Five Year Plan
SGS	Swanirvar Gram Sarker
SGZ	Special Governance Zones
Sharique	Sharique: A Local Governance Project
Shujan	Citizens for Good Governance
SLG	Strengthening Local Governance
SLGDFP	Sirajganj Local Government Development Fund Project
SLGP	Strengthening Local Governance Programme
SMC	School Managing Committee
SNKS	Samata Nari Kallyan Sangstha
SRO	Statutory Regulatory Order
SSC	Scheme Supervision Committee
SSNP	Social Safety Net Programme
SUS	Swabalamby Unnayan Samity
T/UUSC	Thana/Upazila Unnayan Samannaya Committee
THP	The Hunger Project
TP	Thana Parishad
TR	Test Relief
UDC	Union Digital Centre
UDCC	Union Development Coordination Committee
UDFs	Upazila Development Facilitators
UGDP	Upazila Governance and Development Project
ULBs	Urban Local Bodies
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development programme
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UN	United Nations
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
UP	Union Parishad
UPGP	Union Parishad Governance Project
UPLA	Union Parishad Local Academy
UPZ	Upazila
URT	Upazila Recourse Team
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UZGP	Upazila Governance Project

UZP	Upazila Parishad
VAT	Value Added Tax
VCA	Vision Action Commitment
VGD	Vulnerable Group Development
WAT	Ward Action Team
WB	World Bank
WC	Ward Committee
WDFs	Development Forums
WM	Women/ Woman member
WP	Ward Platform
WS	Ward Sabha
YEH	Youth Ending Hunger
ZP	Zila Parishad

## Glossary

<i>Chowkidary/ Chowkidars</i>	Watchmanship/Watchmen
<i>Gram Sarkar</i>	Village Government
<i>Gram Shava</i>	Village Assembly
<i>Bazar</i>	Local marketplace
<i>Chakla</i>	A division/district of a country
<i>Dui nambari</i>	Corruption
<i>Ghat</i>	Stairs or a passage leading down to a water body
<i>Hat</i>	Local marketplace
<i>Izara</i>	Lease
<i>Khowar</i>	A place to keep unattended animals
<i>Khas</i>	Government-owned
<i>Kotwal</i>	In the medieval period, a Police Officer like leader of a fort
<i>Mastaan</i>	Gangster
<i>Manusher Jonno Foundation</i>	Foundation for people
<i>Pourashavas</i>	Municipalities
<i>Palli / Gram Parishad</i>	Village Assembly
<i>Panchayet</i>	Village Assembly
<i>Pargana</i>	A group of villages or a subdivision of a district
<i>Parishad</i>	Council
<i>Sabha</i>	Meeting
<i>Sarkar</i>	A man who owns land worked by tenant farmers
<i>Seba</i>	Service
<i>Swanirvar Gram Sarkar</i>	Self-Reliant Village Government
<i>Shalish</i>	Local Judicial System
<i>Thana</i>	Police station
<i>Union</i>	A rural area consisting of some villages
<i>Upazila</i>	Sub District
<i>Upazila Nirbahi Officer</i>	A civil servant deputed to UPZ as Chief Executive Officer
<i>Unmokto Budget Shava</i>	Open Budget Meeting
<i>Ward Shava</i>	Ward meeting
<i>Zila</i>	District

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Prelude

Aspiration for strengthening local governance (SLG) and consequently building Local Government Institutions (LGIs) as veritable organisations for tackling developmental challenges have become important all over the world due to an increase in the sphere of the functions of the central government ever since the inception of the welfare state. Generally, involvement of the central authority remains engaged with the challenges of the national and global issues and problems. Thus, for delivering the services of the government to the doorsteps of the local people the need for strong and capable local bodies stays immense. In absence of capable local bodies, it remains quite difficult for the national government to focus on the local issues substantially, and to imitate necessary action to meet the challenges. On the other front, the importance of LGIs, in the contemporary global context, has increased as they have been gradually empowered to initiate incessant programmes to serve grassroots citizens. Thus, the activities of LGIs have extended multifariously, including the making of need-based policies, implementation of the same, distribution of goods and services, reducing the burden of the central government, educating citizens in democratic practices and rights, building political leadership, and addressing internal socio-cultural diversity.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, irrespective of geographical location, LGIs are expected to be capable enough to expand the services of the government to the common people by being the unit of local self-government rather than being the agent of the central government.

Modern states employ their attempts to make the local bodies responsive and proficient for responding to the demands of the citizens. The government has been the sole actor for bringing a dynamic shift in the governance system of localities in many countries of the World. Like other countries, Bangladesh has been found proactive towards SLG, as the state has formulated innovative policies and enacted time befitting laws with an intention to decentralise power to the LGIs. However, the initiatives of the government have not been found enough to make LGIs capable of satisfying the demands, and failure of neighbourhood governments implementing the policies and laws of the land.<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact, it stands very difficult for the

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<sup>1</sup> M. Shamsul Haque, “Local Governance in South Asia” in *Improving Local Government Outcomes of Comparative Research*, ed. Michiel S. de Vries, P.S. Reddy, and M. Shamsul Haque (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008): 32.

<sup>2</sup> Farzana Nasrin, “Reforms in Local Government: Experiences from Bangladesh,” *Journal of Asia Pacific Studies* 3, no. 1 (2013): 47, [www.japss.org/upload/3.%20Farzana.pdf](http://www.japss.org/upload/3.%20Farzana.pdf) (accessed August 8, 2016), 47; and

government to strengthen LGIs alone as there involves a good number of actors and multidimensional tasks in the process of strengthening LGIs. Realising the essence, the government of Bangladesh (GoB) very recently in the seventh FYP, has formally recognised the importance of involvement of different backers to increase the capacity of the LGIs to become capable of delivering services to the poor and marginalised people. This initiative has created a congenial environment and opportunity for the International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), though these non-state actors (NSAs) have already been in the sector for many days with indifferent attitudes of the government to their involvement for SLG. However, the individualistic approach of either Governmental Organisation (GO) or NGO may create duplication or clash of efforts in the implementation process. Moreover, both GOs and NGOs have certain varieties of limitations in the way of making and implementing of their own policies. Under this circumstance, collaborative efforts could be an option that could work best in reducing deficiencies to a minimum level by complementing each other through compensating their weakness.

Therefore, this study intending to unearth the impact of collaborative efforts on the local governance deserves special mention and merits attention for an in-depth research. To be more specific, this study has envisioned to identify different issues relating to the collaboration of NGOs with the local government bodies in general and the Union Parishads (hereinafter UPs) in particular and its impact on strengthening the governance situation of the former. In order to uncover the impact of collaboration on local governance an NGO scheme ‘Sharique: A Local Governance Project’ (hereinafter Sharique) which is financed, and contracted by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation (hereinafter Helvetas) has been selected for the study.<sup>3</sup>

## 1.2 Context of the Study

LGIs are broadly encountering challenges of lack of capacity and financial resources, and limited practice of institutional laws to perform at the desired level due to the existence of some inherent and extrinsic weaknesses. These institutions maintain the

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Salahuddin M. Aminuzzaman, “Governance at Grassroots-Rhetoric and Reality: A Study of the Union *Parishad* in Bangladesh,” in *Search for Better Governance in South Asia and Beyond*, ed. Istiaq Jamil, Steinar Askvik, and Tek Nath Dhakal (New York: Springer, 2013), 206.

<sup>3</sup> Sahrique (Sharique means partnership) programme has been implemented since 2006, and it has finished its third phase in August 2016. The efforts of the programme centred in the districts of Rajshahi, Sunamganj, Chapai Nawabganj and Khulna with 207 Union Parishads and 29 Upazila Parishads. It has also addressed about 1,900 community groups with about 50,000 members. The programme in collaboration with the LGIs has been working for both side, i.e. supply and demand side for quite a long period of 10 years. (Source: [https://bangladesh.helvetas.org/en/projects\\_bangladesh/local\\_governance\\_programme\\_sharique/](https://bangladesh.helvetas.org/en/projects_bangladesh/local_governance_programme_sharique/), accessed August 28, 2016)

succession of ‘British-invented,’ ‘Pakistani-installed,’ ‘centrally controlled’ local hierarchical organisation; and all most all the ruling elites of independent Bangladesh have used LGIs to strengthen their power and support base at the local level in the name of decentralisation.<sup>4</sup> Inefficiency, ineffectiveness, and incompetence, which are the major features of LGIs, have resulted from their small size, which keeps away talented and dedicated people from participating in the governing process.<sup>5</sup> They are more prone to indulge in malfeasance and corruption than the national government due to lack of transparency, accountability, efficiency, promptness, proper knowledge, regular auditing, proper mindset of the elites, bureaucrats, and officials, informal governance, and participation of the marginalised people.<sup>6</sup> National government is monitored and checked through different mechanisms of well-established commissions, CSOs and other organisations that actually lack at local level. Since the British era, they have always been subjected to the domination of the local bureaucrats and national level politicians.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, evidence shows that the elected UP officials have been found busy fulfilling the aspirations and demands of the members of the ruling parties instead of remaining inclined to serve the causes of the local people. The majority of the functionaries of LGIs lack adequate capacity, which is required to perform their mandated tasks. Moreover, the management systems are weak, and broad-based community participation in decision-making process is usually limited. Informal traditional rural elite dominates power structure of local areas and exercises hegemonic role over local resources, as well as have intriguing influence in deciding the socioeconomic profiling on poverty.<sup>8</sup> This substantiates the claim that local governance remains weak operationally and functionally rather than structurally.<sup>9</sup>

The politically privileged people do not want to empower local bodies through decentralisation and hinder the process of creating opportunities for local inhabitants to get involved in the process of governance and keep an eye on their constituencies.<sup>10</sup> Frequent structural changes are also responsible for not having a properly functional

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<sup>4</sup> Md. Nadiruzzaman, “Rural Local Government and State Politics in Bangladesh” (PhD diss., Durham University, 2008), II, [http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/2238/1/2238\\_248.pdf](http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/2238/1/2238_248.pdf)? UkUDh:CYT (accessed August 1, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> Kamal Siddiqui, ed., *Local Government in South Asia* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1992), 7.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Akhter Hussain, “Local Governance in Bangladesh: The Emerging Role of the Development Partners,” *Asian Affairs* 25, no. 4 (2003): 5.

<sup>8</sup> David Lewis, and Abul Hossain, *Understanding the Local Power Structure in Rural Bangladesh*, SIDA Studies no. 22 (Stockholm: SIDA, 2008), 83, <http://personal.lse.ac.uk/lewisd/images/Lewis&H-SidaStudies-22.pdf> (accessed February 17, 2017).

<sup>9</sup> Mohammed Asaduzzaman, “Development Role of the Local Governance Institutions in Bangladesh: Empirical Overview,” *Nepalese Journal of Public Policy and Governance* xxiv, no. 1 (June 2009): 101-3.

<sup>10</sup> Pranab Kuamr Panday, “Local Government System in Bangladesh: How Far is it Decentralised?” *Lex Localis* 9, no. 3 (2011): 224.



local governance system.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the relationship between local government bodies and grassroots level offices of the central government administration is yet to be grounded in a sound working relationship.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, decisions related to LGIs are usually made by the central government, as well as by the bureaucrats, who do not have an adequate level of willingness to decentralise and empower local institutions.<sup>13</sup>

On the other hand, third sectors, NGOs have recognition for their roles in alleviating poverty, and gain strong position in the arena of governance and good governance. Being more efficient, effective and responsive, private sectors and their mechanisms have been suggested for improving governance. Furthermore, international aid agencies and the World Bank have been persuading for lessening the role and scope of state agencies through privatisation of services.<sup>14</sup> Civil society is another recognised sector, which has a critical role in democratisation, ensuring good governance and balancing between state power and private sectors, can play a major part in the form of promotion of ‘pluralism in associational life’ in confirming peoples’ participation and reaching the benefits of decentralisation to the grass root people and their organisations.<sup>15</sup> UNDP, international donor agencies, and World Bank have been advising and pressurising their stakeholder for creating opportunity for NGOs and CSOs to play greater roles in governance. NGOs have also transformed from their typical service orientation to be oriented with political issues, particularly with promotion of good governance. NGOs in Bangladesh, in recent times, have engaged with national and local government bodies to strengthen the governance of the same by collaborating with them.

It has been noticed that in recent times, the GoB coupled with donor agencies, and NGOs have started formulating ideas and techniques to strengthen the UPs’ governance. The first such comprehensive initiative was ‘Local Governance Support Project – Learning and Innovation Component (LGSP-LIC) to meet the ends of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with financial support from the World Bank, GoB, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and the European Union (EU). Sirajganj Local Government Development Fund Project (SLGDFP) (2000-2005) has encouraged the government to continue

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<sup>11</sup> Md. Shahriar Islam, and Mohammad Mohabbat Khan, “Inclusive Governance in Bangladesh: A Review,” *Public Affairs and Governance* 3, no. 1 (2015): 13.

<sup>12</sup> Pranab Panday, “Local Government System in Bangladesh,” 218.

<sup>13</sup> John-Mary Kauzya, “Local Governance Capacity for Full Range Participation: Concepts, Framework, and Experiences in African Countries” (United Nations, 2003): 19, [www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2003/esa03dp33.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2003/esa03dp33.pdf) (accessed: August 8, 2016).

<sup>14</sup> M. Rafiqul Islam, and Ali Farazmand, “Perceptions of Civil Servants Toward Privatization and Development: A New Exploratory Study,” *Public Organization Review* 8, no. 1 (2008): 39.

<sup>15</sup> Local government in Bangladesh: past rhetoric’s and contemporary questions 2007), 97.

such project, in a wide area of six districts namely Sirajganj, Habiganj, Satkhira, Feni, Barguna, and Narsingdi through LGSP-LIC (2007-2011) by transferring resources to the UPs. The project has further been enhanced through the next phase namely LGSP-II which started in July 2011 and finished in June 2016.<sup>16</sup> The aim of the project is to enhance UPs' capacity to make them confident in planning, budgeting, and implementing their plans and programmes. Lately, The LGSP 3 has been working for fulfilment on four core components; the components include 1) institutionalisation of UP fiscal transfer, 2) audits and performance management, and operationalization of Management Information System, 3) supplying Expanded Block Grant (EBG) to pilot Poursabhas, and 4) capacity development and project implementation support.<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, local and foreign NGOs in collaboration with the government with or without a partnership with other development associates have got involved in this sector. They are working in selected districts, widespread enterprise yet to be taken, as they are searching for suitable programme to suggest for replication. Some of the projects are Journey for Advancement in Transparency, Representation and Accountability (JATRA) of Care Bangladesh, Union Parishad Governance Project (UPGP) of UNDP with financial support from GoB, UNCDF, EU and DANIDA, SLG of BRAC, Sharique of SDC, and Strengthening Community-Based Organisations for Pro-poor Democratic Governance (SCOPE) project of Dan Church Aid (DCA) co-financed with EU and Church of Sweden (CoS).<sup>18</sup> Sharique project of SDC which has been proposed to be selected in this study has been implemented since 2006. The third phase of Sharique has just been completed in August 2016. The major focus of the project is on 'planning with the people' rather than the existing paradigm 'planning for the people.' A key principle of the project is to make governance work for the poor, women and marginalised groups. Its activities have centred on capacity

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<sup>16</sup> LGD, "History of Second Local Governance Support Project (LGSP-II)," <http://www.lgsplgd.gov.bd/en/about-lgsp-ii/history-of-lgsp/> (accessed August 12, 2016).

<sup>17</sup> World Bank, "Local Governance Support Project – 3," <http://projects.worldbank.org/P159683?lang=en> (accessed June 1, 2018).

<sup>18</sup> Note: **JATRA**: The project focuses on Union Parishad public financial management systems to make it strengthened, transparent and aligned with the Local Government Act 2009. It encourages citizens' participation in planning, and budgeting, implementation and monitoring to deliver feedbacks. (Source: [http://carebangladesh.org/publication/Publication\\_1002356.pdf](http://carebangladesh.org/publication/Publication_1002356.pdf), accessed August 18, 2016) **SLG of BRAC**: The programme has started in 2003, and the aims of the effort are to increase the capacity of the local governance, to make LGIs accountable to local people, to promote citizens engagement with LGIs through providing training, forming platforms, extending supports for planning and budgeting. (Source: <https://brac.net/community-empowerment/item/840-strengthening-local-governance>, accessed August 8, 2016) **UPGP**: The project inceptioned in 2013 in partnership with LGD to support GoB in achieving MDGs in strengthening local administration through effective, inclusive, participatory, democratic LG, and changing traditional service delivery system to encompass a pro-poor approach. (Source: [http://www.bd.undp.org/content/bangladesh/en/home/operations/projects/democratic\\_governance/union-parishad-governance-project.html](http://www.bd.undp.org/content/bangladesh/en/home/operations/projects/democratic_governance/union-parishad-governance-project.html), accessed August 18, 2016) **SCOPE**: The project began in January 2013, continued until December 2016 in four districts of north Bengal namely Nilphamari, Rangpur, Lalmonirhat and Kurigram, and implemented by local NGO titled RDRS. Interventions of the project include capacity building of elected women leaders for efficient resource management, mobilization of women and advocacy for increased role of women in governance. (Source: [http://www.rdrsbanla.net/?page\\_id=3307](http://www.rdrsbanla.net/?page_id=3307), accessed September 14, 2016)

building, self-assessment, and budget support, awareness building of the citizens to claim rights, facilitating citizens' participation in decision-making, improving gender equality, and conducting advocacies.<sup>19</sup>

### 1.3 Statement of the Problem

Since the 1990s, the concept of government has been replaced with the term governance that refers to self-organising and inter-organisational networks.<sup>20</sup> Recently governance has become the centrepiece of discussion to international aid agencies, national CSOs, practitioners of governance and administrators of the countries of both north and south because of phenomenal change in the field of ICT, extraordinary positive economic shift, the role of the states in tiger economy of Asia, and continuous growth of global capitalism.<sup>21</sup> Likewise, conflicting components like misappropriation of government funds, widespread existence of corruption, inadequate success of economic adjustment programmes, breakdown of centrally planned economies, presence of centralised bureaucracy, and the financial turmoil in welfare states among many other issues that have quickened the discussion on governance.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the indication makes it clear that the scenarios in the developing countries regarding problems of governance are multidimensional. It is argued that due to existence of such inescapable challenges, the government of these countries remain unsuccessful to reach the mass people and to soften their evils, such as poverty, illiteracy, lack of income-generating opportunities etc. The arguments continue with uncovering the principal cause of failure of governance induced from 'wrong and inadequate use of resources.'<sup>23</sup>

In Bangladesh, local government demands a great deal of attention for their critical roles in socio-economic development, good governance, and institutionalisation of democracy. In this alignment, the constitution of Bangladesh has made a promise to build participatory, strong and local self-government.<sup>24</sup> Articles 9, 11, 59 and 60 of the constitution have set out the arrangement with respect to the fundamentals of local government bodies. Nevertheless, Bangladesh lags behind in ensuring people's participation in local bodies, as the LGIs have yet to reach the desired level of

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<sup>19</sup> Helvetas, "Local Governance Programme Sharique," [https://bangladesh.helvetas.org/en/projects\\_bangladesh/local\\_governance\\_programme\\_sharique/](https://bangladesh.helvetas.org/en/projects_bangladesh/local_governance_programme_sharique/) (accessed August 28, 2016).

<sup>20</sup> R. A. W. Rhodes, "The New Governance: Governing without Government," *Political Studies* XLIV (1996): 652.

<sup>21</sup> Derick W. Brinkerhoff and Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff, "Governance reforms and failed states: challenges and implications," *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 68:4 (2002), 512.

<sup>22</sup> M. Shamsul Haque, "Reinventing Governance for Performance in South Asia: Impacts on Citizenship Rights," *International Journal of Public Administration* 26, nos. 8 & 9 (2003): 941–964; and Lester M. Salamon, "The New Governance and the Tools of Public Action: An Introduction," *Fordham Urban Law Journal* 28, no. 5 (2000): 1611-1674.

<sup>23</sup> Hasnat Abdul Hye, *Governance: South Asian Perspective* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 2000), 16.

<sup>24</sup> Sujana, "Sthaniya sarkarer bartaman o bhabsiyat karaniya," <https://shujan.org/2009/02/08/> (accessed July 26, 2016).

development. People's representatives of grassroots LGIs, researchers, and members of civil society possess the same view that the local government bodies are gradually becoming feeble and in a position of disarray.<sup>25</sup> LGIs of the country, they opined, have been encountering multifaceted problems from political and bureaucratic domination to the poor performance of the functionaries. Central political leaders, as well as local MP often interfere with the regular, and development functions of the LGIs.<sup>26</sup> In addition, the bureaucracy that is carrying the legacy of British colonial rule, seek to exert control over the LGIs. Inner flaws of LGIs, prominent among the crises of local government, have kept the local bodies inert and poorly performing. Furthermore, low participation of people, lack of accountability and transparency, dependency on the allocation of the central government, the absence of the participatory role of women members in the decision-making process, deficiency of democratic culture compel the LGIs to flounder to reach a strong position.<sup>27</sup> In addition, these institutions suffer from lack of skilled personnel and deficiency of responsiveness from both the common people and the people in power regarding roles and responsibilities. Thus, these bodies are struggling to face the challenges relating to coping with the growing demand for basic services. In this regards, it stands necessary to challenge these adverse circumstances for ensuring efficient service delivery, empowering the poor and marginalised people irrespective of casts and creeds, coming out from poverty and corruption, and ensuring development.

Thus, the need and demand for a strong local government capable of ensuring proper service delivery of the government, dealing with social improvements of local problems, preserving and promoting indigenous knowledge, efficient participatory decision-making process, bottom-up development, and building local leadership, is not new.<sup>28</sup> In order to attain these objectives, the importance of the Union Parishads (UPs) stands enormous, as sub-national institutions these bodies are considered responsible for providing services to the doorsteps of the local people. UPs remain one of the oldest local government organisations, which have gone under the interventions of British, Pakistani and Bangladeshi government for about 150 years. Being the nearest institutions of the local people and primogenital organisations of the land, the UPs stand popular; however, remain poor in performing their functions and delivery of services.

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<sup>25</sup> Discussion of 'Learning Sharing Seminar on Strengthening Local Government' organized by BRAC and the Hunger Project in Dhaka on March 24, 2016. *The Daily Prothom-alo*, March 24, 2016, <http://www.prothom-alo.com/bangladesh/article/808798> (accessed July26, 2016).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Zayeda Sharmin, Md. Amdadul Haque, and Fakhru Islam, "Problems of Strengthening Local Governance in Bangladesh: Towards a Comprehensive Solution," *Sust Studies* 15, no. 1 (2012), 76-84; and Farzana Nasrin, "Reforms in Local Government: Experiences from Bangladesh,"

<sup>28</sup> Kamal Siddiqui, ed., *Local Government in South Asia*, 6-7.

The government has recognised that the existence of strong and effective local governance is pivotal, as properly functioned LGIs have the potentials to contribute directly to the articulation of citizens' multifaceted needs, and identification of pertinent policies that can fit in heterogeneous local environment system all over the country.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the government has planned and implemented a wide-ranging set of actions with a view to reaching set targets of strengthening and empowering local communities for ensuring their active engagement, which would be helpful to achieve sustainable development.<sup>30</sup> The actions of the government include formation of reform commissions or committees, enactment of laws, circulations of rules, regulations, and guidelines, development of long-term plans, and policies, the supply of funds, etc.

In order to increase the capacity of the LGIs, it requires not only infrastructural development, as once it was thought that development is evidently depicted through the physical housing, as well as associated infrastructure,<sup>31</sup> but also operational and functional improvement. These operational processes and functions stem from the existing legal framework regarding local government. Pertinently, the UP Act of 2009, has offered landmark shift in mandates through incorporating the provisions of participatory planning, and budgeting, social accountability mechanisms, proactive information dissemination, and predefined set criteria for service delivery. Additionally, sharing of power and financial assets by central and local bureaucrats, the dedication of political leaders both of the centre and periphery, a well-designed mechanism for decentralisation and devolution, the participation of various groups on which national government has little control can create avenues to improve LGIs.<sup>32</sup> To make use of this opportunity, the government has taken many efforts to change the form of local government from time to time, but the endeavours aiming at strengthening local governance are few, and consequently, there is a strong claim for SLG.<sup>33</sup>

The government, however, in isolation is not enough to make policies on SLG and to implement them appropriately, as it needs the support of other actors of state. In this connection, the process of governance advocates for inclusion of all actors who can play parts in the system. Therefore, strengthening local governance is employed not only capacitating the LGIs but also enabling citizens, especially poor, women and

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<sup>29</sup> Planning Commission, *7th Five Year Plan (Final Draft): FY2015-FY2020* (Dhaka: November 2015), 430.

<sup>30</sup> J. M. Kauzya, "Local Governance Capacity for Full Range Participation," 21,

<sup>31</sup> Dan Smit, Clive Forster, and Anton Krone, *Impact of the SLGP on Human Settlement, Urban Renewal and Urban Governance*, (GTZ, January 2007), 11, <http://www.sustainabledevelopmentnetwork.com/pdf/52783864-Strengthening-LocalGovernance-Programme-Impact-on-Human-Settlements-Urban-Renewal-and-Urban-Go.pdf> (accessed July 20, 2016).

<sup>32</sup> G. Shabbir Cheema, "Engaging Civil Society to Promote Democratic Local Governance: Emerging Trends and Policy Implication in Asia," *Working Paper no 7, Swedish International Center for Local Democracy* (2011):8.

<sup>33</sup> Farzana Nasrin, "Reforms in Local Government: Experiences from Bangladesh," 47.

marginalised groups, as well as their organisations to raise their voice. In addition, governance also stresses importance on creating and empowering civil society organisations to monitor and play an advocacy role. Hence, extensive focus on governance can haze or evaporate the difference between state and civil society.<sup>34</sup> That means the practice of governance promotes a congenial atmosphere for possible collaboration of GO and civil society organisations, specifically, NGOs. Thus, the partnership of members of the civil society and general citizens can contribute to achieving sustainable progress. In this buildup, NGOs have persuasive power over both national and local government bodies as they have extended their coverage of services all over the country.<sup>35</sup> ‘Favoured Child’ of the donors, NGOs have shifted from customary issues of development to incorporate the idea of ‘good governance’ with a key role in sustaining democratic process, and policy ‘voice’ by the 1990s.<sup>36</sup> In Bangladesh, the NGOs also followed the transformation from relief supply to involvement with political affairs. In this alignment, the NGOs have a significant role to play their parts in strengthening civil society organisations (CSO) and help to increase accountability and responsiveness of the government, taking measures against corruption, and building institutions.<sup>37</sup> The roles of NGOs have intensified as they help local people to remove the passiveness by encouraging them to have their voice heard in the development of localities.<sup>38</sup> Many donor agencies, in isolation, have been providing support to overcome the situation of backwardness in different sectors, including gender mainstreaming, human resources development, employment opportunity, good governance, and local governance. Instead of overcoming from the backward situation, these supports have developed a sense of dependency, and reinvigorated top-down, paternalistic and often distorted structures. To overcome this, nowadays, NGOs are contracted or made partners by government and aid agencies for reformation of governance,<sup>39</sup> and their collaboration exists widespread for resource mobilisation, capacity building, enhancing quality service delivery, and knowledge dissemination.

The history of GO-NGO collaboration in Bangladesh goes back to the decade of the 1980s for EPI (Expanded Programme for Immunisation) of Ministry of Family

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<sup>34</sup> Rhodes, “The New Governance: Governing without Government,” 666.

<sup>35</sup> Varun Gauri, and Julia Galef, “NGOs in Bangladesh: Activities, Resources, and Governance,” *World Development* 33, no. 12 (2005): 2051, doi: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2005.05.009 (accessed August 1, 2016).

<sup>36</sup> David Lewis, *The Management of Non-Governmental Development Organizations: An introduction* (London: Routledge, 2001), 32.

<sup>37</sup> Julie Fisher, *Nongovernments: NGOs and the Political Development of Third World* (Jaipur: Kumarian Press, 2003), 21.

<sup>38</sup> Lainurm Kaido-Allan, “Participatory Democracy- the Role of NGOs in Developing Process of Local Authorities” (United Nations, 1989): 3, <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/nispacee/unpan005686.pdf> (accessed August 8, 2016).

<sup>39</sup> *International Encyclopedia of Civil Society* (2010), s.v., “Nongovernmental Organizations, Definition and History,” 1056-62.

Planning with BRAC. With the noteworthy success in EPI, the subsequent periods has witnessed the partnership in the field of education, training and research, health and family planning, employment generation, agriculture, and environment involving both local and foreign NGOs, donors with the government organisations at central level. In these milieus, several international, national and local NGOs have taken different collaborative initiatives whose main intention is to improve the governance situation of the local government bodies, and Sharique project stands one of them.

GO-NGO collaboration develops on mutual respect and acknowledgment of each other in performing common activities to reach shared targets at any stage from policy development to service delivery, and in complementing one another.<sup>40</sup> Usually, the government takes the top-down approach to implement policies, but sometimes it is unsuccessful to reach the grassroots people. On the other hand, NGOs working pattern adopts the bottom-up approach, which also has shortcomings as this approach depends on their capability. The government can provide legal, policy and logistic support, as well as resources in some cases; and NGO can organise these for implementation at field level with their managerial skill, and participatory approach in strengthening local governance. Therefore, the simultaneous endeavours of both GO and NGO result in the effect, which stays more than the aggregate of individual efforts, as one compensates the weaknesses of others by exploiting comparative advantages.<sup>41</sup>

Based on the above discussion, it is evident that local government institutions in Bangladesh have struggled to become strengthened enough to play their due parts in the process of inclusive development. Meanwhile, the government has realised that without proactive LGIs it is next to impossible to attain the targets of vision 2021 and SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) by 2030. Accordingly, the government has initiated programmes to strengthen local governance. Donor agencies and NGOs have also extended their programmes from traditional developmental perspective to extensive process of strengthening local governance. Consequently, the numbers of NGOs and their area of intervention and facilitation to strengthen local governance have been increasing day by day. Most importantly, in recent times, GOs and NGOs are jointly carrying out interventions to strengthen LGIs, and the collaboration of both the stakeholders has the potential to create a synergy in this sector. Therefore, it stands very important to make an effort to evaluate the role of GO-NGO collaborated interventions and facilitation, in strengthening local governance, as compared to control areas. Accordingly, attempts have been made to conduct the study on the following objectives originated from the above discussions.

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<sup>40</sup> Gelar Satya Budhi, "Escalating People's Participation in Rural Development through GO-NGO Collaboration," *Forum Penelitian Agro Ekonomi* 26, no. 1 (July 2008), <http://ejurnal.litbang.pertanian.go.id/index.php/fae/article/viewFile/3951/3288> (accessed September 2, 2016), 62.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

## 1.4 Research Objectives

### 1.4.1 General Objective

The overall purpose of the study is to assess the contribution of GO-NGO collaborative efforts in strengthening local governance in Bangladesh and specifically, to inquire into the initiatives taken by ‘Sharique: A Local Governance Project’ to strengthen the governance of the UP as an outcome of collaboration with the UP.

### 1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are:

- i. to review various efforts of the government of Bangladesh those were intended to strengthen local bodies;
- ii. to identify strategies and activities of different types of collaborative programme that have been implemented with an intention to strengthen local governance in Bangladesh;
- iii. to evaluate the role of Sharique in strengthening the process of governance of the UP;
- iv. to identify the challenges that are being faced by Sharique while working for strengthening the governance of the UP; and
- v. to figure out policy implications and develop a model for further development of collaborative efforts to strengthen local governance.

## 1.5 Literature Review

The issues related to local government and local governance has drawn considerable attention in recent times. Many actors have been performing in this area to strengthen participatory governance and enhance people’s voice. NGOs’ collaboration with the government can be manifested in three ways: partnership development with government organisations in project implementation, capacity development of the government and or local government organisations, and advocacy for reforms.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, including partnership, Belyakov states four ways of interaction between government and NGOs, which he refers as ‘third sector.’<sup>43</sup> The other levels of interactions are notification or informing, consultation, and participation. Among the four states of interactions, he places the partnership in the apex, describing it as a complex system of involvement. In that paper, he puts importance in minimising the

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<sup>42</sup> Abdul Mueed Chowdhury, and M. Ghulam Sattar, “Building Governance for Fighting Poverty: Role of NGOs in Bangladesh,” in Sudhakar Rao, ed. *Guidelines for good governance* (Dhaka: BRAC, 2005): 133.

<sup>43</sup> Sergey Belyakov, “Increasing the Influence of NGO’s on Policy Making through Public Consultations: Lessons from Poland,” *Policy Papers 4/11, The National Endowment for Democracy* (2011). [www.isp.org.pl/uploads/filemanager/SergeyBelyakov.pdf](http://www.isp.org.pl/uploads/filemanager/SergeyBelyakov.pdf) (accessed: August 8, 2016).



gap between authorities and citizens' voice in policy-making process to improve transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness of policy regulations.<sup>44</sup> In his qualitative research, using data from secondary sources on local governance of Bangladesh, Hussain has taken into account seven development partners i.e., NGOs, INGOs, Donor Agencies, and Countries to show that these organisations are very much interested in improving local governance by concentrating mostly on facilitating participation of marginalised people, especially poor and women.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, they also engage in building competency of LGIs in the area of roles and functions, budgeting, planning, implementation of developmental projects, gender sensitisation, enhancing service delivery, local resource mobilisation, transparency, accountability, and advocating for legal reform for the decentralised local government system.

The decentralised local government system with devolving power to the local bodies is one of the prominent conditions of effective local level institutions to establish good governance, democratisation, and civic engagement. If decentralisation becomes effective, it would offer an improved condition of service delivery, citizen participation, local resource mobilisation and institutionalisation of local democracy.<sup>46</sup> In his study, Panday expresses though LGIs in Bangladesh are decentralised yet they are facing severe crises of self-rule due to lack of power and authority, the absence of sound working relation with the field level officer of the central government, lack of financial resources, and trained personnel, and lack of transparency, and accountability. He also mentions that, in some cases, the central government, as well as political leaders have shown less interest in empowering LGIs.<sup>47</sup> Since independence, the successive governments have manipulated the hereditary local institutions to serve their political interests.<sup>48</sup> In spite of that, government has enacted a comprehensive law for UPs in 2009. Having critically analysed the Local Government (Union Parishads) Act, 2009, Panday has termed it is a timely and praiseworthy act, which has integrated a number of provisions required to make the localities responsive and participatory.<sup>49</sup> Islam and Khan have also echoed Panday's view on the enactment of the favorable legal framework as goodwill of the

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Akhter Hussain, "Local Governance in Bangladesh," 5-22.

<sup>46</sup> G. Shabbir Cheema, "Engaging Civil Society to Promote Democratic Local Governance," 5.

<sup>47</sup> Pranab Panday, "Local Government System in Bangladesh," 205-30.

<sup>48</sup> Mohammed Asaduzzaman, "Development Role of the Local Governance Institutions in Bangladesh," 98.

<sup>49</sup> The provisions include: **Ward Sabha:** A Ward Sabha (ward meeting) shall be constituted at ward level with elected ward member in a chair and elected female member as an advisor, and two meetings of Ward Sabha shall be held per annum (c 4, and 5). **Open Budget:** The budget of the UP shall be prepared 60 days in advance of beginning of financial year. After approval by the standing committees, it shall be presented to local people in an open meeting for their approval (c 57). **Right to Information:** Citizens are offered with the right to have any information from the UPs provided it cause no harm to others, and failing to serve the information within agreed time the concerned person shall face sanctions (c 78). **Citizens' Charter:** In UPs, there shall be a Citizens' Charter, which includes the list services citizen entitled to receive within stipulated period (c 49 (1)).

government.<sup>50</sup> A recent study focused on the impact of implementation of the act reveals that after the eight years of application of the policy there exist some significant positive results with inclusions of general people in decision-making, activation of social accountability mechanisms, and dissemination of information through execution of right to information and citizen charter.<sup>51</sup> The study further unveils that the citizens have yet to turn out to be knowledgeable and familiar with the provisions of the act.

Moreover, in an empirical study, the author claims that local bodies are structurally strong but functionally weak as compared to NGOs.<sup>52</sup> To eliminate the evils of the present situation, he proposes ‘partnership-based local governance,’ in which other actors and sectors work together in collaboration to improve overall governance. Asaduzzaman et al. also advocate for partnership-based governance to include government, NGOs/CSOs/INGOs, and private sectors, as decentralisation sometimes empower local elites rather than marginalised citizens, which go against corruption free, accountable and transparent local governance.<sup>53</sup> Vettel's’ study on three NGOs of Tamil Nadu confirms that participatory role in decision-making by powerless groups enhances the opportunity to build an egalitarian political atmosphere.<sup>54</sup> The study further extends as it reveals the rate of success is proportionate to the level of participation by the poor. However, another study in the Netherlands concludes that participation in decision-making is important, yet democratic citizenship is more important than saying directly in the meeting.<sup>55</sup>

Thus, Cheema implies in his study that local level democracy needs (1) political pluralism, devolution of policy, capacity and resources of local government; and (2) a proactive civil society that acts as the indication of democratisation, decentralisation, and accountability.<sup>56</sup> He also specifies that donor agencies like UNDP and the World Bank have materialised strengthening governance projects in three phases. In the first phase, initiatives have been taken to improve public sector capacity in policymaking, implementation, and evaluation. The second phase involves with encompassing government, civil society and private sector within the political system, and for this, a shift is seen from ‘government to governance’. In the third phase, what Cheema has

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<sup>50</sup> Md. Shahriar Islam, and Mohammad Mohabbat Khan, “Inclusive Governance in Bangladesh,” 1-15.

<sup>51</sup> Shuvra Chowdhury, and Pranab Kumar Panday, *Strengthening Local Governance in Bangladesh: Reforms, Participation and Accountability* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG, 2018).

<sup>52</sup> Asaduzzaman, “Development Role of the Local Governance Institutions in Bangladesh,” 96-11.

<sup>53</sup> Asaduzzaman et al., “Strengthening Local Governance in Developing Countries: Partnership as an Alternative Approach,” *Public Organiz Rev* (2015), doi: 10.1007/s11115-015-0311-5 (accessed July 22, 2016).

<sup>54</sup> Surendra K. Vettivel, *Community Participation: Empowering the Poorest -Roles of NGOs* (New Delhi: Vetri Publishers, 1992).

<sup>55</sup> Ank Michels, and Laurens De Graaf, “Examining Citizen Participation: Local Participatory Policy Making and Democracy,” *Local Government Studies* 36, no. 4 (2000): 477, doi: 10.1080/03003930.2010.494101 (accessed 23 July 2016).

<sup>56</sup> Shabbir Cheema, “Engaging Civil Society to Promote Democratic Local Governance,” 1-20.

cited as ‘Glocalization,’ that involves with free flowing of ideas, issues, and information among countries, and once what appear as domestic matters, become global issues later. Aside from that, this phase has emphasised on people-centred local governance to improve mechanism and process towards good governance. Most of the developing countries have made comprehensive policy to fulfil the condition of successful devolution but remained far from comprehensive in scope of practicing. Furthermore, Cheema makes a list of programmes for donors and INGOs engaged in improving local development by establishing local self-government. The itineraries of the list are (1) to support the reform of legal framework and policies, (2) to assist in making known the local government organisational and institutional formation, and working method and measures, (3) to enhance capability at local level in operating local government, (4) to backstop different ministries and departments in enhancing competency, (5) to allocate financial support for budgeting or project financing through local government, and lastly, (6) to support national initiatives and vision to envisage well performing system of local governance.<sup>57</sup>

Bangladesh has taken varied modifications and alterations in the sector of local government. In a broad heading, the recent reform issues are training programmes for the functionaries, development of job description of women members, new tax schedule for localities, projects on strengthening local governance, rejuvenating Upazila Parishads (UZP), and enactment of new legal framework etc.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, these are not enough to make local bodies effective. Thus, more attention is required. Both the authors remain concerned with two major challenges the local bodies are confronted with. One of them, as they mention, the issues of accountability of development programme at local level rests on the lower tiers, but development issues are concerned with the upper bodies, and the agent of central bureaucrats working in the field-level have an upper hand on developmental issues. Another issue is linked with political leaders, primarily the Members of Parliament (MP), who have officially increased oversight over local bodies, and that has created a great deal of tension between locally elected representatives and the MPs. These are, by all means, detrimental to the process of strengthening localities. In their study, they have made the readers conscious about hegemonic state-centric or NGO-centric model. There are many other agents, they have argued, working in local areas, but they remain unrecognised in the conceptual universe. They propose a multi-agent model where there would be space for other agencies to play their role in developing local bodies. The authors make nine recommendations to be included in the 7th Five Year Plan,

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Hossain Zillur Rahman, and Tofail Ahmed, “Strategy on Local Government Strengthening,” *Background Paper for 7th Five Year Plan* (2015), 1-45, [http://www.plancomm.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/13\\_Strategy-on-Local-Government-Strengthening.pdf](http://www.plancomm.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/13_Strategy-on-Local-Government-Strengthening.pdf) (accessed May 4, 2016).

including (1) formulation of an umbrella law to accommodate all the local bodies, (2) initiating LG discussion on prioritise agenda to devolve zero-sum power, (3) improvement of local economy by focusing on localities, (4) focusing on urban government for holistic management and capacity building, (5) use of technology especially ICT (6) contribution of LGIs to national revenue would be 15%, (7) transferred departments to handed over to the appropriate LGIs, (8) training for LGIs functionaries and other stakeholders groups for horizontal and vertical accountability, and (9) all LGIs would come under the voter-based constituencies.<sup>59</sup>

In Global context, Indonesia has gone under intervention initiated by donors for decentralising power to the local bodies. Christopher Silver in his study depicts the whole scenario of Indonesia's devolution of power to local government.<sup>60</sup> The decentralisation process in Indonesia can be divided into two parts, one before 1998 and the other after that. Prior to 1998, the donor agencies' objectives were to democratise the localities and improve local resource mobilisation as property tax was imposed to reduce dependency on central government and that resulted in an increase of budgetary local fund in some localities. After the unanticipated demise of Suharto from power, the subsequent government has enacted two radical laws: 22/1999 and 25/1999; which have expedited the decentralisation process rapidly that have stunned even the donors as it has been done so hurriedly and comprehensively that has remained beyond their anticipation. Local bodies have been given discretionary authority to spend fund for local development. One of the crucial decisions that has been implemented is to share the central revenue with the localities based on a given formula. Besides, local bodies are empowered to collect local revenue, which has enhanced their capacity to take development projects. However, some of the localities are not blessed with a great amount of local revenue, and thus their dependency on central fund has increased. In some cases, local revenue remains 25% of the local budget before 1999, but it has reduced to 15% of the same after starting of allocation policy. The author has continued by saying that the after effect of new sharing arrangement remains better than that of the pre-1998 transfer method. At the same time, the duties and responsibilities of the local bodies have been increased, as well as central government departments staffs have been transferred to the local payment system. The author identifies a lack of streamlined workforce at localities as one of the problems, as well as balancing between central objectives and strong local bodies would be, he has forecasted, a challenge to face in coming days. A World Bank study,

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Christopher Silver, "Do the Donors Have it Right? Decentralisation and Changing Local Governance in Indonesia," *The Annals of Regional Science* (2003), 421-434, doi: 10.1007/s00168-003-0162-9 (accessed July 22, 2016).

concerned with the same issue, discovers that the massive reforms in Indonesia have brought uncertainty and haziness regarding the functions of LGIs, provinces, and national agencies.<sup>61</sup>

In South Africa, the German Agency for Technical Co-operation (GTZ) has intervened in local governance with the Strengthening Local Governance Programme (SLGP). The methods of intervention have been policy advice, capacity building, and institutional strengthening.<sup>62</sup> In partnership with the government, SLGP has promoted some policy frameworks, provided training, and increased exposure to innovations for main partners by exchanging ideas internationally. The study has explored the impacts of the project and the results have shown positive trend and implied that still there has opportunity to do a lot. Fowler in his study on the African perspective has advised NGOs to do a lot to promote democratisation.<sup>63</sup> He has argued for bottom-up development practice and mentioned that conscious and well-informed policy would bring success. In this paper, the author has proposed strategies for intervention by the NGOs, that are ‘the Onion Skin Strategy’ (OSS) and participation for citizenship. The OSS requires multi-layered interventions having provided protection for the layers underneath that form the core goals.

Keeping Africa in the background, Kauzya emphasises on decentralisation and proposes two types of decentralisation; they are vertical and horizontal decentralisation.<sup>64</sup> Vertical decentralisation is a top-down process, by which power, authority, functions, responsibilities, and resources devolve to the local government from central by introducing new laws and structural changes. On the other hand, horizontal decentralisation deals with the empowerment of grassroots communities. Nevertheless, he unveils a threat emanated from the misconception that local citizens do not have enough capacity to be functionaries of local government, and therefore, the power should not be devolved. The researcher prudently identifies that most of the capacity building projects and programmes for local governance narrowly concentrate only on local government bodies. However, he differentiates between the existing misconception, and approach, as local governance capacity building encompasses all the actors at the local level. Most of the time local governance capacity building ends in only training; instead, it should take a holistic approach to include policy environment, institutions, individuals, and teams. African countries are facing double weaknesses; (vertical and horizontal weakness) as not only central and local

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<sup>61</sup> David Savage, and Nilufar Ahmad, *Strengthening Local Governance: Defining the Role of Upazila and Union Parishad* (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2007), 8.

<sup>62</sup> Smit, Forster, and Krone, *Impact of the SLGP on Human Settlement, Urban Renewal and Urban Governance*.

<sup>63</sup> Alan Fowler, “Non-Governmental Organizations as Agent of Democratization: An African Perspective,” *Journal of International Development* 5, no. 3 (1993): 325-39, doi:10.1002/jid.3380050308/pdf (accessed August 8, 2016).

<sup>64</sup> J. M. Kauzya, “Local Governance Capacity for Full Range Participation,” 1-23,

governments but also the civil societies, as well as the private sectors are showing the symptoms of the vulnerability. The study further states that strong institution at local and central level with a sound working relationship is a prerequisite for strengthening localities. For example, Kauyaza continues, Uganda establishes the Decentralisation Secretariat with enough capacity and supports that result in much success. Besides, Rwanda goes with the same venture with the Decentralisation Management Unit with less extensive capacity and the rate of success remains comparatively low. The study mentions that participation depends not only on capacity but also on the willingness of the inhabitants. He proposes five indicators to test participation: Priority Setting, Planning, Producing, Paying, and Consumption. African countries take initiatives to develop formal and informal forum (Integrated Development Planning Process in South Africa, and Community Development Committees in Rwanda) under the local bodies to ensure participation of all actors in the activities of local bodies.

On the contrary, Suleiman owns different views, as she discovers studying literature that the so-called role of NGOs in governance depends on participation is yet to be proved.<sup>65</sup> Her scepticism arises from some distinctive thoughts developed from the study of African countries. These ideas are: (1) in the post-colonised state the public sphere is bifurcated as it lacked cohesiveness to build a unified public voice, and (2) most of the times NGOs depend on the external fund. On that background, the author develops the concept that the NGOs have failed to be the voice of the common people as they claimed, and their dependency on foreign fund may result in performance compromise. She reiterates that governance issues are more political than erratic procedural matter. She emphasises more on indigenous CSOs/NGOs by citing an example from a project (Organi Project) developed in Pakistan.<sup>66</sup> She insists that state is the principal player in bringing change in democratisation and strengthening governance with a better understanding of local context. She further argues that state and NGOs are reciprocally all-inclusive, either they subsist together or collapse in concert.

A research reveals that NGO has struggled to reach its target and the output remained mixed, as the organisation was unable to take into account the local contexts. It has performed better for non-primary target: the NGO workers and private sectors. The result of the study also suggests that these projects have created dependency syndrome; and has recommended involving local people, as well as government to

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<sup>65</sup> Lina Suleiman, "The NGOs and the Grand Illusions of Development and Democracy," *Voluntas* (2013): 241-261, doi: 10.1007/7s11266-012-9337-2 (accessed August 1, 2016), 241-261.

<sup>66</sup> Note: Organi Project contributed on low cost sanitation services.

emphasise mostly organically originated projects and programmes.<sup>67</sup> To focus meticulously on the issue, the World Bank has introduced a new project in Indonesia, Venezuela, and Russia to establish “Special Governance Zones” (SGZ) borrowing the idea from the economic zoning systems.<sup>68</sup> The SGZ has been established in such countries where widespread and systematic alteration of governance may not be practicable. These zones are in the specific areas of the country, where different aspects of governance would be tested. The test result would demonstrate which one is effective and replicable to other parts of the country to reinvigorate governance.

In Bangladeshi context, the researchers have forwarded some recommendations to be included in the recent long-term final plan for establishing strong local governance.<sup>69</sup> The document recommends a comprehensive set of actions to strengthen the local governance listed in ten items, which are: (1) formulation of an umbrella law- ‘Local Government Legal Framework’ (LGLF) instead of nine basic laws and a few hundred rules, (2) setting up indicators and standards to measure performance to increase accountability and transparency, (3) initiation of capacity building for local functionaries, (4) training for budgeting and planning, (5) acceleration of citizens participation, (6) facilitation of at the local level, (7) sharing of taxes between national government and LGIs, (8) implementation of projects in accordance with annual and five-year plan, (9) incorporation of local level plan in national plan, and (10) intensification of supply of technical assistance to LGIs for formulating five-year plan.<sup>70</sup> The government has already envisaged for strong local governance in the Perspective Plan 2010-2020; by 2021 power, function and fiscal authority will be devolved to local governance system and they will be made capable to mobilise local resources to manage expenditures.<sup>71</sup> The government has implemented ‘Local Governance Support Programme’ with financial support from the World Bank, UNDP, EU, SDC, and others. The project took endeavours, firstly, to increase discretionary resources, to encourage a system to increase local tax collection, and to develop a method to make LGI officials accountable to communities; secondly, it attempted to amplify the intergovernmental relations emphasising on direct disbursement of fund, financial reporting, and universal auditing.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Busiinge Christopher, “The Impact of Donor Aided Projects through NGOs on the Social and Economic Welfare of the Rural Poor, ‘What Do the Donors Want?’ Case Study: Kabarole Research & Resource Centre” (Uganda Martyrs University, 2010), [https://www.rgs.org/NR/rdonlyres/3200ECC1-391E-43F6A89F2212F856F449/0/BUSIINGERE SEARCHRGS Copy.pdf](https://www.rgs.org/NR/rdonlyres/3200ECC1-391E-43F6A89F2212F856F449/0/BUSIINGERE%20SEARCHRGS%20Copy.pdf) (accessed August 8, 2016).

<sup>68</sup> World Bank, *Reforming Public Institutions and Strengthening Governance* (Washington D. C.: World Bank, 2000), 145, <http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/Reforming.pdf> (accessed July 20, 2016).

<sup>69</sup> Zillur Rahman, and Tofail Ahmed, “Strategy on Local Government Strengthening,” 25.

<sup>70</sup> 7th FYP, 421-443.

<sup>71</sup> Zillur Rahman, and Tofail Ahmed, “Strategy on Local Government Strengthening,” 38.

<sup>72</sup> David Savage, and Nilufar Ahmad, *Strengthening Local Governance*, 1.

Here, the questions remain whether the plans and reforms initiatives have achieved their goals. The study reveals a number of reform initiatives of GoB to devolve power to the local bodies through the introduction of new legal frameworks, revision of old laws and regulations, establishing new LGIs and units, creating measures for resource mobilisation have been found insufficient to strengthen local government.<sup>73</sup> Mentioning the outcome of three commissions of 1993, 1997, and 1999 on local governance reforms, Aminuzzaman discovers that these initiatives actually have come shortly to bring any significant change in governance.<sup>74</sup> Sharmin et al. explore some real potential causes behind it. These are: lack of consultation with stakeholders, unstable local government structures, inefficiency of local representatives, dependency of local bodies to central government specially for project financing, excessive control of central government over local government, purposeful use of localities by different regimes, bureaucratic domination, dual, or lack of accountability, struggle of power between local representatives and central political leaders, as well as MPs, pre-eminence of local elites, and last not the least the lack of real commitment of the government to strengthen local bodies.<sup>75</sup> They suggest an integrated legal framework for all LGIs, opportunity for both NGOs and private sectors to contribute, increase ability of LGIs to gather fund from local and external sources, initiation of proper policy to transfer government fund, review of reserved, transferred and residual functions, participation of people, and governments, transfer of personnel to local authority, as well as greater political consensus to strengthen local governance.

Governments' most recent initiative has been LGSP jointly funded by the World Bank, and GoB, UNDP, UNCDF, DANIDA, and EU. LGSP has been developed on the base of SLGDFP.<sup>76</sup> After the completion of SLGDFP, the government with donors has rejuvenated the programme with new vigour and name LGSP-LIC to make a widespread intervention in the whole country. In the succession of the LGSP-LIC, LGSP-II has been started implementation in July 2011, and in continuation of LGSP-II, a new project named LGSP-III being into existence in 2017 and has been planned to be completed in 2021. The purpose of this intervention with the allocation of resources is to make the UPs capable of making the decision independently and discretionarily on development planning, budgeting, selecting schemes and

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<sup>73</sup> Farzana Nasrin, "Reforms in Local Government: Experiences from Bangladesh," 47.

<sup>74</sup> Salahuddin M. Aminuzzaman, "Governance at Grassroots-Rhetoric and Reality," 206.

<sup>75</sup> Zayeda Sharmin, Md. Amdadul Haque, and Fakhru Islam, "Problems of Strengthening Local Governance in Bangladesh: Towards a Comprehensive Solution," *SUST Studies* 15, no. 1 (2012), 76-84; and Farzana Nasrin, "Reforms in Local Government: Experiences from Bangladesh,"

<sup>76</sup> LGD, "History of Second Local Governance Support Project (LGSP-II)," <http://www.lgspigd.gov.bd/en/about-lgsp-ii/history-of-lgsp/> (accessed August 12, 2016).



implementing them, as well as making functionaries of the UPs accountable to the local people.

Donors of Bangladesh in collaboration with the government have engaged in initiating programmes and projects to build the capacity of the local governance. One such project is UPGP that started working in August 2013 on the base of previously active LGSP-LIC Programme that worked on participatory planning and management process, and the components included in the following government's programme LGSP-II.<sup>77</sup> The UPGP has focused on the four platforms that according to UPGP construct the core of the UPs. They are the UPs, Standing Committees of the UP, the Ward Sabhas, and the Women Development Forums (WDFs). The project has also taken the initiative to establish a functional and effective relationship between UPs and respective Upazila (UPZ) administration, as well as with the central government to speak for support regarding policy need at the UP level. The UPGP has set its broad-spectrum objective, putting MDG on the background, to capacitate LGIs and other related partners to facilitate participatory delivery of services. Specifically, it has got involved in supporting the government to find the suitable project in seven districts, and assessing the progress of the project which includes improving functional, institutional, and democratic accountability, as well as increasing citizen's participation, to make transparent, effective, and efficient service delivery. The project has intervened in many ways- providing training to the public representatives and officials, forming platforms for elected women representatives, enhancing capacity to mobilise local revenues, initiating IT-based service delivery, supporting LGD in formulation of new rules, and providing Performance Based Grant (PBG) to graduate UPs using 41 indicators. In that report of 2013, the project has claimed, though elementary, some success. Another project Upazila Governance Project (UZGP) parallel to UPGP has been implemented at the Upazila Level to make the UZP properly functioning.

Another donor collaborated project named Sharique funded by SDC and implemented by Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation has been working to strengthen local governance by promoting accountability, participation, transparency, social inclusiveness, and effectiveness of the functions of the LGIs since 2006. It has completed three phases from 2006 to 2009, 2009-2012 and the third phase started in 2013 and completed by August 2016. The programme has covered only 4% of the total population of Bangladesh under 4 districts namely Rajshahi, Chapai Nawabganj, Khulna, and Sunamganj. Sharique has been working for both supply and demand sides. On the supply side it has developed techniques to build capacities of local governance

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<sup>77</sup> *Annual Report 2013: Union Parishad Governance Project*, ed., Md. Sarwar Bari (June 2014).

functionaries, and on the demand side, it has taken measures to make the local citizen aware of their rights and to assist them to be self-assured enough to demand their rights.<sup>78</sup> However, the outcomes of Sharique's intervention have not been measured and evaluated in a holistic view in the context of strengthening UPs.

Recently, in 2016, in his study, Panday has found that Sharique in collaboration with UPs has intervened in mobilising women as an individual, and as a member of the community to raise their voice in creating impact in the decision-making process, to bring them out of the private domain, capacitate them to overcome the impediments to getting involved in public domain.<sup>79</sup> The findings reveal that Sharique has enhanced community networking through the ward platforms, transferred knowledge through training, and made women confident, skilled and courageous to speak and participate in the open budget discussion and ward sabha, as well as other meetings of the UPs. The men, particularly the male UP members are also made sensitised to allow women's participation in decision-making process positively. The study has concluded, dealing exclusively with women's empowerment, and supplied a comparative scenario between Sharique and control area, with a positive notion by recognising efforts of Sharique successful in making governance of UPs more transparent and accountable, and gender sensitive. In another recent study on partnership of UPs with SLG of BRAC for strengthening the governance of UP, Panday has discovered that the efforts come forward with significant positive results with making citizens more aware, knowledgeable and active to engage with the UPs for making demands and questioning officials and holding them accountable, and partaking in decision-making process to include proposals that serve poor and the extremely poor.<sup>80</sup> His study further uncovers that NGOs' such engagement though negate traditional actors having political influence, yet the attachment of citizens with NGOs could help citizens to develop relation with the grassroots institutions through supporting varied programmes of the LGIs collectively.

Care Bangladesh has also experienced on working with UPs. It has implemented several projects (UPWARD, BUILD CAPACITY) funded by USAID with UP to build-up capacity, as well as to construct UP Complex to make UP as the hub of the

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<sup>78</sup> Helvetas Swiss Intercorporation Bangladesh, *Strengthening Local Governance in Bangladesh: Lessons of Practical Experience, SDC Local Governance Programme – Sharique* (Dhaka: Helvetas Swiss Intercorporation Bangladesh, 2012), 1-31.

<sup>79</sup> Pranab Kumar Panday, *Women's Empowerment in South Asia: NGO Intervention and Agency Building in Bangladesh* (London: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>80</sup> Pranab Kumar Panday, "Making Innovations Work: Local Government-NGO Partnership and Collaborative Governance in Rural Bangladesh," *Development in Practice* 28:1 (2018): 125-137.

service centre.<sup>81</sup> This NGO has further intervened through another project entitled JATRA to increase ability, answerability, and transparency, the participation of marginalised groups, as well as to introduce social auditing.<sup>82</sup>

A study on the evaluation of different projects identifies that for political and financial volatility successful decentralisation of local government may take a long time than what has been anticipated.<sup>83</sup> It further explores that the coordination among donors remains feeble, lack of sustainability; on the other hand, the relation between citizens and CSOs has increased and capacity building of LGIs remained effective. The report has faced difficulties assessing gender issue to determine how the projects have contributed to women empowerment and helped them to be part of local decision-making process. Then what is the real image of Bangladeshi local governance?

The scenario of governance at the grassroots level depicts that it suffers from an image crisis.<sup>84</sup> To remove the image crisis, strengthening sub-national governance, in the long run, requires a demand-generated process spiraling from the bottom. He, analysing data of 10 years, reveals that allocation to local government remains a very poor portion (0.25 to 0.52 %) of the national budget. He expresses an example, which discloses that in 2010-2011 fiscal years the national government agencies at local level have spent 700% higher amount of resources than that of LGIs. UP, as he observes, is elite controlled, male-dominated, chairperson centric and MP influenced body where women members remain outside of decision-making circle, and major areas of local inhabitants concerns are rested in the control of central government. In the opinion survey, conducted by Aminuzzaman, 78% of the respondents opined that they have no role to play in the UPs; even 76% of the UP officials do not have a clear idea about functions and responsibilities of the UP. In addition, 75% of the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction about the service deliveries by the UP. He, in conclusion, proposes a mechanism i.e., ‘social-auditing’ to make UP more accountable.

The UP act includes varied mechanisms for ensuring accountability, transparency, planning, one of such is ‘Standing Committee’ (SC) system, and the total number of SCs for the UPs is 13.<sup>85</sup> A study delivers some discouraging information as 66.83% of the

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<sup>81</sup> CARE Bangladesh, “Governance and Accountability,” [http://carebangladesh.org/publication\\_list.php?pub\\_cat=Governance](http://carebangladesh.org/publication_list.php?pub_cat=Governance) (accessed August 18, 2016).

<sup>82</sup> GPSA, “Journey for Advancement in Transparency, Representation and Accountability,” <https://www.thegpsa.org/sa/project/journey-advancement-transparency-representation-and-accountability-jatra> (accessed August 18, 2016).

<sup>83</sup> OECD, *Lessons Learned on Donor Support to Decentralisation and Local Governance, DAC Evaluation Series* (Paris, 2004), <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/30395116.pdf> (accessed August 12, 2016).

<sup>84</sup> Salahuddin M. Aminuzzaman, “Governance at Grassroots-Rhetoric and Reality,” 201-221.

<sup>85</sup> Local Government (Union Parishad) Act, 2009, c. 45.

respondents mentioned that there is no role of SCs in the local level development.<sup>86</sup> The study further states that 3 UPs out of 7 have been found defective regarding SC system. The researcher has found some causes responsible for the non-functioning SCs. These included lack of proper guidelines, training, and financial support. Ahmed et al. explore another dimension that explains local representatives' dilemmas in accountability, as there is a competition between the formal and informal sectors to which the local representatives remain accountable more; ultimately the informal sectors i.e., the system of social accountability prevails.<sup>87</sup>

To remove incapacity varied training programmes have been taken for the officials. The result of a research conducted on the effectiveness of foundation training of the UP secretaries at six UPs uncovers that the professional skill of the respondents has increased, but the respondents identified that it was not enough, as the elected representatives do not have enough knowledge about the related documents on financial management and other issues.<sup>88</sup> Study conducted by the National Institute of Local Government (NILG) on 360 respondents on the effectiveness of Ward Sabha (WS) reveals that the presence of citizens in the meeting was very low (from 1.04% to 13.23% of total voters); and the participation of women lowered further (0.35% to 5.06%). The discussion at WS concentrates mostly on infrastructural development, as well as social problems.<sup>89</sup> Another study of NILG conducted on 3 UPs explores that there are more than 30 sources of revenue, but collection of the revenues remain low due to lack of permanent personnel to collect revenue, people unwillingness to pay tax at current market price, low level of skill of UP secretaries to develop tax evaluation list, and identification of new sources by the government.<sup>90</sup> The studied UPs have spent the earned revenue mostly for the payment of salaries of officials and staffs, and the residue, though little, uses on small development or renovation activities.

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<sup>86</sup> Md. Ilias, and Nurul Islam, "Effectiveness of Standing Committees: A Study of Seven Union Parishads in Bangladesh," in *Enaieljir gabeshana karyakram* [Research programmes of NILG], ed. Md. Ilias, Md. Abdul Khaleq, and Kamrun Nahar (Dhaka: National Institute of Local Government, 2015), 75-120.

<sup>87</sup> Tofail Ahmed, et al., *Social Accountability Mechanisms: A Study on the Union Parishads in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: BRAC University, 2016), ix.

<sup>88</sup> Sayeedul Haque, Md. Abdul Barek, and Md. Abu Ekhtiar Hashemi, "Union Parishader sacibganer buniadi prashikshaner madhyame arthik byabasthapanar sakshamata briddhir karyakarita jacai: choyti Union Parishade rupa gabeshana samiksha," [Assessment of effectiveness of foundation training for Union Parishads secretaries on financial management] in *Enaieljir gabeshana karyakram* [Research programmes of NILG], ed. Md. Ilias, Md. Abdul Khaleq, and Kamrun Nahar (Dhaka: National Institute of Local Government, 2015), 181-12.

<sup>89</sup> Nurun Nahar, and Md. Nazim Uddin, "Unnayan prakalpa grahane ward sabhar karyakarita: chayti Union Parishader upar samiksha," [Effectiveness of Ward Sabha in taking development projects: a study on six Union Parishads] in *Enaieljir gabeshana karyakram* [Research programmes of NILG], ed. Md. Ilias, Md. Abdul Khaleq, and Kamrun Nahar (Dhaka: National Institute of Local Government, 2015), 213-42.

<sup>90</sup> Mohammad Mainul Hossain, Kamrun Nahar, "Rajasva aya ebang er byabaha: tinti Union Parishader upar samiksha," [Income from revenue and its use: a study on three Union Parishads] in *Enaieljir gabeshana karyakram* [Research programmes of NILG], ed. Md. Ilias, Md. Abdul Khaleq, and Kamrun Nahar (Dhaka: National Institute of Local Government, 2015), 75-120.

To fulfil the gaps in training programmes collaboration can play important roles. Collaboration creates an opportunity for NGOs to play with wide range of issues employing more proactive approaches to participating independently, and it will promote an environment in which policy-making and accomplishment of the same become more efficient.<sup>91</sup> The relation between LGIs and NGOs has been shaping towards collaborative approach as shown in a study conducted in Eastern Europe. The respondents of that study, LGI and NGO officials, opined in favour of NGOs, especially of those, which provide assistance, particularly as service delivery. The study also brings into notice that NGOs already have got involved in the process of complementing LG to that area where LGIs has limitations in respect of fund, capacity, human resources, geographical distance, and remoteness.<sup>92</sup>

The question is how NGOs have done in collaboration. A study conducted in the Philippines about the issue of collaboration between local government unit and NGOs discloses that the participation of the latter in policy-making remains invisible, though they have been allowed to do so within the legal framework of the Philippines Constitution of 1987, and the Local Government Code of 1991.<sup>93</sup> The research also uncovers that the NGOs have participated in the implementation of programmes and projects, but remained absent at the basic policy-making meetings. Furthermore, the citizens have it difficult to recognise the partnership between LGIs and NGOs. In addition, the study has also claimed that the size of LGIs or amount of resources did not affect the level of participation.

The relationship pattern between Ghanaian LGIs and NGOs shows that the associations have ended in superficial and suspicious cordiality, and the level of collaboration remained tokenistic. The collaboration processes centre on largely marginalised issues and supplements each other with resources that can be relinquished without any problems. The collaboration also lacks in resource mobilisation, purposeful attempts of collaboration, and synergy building.<sup>94</sup> Now, the concern is what has been the context in Bangladesh?

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<sup>91</sup> Mokbul Morshed Ahmad, Review of the Stakeholders in Rural Development: Critical Collaboration in State-NGO Partnerships by John M. Riley, *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 13 no. 4 (2002): 438-40, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27927815> (accessed September 3, 2016).

<sup>92</sup> Åse Berit Grødeland, "Suspiciously Supportive or Suspiciously Obstructive? – The Relationship between Local Government and NGOs in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Serbia, and Macedonia," *Intl Journal of Public Administration*, 31: 911-952, (2008): 911-952, doi: 10.1080/01900690701465970 (accessed September 2, 2016).

<sup>93</sup> Carmelo Orbista, "NGOs Participation in Local Governance in the Philippines" (master's thesis, University of Canterbury, 2012), [http://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10092/8104/thesis\\_fulltext.pdf;sequence=1](http://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10092/8104/thesis_fulltext.pdf;sequence=1) (accessed August 26, 2016).

<sup>94</sup> Nyigmah Bawole, and Farhad Hossain, "Marriage of the Unwilling? The Paradox of Local Government and NGO Relations in Ghana," *International Society for Third-Sector Research* (2014), doi: 10.1007/s11266-014-9503-9 (accessed September 2, 2016).

Bangladesh has been a fertile ground of NGOs, now there are 2613 NGOs registered with NGO Affairs Bureau on April 2018.<sup>95</sup> They have shifted their involvement pattern in three stages, first in the 1970s, when the charity and relief oriented programme converted to community development; second shifts were seen when the government began to recognising the importance of NGOs and marked by GO-NGO collaboration in many basic sectors, and the third shifts occurred when NGOs showed interest in political advocacy.<sup>96</sup> The research shows that the government has not been always interested in NGO interventions. However, the legal framework does not seem restrictive to NGO proliferation. Recent phenomenon depicts that GO-NGO collaboration is increasing, as the government has been incorporating NGOs in many different committees with other line ministries from the lowest level of the tiers of local government to the national level. Furthermore, GOs are sharing and learning from the experience on NGOs.<sup>97</sup> In this process, in Kenya, with increased access of NGOs in government mechanisms that involve policy formulation and decision-making, government's mimicking of NGOs styles and inclusion of former NGO personnel in public bodies make GO-NGO integration closer and blurred the boundaries.<sup>98</sup>

In this line, in Bangladesh, it is believed that GO and NGOs' effectual collaboration would help to implement programmes in a more competent way, but existing legal framework is not favourable for this.<sup>99</sup> The author suggests that the collaboration is not sufficient at the district level. The study further reveals that GO had the upper hand in policy-making and control, which may hinder effective collaboration. The focus of the study concentrates on the state of collaboration, and the study draws a conclusion by pronouncing that both the parties are in an agreeable mindset to collaborate in a wide range of areas. Then, what more is needed.

A report prepared for the World Bank, consisted of issues like strengthening local governance, shows that the process requires: (a) fundamental reforms to the legal framework, (b) holding of elections on a regular basis (c) allocation of enough discretionary funds to the sub-national bodies, both as financial transfer from central government and from local taxes.<sup>100</sup> The report further includes suggestions to bring

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<sup>95</sup> NGO Affairs Bureau, <http://www.ngoab.gov.bd> (accessed May 30, 2018).

<sup>96</sup> S. M. Nurul Alam, "Whose Public Action? Analysing Inter-sectoral Collaboration for Service Delivery: Bangladesh Country Review, History of State-NSP Relations" (University of Birmingham, 2007), <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/government-society/idd/research/non-state-providers/bangladesh-history.pdf> (accessed September 1, 2016).

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Jennifer N. Brass, "Blurring Boundaries: The Integration of NGOs into Governance in Kenya," *Governance* 25, no. 2, (April 2012): 209–235.

<sup>99</sup> Ahmed Kamrul Hasan, "GO-NGO Collaboration at Local Level: A Study of the Office of the Deputy Commissioner" (master's thesis, North South University, 2011), <http://www.mppg-nsu.org/attachments/339Ahmed%20Kamrul%20Hasan.pdf> (accessed August 22, 2016).

<sup>100</sup> David Savage, and Nilufar Ahmad, *Strengthening Local Governance*, 1-15.

UPZ and UP under the same legal umbrella, so that the tiers can complement each other. Regarding financial transfer, it is observed that the local bodies in Bangladesh are renowned for heavy reliance on fund transfer of national government and face loss of autonomy.<sup>101</sup> On the other side, the expenditure of these institutions inclines mostly towards infrastructural development activities, while soft skill development effort gains little focus. The study, to resolve the disputes, suggests for development of permanent local government commissions, as well as another permanent commission for looking after financial concerns of LGIs to challenge the social and economic difficulties, and to play significant roles in overseeing financial management and performances largely. It is pertinent here, to understand, what Bangladeshi LGIs are doing.

Local governments units in Bangladesh, observed by Ahmed, have found themselves busy with conventional roles such as performing mediation of disputes, constructing infrastructure and distributing social safety net schemes.<sup>102</sup> He argues that localities can play a more augmented role to make Bangladesh middle-income countries within projected time by fulfilling national goals in education, health, population, water and sanitation, nutrition, diffusion and taking up of technology, and agriculture. He proposes some schemes, such as - enacting an umbrella law for LGIs with establishing parliamentary type of local government through indirect election, sharing and transferring of revenues, specification of job description of field bureaucrats, initiation of capacity building programmes which includes plan for changes both in skill and mindset, mobilising local watchdog i.e. CSOs. The reform process should be carried out at both administrative and local government level simultaneously, he concludes.

The reviewed literature has explained explicitly the nature and types of donors' and NGOs,' as well as governments' interventions in local governance. It has been taken for granted that the roles of the third sector cannot be overlooked, as they have become the strongest partners in collaboration with the governments from continent to continent to improve the socio-economic condition, and the way, the state, and local bodies are governed. This review has categorically exposed the need for proper functioning and strong LGIs to increase the numbers of services and to improve the quality of service delivery systems and to make the local peoples' voice heard to accelerate development and alleviate poverty as feeble governance, and badly managed public institutions pose a foremost threat to growth and equitable improvement in the countries of the South.<sup>103</sup> In Bangladesh, government, donors, and NGOs have been working collectively and investing resources for strengthening sub-

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<sup>101</sup> Debapriya Bhattacharya, Mobasser Monem, and Umme Shefa Rezbana, "Finance for Local Government in Bangladesh: An Elusive Agenda," CPD-CMI Working Paper 6 (2013).

<sup>102</sup> Tofail Ahmed, *Bangladesh Reform Agenda for Local Governance*.

<sup>103</sup> World Bank, *Reforming Public Institutions and Strengthening Governance*, xi.

national governance to make it responsive and sensitive to citizens' needs, the transparent and accountable hub of local level innovation and development. The foregoing reviews imply that the extent of literature is limited in the field of GO-NGO collaboration at the local level. The literature review suggests that researches on local government have remained restricted to local government reforms, theoretical aspects of local governance, present scenario of local governance, resource mobilisation, capacity building, citizen participation, process, and types of interventions. Thus, this study on UP-Sharique collaboration deserves further research and merits attention.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Local government institutions could play an important role in service delivery to the grassroots people, as well as in development programmes. Vision 2021 of the government of Bangladesh envisages devolution of power, function, and fiscal authority in accordance with the constitutional provisions for elected bodies at each level of local government. Within the local government institutional history of Bangladesh, the basic unit that exists in the face of changes and restructuring of tiers has been the UP. However, the power and authority, functions, services to deliver, the level of participation of the local people have gone under changes and renovations. Though the UPs have the opportunities and privileges to be a significant institution at the grassroots level, as it stands as the local people's nearest unit that they can own, but remain unsuccessful. The government has realised the potentialities of the UPs and has enacted a law in 2009, which creates hopes, opportunity and legal frame for the UPs to be the hub of the development and services delivery. Nowadays, government and donors have collaborated with NGOs and/or contracted to hire NGOs to implement different projects funded mostly by the donors. These projects aim at intervening in selected areas and replicating the successful practice all over the country to ensure better services for the local people. However, the existing literature deals greatly with the role of GO-NGO collaboration in poverty alleviation, education, sanitation, healthcare, micro-credit programme etc., but does not reveal sufficiently the impact of collaboration in strengthening local governance, specifically at UPs in Bangladesh. The literature is also heavily inclined to collaboration at the national level and lacked in LGI-NGO collaboration.

The project Sharique that has been selected for the study has been implemented for both the supply and demand side to improve the governance of the UPs. Now a pertinent question is - to what extent the efforts of the project have become successful to capacitate both the UPs and citizens. Thus, this issue deserves merits for an in-depth analysis, and that will help concerned authorities, i.e. government, donor agencies, and NGOs to estimate the replicability of the programme. The above-mentioned issues have encouraged and persuaded the researcher to conduct the selected study.



Strengthened local governance contributes to the empowerment of the citizens, the inclusion of poor and marginalised people in decision-making process, making UPs accountable and transparent, removing corruption and overall development of local areas. Thus, the completion of the study thought to be significant in the following areas:

Firstly, the study has explored the context in which government and other donor partners have initiated a programme based on GO-NGO partnership for strengthening local governance at UPs, which stands considerably a new phenomenon.

Secondly, the outcomes of the research stay helpful for the government, and aid agencies, which have contracted NGOs in collaboration with GOs to strengthen LG in reviewing their policies and way of implementations.

Thirdly, current research has provided a full insight into the impacts of GO-NGO intervention, which will allow the authority to replicate the process of interventions in other places in future with or without modifications.

Fourthly; and finally, the present study has presented new insights to academicians and researchers who would like to explore the process of strengthening governance through GO-NGO collective efforts in Bangladesh.

### **1.7 Limitations of the Research**

The study had the following inadequacies in its approach and data collection:

1. Given that only six UPs have been included as study units, and the interview sample size is also small, thus the results of the study cannot be generalised statistically. The endeavour, however, meets study requirements with extensive documents study, FGD, KII, and direct observations.
2. The research could have been better with having a baseline survey to compare with the present findings to understand the outcomes and impacts. Moreover, the impacts of the study have mostly covered intermediary outcomes. Time constraints and financial limitation, as well as study purpose, impeded the researcher to follow such an approach.
3. The documents of the UPs are not prepared uniformly, and in some cases, the documents are not fully prepared. In budgets and yearly financial reports documents, there discover the presence of significant ‘noise’ in calculation and presentations, which make them problematic to study. The lists of implemented or planned to be implemented projects are not found well organised. The resolutions of varied meetings and committees remain underdeveloped and even some were found as blank as white paper.
4. The UP officials are not always supportive, in some cases, the data enumerators suffer a great deal to cope with their attitudes and schedules. They (officials) also

exhibit a tendency to supply untrue information. Some officials are reluctant to cooperate and refused to supply required documents. The researcher uses personal 'local connections' at various levels to overcome these obstacles.

5. For direct observations of events like WS and OBM, the researcher has to face difficulties to maintain the schedules, as most of the event commenced one and a half an hour or two hours late than the stipulated time.

## 1.8 Chapter Outline

This dissertation comprises of the following ten chapters:

**Chapter One: Introduction:** This chapter has represented an overview of the research including research problem, research objectives, extensive literature review, significance of the study, and structure of the dissertation.

**Chapter Two: Research Methodology:** Various aspects of research methodology employed in this study have been discussed in this chapter. Moreover, discussions on the arrangements in favour of adaptation of methodological approaches, and sample selections have been included in this chapter. Furthermore, a table containing indicators for measurement of the progress of GO-NGO joint initiative effort has been incorporated in this chapter. Moreover, a result chain process has been represented to exhibit how the process of collaboration for SLG results in outputs, outcomes, and impacts.

**Chapter Three: Strengthening Local Governance: A Conceptual Lens for the Study of Collaborated Programme:** Various concepts like governance, NGO, and collaboration have been discussed in this chapter. The substantial discussions have promoted drawing of a conceptual framework, which has facilitated smooth progression of the research.

**Chapter Four: Government Initiatives for Strengthening Local Governance:** This chapter has entailed varied efforts of the government from time to time under different regimes for improving the governance of the local bodies, particularly of the UPs. The focus has been concentrated on recommendations of various reform commissions and their intention as well as the level of implementation. Moreover, it has included the discussions of shifts of the legal framework, policies, and plans with the intention to strengthen the governance of the UPs. Additionally, the desires of the government have been examined for GO-NGO collaboration for SLG in this chapter.

**Chapter Five: Collaborative Programmes: Collective Measures of GO-NGO:** In this chapter, endeavours of different instances of GO-NGO collaboration for SLG have been explored. The principal intention behind the discussions is to understand the mechanisms of SLG, the places of interventions and the progress they have achieved.

The analysis of the efforts has ended with picturing out the commonalities among the discussed initiatives for getting a general view.

**Chapter Six: *Shepherding Capacity Building and Increasing People's Participation at Local Level:*** Efforts have been made in this chapter to examine the outcomes of collaboration for capacitation of both citizens and their representatives. The areas of analysis stand knowledge and skill development on engagement, placing of demands, networking, etc. for the citizens, and exerting leadership, organising the participatory meeting, and managing the UP, as well as enhancement and streamlining of people's participation in planning, budgeting and especially in decision-making for the officials.

**Chapter Seven: *Collaboration between Sharique and UPs: An Effort to Improve Accountability, Transparency, and Fiscal Autonomy:*** This chapter includes the discussions on how the capacity building efforts and facilitation of the Sharique project have been capitalised by the UPs to strengthen the processes of governance, respond to peoples' demands, to ensure upward and downward accountability mechanisms, transparency, and to attain fiscal autonomy.

**Chapter Eight: *Mainstreaming Gender in the UPs: The Outcomes of Collaboration between UPs and Sharique:*** Being an important issue of governance gender mainstreaming deserves a separate chapter to have insights. To this end, this chapter has offered analysis of the situation of women in the UPs as agents and as principals. More efforts have been invested to know how much they have been capacitated and empowered, how they have been performing in the UPs, and what has been their impediments to participate in local level politics.

**Chapter Nine: *NGO's Collaboration with Local Government Institutions and its Challenges:*** This chapter has been designed to highlight the state of social capital, which has been developed while implementing collaborative projects as the outcomes of collaboration. The initiatives have been furthered to scan the sustainability of the outcomes of collaboration and unearthing reasons behind the present state of sustainability. Besides these, the chapter discovers the challenges of the collaborative project -Sharique that have already been implemented.

**Chapter Ten: *Conclusion:*** The final chapter has summed up the findings of strengthening endeavour through collaborative efforts of Sharique in Bangladesh. Additionally, the chapter has come up with an analysis of the implications of the study to suggest reforms and modifications regarding strengthening governance of the UPs and the base of collaborative efforts for the same. Finally, a model has been developed for collaboration between (L) GOs and NGOs to strengthen the governance of the LGIs.

## Chapter 2

# Research Methodology

### 2.1 Introduction

Being involved with important issues like methodological aspects, this chapter explains the research approach and methods. In addition, this chapter provides descriptions and arguments for selection of study programme, areas, and sample, data collection tools and techniques, data sources, data presentation and analysis techniques in line with the demands of the objectives.

### 2.2 Research Approach

The present study has basically been a qualitative research, supplemented by quantitative data on a limited scale. This situation can be termed as a dominant-less-dominant design.<sup>1</sup> Here, the dominant design is the qualitative data, while the less dominant one is quantitative data. Denzin termed it as “triangulation” in order to refer application of a combination of methodologies in the study of the similar phenomenon.<sup>2</sup> Qualitative studies illustrate a variety of certain perceptions or behaviours in a population through interviews with a small sample of population members.<sup>3</sup> Qualitative procedures often provide the greater depth of understanding of a phenomenon. The research has also followed the data collection techniques and tools that conform to qualitative approach.<sup>4</sup> Another reason to follow the approach is that the required data have mostly been collected in narrative and descriptive form.

This research has adopted the inductive approach, as the aim of the endeavour is to explore new phenomenon of strengthening local governance through GO-NGO collaboration. For this, data have been collected, and after analysis, a general logical conclusion has been drawn.

### 2.3 Research Methods

This study has been conducted following a case-oriented qualitative research strategy as case studies emphasise detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or

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<sup>1</sup> John W. Creswell, *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (London: Sage Publications, 2014), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Norman K. Denzin, *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978), 291.

<sup>3</sup> Harrie Jansen, “The Logic of Qualitative Survey Research and its Position in the Field of Social Research Methods,” *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung* 11, no. 2, art. 11 (May 2010), <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1450/2946> (accessed September 24, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Bruce L. Berg, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, 4th ed. (London: Allyn and Bacon, 2001), 2-4.

conditions and their relationships.<sup>5</sup> This study has employed case study because this strategy determines in advance, what evidence to gather with what research method and which data analysis techniques to be used to answer the research questions. Case studies investigate any matter using a combination of informal interviews and participant observation. Yin defines the case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.<sup>6</sup> Under such circumstance, the case study method has been best suited for this research since the issue is a contemporary phenomenon, and the relationship between the phenomenon and context is not apparent and multiple sources of evidence have been used.

This research method is also pertinent as to ascertain whether a particular programme is efficient or whether the targets of a programme are attained.<sup>7</sup> Following Jensen and Rodgers' typology of case studies, a set of multiple case studies of multiple research entities, including UPs under Sharique coverage and UPs from non-intervention areas, have been chosen for the purpose of cross-unit comparison.<sup>8</sup> The cross-unit comparison between Sharique areas and control areas has facilitated the process of exploring the effectiveness of collaborative efforts in strengthening LG. The adoption of multiple case study design is of great importance because, first, strengthening local governance is a broad and complex issue; second, the existing research associated with strengthening local governance in the framework of GO-NGO collaboration at the local level is inadequate to evaluate whether it matters in strengthening local governance. Moreover, the phenomenon needs to be studied within its context.

By using case studies, a researcher can generalise in a way that differs from statistical generalisation to population or universe. In addition, case studies conclude to an 'analytic generalisation,' in which empirical result of the case studies develops a new theory, or replicate, or disproof, an old one.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to case study, this research has also incorporated 'natural experiment' research method. Natural experiment, an empirical, method has been utilised to overcome the methodological limitation of experimental technique, in which researcher possess substantial or no control over intervention to experiment

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<sup>5</sup> Robert K. Yin, *Case study research: Design and methods* (California: SAGE Publication Inc, 1984), 23.

<sup>6</sup> R. K. Yin, *Case study research: Design and methods*, 3rd ed. (London: Sage Publication, 2003) 13.

<sup>7</sup> Zaidah Zainal, "Case Study as a Research Method," *Jurnal Kemanusiaan bil 9* (June 2007), [http://psyking.net/htmlobj-3837/case\\_study\\_as\\_a\\_research\\_method.pdf](http://psyking.net/htmlobj-3837/case_study_as_a_research_method.pdf) (accessed July 26, 2016).

<sup>8</sup> Jason L. Jensen, and Robert Rodgers, "Cumulating the Intellectual Gold of Case Study Research," *Public Administration Review* 61, no. 2 (March/April 2001): 238, doi: 0.1111/0033-3352.00025 (accessed July 22, 2016).

<sup>9</sup> R. K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 3rd ed., 31.

individuals/groups.<sup>10</sup> On top of that, natural experiments have been employed in the research when the investigators do not have control over interventions as it can happen naturally or it includes such processes that dwell outside the control of the concerned researcher. This observational method can be helpful in a research endeavour, which typically employs multi-method approach. In this study, Sharique project has been selected for the study, and the interventions of the project have been such a process, over which the researcher has no authority. Thus, the method could be helpful to study case and control groups with methodological support. In this line, two groups of Union Parishads have been selected for this study. In one group, the study has included four UPs where Sharique has implemented their interventions in collaboration with the UPs; and in another group, two UPs have also been selected as control group, where there is no intervention. UPs of both groups have been selected randomly.

## **2.4 Selection of the Study Programme, Area, and Sample**

### **2.4.1 Study Programme**

In this study, ‘Sharique: A Local Governance Project’ (Sharique means partnership) has been selected for assessing the endeavours of GO-NGO in strengthening local governance. The reasons behind the selection of this programme include- it has been working with both the supply and demand sides for almost ten years through completion of the third phase of intervention and collaboration with the UPs, and has initiated its fourth phase in January 2017. Moreover, it has been a comprehensive programme, which has included 72 components for mobilisation.

### **2.4.2 Study Areas**

Among four districts, where Sharique has an intervention, Rajshahi and Chapai Nawabganj have been selected purposively as the study areas. The rest two of the four districts, Sunamganj and Khulna have been left out of the study as Union Parishad Governance Project (UPGP) has intervention in these districts. Moreover, Sunamganj has been under the coverage of another programme of The Hunger Project (THP).<sup>11</sup> Moreover, this study was primarily intended to include purposively two other districts (Naogaon and Natore), which are adjacent to intervention areas, as non-intervention (control) areas. The reason behind the selection of a pair of neighbouring districts has been to maintain geographical, socio-cultural, and economical homogeneity; and the process has provided space for presenting an even-handed comparison between the

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<sup>10</sup> Thad Dunning, *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences: A Design-Based Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 41-102.

<sup>11</sup> The Hunger Project-Bangladesh (THP) initiated its endeavours in 1990 to strengthen UP for transparent, accountable and inclusive governance at the local stage. It mobilises both the electorate and the UP through four-phase procedures- mobilisation, capacity building, taking action, and assessing results. The interventions include mainly training, awareness building, bottom-up advocacy, and citizens’ engagement. (Source: <https://foodsecurity.ngoaidmap.org/projects/12634>, accessed September 14, 2016)

GO-NGO collaborative intervention and non-intervention areas. However, later inquiries have revealed presence of other SLG programmes there, the researcher has inquired areas, which have been left out of collaboration of the project in Rajshahi and Chapai Nawabganj districts. Sharique has left 11 Union Parishads of 4 UPZs, 6 and 5 of Rajshahi, and Chapai Nawabganj districts respectively out of its interventions because of their unwillingness to cooperate, presence of political problems, and remote location. Thus, these UPs have included in the study as control UPs.

In the second step, a pair of Upazilas called Chapai Nawabganj Sadar and Shibganj has been selected randomly, from 5 UPZs of Chapai Nawabganj, and another pair of Upazilas named Puthia and Godagari has been selected randomly from 9 UPZs of Rajshahi. In addition, two UPZs, including Chapai Nawabganj Sadar and Durgapur have been selected purposively among four UPZs for the study as the control UPZs from Chapai Nawabganj and Rajshahi respectively because of the presence of non-collaborative UPs.

**Table 2. 1: Study Area**

Study Areas						
Sharique Areas				LGIs	Control Areas	
Chapai Nawabganj		Rajshahi		Districts ↔	Chapai Nawabganj	Rajshahi
Chapai Nawabganj Sadar	Shibganj	Puthia	Godagari	Upazilas ↔	Chapai Nawabganj Sadar	Durgapur
Jhilim	Shahbajpur	Shilmaria	Deopara	UPs ↔	Alatuli	Maria

In the following stride, four UPs, one from each of the four selected UPZs have been selected randomly. The sample UPs are Jhilim from 14 UPs of Chapai Nawabganj Sadar, Shahbajpur from 15 UPs of Shibganj of Chapai Nawabganj; and Shilmaria from 6 UPs of Puthia, and Deopara from 9 UPs of Godagari, Rajshahi. Moreover, for control UPs, Alatuli and Maria UPs have been selected randomly from Chapai Nawabganj Sadar and Durgapur UPZ respectively.

### 2.4.3 Study Samples

Of total respondents, 48 officials (elected and non-elected) have been selected from 6 UPs for the research by the following methods. The UP Chairman, and the UP secretary, all of the three women members of reserved seats and 3 of 9 general members (3 generals members have been selected randomly using lottery method) from each UP have been selected. The reason behind the selection of all of the 3 women members of reserved seats out of 3 is that Sharique has special components for women members to capacitate and activate them. Most importantly, in selecting

the members, emphasis has been given to those who received Sharique training, and for that, currently elected officials have been dropped in case of not having training, and such respondents have been replaced by ex-officials with training. Moreover, 60 respondents from citizens have been determined using the results of pre-survey and considered sufficient for grasping the views of the respondents.<sup>12</sup> To execute QS and interviews, four Ward Platforms (WPs) have been selected randomly from 36 WPs of 4 selected UPs. Ten members from each WP (a total of  $10 \times 4 = 40$  members from 4 WPs) have been selected randomly (conducting lottery employing the list of WP members). Moreover, for control group 2 Wards have been selected from non-Sharique areas randomly from 18 Wards of 2 UPs and a total of 20 citizens have been selected randomly (conducting lottery using voter list), 10 from each Ward.

The total number of related government officials has been 10, including 4 Deputy Directors of Local Government (DDLGs) of four districts, and 5 Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNOs) from 5 Upazilas. Four project officers of Sharique (1 from each Upazila's of Sharique areas) have been interviewed along with the regional coordinators (RCs) of both Rajshahi and Chapai Nawabganj districts, and national coordinator as well.

**Table 2. 2: Sample Distribution of the Study**

Respondents	Number Per UP	Total Number
UP Chairman	1	$1 \times 6 = 6$
UP Members (General)	3	$3 \times 6 = 18$
UP Members (Woman)	3	$3 \times 6 = 18$
UP Secretary	1	$1 \times 6 = 6$
Citizens of Sharique (Beneficiaries) and Control Areas	10	$10 \times 6 = 60$
<b>Total Respondents from UPs</b>		<b>=108</b>
Project staff (04 Project Officers, 02 Regional Coordinators, 01 National Coordinator)	-	7
Govt. Officials (DDLG, UNO)	-	$4 + 5 = 9$
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>=124</b>

## 2.5 Sources of Data and Techniques of Data Collection

Primary, as well as secondary sources, have been used to collect data. The researcher has made use of QS, In-depth Interviews, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and five-point Likert Scale to gather primary data from

<sup>12</sup> Pre-survey has been conducted through convenient sampling using draft questionnaire both at Sharique (Deopara, Ward no. 5) and at control area (Bhabicha Ward no. 8) and found that the replies of the respondents have been repetitive and exhaustive after 7 and 9 responses at Sharique and control area respectively. Therefore, the researcher has fixed the number of the respondents at 10, and it might be changed (if necessary) during final survey. Arto Haveri, "Complexity in Local Government Change: Limits of Rational Reforming," *Public Management Review* 8:1 (2006): 39, doi: 10.1080/14719030500518667 (accessed May 24, 2017).



the study areas. Related documents of the UPs have also been included as a primary source. Secondary data, bearing paramount importance, have been collected from different relevant publications, such as dissertations, books, journal articles, reports, government and NGO publications, rules, regulations and acts, and websites.

### **2.5.1 Questionnaire Survey**

Data have been collected from the project beneficiaries from the citizens' groups particularly, the members of Ward Platforms (WPs) of Sharique areas. In addition, citizens from non-Sharique areas have also been taken as sample for questionnaire survey (QS). In total 60 respondents from citizens have been included for QS, 10 from each UP. Moreover, 48 UP chairpersons, general members, women members of reserved seats, and secretaries have also been interviewed using different set of questionnaires. Most importantly, these sets of questionnaires have included both closed and open-ended descriptive types of questions to receive the insights in details.

### **2.5.2 In-depth Interview**

Data collection procedures have profoundly depended on in-depth interviews. Separate sets of the open-ended structured questionnaire have been employed to interview NGO, and government officials involved with the strengthening initiatives. The researcher himself conducted interviews and in some cases, two trained enumerators have assisted him. In total, 16 in-depth interviews have been conducted during data collection period to elicit the views and opinions of the interviewees on the concept of strengthening governance of the UP. Each interview has tentatively lasted between one, and one and a half of an hour. During the interviews, notes have been taken, and conversations have been recorded with the consent of the interviewees.

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

In the field of strengthening local governance through GO-NGO collaboration, Bangladesh has been gifted with lots of experts i.e. academicians, journalists, and practitioners, who are capable of speaking on the issues. The research has been enriched by their valuable comments on the issue with in-depth clarification. For this, 2 academicians, 1 practitioner, and 1 journalist in total 4 of them have been selected purposively as key informants to include their views, ideas, and comments to perceive the scenario comprehensively. The investigators have conducted interviews with the help of a guideline, and during interview sessions, notes have been taken and instruments such as audio/video recorder have been used with the consent of the interviewees.

### 2.5.4 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

FGD is another significant tool of qualitative data gathering method. The researcher employing a guideline has used the advantages of FGD to collect views and comments, experiences and expectations of the citizens of the study areas regarding GO-NGO collaboration to promote local governance. It has also helped to know their expectations, achievements, and problems they faced to get services delivered from UPs. Six sessions of FGD, one at each UP, have been organised consisting of 10 persons for every session.

**Table 2. 3: Participants of FGD**

Category of Participants	No. of Participants
Beneficiaries of Social Safety- Net Programmes	2 (Male 1, Female 1)
Service Receivers	2 (Male 1, Female 1)
Member of Civil Society Organisation	2
Participant of Ward-Sabha of UP	1
Participant of Open Budget Meeting of UP	1
Participant of Monthly Meeting	1
Non-participant Citizen	1
Total	10

### 2.5.5 Review of Documents

Different types of documents of UPs, such as annual financial reports, five-year plans, project list, minutes of the meetings of the council, budgetary documents, and different project plans, WS resolutions, UDCC resolutions, standing committee resolutions, etc. have been reviewed. The analysis of these documents contributed to study multifaceted ways including: understanding discussions and decisions, nature of demands and their implementation, presence of citizens and officials, as well as status of documentation. Moreover, UP related laws, rules, regulations, SROs, UP operational manual, Sharique training manuals, etc. have taken under consideration to unearth level of understandings of the officials, also used for analysis. Being vital document, LGSP audit reports have also been consulted. Unavailability of the documents, unprepared conditions, heterogeneous presentations, and inaccessibility to the targeted persons posed as drawbacks to the process.

### 2.6 Data Preparation and Analysis

Data have been examined thoroughly and edited to remove inconsistencies. Then, the data have been processed by coding, classifying, and tabulating. Graphs, charts, tables, diagram etc. have been used to present collected data to make these data comprehensible. Qualitative data have been analysed through inductive reasoning process for drawing the appropriate inference. For necessary parts, the statistical package for the social sciences (IBM SPSSs version 22) software has been used. The study has adopted pertinent statistical tools to analyse the data. Following the above procedures, and based on the objectives of the research, respondents' responses have

been summarised and categorised to analyse and discuss. Moreover, for drawing a final inference, results from qualitative and quantitative data have been synthesised and interpreted where necessary, though they have supplemented each other.

## **2.7 Reliability and Validity of Data**

Validity is one of the important strengths of qualitative research. It refers to the trustworthiness of data, which is subject to the measurement of the phenomenon, and research problem. Validity and reliability of the collected data have been facilitated through triangulation of data by using different methods of data collection, such as QS, in-depth interviews, FGD, and content analysis. Moreover, in some cases statements have been re-examined with the respondents.

## **2.8 Units of Analysis**

Unit of analysis has guided the researcher to identify the units on which the researcher has generalised his findings. To identify the unit of analysis of a study, the questions like ‘who,’ and ‘what’ principally provide the answers. Three key properties direct the formulation of unit of analysis: social entities, time, and space. However, the major area of unit of analysis comes from social entities; it includes a person or an institution, or groups. More specifically individuals, groups, artefacts, geographical units, social interaction can be included in the unit of analysis.<sup>13</sup> For the present study, the following units have been taken into consideration.

### **2.8.1 Individual**

Individuals related with LGIs have been included in the study as unit of analysis. Among them, the recipient of services, i.e. the citizens, UP functionaries both elected and non-elected, members of Ward Platform of Sharique, and NGO officials have got the most attention in the study to include their perceptions and experiences.

### **2.8.2 Social Group**

When social groups are selected as unit of analysis the focus moves to group characteristics rather than an individual one. The study has included Ward Platform as social group to analyse extensively group-building process of Sharique in their way to develop a collective voice.

### **2.8.3 Geographical Unit**

The key attention in analysing of geographical unit has been given on organisational features of the unit, not on the individuals within the organisation. Here, the Union Parishad has been considered as the key geographical unit for analysis.

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<sup>13</sup> Social Research Methods, “Unit of Analysis,” <https://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/unitanal.php> (accessed October 30, 2017).

### 2.8.4 Social Interaction

The dyadic relations among citizens and between citizens and their representatives, or government officials have been included in the analysis. Furthermore, the relationship between officials of local government unit of UP and Sharique project in the base of collaboration has been analysed.

### 2.9 Area of Measurement and Related Indicators

Indicators to measure the collaborative efforts of strengthening local governance based on theory-based impact evaluation have been presented in the following table with area of measurement and the descriptions of the indicators.

**Table 2. 4: Area of Measurement and Related Indicators**

Areas	Dimensions	Indicators
Capacity Building	<b>Demand Side (Citizen) Indicators</b>	
	Knowledge/Awareness	Knowledge on Citizenship, UP Functioning, Entitlements, & Duties, Community Betterment
	Ability to Participate	Understanding WS & OBM, Understanding RTI & CC, Awareness on the Weakness & Strength of UP
	<b>Supply Side (UP Functionaries) Indicators</b>	
	Knowledge	Job Description, Cognisance of Legal Issues
	Administrative and Leadership Skill	Participating in Meeting, Audit Queries, Documentation, e-Governance, Intention to Work Together, Decision Making & Prioritising the Demands, Formulation of Long Term Plan & Budget, Communication, Negotiation with UNO & DC, Changing Pattern of Budget
Citizens' Participation	<b>Demand Side Indicators</b>	
	Attitude	People Attitudes to UP
	Access to Participatory Mechanisms	Participants of WS/OBM, Interest in Participation, Community Satisfaction with Engagement
	Placing of Demands	Networking for Collective voice, Making Demands with Ownership, Issues Citizens Usually Discussed
	<b>Supply Side Indicators</b>	
Leadership of UP Officials	Arranging WS & OBM, Circulation of Ward Meeting/Inviting People/ Fixing Place & Time, Providing Scope for Participation	
Accountability	<b>Supply Side Indicators</b>	
	Responsiveness of UP Functionaries	Listening, Solving Problems & Showing Empathy, Incorporation of Citizens Demands in UP's Documents, Implementation of Demanded Projects, Selection of SSNP Beneficiaries through WS, Inclusion of SSNP Beneficiaries on Demands, Delivering Information on Demand, Complaints Satisfaction
	Social Accountability	Social Audit, People's Supervision of Project, Formation & Activation of Various Committees
	Answerability of UP Officials	Attitudes of the Functionaries to the Questions, Providing Justification for the Deeds
	Enforcement	Citizens Satisfaction

Transparency	<b>Demand &amp; Supply Side Indicators</b>	
	Access to Information (Freedom of Information)	Seeking & Using Information by citizens, State of Information Dissemination, Use of Websites Use of Information by People
	Incidence of Corruption	Presence of Corruption
Fiscal Autonomy	<b>Supply Side Indicators</b>	
	Financial Sill	Mobilising Own Income (Diversification of Sources of Income from Tax & Non-tax), Changing Pattern of Budget
	Tax Autonomy	Imposition, or Elimination of Tax, & Setting Tax Rate Income from Tax, Tax Varieties, Income from Other Sources
	Financial Condition & Expenditure Autonomy	Reliance on Own Revenues, Change in Own Income, Total Fund Received
Gender Mainstreaming	<b>Demand/Supply Side Indicators</b>	
	Awareness	Cognitive Changes Towards Gender, Awareness on Rights & Entitlements
	Equality	Participation & Voice Raising of Women, Equal Rewards & Benefits, Male Biasness? Gender Budgeting
	Empowerment	Change in Power Relation, Ownership, Freedom of Choice & Action
	Leadership	Organising Capacity of WMs, Mobilising Citizens Against Social Problems, Performance of WMs, Networking, Capacity of WMs, Satisfaction of WMs
	Enabling Environment	Change of Attitudes & Behaviours to Female
Collaboration	<b>Demand Side Indicators</b>	
	Social Capital (Enabling Factors)	Willingness, Mutual Respect & Trust, Cooperation, Shared Goal
	Quality of Inputs	Varied Process of Skill Development & Motivation, Publications, Grant, Advocacy
	Sustainability	Achievement & Learning or Varied Fields, Causes of Present State of Sustainability
	Problems & Challenges	Different problems & Challenges of Collaboration
	Achievements	Significant Achievements

## 2.10 Impact Evaluation through Theoretical Perspective

### 2.10.1 Impact Evaluation

Impact study searches for long-term results of an intervention. This type of study focuses on changes, which can be positive or negative, deliberate or unplanned, in the sphere of knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviours, and status of the target groups.<sup>14</sup> It provides insights on ‘a programme or a policy, or upstream activities – for example, capacitation, policy advocacy and backstopping for a facilitating context.’<sup>15</sup> While

<sup>14</sup> Nilima Sonpal-Valias, *Measuring the Difference: An Outcome Evaluation Resource for the Disability Sector* (Calgary, AB: The Alberta Council of Disability Services, 2009), 1.

<sup>15</sup> Patricia Rogers, *Overview of Impact Evaluation: Methodological Briefs*, Impact Evaluation 1 (Florence: UNICEF Office of Research, 2014), 1.

outcome analysis takes whether intended results, have been attained or not into account, an impact assessment generates the answers of the questions like: “how would outcomes such as participants’ well-being have changed if the intervention had not been undertaken?”<sup>16</sup> “Can these effects be attributed to the programme/intervention?” “Did the programme/intervention have unintended effects on the beneficiaries? ...on the non-beneficiaries (externalities)?”<sup>17</sup> Comprehensively, the evaluation process deals with the questions of three categories: first, descriptive questions look for what exactly, is happening and ‘describes processes, conditions, organisational relationships, and stakeholder views;’ second, normative questions judge the actions and inquire into the targets whether they are being achieved or not; and third, cause-and-effect questions focus on outcomes to explore what change the intervention makes in outcomes.<sup>18</sup>

Largely used approaches of impact study include an examination of factual situation to identify the consistency of changes in the environment in line with the intervention, counterfactual analysis that tries to assess the situation of after intervention with the situation if there has not been any intervention, and finally, recognising and investigating probable alternative clarifications of the changes.<sup>19</sup> An impact study with counterfactuals can be shown in an equation given below:

Impact of the programme = what happened (with the programme) – what would have happened (without the programme).<sup>20</sup>

This equation can be formulated as  $\alpha = (Y | P = 1) - (Y | P = 0)$

When  $\alpha$  is the causal impact of the programme,  $(Y | P = 1)$  is the outcome of the intervention, and  $(Y | P = 0)$  represents the results without the intervention [ $Y$ =outcome, and  $P$ = programme].<sup>21</sup>

However, in reality, it is impossible to study the same programme with intervention and without intervention in a given time. To overcome this paradox, counterfactuals are usually developed by employing a homogenous group, which is not affected by the programme. This group is termed as control group that imitates the counterfactuals.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Howard White, and Alain Barbu, *Impact Evaluation: The Experience of the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2006), 3.

<sup>17</sup> Marie M. Gaarder, "Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs," *International Initiative for Impact-Evaluation* (2010), 2.

<sup>18</sup> Linda G. Morra Imas, and Ray C. Rist, *The Road to Results: Designing and Conducting Effective Development Evaluations* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2009), 223-229.

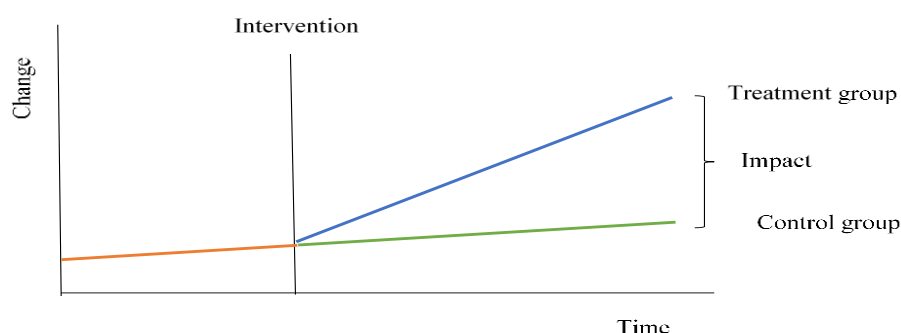
<sup>19</sup> Patricia J. Rogers, "Introduction to Impact Evaluation," *Impact Evaluation Notes* no. 1, InterAction and the Rockefeller Foundation (March 2012), 1.

<sup>20</sup> Trinity Impact Evaluation Unit, "Impact Evaluation: Randomisation," *Development Studies Association of Ireland* (2016), 7.

<sup>21</sup> Paul J. Gertler et al., Sebastian Martinez, Patrick Premand, Laura B. Rawlings, and Christel M. J. Vermeersch, *Impact Evaluation in Practice* (Washington DC: World Bank, 2011), 34.

<sup>22</sup> Trinity Impact Evaluation Unit, "Impact Evaluation: Randomisation," *Development Studies Association of Ireland* (2016), 9.

Drawing the differences between the intervention group and control group may result in finding the impact of the programme. Graphically, Figure 2. 1 illustrates the issues.



**Figure 2. 1 Measuring Impact**

This study for assessing the impact of Sharique on SLG has taken both treatment and control group (comparison group) to determine a simple difference.

### **2.10.1.1 Theory-Based Impact Study**

Among three approaches of impact evaluation such as theory based, mixed methods, and participatory approaches, theory-based impact evaluation catches the attention of many due to its conduction of systematic and identification of a comprehensive range of impacts. It covers both processes and impact evaluation inquiries.<sup>23</sup> White asserts that theory-based approach includes ‘mapping out the causal chain from inputs to outcomes and impact and testing the underlying assumptions.’<sup>24</sup> World Bank, on the other hand, mentions that impact study mainly focuses on outcomes and impacts, evaluation of inputs and process remain less attentive, and outputs in some cases are mentioned.<sup>25</sup> However, there are considerable debates what exactly the terms outputs, outcomes and impacts signify. World Bank denotes that normally outputs involves with the goods and services "supplied by a programme, outcomes' connection is with the benefits of the delivered goods and services to the particular target group, and impact generally indicates whether outcomes have played role in shifting behaviours of the recipients or ‘longer-term conditions of interest.’<sup>26</sup> Here, the principal factors are to differentiate between supply-side activities with the delivery of goods and services and demand-side responses with demands and/or usages of goods and services provided.

<sup>23</sup> NONIE Subgroup 2, "NONIE Impact Evaluation Guidance" (2008), 10.

<sup>24</sup> Howard White, "Theory-Based Impact Evaluation: Principles and Practice," Working paper 3, *International Initiative for Impact Evaluation* (2009), 3.

<sup>25</sup> Independent Evaluation Group, *Designing a Results Framework for Achieving Results: A How-to Guide* (Washington DC: World Bank, 2012), 8.

<sup>26</sup> Independent Evaluation Group, *Designing a Results Framework for Achieving Results: A How-to Guide* (Washington DC: World Bank, 2012), 7.

### 2.10.1.2 Key Principles of Theory-Based Impact Study

White refers to six principles,<sup>27</sup> which are key to effective application of the approach. These principles include (1) mapping out the causal chain (Programme theory, Theory of Change, Result Chain); (2) understanding context; (3) anticipating heterogeneity; (4) rigorous evaluation of impact using a credible counterfactual; (5) rigorous factual analysis; and (6) use of mixed methods. This study on SLG in accordance with the principles stated by White advances to accomplish the task of assessing the impacts as it draws a result chain, considers the context of the programme and heterogeneity, selects a comparison group for counterfactual analysis using single difference measure, includes the programme inputs, activities, and outputs, and uses both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Among the six, two principles: result chain and context require extra attention for this study and have been discussed below.

#### 2.10.1.2.1 Mapping out the Causal Chain

The process of mapping out a causal chain takes various names and theories such as result chain, result framework, the theory of change, programme theory, outcome mapping, etc. These terms have been used interchangeably. The key features of the causal chain are to establish a ‘logical and expected cause-effect relationships among inputs, outputs, intermediate results or outcomes, and impact,’ through encompassing all the necessary components.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, it questions why programme activities drive to the outputs, why these outputs bring the probable short or midterm outcomes, and through what process these outcomes convert (at least hypothetically) into sustained outcomes or impact. Thus, the theory of change study requires testing of assumptions to explore whether the hypothetical results or outcomes have been achieved.<sup>29</sup> The results as outputs, outcomes, or impact are explained through indicators and that can be qualitative, quantitative or observable.<sup>30</sup>

This study has formulated five assumptions to be tested to uncover to what extent the joint initiatives of UPs and Sharique remain successful to strengthen local governance. The assumptions have been given below.

1. The collaboration of Sharique with local government units of UPs capacitates individuals, organisations, and environment as well.
2. The collaboration of Sharique with local government units of UPs increases effective people’s participation in the governing process.
3. The collaboration of Sharique with local government units of UPs enhances the level of transparency and accountability.
4. The collaboration of

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<sup>27</sup> Howard White, “Theory-Based Impact Evaluation: Principles and Practice,” Working paper 3, *International Initiative for Impact Evaluation* (2009), 7.

<sup>28</sup> Independent Evaluation Group, *Designing a Results Framework for Achieving Results: A How-to Guide* (Washington DC: World Bank, 2012), 7.

<sup>29</sup> Howard White, “Theory-Based Impact Evaluation: Principles and Practice,” Working paper 3, *International Initiative for Impact Evaluation* (2009), 7.

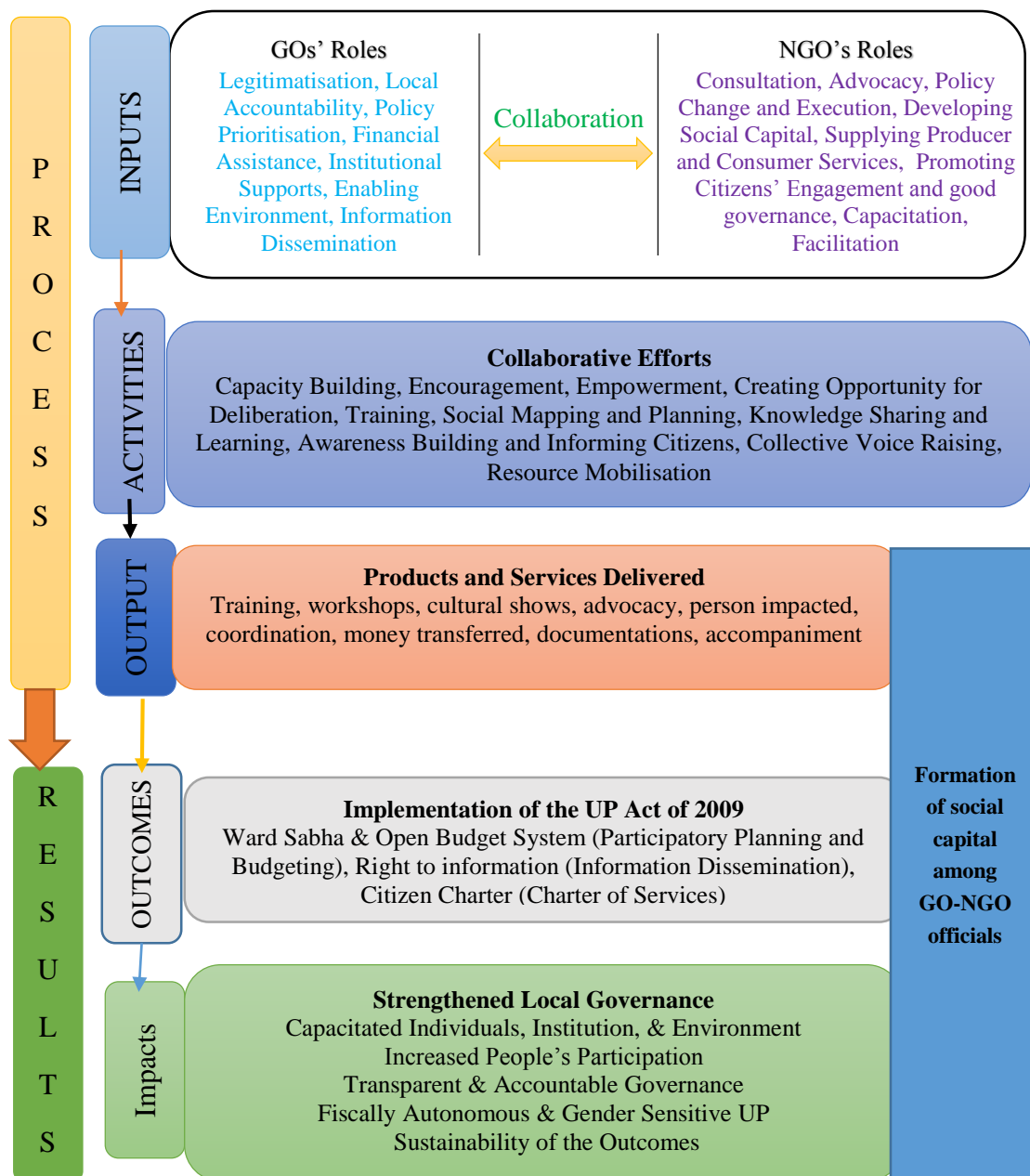
<sup>30</sup> Independent Evaluation Group, *Designing a Results Framework for Achieving Results: A How-to Guide* (Washington DC: World Bank, 2012), 8.



Sharique with local government units of UPs contributes to UPs being autonomous fiscally. 5. The collaboration of Sharique with local government units of UPs mainstreams gender in local governance.

### 2.10.1.2.2 Causal Chain of Collaboration for SLG

Based on the above assumptions a map of the causal chain has been drawn below to depict cause-effect relationships of Sharique’s interventions and its outputs, outcomes, and impact.



**Figure 2. 2: Map of Causal Chain of GO-NGO Collaboration for SLG**

The 'result chain' shown above has depicted possible overall cause-effect relationship of GO-NGO collaboration. The map is engaged in two parts: process part, which is

related with implementation of chain, which includes inputs, activities, and outputs of the programme. The map shows that government organisations come closer to NGO with their inputs such as legitimatisation, local accountability, policy prioritisation, financial assistance, institutional supports, enabling environment, information dissemination; and on the other hand NGO forwards with their efforts such as consultation, advocacy, policy change, and execution, developing social capital, supplying producer and consumer services, promoting citizens' engagement and good governance, capacitation, and facilitation to collaborate for strengthening local governance.

Both GOs and NGO, at the second stage employ their collaborative activities, which include capacity building, encouragement, empowerment, creating an opportunity for deliberation, training, social mapping and planning, knowledge sharing and learning, awareness building and informing citizens, collective voice raising, and resource mobilisation to achieve the pre-planned outputs. The outputs of the intervention consisted of a number of the training session, workshops, cultural shows, advocacy efforts, person impacted, coordinating meeting, amount of money transferred, and these outputs lead to the result part.

The result part involves two components: outcomes and impact. The collaborative efforts target to strengthen the governance of UPs in line with the UP Act of 2009. Thus, the outcomes of the efforts concentrate on the implementation of the Act, and key characteristics, which are focused to achieve participatory planning and budgeting through activating Ward Sabha and Open Budget Meeting, dissemination of information, and ensuring implementation of charter of services. Theoretically, it is argued that these outcomes drive to the ultimate goals of the programme, i.e. the impact. The theory of change for UP-Sharique collaboration expected to create impact, which will be beneficial to the citizens. The targeted components of the impact are increased sustainable people's participation, fiscally autonomous local bodies, capacitated individuals, institution, & environment, transparent & accountable governance, and gender mainstreamed UPs.

The principal feature of this map of result change confirms that if something happens at the lower stage, something will follow that at the upper stage because of those initiatives. Thus, this chain evolves with a causal relationship, and this study has envisaged unearthing whether this causal relationship really exists, and deliver the impact as planned and expected.

#### **2.10.1.2.3 Understanding of the Context**

For lucid apprehension of the extent of the impact of the programme, it is crucial to understand the context. White defines context as 'the social, political and economic

setting in which the programme takes place, all of which can influence how the causal chain plays out.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, the links ‘understanding context’ with perceiving project documents and other socio-economic literature to encompass a wider perspective. On the word of Ackoff, each social setting contains three tiers of purpose: ‘the purpose of the system, of its parts, and of the system of which it is a part, as well as the super system.’<sup>32</sup> For this study the rural local environment, its various elements such as background of local governance, power dynamics, socio-economic condition, cultural context, and at wider sphere the local governance and existing situation in terms of gender, elite control, party politics, central-local relation, etc. have been taken into consideration to deepening the understanding the impact of collaborative efforts.

## 2.11 Concluding Comments

The above methodological discussions have provided the guiding principle of the research. The study includes case study as a research method, which provides flexibility to explore a phenomenon with its environment. This research endeavour includes Natural experiment technique, which has allowed the researcher to select a control group of UPs to compare with the UPs under Sharique areas. Moreover, the result framework provides the base for developing the impact evaluation mechanism, which includes both process and outcome evaluation. This finally leads to guide the study to explore the outputs and outcomes of collaborative efforts of Sharique and UPs. In this line, chapter 4 and 5 has included discussions on varied actions, inputs, and outputs of government and Sharique respectively that means the process part, and chapter 6, 7, 8 and 9 followed with results parts, which includes outcomes and impacts. Additionally, chapter 9 has included results related to collaboration itself, and long-term outcomes focussing on analysis of the state of sustainability of the outcomes and related issues. These methods with the assistance of interviews, document analysis, and observations have aided the researcher to collect data. For data presentations, both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used for successful accomplishment of the study.

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<sup>31</sup> Howard White, “Theory-Based Impact Evaluation: Principles and Practice,” Working paper 3, *International Initiative for Impact Evaluation* (2009), 10.

<sup>32</sup> Russell L. Ackoff, *Creating the corporate future* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1981), 23.

## Chapter 3

# Strengthening Local Governance: A Conceptual Lens for the Study of Collaborative Programme

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter as indicated in the title, involved with conceptual aspects of the study. Attaining better clarity the discussion has been devised into four sections. First part has dealt with an understanding of key concepts of the study, such as governance, local governance, the components and the process of strengthening the process of governance in localities. In the second part of the chapter, conceptualisation of NGO, transformation NGO, their new roles, and debates on NGO has been discussed. The third part has included discussions on collaboration of GOs and NGOs at national and sub-national level. The fourth and final part has been entrusted with drawing up a conceptual framework of the study, which has contributed to smooth progress of the research.

### 3.2 Governance and Strengthening Local Governance

#### 3.2.1 Governance, Local Governance, and Its Components

##### *3.2.1.1 Understanding Governance: Transformation of Government to Governance*

The wave of globalization, 'information revolution', and the rise of pluralistic centres have brought changes in state-citizens relationship. Valuing people and their organizations, and the way they are ruled shift the balance in favour of governance from governments. Institutional development in the 1980s draws attention on management development of government organizations simultaneously with an enlarged sphere that includes political and social context. Structural adjustment, specifically decentralization, the process of re-democratization in many countries, as well as weakness such as corruption, lack of accountability etc. induce a shift from government itself to the process by which government manages and utilize resources—that is to governance.<sup>1</sup> These shifts can be understood as 'focusing more on process and less on institutions.'<sup>2</sup> Government mostly involved with formalities, hierarchies, limited association of citizens, top-down approach, unbendable presence of bureaucracy, exercise of authority etc. It mirrors standardisation, formalities, procedures, and ceremonial institutions for demand making, problem-solving, and implementing 'public choice.'<sup>3</sup> Government contracts a political actor as the sole role

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<sup>1</sup> Robert H. Wilson, "Understanding Local Governance: An International Perspective," *Revista de Administração de Empresas* 40, no. 2 (2000): 52.

<sup>2</sup> Jon Pierre "Public-Private Partnerships and Urban Governance: Introduction," in *Partnerships in Urban Governance: European and American Experiences* (New York: Palgrave, 1998), 5.

<sup>3</sup> Peter John, *Local Government in Western Europe* (London: Sage Publications, 2001), 4.

player for service delivery, however, in governance this responsibility is shared among the state, people and private sectors.<sup>4</sup> Thus, harmonization of inter-reliant activities of varied actors can be termed as governance.<sup>5</sup> However, governance is not such a straightforward issue as Bevir terms ‘governance’ as a vague word, and argues that it induces a more pluralistic pattern of rule, focuses on the processes and interactions that bond state and civil society, and inspired by crisis of faith in the state.<sup>6</sup> He further states that both governance and crisis of faith make representative democracy improbable, as faith in actors, is key to institutionalisation of democracy.

Governance finds its base on ‘process, values, and institutions.’ It has been carried forward to challenge the limitation of government to encompass widespread concepts to have the provisions to include various actors and their interests in implementing programmes. Gerry Stoker argues

The concept of governance is wider than that of government; it takes into account not just the institutions of government but also the process through which these institutions interact with civil society and the consequences of this mutual influence between state and society. Governance refers to the action, manner or system of governing in which the boundary between organizations and public and private sectors has become permeable. Governance recognizes the interdependence of organizations. The essence of governance is the interactive relationship between and within governmental and non-governmental forces. It involves a recognition of the limits of government.<sup>7</sup>

Melo and Baiocchi emphasise more on process that relies on institutional setting for harmonization and regulation of collective actions, which is shaped as networks. They link governance with the management of intricate issues; however, the authors tag an important challenge, which conforms to a ‘new form of procedural legitimation.’<sup>8</sup> The procedural legitimation involves with ‘gathering of inputs from society’ and accession of citizens with influence in the process of governance. Some processes that innovated for procedural legitimacy includes ‘participatory budgets, participatory strategic planning or prospective workshops, citizen juries’ etc. These procedures must have acceptability as just, expedient, in addition, to be suitable exercise to pay heed to the citizens, as well as to encompass them in ‘public decision-making’. The principal target of the instruments is to motivate minimization of the difference between the people and politicians, and the process can contribute to building ‘political trust.’<sup>9</sup> Accordingly, ‘New Governance Paradigm’ relates governance with policymaking

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<sup>4</sup> Jon Pierre, “Introduction: Understanding Governance,” in *Debating Governance: Authority, Steering, and Democracy*, 1-10 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2.

<sup>5</sup> Bob Jessop, “The Rise of Governance and the Risk of Failure: The Case of Economic Development,” *ISSJ* (UNESCO) 155 (1998): 29.

<sup>6</sup> Mark Bevir, *Democratic Governance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 1.

<sup>7</sup> Gerry Stoker, “Public-Private Partnership and Urban Governance,” in *Partnerships in Urban Governance: European and American Experiences*, ed. Jon Pierre (New York: Palgrave, 1998), 38.

<sup>8</sup> Marcus Andre Melo, and Gianpaolo Baiocchi, “Deliberative Democracy and Local Governance: Towards a New Agenda,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30.3 (September 2006): 591.

<sup>9</sup> Joan Font, and Ismael Blanco, “Procedural Legitimacy and Political Trust: The Case of Citizen Juries in Spain,” *European Journal of Political Research* 46 (2007): 557-559.

process that requires active involvement of people and other actors as stakeholders.<sup>10</sup> Le Galès elaborates

governance is the capacity to integrate and give form to local interests, organizations and social groups and, on the other hand, the capacity to represent them outside, to develop more or less unified strategies towards the market, the state, other cities and other levels of government.<sup>11</sup>

In neighbourhood level, new local governance involved with actors' 'cooperation-seeking behaviour', which make it distinct from old-fashioned model. Case-specific cooperation and blurring of all boundaries are two essential components of it. The new local governance earmarks with focusing high on the relation among actors, and devises a plan to produce services and implement development tasks together with several local bodies, NGOs and business firms through a collaboration network.<sup>12</sup> Thus, governance refers much more than not only 'government' but also 'good government' as it encompasses "decisions, negotiation, and different power relations between stakeholders to determine who gets what, when and how."<sup>13</sup> Governance major targets are to reaching out citizens to uplift them and to alleviate poverty. However, "without 'good', or at least 'good enough', governance the fight against poverty cannot be won."<sup>14</sup>

Guided by two approaches viz. 'top-down' and 'bottom-up', arrangements of governance translate into centralized, as well as decentralized and participatory forms of government respectively. The centralization of the process of governance concerns with concentration of power, and planning and decision-making. On the other hand, decentralisation involves with 'transfer of powers and resources from higher to lower levels in a political system,'<sup>15</sup> and 'could bring about broader participation in development planning and management.'<sup>16</sup> It refers to extensive transfers of the 'locus of decision making' from central governments to regional, municipal or local governments.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Pan Suk Kim, et al., "Toward Participatory and Transparent Governance: Report on the Sixth Global Forum on Reinventing Government," *Public Administration Review* 65, 6 (2005): 647.

<sup>11</sup> Patrick Le Galès, "Regulations and Governance in European Cities," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (2002): 496.

<sup>12</sup> Arto Haveri, "Complexity in Local Government Change: Limits of Rational Reforming," *Public Management Review* 8:1 (2006): 33-34.

<sup>13</sup> Jean de la Harpe, "Strengthening Local Governance for Improved Water and Sanitation Services," IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre (2007), 4.

<sup>14</sup> DFID, *Governance, Development and Democratic Politics: DFID's Work in Building More Effective States* (London: Department for International Development, 2006), 7.

<sup>15</sup> Richard Crook, and James Manor, "Democratic Decentralization," *OED Working Paper Series*, no. 11 (2000), 1.

<sup>16</sup> Dennis A. Rondinelli, and John R. Nellis, "Assessing Decentralization Policies in Developing Countries: The Case for Cautious Optimism," *Development Policy Review* 4 (1986): 4.

<sup>17</sup> Jeffrey Sayer, et al., "The Implications for Biodiversity Conservation of Decentralised Forest Resources Management," Paper prepared on behalf of IUCN and WWF for the UNFF Inter-sessional workshop on Decentralisation Interlaken, Switzerland (May 2004), 5.

### 3.2.1.2 Local Governance

J. H. Mill argues in favour of local government based on two propositions. The first proposition involves with the opening of opportunities for local people to participate, supplying of the capability to make citizens accustomed to the practices of politics and government, and the second one deals with justification of wide scope of LGIs by local knowledge, interest, needs and capacity to watch over for achieving efficiency and effectiveness.<sup>18</sup> Thus, local government is the result of decentralisation, which involves with ‘transfer of responsibility for planning, management, and the raising and allocation of resources from central government’ to ‘subordinate units’.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, local governance is the set of policy frameworks, structures, relationships and decision making that takes place at the local level to deliver services or achieve objectives.<sup>20</sup> Then again, local governance, he explains, includes diverse area of joint planning and the implementation of the same at sub-national level collectively. It encircles both formal and informal sectors associated with localities and other levels of government. It also takes into account the role of informal norms, community organizations, networks and local association in chasing joint action by designing a framework for people-people and people-state dealings, common decision-making, and public service delivery. Thus, local government helps to promote pluralism.<sup>21</sup> The involvement of local governance swells in recent time to conserve the life and liberty of inhabitants, create room for democratic participation and civic discourse, backstop market-led and eco-friendly sustainable local development, and disseminate outcomes, which improve quality of life of the local people,<sup>22</sup> with its capacity to solve contextual issue based problems in compare to central authorities.<sup>23</sup>

Local governance encourages presence of civil society in the public domain through more engagement in activities. The partaking of civil society contributes to improving efficacy, answerability, enhancement of democracy through promoting participatory methods rather than representative methods.<sup>24</sup> Aminuzzaman interprets local governance as a way through which decision-making at local level is implemented. He further argues that ‘good local governance’ fulfils the condition of people’s critical

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<sup>18</sup> John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism, Liberty and Representative Government* (London: Dent, 1911), 2357.

<sup>19</sup> Dennis A. Rondinelli, and John R. Nellis, "Assessing Decentralization Policies in Developing Countries: The Case for Cautious Optimism," *Development Policy Review* 4 (1986): 5.

<sup>20</sup> Anwar Shah, and Sana Shah, "The New Vision of Local Governance and the Evolving Roles of Local Governments," in *Local Government in Developing Countries*, ed. Anwar Shah, 1-46 (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2006), 1.

<sup>21</sup> Gerry Stoker, "Introduction: Normative Theories of Local Government and Democracy," in *Rethinking Local Democracy*, ed., Desmond King, and Gerry Stoker (Houndmills: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996), 15.

<sup>22</sup> Anwar Shah, and Sana Shah, "The New Vision of Local Governance," 1-2.

<sup>23</sup> Tony Bovaird, Elke Loeffler, and Salvador Parrado Diez, *Developing Local Governance Networks in Europe* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Publishers, 2002), 14.

<sup>24</sup> John Gaventa, and Camilo Valderrama, "Participation, Citizenship and Local Governance," Background note prepared for workshop on ‘Strengthening participation in local governance,’ Institute of Development Studies, June 21-24, 1999, 4.

examination and overseeing, transparency, participation, and rule-orientation for decision-making.<sup>25</sup> Pages echoes as he mentions three basic dimensions of local governance viz., transparency, public accountability, and participatory democracy.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, local governance includes a set of actors from local area, harmonisation of their activities and efforts, participation of citizens in decision making with transparency for establishing accountable and democratic institutions.

### **3.2.1.3 New Vision of Local Governance**

Local governments, nowadays, to be successful, have to deal with failures of both market and government. Shah mentions five standpoints on models of neighbourhood government and their corresponding roles and responsibilities, as well as challenges. The viewpoints are Traditional Fiscal Federalism, New Public Management (NPM), Public Choice, New Institutional Economics (NIE), and Networks Forms of Local Governance. Shah states that

The federalism and the NPM perspectives are concerned primarily with market failures and how to deliver public goods efficiently and equitably. The public choice and NIE perspectives are concerned with government failures. The network forms of governance perspective is concerned with institutional arrangements to overcome both market and government failures.<sup>27</sup>

To overcome the challenges of given models, Shah argues, local government needs to buy local services, promote the networks of government supply sides and bodies other than government, maintain common rules of state and national governments. For ensuring quality of life of citizens at local level, local governments have arbitral roles to play among the actors and their linkages to realise better outcomes than the individual total and innovate ideas to utilize unexploited resources of the mass people.<sup>28</sup> Shah further advances through his 'New Vision of Local Governance' and identifies roles and responsibilities that fit in both developed and developing countries. He maintains that local governance involves with community governance, and follows the principles of subsidiarity, autonomy, citizen-centric, responsibility and accountability to electorates. He adds that local government employs its efforts to develop social capital, practise transparency, coordinate activities of various actors, focus on results and competitive and innovative service delivery. Moreover local governance is designed to practise autonomy in taxing, spending, regulatory and administrative decisions, involve with strengthening voice and exit option of citizens through practising direct democratic tools, citizens' charter, performance budgeting, create space for civic discourses, work

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<sup>25</sup> Salahuddin M. Aminuzzaman, "Political Economy of Local Governance: A Study of the Grassroots Level Local Government in Bangladesh," Paper presented to 23rd Congress of Political Science, July 19-24th, 2014, Montreal, Canada (2014), 2.

<sup>26</sup> Luis Cembellin Pages, *Tools to Measure the Local Government / Transparency and Accountability* (Malaga: Universidad de Malaga, 2015), 7.

<sup>27</sup> Anwar Shah, and Sana Shah, "The New Vision of Local Governance," 5.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.



better and cost less, include citizens of all strata and ensure their participation, and to overcome both government and market failures.<sup>29</sup>

This system brings citizens to the centre of discourses, makes them the ultimate sovereigns, facilitates local government to play a leadership role in a pluralistic society, and sorts government arrangements to 'serve as agents in the supply of public governance.' Such processes of empowering citizens could play a vital role in reforming public sector governance in developing countries when centres are inept or reluctant to do the same.<sup>30</sup>

#### **3.2.1.4 Good Local Governance**

Thinkers though use governance and good governance interchangeably and termed governance as normative proposition,<sup>31</sup> yet the idea of good governance can be seen as shift from governance, described as desired system of governance. World Bank promoted the good governance (GG) theory to set standards for the developing countries to match with indices of the GG in conformity with the philosophy of democracy. GG is not involved only with efficiency, but it also includes the relations between the citizens and state in line with principle of accountability.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, the theory also considers treatment of people not only as customers or consumers (as in NPM) but also as citizens, who in turn possess the rights to hold their authority accountable for the activities they have taken or have not taken. Wilson identifies the features of good governance; they include 'free and open elections, the rule of law with the protection of human rights, citizen participation, transparency and accountability in government.'<sup>33</sup> Good local governance at local level, which Minogue refers as 'reform strategy,' involves with building and strengthening of institutions locally with a view to ensuring governments' answerability, openness and transparency, and democratic practice.<sup>34</sup> It includes those mechanisms of governance, which ensure effective service delivery, sustainable development, welfare of the citizens through staying close to the citizens and practises all norms of democracy. Shah observes

Good local governance is not just about providing a range of local services but also about preserving the life and liberty of residents, creating space for democratic participation and civic dialogue, supporting market-led and environmentally sustainable local development, and facilitating outcomes that enrich the quality of life of residents.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>31</sup> Robert H. Wilson, "Understanding Local Governance: An International Perspective," *Revista de Administração de Empresas* 40, no. 2 (2000): 52.

<sup>32</sup> Peder G. Björk, and Hans S. H. Johansson, "Towards Governance Theory: In Search for a Common Ground," IPSA (2001): 7-8.

<sup>33</sup> Robert H. Wilson, "Understanding Local Governance:" 52.

<sup>34</sup> Martin Minogue, "The Principles and Practice of Good Governance," British Council briefing on Law and Governance (1997), 21.

<sup>35</sup> Anwar Shah, and Sana Shah, "The New Vision of Local Governance," 2.

He emphasises on voice and space mechanisms, as well as market mechanisms for efficiency in delivery of services. His point of view ensures the notion- ‘results do matter.’ Then again, Waheduzzaman’s comparative discussion on elements of good governance of various organizations viz. UNDP, ESCAP, WB, DFID, and ADB concludes with identifying four shared elements. These elements of good governance are accountability, participation, predictability, and transparency.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, GG aspires for inclusiveness of all of the society to the governing process, which establishes inclusive governance. Inclusive governance advocates for right to participation of all people, such as ‘the poor, women, ethnic and religious minorities, indigenous peoples and other disadvantaged groups’ in the system of decision-making process, which shifts the ways they live.<sup>37</sup> The system empowers the citizens to access to and make government organisations and policies responsive and answerable.

The discussions delineate GG and maintain that GG is more than governance, as it emphasises more on people-government relation, people’s rights and entitlements and inclusiveness in the decision-making process than on standardisations.

### **3.2.2 Strengthening Local Governance and its Components**

Strengthening local governance (SLG) deals with the processes that make local bodies strong, capable and effective entities for improving local development outcomes. Additionally, SLG not only concerns with local bodies but also engages with effective participation of people of different strata and their formal and informal organizations, capacitating stakeholders to play their role, increasing the opportunity for local inhabitants to lead a quality and animated life. Gaventa and Valderrama’s strategies and approaches for SLG include participatory planning, citizen education and awareness building, training and sensitising local officials, advocacy, alliances and collaboration, participatory budgeting, promoting accountability of elected officials to citizens.<sup>38</sup> Blair argues that popular participation, accessibility and accountability to citizens with significant political rights and liberty, the inclusion of constituents with voice from all walks of life in community decision-making, citizens’ representation and empowerment are the major promises of democratic local governance (DLG), i.e., strengthened local governance.<sup>39</sup> Thus, SLG includes a comprehensive process, mechanisms and efforts to be successful. The process, though contextualized as one size does not fit all, yet major concerns witness some commonalities. This study has focused on some shared components of SLG, which

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<sup>36</sup> Waheduzzaman, "People's Participation for Good Governance: A Study of Rural Development Programmes in Bangladesh" (PhD diss., Victoria University, 2010), 27.

<sup>37</sup> Clarence Dias, and R. Sudarshan, "Introduction: Inclusive Governance for Human Development," in *Towards Inclusive Governance, Promoting the Participation of Disadvantaged Groups in Asia-Pacific* (Bangkok: UNDP, 2007), 1.

<sup>38</sup> John Gaventa, and Camilo Valderrama, "Participation, Citizenship and Local Governance," 1-16.

<sup>39</sup> Harry Blair, "Participation and Accountability at the Periphery: Democratic Local Governance in Six Countries," *World Development* 28, no. 1 (2000): 21-23.

include triumvirate of good governance viz. people's participation, accountability of their representatives, transparency, as well as other important issues like fiscal autonomy, citizen's representation and empowerment, gender mainstreaming, and institution building. These important issues need in-depth reflection.

### **3.2.2.1 Capacity Building at Individual, Organisation and Environment Level**

Murray states outspokenly that 'without the capacity to make good decisions and to implement them well, ineffective government is the best expectation one might have; the worst expectation is a failed state.'<sup>40</sup> To avoid such situation in the process of local governance, Bangladesh needs capacity building (CB) of LGIs. This section has dealt with the concept of capacity, capacity building and its various dimension, as well as evaluation framework of CB.

#### **3.2.2.1.1 Capacity Building**

Morgan's concept of capacity includes not only knowledge and skills but also relationships, values, attitudes, etc.<sup>41</sup> Brinkerhoff reflects capacity as multidimensional as it, he thinks, is a complex and continuous dynamic process, tool to achieve objectives, and it has links with performance, contributes to sustainability.<sup>42</sup> In brief, capacity is enabling factor, links with ability to perform the desired tasks to fulfil development needs by individual, or organization, or the system/environment/ society separately or as a whole inefficient and sustainable way. CB involves focused external interventions over a period to fill the gaps in the ability of individuals or organizations.<sup>43</sup> OECD terms CB as a process and adds that this process involves with 'maintaining, unleashing, strengthening, creating, and adapting capacity of people, organizations, and society as a whole over time.'<sup>44</sup> For this study, the definition of UNDP has been prioritized to analyse the issue. The definition states that

capacity development is a concept, which is broader than organisational development since it includes an emphasis on the overall system, environment or context within which individuals, organisations and societies operate and interact (and not simply a single organisation). In the case of development programmes, it includes a consideration of all factors, which impact upon its ability to be developed, implemented and the results to be sustained.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> James Murray, "Building Capacity," presentation to the Institute of Public Administration National Conference, Institute of public administration, Dublin (May 2007), 1.

<sup>41</sup> Peter Morgan, "Capacity and Capacity Development: Some Strategies," Note prepared for CIDA / Policy Branch (October 1998), 2-3.

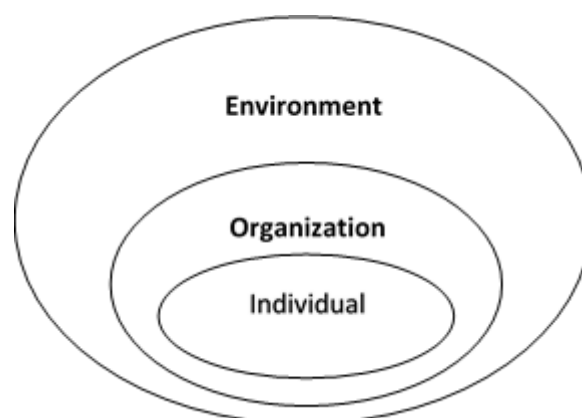
<sup>42</sup> Derick W. Brinkerhoff, "Technical Cooperation for Capacity-Building in Strategic Policy Management in Developing Countries," Paper presented at American Society for Public Administration, 56th National Conference, San Antonio, Texas (1995), 2.

<sup>43</sup> Nigel Simister, and Rachel Smith, "Monitoring and Evaluating Capacity Building: Is It Really that Difficult?" *Praxis paper* 23, International NGO Training and Research Centre (January 2010), 3.

<sup>44</sup> OECD, *The Challenge of Capacity Development: Working towards Good Practice* (Paris: Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation, 2006), 9.

<sup>45</sup> UNDP, "Capacity Assessment and Development in a Systems and Strategic Management Context," Technical Advisory Paper No 3, Management Development and Governance Division (January 1998), x.

This definition ascertains CB as broader than organizational capacity building or institution building. Building only the capacity of the organisation exclusively, Christoplos, et al. notify, may result in incomplete process, as it should be supplemented by investing in developing capacity at an individual level.<sup>46</sup> UNDP also emphasises on overall system, environment or context, as without enabling context the whole process of capacity building may fall short. Thus, it can be drawn that capacity building takes place three level: with individual, with the organization, and with broader society,<sup>47</sup> or according to UNDP with environment. However, while the matter of assessment of capacity building comes up, Brown, LaFond, and Macintyre assert that the process should measure on four levels: the system, organization, officials, and individual/community.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, UNDP includes capacity building at individual/community level with general people in the environment level. Therefore, CB assessment framework of this study has included three levels, which can be shown in the following Figure 3. 1. However, for better realization, the theoretical aspect of individual level for both officials and citizens has been discussed altogether.



**Figure 3. 1: The Levels of Capacity Building.<sup>49</sup>**

### **3.2.2.1.2 Capacity Building at Individual Level (Officials/ Citizens)**

Individuals and communities influence the outcomes, practise certain behaviours, and demand improved services through their abled behaviour.<sup>50</sup> Individual-level CB is the most important element of capacity; and refers to scheduling of objectives by individuals with will and capability, as well as achieving it through using one's

<sup>46</sup> Ian Christoplos et al., *ALNAP Review of Humanitarian Action in 2004: Capacity Building* (London: ODI, 2005), 47.

<sup>47</sup> Santiago Ripoll Lorenzo, "Evaluating Individual Approaches to Capacity Development: A Literature Review," ALINe working paper 6 (September 2012), 8.

<sup>48</sup> Lisanne Brown, Anne LaFond, and Kate Macintyre, *Measuring Capacity Building* (Chapel Hill, NC: Carolina Population Center, 2001), 12.

<sup>49</sup> Atsushi Matachi, *Capacity Building Framework* (Addis Ababa: UNESCO - International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa, 2006), 4.

<sup>50</sup> Lisanne Brown, Anne LaFond, and Kate Macintyre, *Measuring Capacity Building*, 9.

knowledge and skills, awareness, and experience, shifting values, attitudes, and utilising information and communication technology (ICT).<sup>51</sup> Both the ‘knowledge of basis’ and ‘people skill,’ or ‘soft skill’ are important to measure CB at individual level. UN-HABITAT includes 12 competencies for elected officials of local governments.<sup>52</sup> These are representation, communicating, facilitating, using power, decision-making, policymaking, enabling, negotiating, financing, overseeing, institution building, and leadership.

Capacity measurement, though, at individual/community level for citizens and officials involves the same elements: knowledge and skills, however citizens’ competencies are different from the local government personnel. They need attaining the capacity of recognition of the need for services, intention to use the services, participation in decision-making process, holding officials accountable, networking, community mobilization, empowerment, etc.<sup>53</sup>

### 3.2.2.1.3 Capacity Building at Organization Level/Institution Building

Growth and development of a country greatly depend on the quality of its institutions or organisations. Institution building (IB) involves with the aided formation of new or refurbishment of existing organisations, which includes participation of community members to determine necessities.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, while mentioning IB, Moore, Stewart, and Hudock emphasise on capacity building of the organisation.<sup>55</sup>

Explicating IB, Esman argues:

Institution Building may be defined as the planning, structuring and guidance of new or reconstituted organizations, which (a) embody changes in values, functions, physical and/or social technologies, (b) establish, foster, and protect normative relationships and action patterns, and (c) obtain support and complementarity in the environment.<sup>56</sup>

Thus, the main thrust of IB involves ‘organisation building’, that is to increase the effectiveness of the organisations through bringing adjustment to their structures, management, procedures, etc. separately or in networks. Specifically, the process

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<sup>51</sup> JICA Task Force on Aid Approaches, *Capacity Development Handbook for JICA Staff* (Tokyo: JICA, 2004), 7; Atsushi Matachi, *Capacity Building Framework* (Addis Ababa: UNESCO - International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa, 2006), 5; Santiago Ripoll Lorenzo, “Evaluating Individual Approaches to Capacity Development: A Literature Review,” ALIne working paper 6 (September 2012), 8; and Yahong Zhang, Robert Lee, and Kaifeng Yang, “Knowledge and Skills for Policy Making: Stories from Local Public Managers in Florida,” *Journal of Public Affairs Education* 18:1 (2012): 202.

<sup>52</sup> UN-HABITAT, *Key Competencies for Improving Local Governance, volume 1: Quick Guide*, The Local Elected Leadership Series (Nairobi: United Nations Human Settlements Programme, and Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative, 2005), 5-13.

<sup>53</sup> Lisanne Brown, Anne LaFond, and Kate Macintyre, *Measuring Capacity Building*, 16.

<sup>54</sup> Carol Joan Byg Heifner, “An Identification of the Capacity for Institution Building within the Civil Society Sector of Romania” (PhD diss. Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences Case Western Reserve University, May, 1999), 31.

<sup>55</sup> Mick Moore, Sheelagh Stewart, and Ann Hudock, *Institution Building as a Development Assistance Method: A Review of Literature and Ideas* (Stockholm: SIDA, 1995), 12.

<sup>56</sup> Milton J. Esman, “The Elements of Institution Building,” in *Institution Building and Development*, ed. J. W. Eaton 21-39 (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1972), 22.

deals with enabling organization to accomplish the designated tasks more efficiently through building up the capacity.<sup>57</sup> Pareek argues that IB process brings the change from a) elitism to populism, b) percolation to growth, c) centralism to decentralisation, and d) isolated professionalism to dialogue.<sup>58</sup>

In addition to the above variables, the institution building is represented with the variables of ‘Staircase Model’.<sup>59</sup> The model includes four development stages of an institution: the presence of organisation with low and unpredictable output, the organisation delivers expected output, the organisation carries out changes on its own, and the organisation engages actively with its clients.<sup>60</sup>

#### **3.2.2.1.4 Capacity Development at the Environment/Context/System Level**

The environment, or context, or system within which the individuals, organizations and societies undertake their functions is also an important factor in analysing impact of CB.<sup>61</sup> JICA refers to CB at environment level as ‘the environment and conditions necessary for demonstrating capacity at the individual and organizational levels.’<sup>62</sup> This enhances the creation and execution of policies and strategies in systems or frameworks beyond an individual institution. CB at environment level deals with numbers of dimensions: policy dimension, legal/regulatory dimension, management or accountability dimension, resource dimension, and process dimension.<sup>63</sup> The elements of environment level capacity include formal institution (laws, policies, decrees, ordinances, membership rules, etc.), informal institutions (customs, cultures, norms, etc.), social capital and social infrastructure, and capacities of individuals and organization under the environment.<sup>64</sup>

#### **3.2.2.2 People’s Participation (Participatory Planning & Budgeting)**

In a direct democracy, the participation is inevitable; however, for representative democracy the position of people’s participation is no less important. For instituting pro-poor governance that is inclusive governance, participatory mechanisms have gained ground in the governance and development discourses. In participation, Wood asserts that the ‘affected parties must come to see the decisions of the institution as

<sup>57</sup> Mick Moore, Sheelagh Stewart, and Ann Hudock, *Institution Building as a Development Assistance*, 12.

<sup>58</sup> Udai Pareek, *Effective Organizations: Beyond Management to Institution Building* (New Delhi: Oxford & IBH, 1981, 1994, 2002), 27; and T. V. Rao, “Beyond Management: Some Conceptual Contributions of Professor Udai Pareek to the Modern World,” *Indore Management Journal* 2:2 (2010): 16.

<sup>59</sup> Goran Andersson, and Peter Winai, *Diagnosis of Organization in Development Cooperation: Guideline for Application of the Staircase Model* (Stockholm: Department for Democracy and Social Development, Sida, 1997), 19.

<sup>60</sup> Idem., “Measuring and Diagnosing Institutional Development,” in *Institution Building and Leadership in Africa*, ed. Lennart Wohlgemuth, Jerker Carlsson, and Henock Kifle (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1998): 66.

<sup>61</sup> UNDP, “Capacity Assessment and Development in a Systems,” x.

<sup>62</sup> JICA Task Force on Aid Approaches, *Capacity Development Handbook for JICA Staff*, 7.

<sup>63</sup> UNDP, “Capacity Assessment and Development in a Systems,” xii.

<sup>64</sup> JICA Task Force on Aid Approaches, *Capacity Development Handbook for JICA Staff*, 10-11.

their own decisions, and the success or failure of which relies on their actions.<sup>65</sup> Increased participation of stakeholders in the process of policymaking and implementation confirms the presence of good governance.<sup>66</sup> It concerns with rights of citizenship and democratic governance,<sup>67</sup> as well as, management of public facilities with community and client connection.<sup>68</sup>

Participation can be viewed both as an approach of ‘means to end’ and as an ‘end in itself’. The former involves with increasing effectiveness and efficiencies of the programmes/institutions and the latter approach deals with enhancing control over means and regulative establishments and plays roles as an instrument of empowerment of the marginalised.<sup>69</sup> Wolfe and Stiefel involve participation with organised endeavours to bring resources and regulative institutions under enhanced control of groups or movements which once denied of such control in a given social setting.<sup>70</sup> The process has been seen as interference of ‘private citizens’ i.e., nonelected persons in governance related activities with strong social interests. In this process, the participation denotes more involvement of citizens beyond old-fashioned indirect representation to direct mechanisms to practise control over and influence governance,<sup>71</sup> and denial or disrespect of such engagement in the process of governance brings the legitimacy questions of the government ahead.<sup>72</sup> Enhanced level of participation contributes to not only alleviate poverty and instil social justice, but also compensate ‘democratic deficit’, which becomes the issue of dialogue both in ‘mature and emerging democracies.’<sup>73</sup>

Effective participation needs inclusion of informed poor people with taking their voices and interests into account while decisions are made, so that they can hold representatives, i.e., policymakers accountable.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, strengthening the process of citizen engagement and ensuring the accountability and responsiveness of the institutions require equal attention. Participation through ‘consultation without

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<sup>65</sup> Ngaire Wood, "Good Governance in International Organizations," *Global Governance* 5, no. 1 (1999): 44.

<sup>66</sup> Eran Vigoda-Gadot, and Shlomo Mizrahi, "Public Sector Management and the Democratic Ethos: A 5-Year Study of Key Relationships in Israel," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 18, no.1 (January 2007): 80.

<sup>67</sup> John Gaventa, "Towards Participatory Local Governance: Six Propositions for Discussion," This paper is based on a presentation made for the Ford Foundation (2001), 29.

<sup>68</sup> Jan Bucek, "New Approaches to Local Democracy: Direct Democracy, Participation and 'Third Sector,'" *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 18 (2000): 11.

<sup>69</sup> Gerd Schönwälder, "New Democratic Spaces at the Grassroots? Popular Participation in Latin American Local Governments," *Development and Change* 28 (1997): 756-57.

<sup>70</sup> Marshall Wolfe, and Matthias Stiefel, *A Voice for the Excluded: Popular Participation in Development: Utopia or Necessity?* (London: Zed Books, 1994), 5.

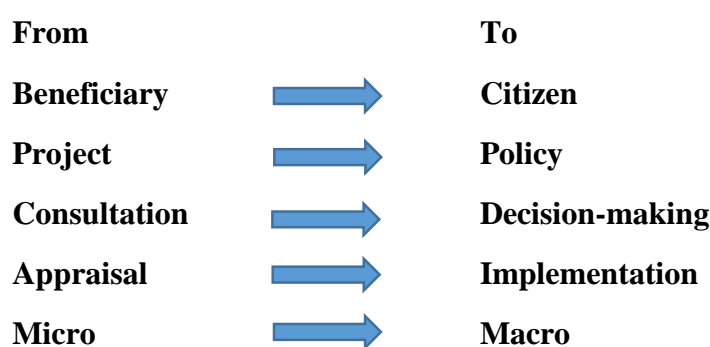
<sup>71</sup> John Gaventa, and Camilo Valderrama, "Participation, Citizenship and Local Governance," 4.

<sup>72</sup> Lisa Blomgren Bingham, "Public Sector Knowledge Networks as Governance: The Role of Legal Frameworks, Conflict Management, and Public Voice," *Public Administration Review* LXIX, no. 3 (May-June 2009): 88-89.

<sup>73</sup> John Gaventa, "Strengthening Participatory Approaches to Local Governance: Learning the Lesson from Abroad," *National Civic Review* (2004): 26.

<sup>74</sup> DFID, *Realising Human Rights for Poor People* (London: DFID, 2000), 24.

attention to power and politics will lead to ‘voice without influence’ and accountability through ‘reorganisation of political institutions without attention to inclusion and consultation will only reinforce the status quo.’<sup>75</sup> Thus, the issues of citizens’ capability to engage in decision-making and to claim their demands get increased attention. The overall process of enhancing participation, instituting good governance, and promoting citizenship, shifts the involvement of the concept from mere participation with the beneficiaries or the excluded, to broader engagement of citizens for making decision on important areas that have impacts on their lives.<sup>76</sup> Localities could be the best place to observe the shift as the interface of government and grassroots people meet there. The shift can be shown in the following way.



**Figure 3. 2: Shift of Participation.**<sup>77</sup>

### 3.2.2.2.1 Types and Levels of Participation

Arnstein categorises participation into three basic forms based on the extent and nature of engagement and power shared from traditional power holders.<sup>78</sup> These types of participation are nonparticipation, tokenism, and citizen power, which include subparts as manipulation and therapy for nonparticipation, informing, consultation, and placation for tokenism, and finally partnership, delegated power, and citizen control for citizen power. Nonparticipation stays at the bottom rung of the metaphoric ladder and at this level, citizens are seen as ‘passive and powerless,’ and citizens do not have any influence on development process. Then at the level of tokenism, citizens’ participation sensed as a token, where citizens are informed and have opportunity to have their voice heard, but that voice does not have any muscle to influence decisions that resulted in unchanged status-quo. At the highest level of participation, that is citizen power, citizens have the capacity to participate and negotiate benefits with traditional power holders, as well as to exercise influence and

<sup>75</sup> Andrea Cornwall, and John Gaventa, "Bridging the Gap: Citizenship, Participation and Accountability," *PLA Notes* 40 (February 2001): 32.

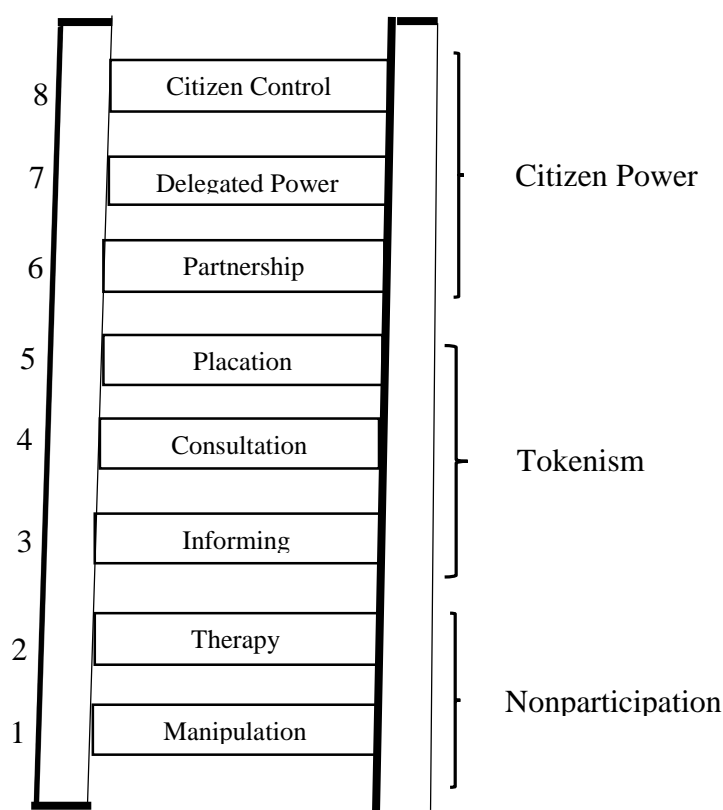
<sup>76</sup> John Gaventa, and Camilo Valderrama, "Participation, Citizenship and Local Governance," 1-16.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Sherry R. Arnstein, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 35:4 (1969): 216-224.



control over decision-making process, or in some cases, citizens have the lion share of representation in decision-making or complete decision-making authority.<sup>79</sup>



**Figure 3. 3: Participation Ladder.**<sup>80</sup>

McGee finds four levels of participation, which include information sharing at the bottom step, consultation at second lowest rung, joint decision-making at the third lowest tread, and initiation and control by stakeholders stays at the topmost stair of the ladder.<sup>81</sup> Information sharing level involves with the putting ‘budget and public policy information into the public domain.’ Then, at consultation level, government ‘sets up instruments such as forums, councils, and referendums or surveys to gather information on citizen preferences.’ Joint decision-making allows citizens not only have information in accordance with their necessities or choices but also play active role in decision-making. At the topmost level, initiation and control by stakeholders, realizes as ‘citizens have direct control over the full process of development, fundraising funds, implementation of projects or policy, as it happens with social fund and community-driven development projects.’ However, there is warning against participation, as the elites like government officials and/or interest groups of the society make use the opportunity of people’s participation as they represent their

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Rosemary McGee, *Legal Frameworks for Citizen Participation: A Synthesis Report*, Logo Link report (Sussex: Institute for Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton, United Kingdom, 2003), 17.

private interests with the look of public issues. They gain control over participatory tools and instruments, and have their voice heard and exert influence on decision-making or make decisions instead of marginalized citizens, as the later has not been empowered enough.<sup>82</sup> On these arguments, the results of the study have assessed the level of participation of the citizens in decision-making process.

### 3.2.2.2.2 Model of Governance Based on Level of Participation

Based on the level of participation and quality of governance Waheduzzaman and Mphande develop four models of governance, which include authoritarian, bureaucratic, political and democratic.<sup>83</sup> Firstly, the authoritarian model of governance includes the characteristics of low level of participation and having citizens only as passive participants; and the decisions are taken at the top level of local agencies. Citizens are only informed through display boards, contact points disclosure, etc. Thus, the total system struggles with a lack of transparency, accountability, as well as responsiveness. Secondly, in the bureaucratic model of governance citizens are consulted through arranging public meeting, however, they are not included in the decision-making process. This model treats people as consumers, follows the principles of upward accountability and does not share important information regarding projects. The model also suffers from a poor level of transparency and accountability, and exhibits better level of accountability and predictability with consultations. The third model, named the political model involves with such situation, when the participation reaches the stage of 'involving'. In this model, a group of community people, not the whole community or particularly not the disadvantaged groups, are engaged in the decision-making process. This community is formed in line with political connexion or linkages with administration. This model of governance becomes activated in line with party politics; which is termed as 'Partyarchy' by Coppedge. *Partyarchy* indicates monopolies of political parties regarding social control and maintaining of formal political process in party lines.<sup>84</sup> Back in the political model, the relevant government agency shares information, possessions, and authority with this group. In this model, the level of transparency, answerability, sensitivity, and predictability reaches optimum level because of preference to certain groups, and there observes improvement of the level of the components of governance. Finally, the fourth model, the Democratic Model allows people from all strata to access to information, decision-making and project implementation process. In this model, community becomes aware of the participation

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<sup>82</sup> Donald P. Moynihan, "Citizen Participation in Budgeting: Prospects for Developing Countries," in *Participatory Budgeting*, Anwar Shah, ed. (Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 2007), 61.

<sup>83</sup> Wahed Waheduzzaman, and Charles H. B. Mphande, "Gaps in Pursuing Participatory Good Governance: Bangladesh Context," *Administration & Society* 46 (1) (2014): 37-69.

<sup>84</sup> Michael Coppedge, *Strong Parties and Lame Ducks: Presidential Partyarchy and Factionalism in Venezuela* (California: Stanford University Press, 1994), 24.

in the governing process and the local agency delegates some authority to the whole community to make decision and implement projects, and their inclusion signifies their capacity not their affiliation with politics and administration. This model becomes open, accountable, receptive, as well as expectable, and promotes the mechanisms of community-based governance. More importantly among these four models, this model becomes most anticipated.<sup>85</sup>

### 3.2.2.3 Transparency

Transparency and right to information are considered as important components of democratic participation. Transparency promotes easy understanding, openness and guilelessness in networking, dealings, and operations. Holzner engages it with diffusion of information regarding decisions, activities, and existing environment to the public by ‘legitimate centres of powers’.<sup>86</sup> Dissemination of information contributes in making organization accountable, however, disclosure of information with many technicalities, and dumping of files with full of information frustrate stakeholders. IMF goes on saying that transparency let know citizens about “government structure and functions, fiscal policy intentions, public sector accounts, and projections,” and resource them with “ready access to reliable, comprehensive, timely, understandable, and internationally comparable information on government activities....”<sup>87</sup>

The Encyclopedia of Political Science includes that,

Transparency in the field of government is the ability of constituents to gain access to the facts, figures, documents, decisions, and other aspects of their government. ... However, the definition in the context of politics has a deeper significance to the ways in which people are able to understand, participate, and control their country’s government.<sup>88</sup>

Moore makes argument for bringing solution of four problems induced by practise of transparency: corruption, monopoly of knowledge, coercion, and exclusion. However, he also warns against excessive transparency, as it can be ‘corrosive to democracy’.<sup>89</sup> Transparency acts like a hole-in-the-wall into the façade of government of operation for outsider to gain effective and suitable information.<sup>90</sup> Transparency signifies, as UNDP perceives, ‘sharing information and acting in an open manner.’<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Wahed Waheduzzaman, “Community Participation and Local Governance in Bangladesh,” *Australian Journal of Political Science* 50 no. 1 (2015): 128-147.

<sup>86</sup> Burkart Holzner, *The Transparency Syndrome in Global Change* (Pittsburgh, United States: University of Pittsburgh, mimeo, 2001), 1.

<sup>87</sup> IMF, *Annual Report 1998* (Washington, DC: IMF, 1998), 39.

<sup>88</sup> George Thomas Kurian, ed., “Transparency,” *The Encyclopedia of Political Science* (2011), 1687.

<sup>89</sup> Alfred Moore, “Four Faces of Transparency in Democratic Theory,” paper presented at University of Cambridge on September 9, 2016.

<sup>90</sup> Esri, “Transparency and Accountability for State and Local Governments,” <http://www.esri.com/library/brochures/pdfs/transparency-and-accountability.pdf> (accessed August 21, 2017).

<sup>91</sup> UNDP, *Governance for Sustainable Development* (New York: UNDP, 1997), 36.

Freedom of information or right to know assures citizens' access not only to documents that government hold but also to the meetings, when decisions are made that affect them. Freedom of information ensures citizen's capacity to look into inside the government organisations through 'open meetings, access to records, websites, whistleblower protections, and even illegally leaked information.'<sup>92</sup> The combination of access to information and transparency warrants and promotes democracy, accountability, citizens' effective participation, citizen's trust, and curbs corruption. In fact, as Rourke claimed, "Nothing could be more axiomatic for a democracy than the principle of exposing the process of government to relentless public criticism and scrutiny."<sup>93</sup>

Stiglitz develops a distinct and palpable argument for the release of information. Claiming the ownership of information for public, he states:

The question is, given that the public has paid for the gathering of government information, who owns the information? Is it the private province of the government official, or does it belong to the public at large? I would argue that information gathered by public officials at public expense is owned by the public—just as the chairs and buildings and other physical assets used by the government belong to the public.<sup>94</sup>

Florini brings principal-agent relationship difficulties to forward arguments for unimpeded flow of information. According to public choice theory, the agent, the government officials, has an incentive with enlarged budget and bureaucratic sphere of operation, and could involve with dictated development, which does not fulfil the interest of the principal. The problem can be overcome through making the process transparent, as asymmetric information assists the agent, and transparency lessens this asymmetry, as well as the power of the agent. His punchline argues, "If agents are employed to serve the interests of the principals, the prevailing presumption should be in favour of agent transparency. Agents have no inherent rights to withhold information from principals."<sup>95</sup> He further mentions that transparency discloses behaviours; however, the expressed behaviours do not necessarily always provide the clues of inherent meaning of the behaviours. It bears more importance to know that why someone is doing something than what he is doing. He believes, even in secret matters the agent may mistake in handling alone as they necessitate feedback procedures to incorporate changed information.<sup>96</sup>

Information builds platforms for citizens to assess their representatives and to pronounce their sentiments, and without it, both election and the representation

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<sup>92</sup> Suzanne J. Piotrowski, and Gregg G. Van Ryzin, "Citizen Attitudes toward Transparency in Local Government," *The American Review of Public Administration* 37 (2007): 308.

<sup>93</sup> Francis E. Rourke, "Administrative secrecy: A Congressional Dilemma," *American Political Science Review*, 54 (1960): 691.

<sup>94</sup> Joseph E. Stiglitz, *On Liberty, the Right to Know, and Public Discourse: The Role of Transparency in Public Life* (Oxford: Oxford Amnesty Lecture, 1999), 7.

<sup>95</sup> Ann M. Florini, "Increasing Transparency in Government," 14-15.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

process end in procedural worthless mechanisms.<sup>97</sup> Feeble CSOs, unsettled press, or citizens cannot gather information, as opportunity to collect information remains unexploited. In some cases, the authority discharges half-truth information, makes procedures of information costly and complex, circulates information with vagueness.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, government could take various camouflaged strategies to obstruct free flow of information. The method can include one or blend of the following techniques: claiming that documents are lost, supplying huge unrelated documents, mentioning that the seeking documents are classified, or beyond the jurisdiction of the claimants by using excuses of prevailing secrecy act.<sup>99</sup>

Freedom of information, though, known as a right, yet over exercise of this right can affect personal privacy, organisational secrecy, and safety.<sup>100</sup> Another noteworthy account of criticism of governmental transparency involves the high price of information.<sup>101</sup> National security, law enforcement, proprietary information, personal privacy are some substantial causes for not realising information by the authority.

### 3.2.2.3.1 ICT, e-Governance and Transparency

Social media and ICT, particularly e-governance contribute to making management transparent in a most effective and expedient way. Bertot, et al., state: “the social technologies available today are transformative in general and with regard to transparency and anti-corruption in particular. ... ICTs can, in fact, create an atmosphere of openness that identifies and stems corrupt behaviour.”<sup>102</sup> It allows citizens to voice whenever they want, and makes public participation easier, faster, and cost effective with increased numbers. It contributes to developing a close relationship between government and citizens, and allows citizens to track and monitor officials’ activities, which resulted in curbing corrupt behaviours.<sup>103</sup> ICT has proven itself for creating opportunity for citizens not only to gain information but also to engage interactively with authority that conforms to openness and accountability.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Ann M. Florini, "Increasing Transparency in Government," *International Journal on World Peace* 19, no. 3 (September 2002): 3.

<sup>98</sup> Michael Johnston, "Transparency," *Encyclopædia Britannica* (2014).

<sup>99</sup> George Thomas Kurian, ed., "Transparency," *The Encyclopedia of Political Science* (2011), 1687.

<sup>100</sup> George Thomas Kurian, ed., "Freedom of Information," *The Encyclopedia of Political Science* (2011), 623.

<sup>101</sup> Suzanne J. Piotrowski, and Gregg G. Van Ryzin, "Citizen Attitudes toward Transparency in Local Government," *The American Review of Public Administration* 37 (2007): 309.

<sup>102</sup> John C. Bertot, Paul T. Jaeger, and Justin M. Grimes, "Using ICTs to Create A Culture of Transparency: E-Government and Social Media As Openness and Anti-Corruption Tools for Societies," *Government Information Quarterly* 27 (2010): 269.

<sup>103</sup> Dong Chul Shim, and Tae Ho Eom, "E-Government and Anti-Corruption: Empirical Analysis of International Data," *International Journal of Public Administration* 31 (2008): 312.

<sup>104</sup> Vicente Pina, Lourdes Torres, and Sonia Royo, "Are ICTs Improving Transparency and Accountability in the EU Regional and Local Governments? An Empirical Study," *Public Administration* 85, no. 2, (2007): 464.

### 3.2.2.3.2 Transparency at Local Level

Transparency at local level has gained attention lately, as it is thought that transparency could address the challenges of sustainable development. It is a strategic entrance for local inhabitants into the space of decision makers for being catalysers of revolution in the governance of the locality.<sup>105</sup> Local government has two major advantages over national government to progress transparency, due to their smaller entity, and propinquity of authority to the citizens: first, adverse effects corruption and alienation i.e., poor governance are felt intensely at local level; second, transparency brings fundamental reforms at localities.<sup>106</sup> The effect of localization of transparency is stated in the following way:

Local government is better placed than national government to understand and act on the wishes of its citizens. Its scope for action against corruption is greater as it is more likely to be able to mobilise a finite number of stakeholders behind a common strategy for enhancing transparency and combating corruption. It has a crucial leadership role to play, which, if discharged successfully, will ensure continued and enhanced support from the citizenry. Local level successes can thus form the basis for implementing broader national reforms.<sup>107</sup>

Some institutional reforms are necessary to ensure transparency, like instituting complaint, and front offices, one-stop service centres, oversight committees, independent audit teams, independent anti-corruption agencies, and participatory budgets.<sup>108</sup> Pages identifies six indicators of transparency for local level, these include information on the bodies, relation with public, fiscal transparency, procurement of services, rural transparency and transparency on sustainable development.<sup>109</sup> Being the important component of governance, transparency has been tested with its components to identify how the UPs and the citizens deliver and make use of information respectively.

### 3.2.2.4 Accountability

The empty space between two elections remains high. Therefore, for accountable governance, citizens' views, ideas, preferences and opinions regarding activities of LGIs must be reflected in-between elections through other mechanisms. Blair mentions seven such mechanisms counting 'election': 'political parties,' 'civil society,' 'the media,' 'public meetings,' 'formal grievance procedures,' and 'opinion surveys.'<sup>110</sup> Traditionally, before the 1990s, public management approach has emphasised compliance with regulations, policies, and procedures. Post-1990s,

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<sup>105</sup> Transparency International, and UN-HABITAT, *Tools to Support Transparency in Local Governance* (Nairobi: TI, and UN-HABITAT, 2004), 2.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>109</sup> Luis Cembellin Pages, *Tools to Measure the Local Government / Transparency and Accountability* (Malaga: Universidad de Malaga, 2015), 8.

<sup>110</sup> Harry Blair, "Participation and Accountability at the Periphery:" 27.

witnesses a shift in public management, which gives birth to New Public Management (NPM). In this period, the form of accountability takes a shift, as performance is judged in the market strategy with level of customer's satisfaction, less cost, and efficiencies that is 'quasi-market accountability', which is represented through output measures like targets, benchmarks, and various proxies for user's choice.<sup>111</sup> However, NPM is criticized for disempowering citizens and producing specified outputs with focusing less on outcomes that community needs.<sup>112</sup> In response to this, during mid-2000, there develops new idea of Public Value Management, which creates value through joint action of citizens that is community engagement processes and participation of all stakeholders. It involves with contribution of an organisation to common good, and emphasises deliberation and choice, tackling of problems that the citizens care most about; stretches from service delivery to system maintenance.<sup>113</sup> Recently, with the development of 'New Governance Agenda' the concept of accountability transmigrates from its traditional public spheres to private and voluntary sectors, as globalization transforms the map of power base, and state and its institutions are not remained as the only decision makers.<sup>114</sup> There is seen an endeavour to formulate 'institutions of accountability in a non-hierarchical environment by mixing mechanisms of voice (traditional in the public sector) with those of exit (more appropriate to the market).' This process conforms to the emergence of network form of governance and notable increase of role of NGOs as an instrument of accountability.

To be accountable necessitated a person to give 'a count' of resources either money or properties, which had been left in his upkeep.<sup>115</sup> In a more specific sense, accountability involves with a person's or an institution's requirements to give an account for a set of duties to be done to an authority, which can produce rewards and punishment, and analyses, additionally, stress importance on the capacity of account holder to enforce 'sanctions or other remedies' on accountant.<sup>116</sup> Thus, accountability consists of two main actors: caretaker and reward provider or punisher, who in the process involved in a relationship. The involved actors maintain a 'dialogical

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<sup>111</sup> Dario Castiglione, "Accountability," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2012), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/accountability> (accessed August 19, 2017).

<sup>112</sup> City of Perth Authority, "Local Government Accountability and Transparency: Opening the Door on International Best Practice" (2017), 2, <http://sharetoshape.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Open-Government-Opening-the-Door-on-International-Best-Practice.pdf> (accessed August 21, 2017).

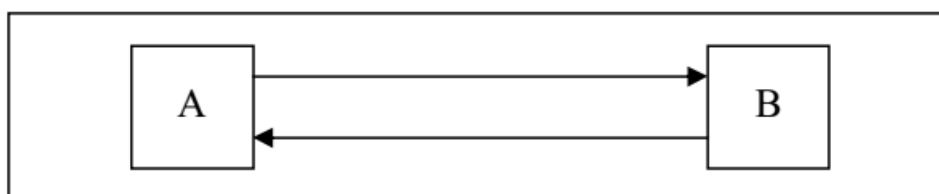
<sup>113</sup> Mark H. Moore, *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 52-56.

<sup>114</sup> Dario Castiglione, "Accountability," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2012), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/accountability> (accessed August 19, 2017).

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> Richard Mulgan, "Accountability Issues in the New Model of Governance," discussion paper no. 91, Australian National University (2002), 3.

relationship’, which promotes engagement of both parties in speak and ‘public debate’.<sup>117</sup> In that case, accountability can be termed as a relationship between ‘holders’ and ‘givers’ which reflects through ‘seeking of information by holders to investigate and scrutinizes the works of the givers.’<sup>118</sup> Schedler addresses these relationships as a link of two parties. He continues: “A is accountable to B when A is obliged to inform B about A's (past or future) actions and decisions, to justify them, and to suffer punishment in the case of eventual misconduct.”<sup>119</sup> This can be depicted in the following way:



**Figure 3. 4: Accountability Relationship: A Static Model.**<sup>120</sup>

The accountability relationships between givers and holders are ruled by various factors including legal frameworks, citizen engagements, how people understand the concept of accountability, and state-market relations. In this relation, citizens use a good number of formal and informal tactics to hold institutions accountable.

Schedler identifies two distinct dimensions of accountability: ‘answerability’ and ‘enforcement’.<sup>121</sup> Answerability consists of, Schedler maintains, two aspects, first one, transparency, involves with discharging of information as needed and second one, justification, is a set up through which the actors justify their deeds. Overall, the processes of answerability bring the actors to encounter the ‘nasty’, ‘uncomfortable’ questions. The other dimension, enforcement (or sanctions) involves with reward for expected behaviour and punishment or ‘imposed of negative sanctions’ for undue behaviour or breach of certain rules of behaviour.<sup>122</sup> Newell and Wheele state that accountability refers to duty bearer’s compulsion to accept the liability for their activities. It denotes the rights and responsibilities that lie in-between people and institutions [including governments, civil society, and market actors] that have an influence on their lives.<sup>123</sup> It cannot be separated from the ‘interlocked governance

<sup>117</sup> Andreas Schedler, “Conceptualizing Accountability,” in *The Self-Restraining State: Power and Accountability in New Democracies*, ed. Andreas Schedler, Larry Diamond, and Marc F. Plattner, 13-28 (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1999), 15.

<sup>118</sup> Richard Mulgan, “Accountability Issues in the New Model of Governance,” 3.

<sup>119</sup> Andreas Schedler, “Conceptualizing Accountability,” 17.

<sup>120</sup> Tammie O’Neil, Marta Foresti, and Alan Hudson, “Evaluation of Citizens’ Voice and Accountability: Review of the Literature and Donor Approaches,” DFID (2007), 3.

<sup>121</sup> Andreas Schedler, “Conceptualizing Accountability,” 14-15.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Peter Newell, and Joanna Wheele, “Making Accountability Count,” IDS policy briefing 33 (2006), 1.



wheel' of citizenship, participation, and accountability, where citizenship allows holding duty bearers accountable and the process of accountability employs citizens in participation.<sup>124</sup> Recent phenomenon of accountability includes first, opening up decision-making process for public scrutiny, second, introduction of direct control mechanisms such as ombudsman, recall of public officials, opinion surveys, and other forms of deliberative polling to exert citizens wishes; and third, initiating 'sticker standards of conduct' to curb corruption and control private interest in public affairs.<sup>125</sup>

At local level, accountability is enhanced with adoption of quasi-market accountability, and inclusion of other institutions of accountability as a form of social accountability involved with demand side.<sup>126</sup> Social accountability underlies engagement of citizens/communities and/or civil society organisations to act directly or indirectly commissioning an expansive array of mechanisms (excluding voting) for demanding accountability of elected and non-elected officials. The tactics for social accountability include citizen participation in public policy making, participatory budgeting, public expenditure tracking, citizen monitoring of public service delivery, citizen advisory boards, lobbying and advocacy campaigns, etc., which is supported by the efforts of government and other sectors like media, private sector, donors.<sup>127</sup>

#### **3.2.2.4.1 Aspects of Accountability and Types of Accountability**

Accountability can be categorized into two types based on 'relationship between the accountor and the accountee.'<sup>128</sup> Holding an authority responsible by their superiors can be termed as 'upward accountability', or 'hierarchical accountability', or 'vertical accountability', the reverse scenario i.e. the answerability to the subordinates, is mentioned as 'downward accountability', or 'horizontal accountability' or 'citizen accountability', or 'societal accountability'.<sup>129</sup> The provisions of horizontal accountability encompass good numbers of actors: peers, equals, journalists, stakeholders or concerns, which stay outside of pyramidal relationship within central government and executive agency. The actors involved with horizontal accountability usually take a passive stance, as they depend mostly on information, which is provided to them and the actors lack technical knowledge, and wait for the annual budgetary planning and control phase.<sup>130</sup> On the other hand, vertical accountability requires an

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<sup>124</sup> Rajesh Tandon, "Linking Citizenship, Participation and Accountability: A Perspective from PRIA," *Innovations in Civil Society* 1, no. 1 (July 2001), 7.

<sup>125</sup> Dario Castiglione, "Accountability."

<sup>126</sup> Michael Schaeffer, and Serdar Yilmaz, "Strengthening Local Government Budgeting and Accountability," policy research working paper, World Bank (2008), 3.

<sup>127</sup> Bhavna Sharma, "Voice, Accountability and Civic Engagement: A Conceptual Overview," Oslo Governance Centre, Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP (2008), 8.

<sup>128</sup> Thomas Schillemans, "Accountability in the Shadow of Hierarchy: The Horizontal Accountability of Agencies," *Public Organization Review*, 8(02) (2008): 178.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 176-180.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

active role, and supply of information to the government, inspection services, Ombudsman, Auditor-General and judges as demanded.<sup>131</sup> However, Krishna mentions horizontal accountability as the third category in addition to upward and downward accountability related with decentralization, and relates it with the context of partnership mechanisms as they engage in reciprocal accountability to each other by sharing information, responsibility and authority fairly.<sup>132</sup>

At local level four areas of accountability are seen, they involve with election (political), legal and moral compliance (Integrity & compliance), involving in governance for citizens (participation), recognising the priorities of communities, and ensuring access to information (performance).<sup>133</sup> Moreover, Kluvers and Tippet understand four critical components of accountability: information, values, enforcement, and relationships.<sup>134</sup>

#### **3.2.2.4.2 Voice and Accountability**

Ability and its multifarious recognised and unrecognised means of manifestation of the opinions of citizens, particularly of the marginalised groups, are involved with the voice mechanism. ‘Complaint, organized protest, lobbying and participation’ in the procedures of decision-making, provisions of services, or the stages of execution of the policy are deemed as voice.<sup>135</sup> Hirschman, the pioneer of the concept of ‘voice’, argues, generally, consumers possess two options: to exit or to voice, and to be loyal to have their demands fulfilled, i.e. to ensure accession to improved services and/or quality goods. However, for the public services, as it like in a monopolistic situation, the consumers’/users’ choices become narrowed as they have no exit option to obtain the services or goods in the absence of alternative providers, hence they are left with either a passive option of being loyal to the system and involve with a patriarchal relation for benefits, or adopt a coercive option to raise voice collectively for a forceful reforms and changes.<sup>136</sup> Being loyal to a patron-client relation to obtain welfares is not inclusive and sustainable. Thus, most of the people, specifically, the low profiled citizens are precluded of public services, and then there stay only one choice open for them that includes raising voices.

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Anirudh Krishna, "Partnerships between Local Governments and Community-Based Organisations: Exploring the Scope for Synergy," *Public Admin. Dev.* 23 (2003): 368.

<sup>133</sup> City of Perth Authority, "Local Government Accountability and Transparency," 10.

<sup>134</sup> Ron Kluvers, and John Tippet, "Mechanisms of Accountability in Local Government: An Exploratory Study," *International Journal of Business and Management* 5 (7) (2010): 46-53.

<sup>135</sup> Anne Marie Goetz, and John Gaventa, "Bringing Citizen Voice and Client Focus into Service Delivery," Working paper 138, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex (2001), 5-8.

<sup>136</sup> Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations and State* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1970), 21.

Thus, voice does not involve with only passive expression of opinions symbolically, rather it demands actions, rights, and entitlement from those in power. This demand-driven mechanism works better with the presence of strong civil society to manipulate policies at the centre, and to institute social accountability strategy to hold power holder responsible at the periphery. It is believed that if people stand up and raise demands against inactions of office bearers, then the power holders may change their approaches and pay heed to people's demands.<sup>137</sup> Voice amplifies the choice of the poor and develops a position in the power relation, assists in solving collective difficulties with coactions and coordination, and institutes a platform.<sup>138</sup>

The impact of voice can be shown as the following process:

**Voice → Accountability → Strengthened Local Governance.**

**Figure 3. 5: Impact of Voice.**<sup>139</sup>

However, Sharma remains concerns over the exploitation of the opportunity of voice mechanism by the influential within the civil society organizations, social platforms and other groups seemingly represent voice. Furthermore, she is also sceptical about the impact of voice, while the governments found irresponsive to citizens' needs and reluctant to support citizens' rights.<sup>140</sup> Thus, effective voice mechanism for institutionalising accountability requires well-informed citizens with the power to raise claims, and duty bearers to be agreeable and capacitated to respond to such claims. The study has made use of varied types of accountability, its relationship with voice, and other components of the same to examine capacity of citizens to hold officials accountable.

### **3.2.2.5 Fiscal Autonomy**

Local Government fiscal autonomy is derived from both the concept of fiscal federalism and fiscal decentralization. Pola argues for fiscal federalism or fiscal decentralization through providing following principles: the closer the decision making bodies to the people the more they work best, electorates make use of their voting rights according to their need of services, and 'the decision-making should be consistent with the goals of allocative efficiency, a target which is, in turn, strictly connected with the principle of economies of scale and the correction of benefits-costs

<sup>137</sup> Goran Hyden, "Strengthening Local Governance in Africa: Beyond Donor-Driven Approaches," ICLD, working paper no. 12 (2016): 14.

<sup>138</sup> Gopakumar Thampi, "Promoting and Embedding Voice Mechanisms for Accountable Governance: Concepts, Tools and Practice," IGS working paper series no. 6 (2013), 11.

<sup>139</sup> Idem., "Enhancing Accountability at the Cutting Edges," working paper, Governance Knowledge Centre, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Government of India (2011), 1-6.

<sup>140</sup> Bhavna Sharma, *Voice, Accountability and Civic Engagement: A Conceptual Overview* (Oslo: Overseas Development Institute, 2008), 3-5.

spillovers.<sup>141</sup> Fiscal federalism is a ‘general normative framework,’ or ‘constitutional arrangements,’ or ‘design of fiscal constitutions,’ for assigning spending responsibilities, and capacities to apply financial mechanisms including revenue raising power, intergovernmental transfers, etc. to accomplish the responsibilities by different layers of government for just and effective delivery of public services, and for correction of horizontal and vertical imbalances.<sup>142</sup> On the other hand, fiscal decentralization includes institutionalization of legal and formal atmosphere, transfer of functions to local governments, collection of own source revenues by tiers of government, fixation of intergovernmental fund transfers, access to development capital by sub-central government, estimation and watch over of fiscal streams of tiers of government.<sup>143</sup> De Mello justifies fiscal decentralization for the involvement of the process with the consideration of local differences, extraction of local likings inexpensively, promotion of accountability by bringing expenditure responsibilities closer to revenue sources, rationalization of public sector actions, stimulation of local growth and poverty alleviation.<sup>144</sup> Fiscal decentralization involves the important idea of fiscal autonomy, though the expenditure stakes and revenue stakes of lower tiers of government, in accordance with central government, are small.<sup>145</sup>

In general sense, fiscal autonomy includes the capacity and power of local bodies to raise revenue to bear their expenditures.<sup>146</sup> It requires both legal stipulation and favourable political economy narratives of the government.<sup>147</sup> Fiscal autonomy includes the “freedom to impose local taxation, generate revenue within its assigned sources, allocate its financial and material resources, determine and authorize its annual budgets without external interference,”<sup>148</sup> Gomes asserts that the arrangement of fiscal autonomy involves with availability of financial resources for LGIs actions,

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<sup>141</sup> Giancarlo Pola, “Introduction,” in *Principles and Practices of Fiscal Autonomy: Experiences, Debates and Prospects*, 1-9, ed. Giancarlo Pola (London: Routledge, 2016), 1.

<sup>142</sup> Wallace E. Oates, “An Essay on Fiscal federalism,” *Journal of economic Literature* 37(3) (1999):1120-21; Zemenu Yesigat, “Subnational Fiscal Autonomy in a Developmental State: The Case of Ethiopia,” *Beijing Law Review* 7 (2016): 44; Giancarlo Pola, “Introduction,” 1.

<sup>143</sup> Paul Smoke, “Fiscal Decentralization in East and Southern Africa: A Selective Review of Experience and Thoughts on Moving Forward,” paper prepared for conference on Fiscal Decentralization, IMF, Washington, DC, Nov. 20-21, 2000, 3; Junaid Ahmad et al., “Decentralization and Services Delivery,” World Bank policy research paper 3603 (2005), 6.

<sup>144</sup> Luiz R. De Mello Jr., “Fiscal Decentralization and Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations: A Cross-Country Analysis,” *World Development* 28, no. 2 (2000): 365.

<sup>145</sup> Nobuo Akai, and Masayo Sakata, “Fiscal Decentralization Contributes to Economic Growth: Evidence from State-level Cross-section Data for the United States,” *Journal of Urban Economics* 52 (2002): 96; Roy W. Bahl, and Johannes F. Linn, *Urban Public Finance in Developing Countries* (Oxford: Published for the World Bank by Oxford University Press, 1992), 386.

<sup>146</sup> Zemenu Yesigat, “Subnational Fiscal Autonomy in a Developmental State: The Case of Ethiopia,” *Beijing Law Review* 7 (2016): 45.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>148</sup> Jude C. Okafor, “Local Government Financial Autonomy in Nigeria: The State Joint Local Government Account,” *Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance* 6 (2010): 126.

and provides sub-central government choices over the provision of funds, and public policies.<sup>149</sup> Slake's affirmation of the concept involves with reliance of LGIs on locally raised revenues instead of transferred funds, and setting of their individual tax rates.<sup>150</sup> Blöchliger and Rabesona term the process as 'tax autonomy' and according to their realization it incorporates 'sub-central government's right to introduce or to abolish a tax, to set tax rates, to define the tax base, or to grant tax allowances or reliefs to individuals and firms.'<sup>151</sup> Specifically, a local tax autonomy in its true essence allows sub-national bodies the freedom whether to levy tax or not, regulate exact tax base and rates, manage (assessment, collection and enforcement) the tax, hold collected revenue, and expend the amassed resources to fulfill their needs.<sup>152</sup>

Most importantly, a weak fiscal structure lessens constituents' interests in and demand for better service provisions.<sup>153</sup> Empirical evidence shows that positive change in fiscal autonomy resulted in improved financial performance.<sup>154</sup> In a condition where fiscal autonomy exists taxpayers enjoy accessibility to decision-making process regarding tax-assessment, become aware of public service outcomes and that improve answerability and efficacy in public sector.<sup>155</sup> However, in some cases higher level of decentralization and fiscal autonomy can be harmful to development and adeptness due to weakening of balance and macroeconomic strategy.<sup>156</sup> Moreover, the process may hurt by embezzlement, inefficient administration of expenditure, uncoordinated fiscal approach.<sup>157</sup>

Fiscal autonomy measurement in this research, based on the above reviews, includes two major indicators: Revenue Autonomy and Expenditure Autonomy. For revenue autonomy the ratio of own internal revenue (annual taxes, user fees, certificate and

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<sup>149</sup> Sandra Gomes, "Fiscal Powers to Subnational Governments: Reassessing the Concept of Fiscal Autonomy," *Regional and Federal Studies* 22:4 (2012): 387.

<sup>150</sup> Enid Slake, "How Much Local Fiscal Autonomy Do Cities Have? A Comparison of Eight Cities around the World," Institute of Municipal Finance and Governance (IMFG) Perspective no. 19/2017 (July 2017), A3.

<sup>151</sup> Hansjörg Blöchliger, and Josette Rabesona, *The Fiscal Autonomy of Sub-Central Governments: An Update*, OECD Network on Fiscal Relations across Levels of Government, no. 9 (Paris: OECD, 2009), 3.

<sup>152</sup> Enid Slake, "How Much Local Fiscal Autonomy Do Cities Have?" 2-3; Richard M. Bird, *Are There Trends in Local Finance? A Cautionary Note on Comparative Studies and Normative Models of Local Government Finance* (Toronto: Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance, 2011); Hansjörg Blöchliger, and Josette Rabesona, *The Fiscal Autonomy of Sub-Central Governments: An Update*, OECD Network on Fiscal Relations across Levels of Government, no. 9 (Paris: OECD, 2009), 3.

<sup>153</sup> Benny Geysa, Friedrich Heinemann, and Alexander Kalb, "Voter Involvement, Fiscal Autonomy and Public Sector Efficiency: Evidence from German Municipalities," *abstract*, Centre for European Economic Research Discussion Paper no. 08-024 (April 2008), vi.

<sup>154</sup> James Paul Alfred Renyaan, et al., "Effect of Fiscal Autonomy and Economic Growth on Local Financial Performance: A Study on Local Government of Papua Province," *International Journal of Business and Management Invention* 1:1 (2012): 20.

<sup>155</sup> Enid Slake, "How Much Local Fiscal Autonomy Do Cities Have?" A3.

<sup>156</sup> Wallace E. Oates, "Towards a Second-generation Theory of Fiscal Federalism," *International Tax and Public Finance* 12 (2005): 351.

<sup>157</sup> Muhammad Zahir Faridi, and Raima Nazar, "Impact of Fiscal Autonomy on Poverty in Pakistan," *Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences* 7(1) (2013): 142.

license fees, income generated from fixed/current assets, income accruing from the sale of both assets, and income from penalties and fines, etc.) over total revenue, and the ratio of non-internal (earmarked and non-earmarked grants, performance grants, mandatory tax-sharing, redistributive tax-sharing, donor grants, etc.) over total revenue have been calculated to draw an inference. The other indicator, expenditure autonomy has been calculated by using the ratio of total own revenue and total expenditure, and the description about autonomous fund.<sup>158</sup>

### 3.2.2.6 Gender Mainstreaming

Half of the population of the globe are women and keeping them out of mainstream development process will be detrimental to the balanced growth. Accordingly, the role of women is being promoted and 'women's values' are being integrated into the mainline development course, and the sphere of their activities has been extended both in public and private domains.<sup>159</sup> This process leads to gender mainstreaming, which has targeted to uphold and achieve gender equality through increasing the effectiveness of the core policies with gendered perspective.<sup>160</sup> Gender Mainstreaming (GM), discussed at the Fourth World Conference in Beijing and included in the afterward Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (United Nations 1995) to incorporate gender perspective in every aspect of life, particularly, in development activities. GM is not an end itself; rather it is a process, or strategy to achieve the target of gender equality.<sup>161</sup> "Achieving gender equality requires inspiring and mobilising social change."<sup>162</sup> Thus, while measuring the GM, people actually, incline to evaluate the advancement in implementation, rather than the tangible results.<sup>163</sup>

Various forms of narratives of GM are found in the literature, and they include multidimensional issues into GM concept from policy formulation to implementation. Rao, and Kelleher grounding GM in feminist theoretical frameworks mention that GM

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<sup>158</sup> Nobuo Akai, and Masayo Sakata, "Fiscal Decentralization Contributes to Economic Growth: Evidence from State-level Cross-section Data for the United States" *Journal of Urban Economics* 52 (2002): 93–108; Yannis Psycharis, Maria Zoi, and Stavroula Iliopoulou, "Decentralization and Local Government Fiscal Autonomy: Evidence from the Greek Municipalities," *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 34 (2016): 266; Sandra Gomes, "Fiscal Powers to Subnational Governments: Reassessing the Concept of Fiscal Autonomy," *Regional and Federal Studies* 22:4 (2012): 390; Hansjörg Blöchliger, "Fiscal Autonomy of Sub-central Governments," OECD Working Paper no. 2 (2006), 21, 26.

<sup>159</sup> Council of Europe, *Gender Mainstreaming: Conceptual Framework, Methodology and Presentation of Good Practices*, final report of activities of the group of specialists on mainstreaming (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1998), 12–13.

<sup>160</sup> Sylvia Walby, "Gender Mainstreaming: Productive Tensions in Theory and Practice," *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society* 12, no. 3 (2005): 321.

<sup>161</sup> Maretha de Waal, "Evaluating Gender Mainstreaming in Development Projects," *Development in Practice* 16, no. 2 (April 2006): 209.

<sup>162</sup> Annalise Moser, *Gender and Indicators: Overview Report* (Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, 2007), 5.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

becomes favourable to ‘Femocrats’ and ‘gender activist’ for its transformative potentiality.<sup>164</sup> Contrarily, other thinkers find that gender issue is not involved exclusively with women, rather gender relation are scrutinised as relationship between women and men.<sup>165</sup> True asked for dealing thoughtfully with and rectification of firmly established and large looming imbalance between male and female in the society.<sup>166</sup> Thus, it can be termed as ‘deliberate’ and ‘planned’ process intended to change the fixed nature of ‘gender arrangement’ in the society as a whole.<sup>167</sup> On the other hand, labelling it as distinct approach, Daly accepts that GM ‘seeks to institutionalize equality by embedding gender-sensitive practices and norms’ through emphasising more on inequality producing system, and norms ‘in the structures, process, and environment of public policy.’<sup>168</sup> The discussion on definition on GM remains incomplete without presenting the comprehensive argument of ECOSOC; it consents GM as:

the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.<sup>169</sup>

This definition, though, fails to recognize the agent who performs the functions to bring change and to institutionalize the ultimate target of gender equality, yet it has been taken for this study as it covers all other aspects of GM. In brief, GM challenges the male biasness of the society to enable both men and women to have equal opportunity to impact, participate in, and take advantages from development courses and practices.

Council of Europe outlines several important enabling conditions with a view to facilitating GM: political will, specific gender equality policy, statistics, comprehensive knowledge of gender relations, knowledge of the administration, necessary funds and human resources, participation of women in political and public life and in decision-making processes.<sup>170</sup> Moreover, Meentzen identifies a number of significant tools employable for GM; these tools are gender analysis, specific measures for the promotion of women, advancement plans for women/gender equality

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<sup>164</sup> Aruna Rao, and David Kelleher, “Is There Life after Gender Mainstreaming?” *Gender and Development* 13:2 (July 2005): 59.

<sup>165</sup> Angelika Blickhäuser, and Henning von Barga, “Gender Toolbox, Fit for Gender Mainstreaming” (2007), 5.

<sup>166</sup> Jacqui True, "Translation Networks and Policy Diffusion: The Case of Gender Mainstreaming," *International Studies Quarterly* 45 (2001): 28.

<sup>167</sup> Raewyn W. Connell, *Gender* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), 54.

<sup>168</sup> Mary Daly, "Gender Mainstreaming in Theory and Practice," *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society* 12, no. 3 (2005): 435.

<sup>169</sup> UN, *Gender Mainstreaming: An Overview* (New York: United Nations, 2002), 1.

<sup>170</sup> Council of Europe, *Gender Mainstreaming: Conceptual Framework*, 23-25.

plans, information and awareness raising of men, and mainstreaming women and gender on institutional, state and socio-political level gender-budget.<sup>171</sup> Thus, it means that the GM issues are no longer the responsibility of individual designated officers or the women affairs offices, rather all the expert offices have been designed to scale up the process. However, the transformation process is difficult as organisations are gendered at the deep, and it hides under the cover of power, as well as lessen the ability of women to challenge the deeply gendered institutions.<sup>172</sup> Four inter-related power factors impede the advancement of women towards GM: political access, accountability systems, cultural systems, cognitive structures.<sup>173</sup> Therefore, bringing change or transformation in individual-level involving both sexes, society level as a whole, and both formal and informal spheres are keys to generate impacts of GM.

Wall proposes an evaluation framework for GM, and includes five objectives of GM: Gender parity, gender equality, gender equity, empowerment, and transformation to analyse the success of gender perspective, which form the base of evaluation.<sup>174</sup> However, for this study two components of the framework have been included: gender equality, and empowerment. Firstly, gender equality (equal access, control, opportunities, rewards, and benefits for women and men) refers to developing level playing field by removing barriers to offering same opportunities for women as men possess, including the ability to participate in public sphere.<sup>175</sup> The World Bank view of gender equality includes ‘equality under the law, equality of opportunity, rewards, and resources, and equality of voice to influence and contribute to the development process.’<sup>176</sup> Secondly, empowerment (cognitive, behavioural, and effective changes to increase levels of equality and empowerment of women in relation to men) changes power relation of gender through raising awareness of women’s subordination and capacitating them to encounter it.<sup>177</sup>

### 3.3 NGO and Related Issues

NGOs stand on the Schumacherian values that place people most importantly and eventually in the centre of source of any assets whatsoever.<sup>178</sup> Therefore, NGOs’ major

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<sup>171</sup> Angelika Blickhäuser, and Henning von Bargen, “Gender Toolbox,” 4.

<sup>172</sup> Aruna Rao, and David Kelleher, “Is There Life after Gender Mainstreaming?” *Gender and Development* 13:2 (July 2005): 64.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Maretha de Waal, “Evaluating Gender Mainstreaming in Development Projects,” 211.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>176</sup> World Bank, *Engendering Development: Through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources, and Voice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 2-3.

<sup>177</sup> Hazel Reeves, and Sally Baden, *Gender and Development: Concepts and Definitions*, Bridge Report (Brighton: Institute for Development Studies, 2000), 9.

<sup>178</sup> Ernst Friedrich Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as If People Mattered* (London: Blond & Briggs, 1973), 123.



development initiatives spotlighted people around the globe. NGOs facilitate people in organizing themselves for self-defence, self-help, self-reliance and development.<sup>179</sup> State's incompetence, subjugation, and pervasive corruption, as well as unwillingness of profit-oriented actors to alleviate poverty, empower the marginalised, or even to employ resources constructively- necessitate reconsideration of development approach.<sup>180</sup> Therefore, these organisations are found involved with various sectors: empowerment of the poor, poverty eradication and efficacy, green and sustainable development, surrogating for community voice, strengthening communities and governance. However, the roles of NGOs can be categorised into three main components, these are implementer, catalyst, and partner.<sup>181</sup>

### 3.3.1 NGOs' Roles in Political Affairs

'NGOs cannot simply avoid politics or leave it in the hands of traditional politicians,'<sup>182</sup> is a quote from Abad, to describe the role of the Pilipino NGOs regarding political issues. This, however, appropriate not only for the Philippines but also for other parts of the developing world like South Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Clark asserts that through extensive 'proliferation all over the developing world has made NGOs important political actors,'<sup>183</sup> and NGOs are being focused, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, for their diversified roles and activities with swelling power and growing significance.<sup>184</sup> NGOs, though, are not recognised apparently as political actors, yet their political affiliation, influence, and power entice researchers, policymakers, and other political actors as well. NGOs political involvement springs out based on various reasons including weak political institutions (Philippines), lack of political penetration by marginalised groups (India), hegemonic role of formal institution, lack of democratic institutionalisation (Bangladesh), etc.<sup>185</sup> Second generation, and most third generation NGOs play roles as catalysts and enhance focus on 'conscientization' and mobilisation in dealing with political conflict straight through reinforcing social movement based on specific issues.<sup>186</sup> NGOs involvement in politics range from influencing policymaking and legislation, conducting dialogue

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<sup>179</sup> Samiul Hasan, "Voluntarism and Rural Development in Bangladesh," *Asian Journal of Public Administration* 15 (1), (1993): 82-101.

<sup>180</sup> John Farrington, and Anthony Bebbington, eds., *Reluctant Partners? Non-Governmental Organizations, the State and Sustainable Agricultural Development* (London: Routledge, 1993), 2.

<sup>181</sup> David Lewis, *Encyclopaedia of Civil Society*, sv., "Nongovernmental Organization, Definition and History" (2009).

<sup>182</sup> Florencio Abad, "People's Participation in Governance: Limits and Possibilities – The Philippine Case," in *Participation in Government: The People's Right*, ed. E. Garcia, J. Macuja II, and B. Tolosa Jr. (Quezon: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1993), 159.

<sup>183</sup> Gerard Clarke, "Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Politics in the Developing World," *Political Studies* XLVI (1998): 52.

<sup>184</sup> David Lewis, *Encyclopaedia of Civil Society*.

<sup>185</sup> Gerard Clarke, "Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Politics in the Developing World," 41.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

on minimum wage, feudalism, bonded labour, restructuring and in some cases duplicating of political parties (Chile), local government actor (Philippines), challenging power elite (Indonesia), to act as virtually parallel state to reach poor (Bangladesh).<sup>187</sup>

NGOs also play critical role in overturning authoritarian regime, organising mass upsurge, promoting interest of the western world, democratisation, and conserving status-quo in the political arena when needed.<sup>188</sup> Moreover, NGOs' decision sometimes swerves with the influence of business interests, religious groups, foreign donors (governmental, nongovernmental or multilateral), underground or insurgent movements, political parties, partner peoples' organisations and governments.<sup>189</sup> Even in some cases, political elites run inquest of legitimacy from 'development partners' undermining their own people.<sup>190</sup>

The pundits remain sceptical about the success of NGOs in managing vast and spread inequality in the sector of economy and politics due to their non-political roots and strategies,<sup>191</sup> and need of expertise to substitute policy formulation, conduction of advocacy, as well as preparedness to take the challenge of meeting 'vested interest and the establishment.'<sup>192</sup> In addition, NGOs have to sustain criticism and accusation of overt involvement in politics, as government has a nervous feeling about NGOs' involvement in politics due to fear of destabilisation of government, uprising, and interestingly, leftist political groups find NGOs working against social revolution through enhancing existing state of affairs.<sup>193</sup> Moreover, NGOs may lose their credibility; and engaging in formal politics let them lose their expertise and believe to be trapped in the dirty politics of the developing world.

In Bangladesh, NGOs' roles have been directed mostly to service deliveries, microcredit, and development activity orientation through carrying out advocacy, awareness raising for accessing to the rights, voter education, empowerment, and capacity building to be involved in political sphere. This phenomenon turns into overt political affairs in the decade of 1990 and afterwards through conduction of advocacy and exercise of influence for policy change with the addition of good governance

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 43-45.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 45-51.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>190</sup> Issa G. Shivji, *Silences in NGO Discourse: The Role and Future of NGOs in Africa* (Nairobi: Fahamu, 2007), 31.

<sup>191</sup> Nicola Banks, David Hulme, and Michael Edwards, "NGOs, States, and Donors Revisited: Still Too Close for Comfort?" *World Development* 66 (2015): 715.; Anil Bhatt, "Asian NGOs in Development: Their Role and Impact," in *Government-NGO Relations in Asia: Prospects and Challenges for People Centred Development*, ed. Noeleen Heyzer, James V. Riker, and Antonio B. Quizon, 77-90 (London: Macmillan Press, 1995), 86.

<sup>192</sup> Anil Bhatt, "Asian NGOs in Development: Their Role and Impact," 86.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 87.

agenda.<sup>194</sup> Giant NGOs like Grameen Bank, and Proshika accompanying with different organisations, political groups, media, and trade unions enter into the political arena. Proshika, additionally, includes elements through establishment of Institute for Development Policy Analysis and Advocacy (IDPAA) at the beginning of the 1990s with a view to arranging political, social and governmental campaigns.<sup>195</sup> NGOs came under sheer criticism for their role in the involuntary downfall of Ershad in 1990.<sup>196</sup> Later in 1993, NGOs equivocally disclose their supports towards ‘pro-democracy movement’. Before the parliamentary election in 1996, NGOs moved forward with the intention of monitoring election, which generated ‘widespread suspicion’, and that brought some critical issues in front, such as whether they were working on behalf of any interest, using their funds and vote banks, and promoting any candidate.<sup>197</sup> Thus, in one polar, NGOs propelling the course of development in Bangladesh, and in other polar, the activities of NGOs go astray against the interest of communities.

### 3.3.2 Government-NGO Relation in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh the relation of GO-NGO takes manifolds, some of them have been discussed briefly. Triple mode of GO-NGO relation: supplementary, complementary, and adversarial can be observed in Bangladesh during the phenomenal change in the history of independent Bangladesh. After the hit of super cyclone in 1970, and subsequent nine-month long liberation war in 1971, NGOs storm into the country with humanitarian aids, particularly with relief supply, and rehabilitation programmes to supplement the government to mitigate pervasive poverty, as the authority at that time was incapable of fulfilling the requirements of heavily suffered people. During the 1980s, NGOs move from service delivery to development activities to readdress social needs with a view to complementing government. However, NGOs develop adversarial relationship with government when the authority brings NGOs in the legal framework, starts collaborating with the NGOs, and becomes aware of NGOs’ involvement in politics, and their profit motives, control corruption and implement conformity to law. At times the relation becomes fragile as NGOs claim the government makes undue late (red tapism) approving the proposed projects, and the control of inflow of funds, on the other hand, government often hold that NGOs make delay with the supply of necessary documents.<sup>198</sup> This process of complaining one

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<sup>194</sup> Pranab Kumar Panday, and Shelley Feldman, “Mainstreaming Gender in Politics in Bangladesh: Role of NGOs,” *Asian Journal of Political Science* 23:3 (2015): 308.

<sup>195</sup> David Lewis, “On the Difficulty of Studying ‘Civil Society’: Reflections on NGOs, State and Democracy in Bangladesh,” *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 38(3) (2004): 310.

<sup>196</sup> Sarah C. White, “NGOs, Civil Society, and the State in Bangladesh: The Politics of Representing the Poor,” *Development and Change* 30 (1999): 310.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid..

<sup>198</sup> Richard Batley, “Structures and Strategies in Relationships between Non-Government Service Providers and Governments,” *Public Administration and Development* 31 (2011): 309.

against other makes the relation hostile. Thus, it can be concluded that the relation between GO-NGO mixes with conflict and cooperation.

### 3.4 GO-NGO Collaboration and its Varied Aspects

NGOs getting spaces in the development processes with the inception of 'New Governance Agenda', which provides preference of private sector over the public sector.<sup>199</sup> This preference motivates NGOs to involve with poverty reduction to service delivery, supporting democratic movement to upholding human rights, and advocacy to collaborative governance. This section deals with various aspects of GO-NGO collaboration briefly, after discussing theoretical perspective of collaboration. Collaboration and partnership, though different term, yet they take a common language of 'breaking down barriers,' and 'working together.'<sup>200</sup> Thus, collaboration and partnership, in this section have been used interchangeably.

#### 3.4.1 Collaboration as Concept

Collaboration is an ambiguous term, which refers to different things to different people. In its simplest definition collaboration talks about 'relationship between two entities.'<sup>201</sup> It is known by many terms, which include 'joint ventures, consolidations, networks, partnerships, coalitions, collaboratives, alliances, consortiums, associations, conglomerates, councils, task forces, and groups' to many in literature.<sup>202</sup> Due to this variation and complexity actors in collaboration, most of the time, fail to perceive 'what collaboration looks and feels like.'<sup>203</sup> Groups, organisations, individuals, and varied combination of such units can be partners in collaboration. Gray suggests collaboration as "the pooling of appreciations and/or tangible resources, e.g. information, money, labour etc., by two or more stakeholders, to solve a set of problems which neither can solve individually."<sup>204</sup> She claimed that through pluralistic approach of partners, efforts could be ended in such a result, which surpasses the ability of any single companion of collaboration. Similarly, Sink validates that the outcomes of collaboration go beyond the individual capacity.<sup>205</sup> Gazley following her predecessors includes that "collaborations require voluntary, autonomous membership (partners retain their independent decision- making powers

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<sup>199</sup> James Copestake, "NGO-State Collaboration and the New Policy Agenda the Case of Subsidized Credit," *Public Administration and Development* 16 (1996): 28.

<sup>200</sup> Ros Carnwell, and Julian Buchanan, *Effective Practice in Health, Social Care and Criminal Justice A Partnership Approach*, 2nd ed. (Berkshire: Open University Press, 2009), 10.

<sup>201</sup> Rebecca Gajda, "Utilizing Collaboration Theory to Evaluate Strategic Alliances," *American Journal of Evaluation* 25, no. 1 (2004): 68.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>204</sup> Barbara Gray, "Conditions Facilitating Interorganizational Collaboration," *Human Relations*, 38 (10) (1985): 912.

<sup>205</sup> D. W. Sink, "Interorganizational Collaboration," in *The International Encyclopedia of Public Policy and Administration*, ed. Jay M. Shafritz, 1188–1191 (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 1188.

even when they agree to some common rules), and they have some transformational purpose or desire to increase systemic capacity by tapping shared resources.”<sup>206</sup> In collaboration, partners are treated equally in achieving the common targets of pressing needs keeping opportunity for a wide range of participation in community level, and the shared goals otherwise are not achievable through the efforts of any of them separately.<sup>207</sup> Henneman et al. make collaboration commensurate with ‘a bond, union or partnership, characterised by mutual goals and commitments,’ based on knowledge and expertise.<sup>208</sup> Similarly, Hudson et al. echo with the same voice as they identify ‘joint working’ as the prime feature of collaboration filled with mutual respect and trust, which is the gesture of working together to involve in official, organised collective working, together with combined evaluation, delivery of services, and commissioning.<sup>209</sup> They, furthermore, use a continuum to show the position of collaboration as given below:



**Figure 3. 6: Continuum of Collaboration.**<sup>210</sup>

The continuum starts at isolation, when there is no relationship exist between actors, and ends at integration, which shows merge of actors into one identity. Skelcher asserts that collaboration came to prominence due to resource constraints and complexity of problems that necessitate multi-actors’ involvement.<sup>211</sup> Successful collaboration includes ‘a common purpose, strong insistence on a whole systems approach, shared power, and service user’s perspective to stimulate change.’<sup>212</sup> Moreover, Mani identifies three steps of collaboration: ‘initiation’, ‘consolidation’, and ‘complementarity’. Initiation involves with meeting of partners to concentrate on a particular issue; consolidation concerns with exacting rules and regulations for determining the roles and responsibilities in partnership; and at complementarity stage

<sup>206</sup> Beth Gazley, “Inter-sectoral Collaboration and the Motivation to Collaborate: Toward an Integrated Theory,” in *Big Ideas in Collaborative Public Management*, ed. Lisa Blomgren Bingham, and Rosemary O’Leary, 36–54 (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2008), 42.

<sup>207</sup> Aaron Bisno, “The Difference between Partnerships and Collaboration” (January 2013), <http://ejewishphilanthropy.com/the-difference-between-partnerships-and-collaboration/> (accessed October 8, 2017).

<sup>208</sup> Elizabeth A Henneman, Jan. L. Lee, and Joan I Cohen, “Collaboration: A Concept Analysis,” *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 21: 1 (1995): 104.

<sup>209</sup> Bob Hudson, Mark Exworthy, and Stephen Peckham, *The Integration of Localised and Collaborative Purchasing: A Review of the Literature and Framework for Analysis* (Leeds and Southampton: Nuffield Institute for Health, and Institute for Health Policy Studies, University of Southampton, 1998); and Ros Carnwell, and Julian Buchanan, *Effective Practice in Health, Social Care and Criminal Justice A Partnership Approach*, 2nd ed. (Berkshire: Open University Press, 2009), 14.

<sup>210</sup> Hudson et al., *The Integration of Localised and Collaborative Purchasing: a Review of the Literature and Framework for Analysis* (1998).

<sup>211</sup> Chirs Skelcher, “Collaboration,” in *International Encyclopedia of Political Science*, ed. Bertrand Badie, Dirk Berg-Schlusser, and Leonardo Morlino, 298-299 (Thousands Oaks: Sage Publication: 2011), 298.

<sup>212</sup> Emily Miles, with William Trott, “Collaborative Working: How Publicly Funded Services Can Take a Whole Systems Approach,” Institute for Government (2011), 6.

partners in collaboration calls for their voice and negotiating capability in strategy and decision-making practice.<sup>213</sup>

Collaboration does not conform to the views that partners should compromise on principles; for example, one partner can collaborate in a particular programme but can be in an argumentative relation on other issues.<sup>214</sup> A potential collaboration should make sure ‘articulated goals’, ‘mechanisms to measure’, and ‘monitor performance’ by setting down the responsibilities of the partners clearly.<sup>215</sup> Farrington delineates collaboration as formalisation of inter-dependence of partners for successful completion of their activities partly, if not wholly.<sup>216</sup> Collaboration, therefore, involves with joint working for shared goals. It is believed that in collaboration, partners can attain the targets, which seems unlikely to achieve with the efforts of single actors.

Morris et al. explained collaboration process through the lens of system theory. The collaborative process, resources, and governance functioned as inputs. The outputs include situational variables, and plans, programmes, decisions, reports, and partnerships as the intermediated outputs and change in behaviour, and physical environment as long-term outputs. Both midterm and long-term outcomes generate social capital, and Long-term outcomes also generate feedback to situational variables.<sup>217</sup>

### 3.4.2 GO-NGO Collaboration

Neither the states nor the market succeeded to achieve the targets of better quality of life of the unprivileged, fulfilling their basic needs, reducing relative inequality and extreme penury as they encountered variety of causes.<sup>218</sup> The apparent failure of ‘trickled down’ mechanism, NGOs come forward with bottom-up approach to involve the poor in income generating and empowering activities to develop their self.<sup>219</sup> Brown, and Korten argue that both limitations of government and recognition of NGOs push them forward to collaborate through using their recognised capacities to

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<sup>213</sup> Devyani Mani, “Evolution of Partnerships for Urban Poverty Alleviation,” UNCRD (2001): 2.

<sup>214</sup> Mark Robinson, “Democracy, Participation, and Public Policy: The Politics of Institutional Design,” in *The Democratic Developmental State: Politics and Institutional Design*, ed. Mark Robinson and Gordon White (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 4.

<sup>215</sup> USAID, *Annual Report, 1997* (Washington: USAID: 1997), 1.

<sup>216</sup> John Farrington, et al., *Reluctant Partners? Non-Governmental Organizations, the State and Sustainable Agricultural Development* (London: Routledge, 1993), 127.

<sup>217</sup> John Charles Morris et al., *The Case For Grassroots Collaboration: Social Capital and Ecosystem Restoration at the Local Level* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013); and Christopher M. Williams, Connie Merriman, and John C. Morris, “A Life-Cycle Model of Collaboration,” in *Advancing Collaborative Theory: Models, Typologies, and Evidence*, John C. Morris, and Katrina Miller-Stevens ed., 175-196 (New York: Routledge, 2016), 179.

<sup>218</sup> Afroza Begum, *Government-NGO Interface in Development Management: Experiences of Selected Collaboration Models in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: A H Development House, 2008), 1.

<sup>219</sup> Samuel Paul, “Nongovernmental Organizations and the World Bank: An Overview,” in *Nongovernmental Organizations and the World Bank: Cooperation for Development*, ed. Samuel Paul, and Arturo Israel, 1-19 (Washington: World Bank, 1991), 2.

deal with complex issues of development.<sup>220</sup> Nowadays, the function of the NGOs has been welcomed, as it has been deemed that the complexities faced by the government in supplying its services can be appeased by intimate interaction with the NGOs.<sup>221</sup> NGOs have also struggled with their scarcity of knowledge, information, resources and penetration in the society to execute their delivery of services. Therefore, GO-NGO collaboration using ‘comparative advantage’ in developing countries become needful as the government act with its authority and policy.

GO-NGO collaboration emerges as strong mechanism to reach the marginalised, who once remain hard to reach by government. The successful collaboration between these two important sectors could take along synergy in the field of development. Employing, ‘different but complementary strengths,’ of GOs and NGOs could accelerate the course of poverty reduction, people’s participation in decision-making, ensuring accountability and transparency of local government, etc. However, Lewis warns against the close relationship between government and NGO sector, as such intimacy could fell NGOs in identity crisis.<sup>222</sup> For better collaboration, a suitable socio-politico environment is essential. Plural democratic society creates more opportunities for NGOs to play a catalytic role in a state for development work or service delivery.<sup>223</sup>

#### **3.4.2.1 Local Government-NGO Collaboration**

With inadequate ‘resources, jurisdiction, imagination, entrepreneurial spirit, courage, time,’ etc. local government is conducting their activities. NGOs should extend their intervention to motivate and capacitate people to claim their entitlements from public resources, and enable local government to realise people’s necessities, abilities, and aspirations. However, NGOs involvement with service delivery may weaken local government and may orient local people to hope a smaller amount from their government. There is a chance that NGOs can hamper the development process through damaging citizens and their government mutual understanding.<sup>224</sup> These, insufficiencies of local government, and complexities regarding involvement of NGOs open the corridor for a potential local government-NGO collaboration to capacitate both citizens and their government for a sustainable development, and spread their ‘power and capacities.’

Both decentralisation and proliferation of NGOs create synergy for advancing decentralisation in two ways: first, ‘push down’ of power from the national to local

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<sup>220</sup> David L. Brown, and David C. Korten, "Working More Effectively with Nongovernmental Organizations," in *Nongovernmental Organizations and the World Bank: Cooperation for Development*, ed. Samuel Paul, and Arturo Israel, 44-93 (Washington: World Bank, 1991), 50.

<sup>221</sup> John Farrington, and Anthony Bebbington, eds., *Reluctant Partners?* 24.

<sup>222</sup> David Lewis, *The Management of Non-Governmental Development Organizations: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2001), 150.

<sup>223</sup> Iain Attack, "Four Criteria of Development NGO Legitimacy," *World Development* 27, no. 5 (1999): 863, 855-864,

<sup>224</sup> Christopher Collier, "NGOs, the Poor, and Local Government," *Development in Practice* 6, no. 3 (August 1996): 249.

authorities including NGOs, second, ‘push up’ from local level that involves expectation of local authorities for increased control, and second, wishes of NGOs for granting provisions for services, which they advance in favour of the people.<sup>225</sup> These mechanisms of decentralisation progress through various forms of local government-NGO collaboration, such as delivery of social welfare services in cooperation, collective use of both personnel and financial resources, partaking in dialogue to make policy, and advancing training programmes jointly. These processes of push down and push up, as well as local government and NGO interaction have strengthening impacts both on local government and on NGOs. In Latin America, augmented collaboration of local government and NGOs has contributed in local development and participatory democracy.<sup>226</sup>

NGOs may collaborate local bodies through consultation, advocating for marginalised communities, participating in service delivery,<sup>227</sup> public policy development, and policy and programme implementation,<sup>228</sup> developing social capital,<sup>229</sup> supplying producer and consumer services, promoting citizens’ engagement in local governance,<sup>230</sup> capacity building,<sup>231</sup> and promotion of good governance for poverty reduction.<sup>232</sup> The counterpart in collaboration, the local government, can contribute in developing local infrastructures, regulating business and non-profits entities,<sup>233</sup> offering NGOs the legitimacy and local accountability, as well reaching hard to reach communities and to continue the project activities.<sup>234</sup> Both NGOs and LGIs work together with their roles and strength to create synergy and reinforce each other by covering reciprocal weakness.

Collaboration requires joint engagement of partners with vision, knowledge, and related resources. Successful collaborative efforts at local level include four elements; ‘a. combined efforts across organisations; b. shared responsibility, c. a mutual goal valued

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<sup>225</sup> Julie Fisher, *Non-Governments: NGOs and the Political Development of the Third World* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1998); and Keith Snavelly, and Uday Desai, "Mapping Local Government-Nongovernmental Organization Interactions: A Conceptual," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 11, no. 2 (April 2001): 247.

<sup>226</sup> Bamidele Olowu, "Building Strong Local Government through Networks between State and Non-governmental (Religious) Institutions in Africa," *Public Administration and Development* 19 (1999): 409-412.

<sup>227</sup> Jan Bucek, and Brian Smith, "New Approaches to Local Democracy: Direct Democracy, Participation and Third Sector," *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 18 (2000): 11.

<sup>228</sup> Keith Snavelly, and Uday Desai, "Mapping Local Government-Nongovernmental Organization Interactions: A Conceptual," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 11, no. 2 (April 2001): 249.

<sup>229</sup> Robert Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* 6 (1995): 67-78.

<sup>230</sup> Keith Snavelly, and Uday Desai, "Mapping Local Government-Nongovernmental Organization," 251.

<sup>231</sup> James R. Keese, and Marco Freire Argudo, "Decentralisation and NGO-Municipal Government Collaboration in Ecuador," *Development in Practice* 16, no. 2 (April 2006): 114-127.

<sup>232</sup> John Nkum, "Local Governance for Rural Poverty Reduction," Paper presented on Policies and approaches for rural poverty reduction: What works in practice? European Forum on Rural Development Cooperation, Montpellier, France, 4-6- September 2002, 1.

<sup>233</sup> Keith Snavelly, and Uday Desai, "Mapping Local Government-Nongovernmental Organization," 249.

<sup>234</sup> James R. Keese, and Marco Freire Argudo "Decentralisation and NGO-Municipal," 114-127.



by citizens; and d. benefits for a community,<sup>235</sup> and among these elements, the final one focuses most. LGIs collaboration emphasises the goals and impacts of the collaboration, and ‘the value brought to the people served.’<sup>235</sup> This means collaboration is not the end; rather it is a means of bringing effective results for the people.

### 3.4.3 The Sensibility of GO-NGO Collaboration

Begum identifies various rationale for GO-NGO collaboration. According to her the GO-NGO collaborative efforts:

- ensure poor’s participation; creates demand among the poor for public services; ensures utilisation of knowledge and ability of both the counterparts;
- ensures the expansion and replication of successful programmes;
- ensures optimum utilisation of scarce resource;
- creates a new working system in the development scenario;
- ensure pluralism;
- ensures the utilisation of the potentials of all sectors;
- ensures cost effectiveness.<sup>236</sup>

### 3.4.4 Mode of GO-NGO Collaboration

GOs and NGOs could collaborate in various ways. Some of the modes of collaboration include co-financing, one-way financial flow, contract/subcontract, joint implementation, consultation, successful linkage, and intermediary.<sup>237</sup>

### 3.4.5 GO–NGO Collaboration: Key Factors

The process of collaboration is vibrant and dynamic. The following strategies and factors play critical role in keeping the collaboration process alive.

- ❖ openness and willingness for collaboration from both sides;
- ❖ mutual respect and trust;
- ❖ recognition of mutual strengths and values, and comparative advantages;
- ❖ favourable policies, laws and regulatory frameworks;
- ❖ acceptance of autonomy and independence;
- ❖ effective mechanisms to monitor, measure and learn;
- ❖ transparency and accountability; involvement of all stakeholders at every step; mutual learning process, training, workshop, and accompaniment;
- ❖ benefits for the community; and continued commitment of collaborating partners.<sup>238</sup>

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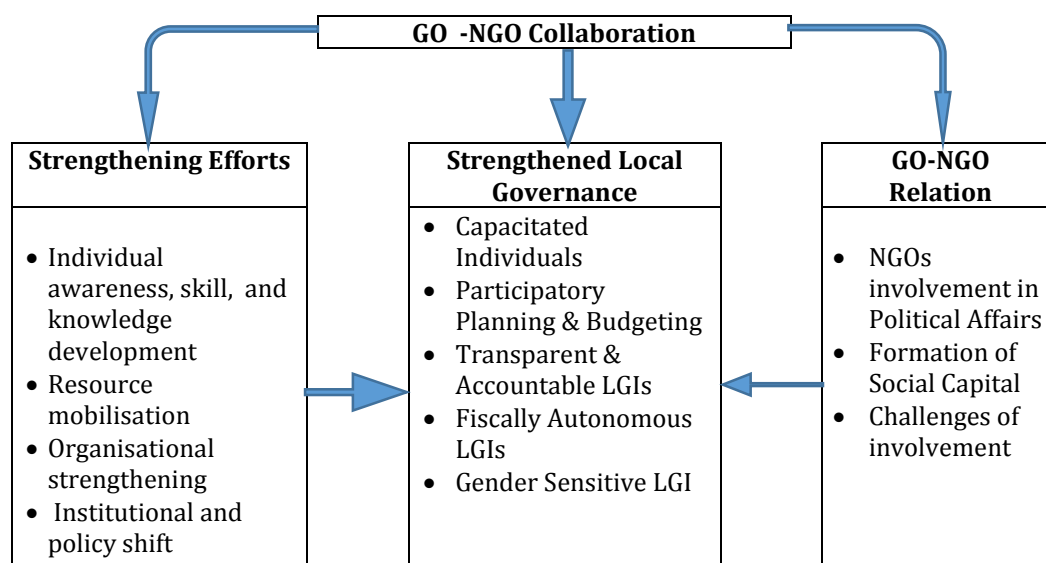
<sup>235</sup> David Warm, “Local Government Collaboration for a New Decade: Risk, Trust, and effectiveness,” *State and Local Government Review* 43 (2011): 61.

<sup>236</sup> Afroza Begum, *Government-NGO Interface in Development Management*, 91-93.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, 94-96.

<sup>238</sup> A N Zafar Ullah et al., “Government-NGO Collaboration: The Case of Tuberculosis Control in Bangladesh,” *Health policy and planning* 21.2 (2006): 149; Bhuvan Bhatnagar, *Non-governmental Organizations and World Bank Supported Projects in Asia: Lesson Learned*, Technical Department, Asia Region (Washington: World Bank, 1991), 17-19; Afroza Begum, *Government-NGO Interface in Development Management*, 94; David Warm, “Local Government Collaboration for a New Decade,” 61.

### 3.5 Conceptual Framework of the Study



**Figure 3. 7: Conceptual Framework.** (Prepared by Researcher.<sup>239</sup>)

The framework indicates the links of concepts in the process of collaboration for SLG. The middle column provides the expected characteristics of the strengthened local governance to be attained in collaborative efforts of GO-NGO. In the first column, there include varied measures of the collaborated programme. On the other hand, the third column represents the state of GO-NGO new relations, their state of engagement with political affairs, and the building of social capital in their involvement in collaboration with LGIs' officials and citizens. Both the left and the right column affect the middle column, however, the effect of the former is higher and more direct than the same of the later is.

### 3.6 Conclusion

This theoretical orientation of strengthening local governance through the efforts of GO-NGO collaboration as discussed above supports to conceptualise the issues. The chapter sequentially includes discussion on governance and its shift from government, varied components of SLG, NGO related issues including NGOs' role in politics and their engagement with national and sub-national government, and collaboration and its components. The conceptualisation includes varied theories of governance, and theories related to components of governance, and collaboration. Lastly, the discussion summed up with developing of a conceptual framework for collaborative enterprise for SLG. This discussion has facilitated the illustration of the outcomes and impacts of collaborative arrangements of Sharique.

<sup>239</sup> Marike C. Bontenbal, "Strengthening Urban Governance in the South through City-to-City Cooperation: Towards an analytical Framework," *Habitat International* 33 (2009): 187.

## Chapter 4

# Government Initiatives for Strengthening Local Governance

### 4.1 Introduction

The importance of local government, in this day and age, has been intensified further. The phenomenon can be observed in the SDGs' plan to 'go local' or other words 'localisation of SDGs.' The agenda 2030, commenced from January first, 2016, develops particular strategy to include all tiers of regional and sub-national governments in achieving its 17 goals and 169 associated targets. The goal number 11 of the SDGs involved with 'making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable,' remains the linchpin of the process of developing local government as the hub of the quality goods and service delivery. However, the other 16 targets directly or indirectly have strong ties with the activities of subnational government. The agenda view LGIs not only as mere executors but also as an important centre of decision-making closest to local people, to leave-no-one-behind in the stream of development. The vision 2020, which included in the Perspective Plan and the Sixth and Seventh FYPs has also urged strong and fiscally autonomous LGIs in Bangladesh.

Recognising these, the government of Bangladesh has centred its focus on 'human factor' as the key to poverty reduction and development. Moreover, the government is propelling its initiatives strongly in the direction of 'combining resources with social mobilisation, local capacity building, environmental sustainability, gender equality and with participation in and ownership of development activities.'<sup>1</sup> These types of goals required focused attempts, which include organisational reforms, inclusion of all, structural adjustment, and congenial environment for good governance. For this, the government has reinvigorated its efforts to strengthen subnational bodies, and the action for this ranges from enactment of new laws, resource mobilisation, long-term planning, to collaborating with NGOs. This chapter has discussed varied plans, reforms, and other efforts of the government to strengthen local governance in general and the governance of Union Parishad in particular.

### 4.2 Evolution of Local Government

#### 4.2.1 Pre-British Period

The present system of local government has been the successor of British systems, which remoulded traditional forms of local government that existed for many centuries. Traditionally, the villages were small principalities, or 'Little Republic,' which were mostly self-reliant in many respects and were run by the community-based

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<sup>1</sup> M. Rezaul Islam, *NGOs, Social Capital and Community Empowerment in Bangladesh* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 25-26.

organisations, locally known as *Panchayet* (a local organisation), evolved out naturally at the grassroots level. The *Panchayet* system, though, did not have legal base, yet it involved with ensuring unperturbed disciplines and social environment, reconciliatory efforts, and resource mobilisation to accomplish its traditional activities.<sup>2</sup> During the medieval period, which incepted with the beginning of Muslim rule in the Indian sub-continent, the system of local government whether reorganised or remained unchanged was unclear. However, it remained clear that the local government system involved with strengthening revenue collection procedures, and administration, which were represented with the presence of ‘*Sarkar/Chakla* and *Pargana*’ as the centre of revenue collection and administration. Moreover, this period of Mughals was not noted for consultation of local people for the governing of the local institutions. The period was also known for the proliferation of town life and establishment of urban administration with the formation of *Kotwal* office that covered all spheres of life of the urban people with key focus remained on maintaining law and orders.<sup>3</sup>

#### 4.2.2 British Period

British colonial ruler provided legal base of LGIs through the enactment of ‘The Village *Chowkidary* Act, 1870,’ or ‘Bengal act 6 of 1870.’ Focusing on political, economic and most importantly on administrative targets, the act instituted Union and *Chowkidary Panchayet*, which comprised of a number of villages and ran by five members selected by the government for three years. Involving mostly with maintaining law and order for expediting tax collection, the *Chowkidary* system did not have an agenda for development. Thus, a next-generation local government became essential and under the auspices of Ripon’s Local Self Government (Resolution of 1882) the next ruler responded with a brand new law titled ‘The Bengal Local Self-Government Act’ of 1885 (Bengal Act III of 1885) with a view to extending local government in Bengal. The law established district and local boards, as well as Union Committee at district, sub-divisional, and Union level respectively to perform activities related to education, health, public works, sanitation, vaccination, census, famine relief, etc.<sup>4</sup> The subsequent endeavour ‘The Bengal Village Self-Government Act, 1919’ (act 5 of 1919) repealed both *Chowkidary Panchayet* and Union Committee to institute unified Union Board, in which two-thirds of the members were elected and the rest was nominated. In excess of the previously designated tasks under the act of 1885, the new act of 1919 authorised Union Board to levy Union rate and dispose of minor criminal offences.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> LGD, “History of LGD,” [http://old.lgd.gov.bd/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2&Itemid=81&lang=en](http://old.lgd.gov.bd/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2&Itemid=81&lang=en) (accessed November 4, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Kamal Siddiqui, “Local Government,” *Banglapedia*, [http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Local\\_Government](http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Local_Government) (accessed May 8, 2018).

<sup>4</sup> F. R. Stanley Collier, ed., *The Bengal Local Self-Government Act (B.C. Act III of 1885) and the General Rules Framed Thereunder* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink and Co., 1886), 40-54.

<sup>5</sup> LGD, “History of LGD.”

### 4.2.3 Pakistan Period

The United Front Ministry in 1957, in Pakistan, brought substantial changes in the laws relating to the provincial localities. The changes include provisions for direct election in all seats, abolishment of nomination, and arrangement of elective seats for minorities, introduction of universal adult (21 years of age or above) franchise, as well as symbols for voting in secret ballot, and appointment of magistrate for trialling offences committed under the laws. However, these provisions of the laws could not be practiced in any election for the takeover of power by the military in 1958. After the coup d'état, major changes in the local government system were introduced with the promulgation of Basic Democracy Order (BDO) of 1959, which reinstated the system of nomination that repealed earlier in 1946. The Order of 1959 instituted four tiers of Council at (bottom UP) Union, Thana, District and Divisional level. A Union Council, at that time, was established for 10,000 inhabitants with 10 to 15 members, and among them, two third was elected and the rest of them remained nominated. However, the nomination system was annulled again after the commencement of the constitution in 1962. Besides maintenance of law and order, the Union Council was assigned 37 specific functions and key issues like agricultural development, water supply, education, communications, and social welfares were included. Furthermore, the Order continued the process of quasi-judicial practices and imposition of tax on property and other sources to expand the base of income for developing own fund. However, in both the British and Pakistan period the local government system though took various names and forms, yet their lot were unchanged as these units lacked autonomy.<sup>6</sup>

### 4.2.4 Bangladesh Period

In independent Bangladesh, the local government system went under continuous modifications with the changes of regimes at the national level. Initially, through President's Order seven of 1972, existing elected local bodies were dismantled and committees were appointed at Union *Panchayet* (later renamed Union Parishad) at Union level, and Zila (District) Board (later renamed District Parishad) at district level, which were known as Union and District Council respectively in Pakistan period. Later, Local Government Ordinance (LGO) of 1976 announced the provisions for Union Parishad, Thana Parishad, and Zila Parishad. In Union Parishad, the provisions for inclusion of two nominated women members, and two peasant members were introduced freshly by the LGO, in addition to existing one chair and nine members. At Thana level, there were no elected bodies, and consequently, the government officials lead Thana Parishad. Provision of Zila Parishad designed to include elected, government and women members. However, no such election was never held.<sup>7</sup> Later in 1980, *Swanirvar Gram Sarker* (SGS) [village self-government] was established, not as a tier but as a supportive organisation of UP in the majority of the villages. These bodies,

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<sup>6</sup> Kamal Siddique, ed., *Local Government in South Asia: A Comparative Study* (Dhaka: University Press, 1992), 17-18.

<sup>7</sup> Kamal Siddique, *Local Government in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: University Press Ltd., 1994), 62.

according to Majumdar, ‘serve no useful purpose and do not have much to offer.’<sup>8</sup> The same was tried in 1983 in the name of *Palli* Parishad for no substantial achievements. The Local Government (Union Parishad) Ordinance of 1983, replicated the formation of 1976 provisions with 36 specific functions for UPs, except the provision for nomination of three women members instead of previously designated two. Another pioneering change was noticed with the enactment of the Local Government (Union Parishads) (Second Amendment) Act, 1997 (Act No. XX of 1997), which incepted the provision of election in the reserved seats for women in the UP.

During Ershad regime, a marked change was observed with the advent of Upazila (sub-district) Parishad in 1982, which introduced the interface of local participatory politics with civil service at the local level for the first time. Upazila Parishad was made as the focal point of administration by transferring varied activities to the same. The system deemed effective due to the existence of a balance of power between the elected officials and government officials.<sup>9</sup> This system, though, was abolished in 1991, yet, renewed attempts were taken through the enactment of the Upazila Act in 1998 (Act 24 of 1998) to reintroduce the Upazila Parishad. Finally, it was reinstalled with the enactment of the Upazila Parishad Act, 2009. However, MPs’ mandatory advisory roles weaken Upazila Parishad in terms of decentralisation, democracy, and good governance indicators.<sup>10</sup>

In 1998, the government introduced a four-tier local government system; the tiers are Gram (Village), Union, Thana/Upazila, and Zila (District) Parishad. The Gram Parishad at the village level was replaced by the same kind of unit named *Gram Sarkar* (GS) through the enactment of The Gram Sarkar Act, 2003. However, this GS was also abolished in 2008 based on the allegation of that GS served the purpose of politics. The year 2009 witnessed a comprehensive development in the arena of local government through the enactment of several inclusive local government acts for different tiers. The most significant paradigm shift has been brought by introducing partisan local polls using party symbol through amending different existing acts in 2015, and that ended the practice of non-partly poll of local government that was practised for a century.<sup>11</sup> Under the new provisions, ninth Union Parishad election was held in 2016, which experienced transaction of money for nomination, unopposed election, (214 chairs), violence (145 deaths, the highest ever), political rift within the parties, erratic voting, questionable roles of law enforcers, control of election system by ruling party, and loss of masses conviction on local election.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Badiul Alam Majumdar, “Gram Sarkar: A Problematic Initiative,” editorial, *The Daily Star*, May 5, 2005.

<sup>9</sup> Pranab Kumar Panday, “Local Government System in Bangladesh: How far is it Decentralised?” *Lex Localis - Journal of Local Self-Government* 9, no. 3 (July 2011): 215-17.

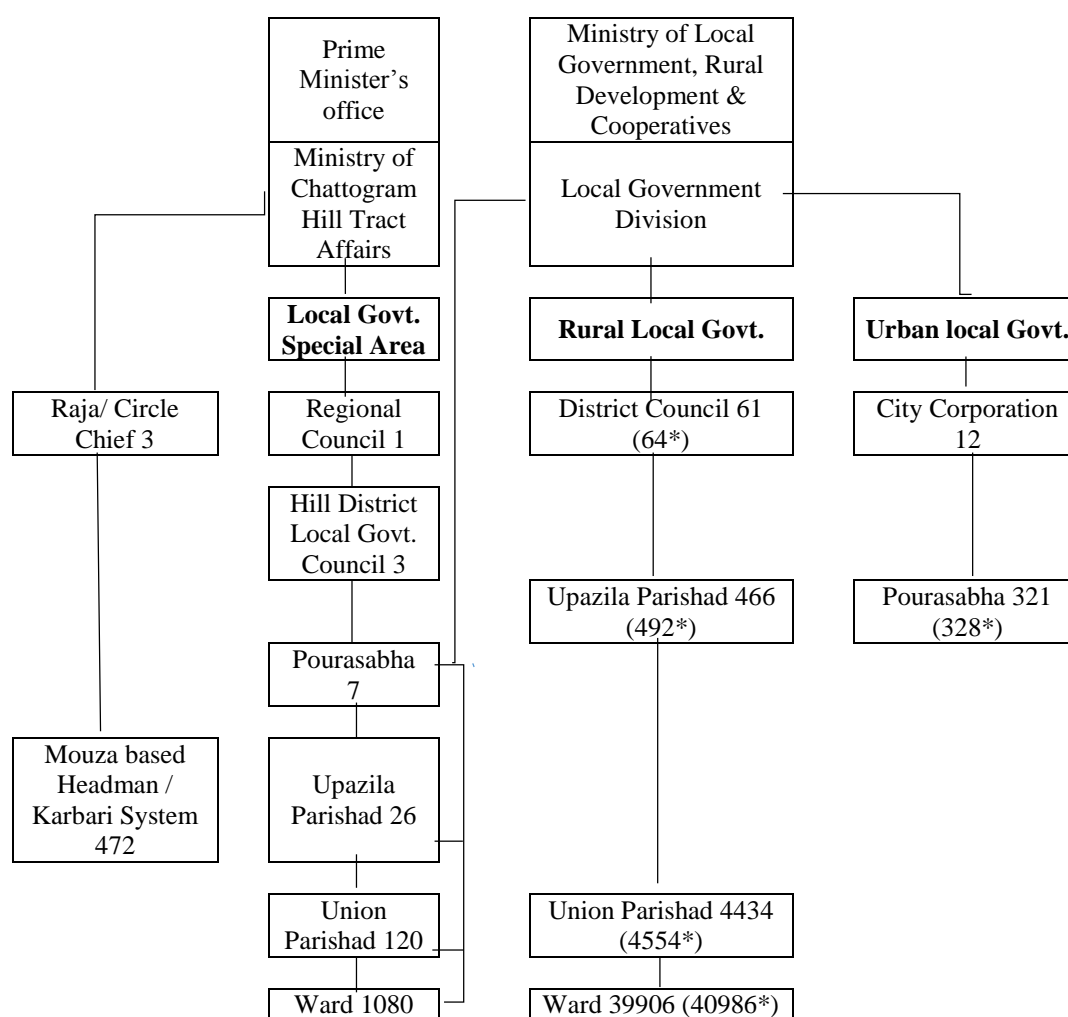
<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 217.

<sup>11</sup> Dhiraj Kumar Nath, “Partisan Local Polls and Challenges for Political Parties,” the Opinion Pages, *Bdnews24.com*, October 31, 2015, <https://opinion.bdnews24.com/2015/10/31/partisan-local-polls-and-challenges-for-political-parties/> (accessed November 8, 2017).

<sup>12</sup> Md. Mashiur Rahman, and Salma Nasrin, “Maiden Partisan Rural Local Government Elections: Bangladesh Experience,” *Journal of Public Administration and Governance* 7, no. 1 (2017): 48-70.

Another expressible development happened with the first ever election of Zila Parishad in 2016. The election, indirect in nature, paved the way for the election of a Chair, 15 general members, and 5 women members in reserved seats by the votes of elected representatives of various LGIs in each district.<sup>13</sup> The election of Zila Parishad went under polls boycott by major political parties, uncontested wins (21 Cahir among 61), and breach of election codes by MPs, claims of vote buying, and some other controversies and anomalies.<sup>14</sup>

#### 4.2.5 Existing Local Government Structure in Bangladesh



**Figure 4. 1: Present Local Government Structure in Bangladesh.** *Source:* Adopted and Modified from Panday.<sup>15</sup> (\* Total number of the units in the country.)

<sup>13</sup> Partha Pratim Bhattacharjee, and Pankag Karmakar, "Zila Parishad: First Ever Polls; AL to Win it," *The Daily Star*, December 4, 2016, <http://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/zila-parishad-first-ever-polls-al-win-it-1324714> (accessed November 8, 2017).

<sup>14</sup> "District Council: AL in Absolute Authority," *Star Online Report*, December 28, 2016, <http://www.thedailystar.net/country/voting-zila-parishad-polls-begins-1336678> (accessed November 8, 2017).

<sup>15</sup> Pranab Kumar Panday, "Local Government System in Bangladesh," 212.

The figure shows that there are two separate forms of LGIs in urban and rural area. Presently the rural local government structure of Bangladesh includes three tiers, viz. Union Parishad at the bottom, Upazila Parishad at the middle and Zila Parishad at the top level. Conversely, the urban local government includes Poursabha for town and City Corporation for the big city. The government develops specially structured local government tiers for Chattogram hilly area.

### 4.3 Varied Commissions for Strengthening Local Governance

In Bangladesh, different commissions were formed to renovate the structure of the local government and strengthen the governance of the localities. However, these initiatives were considered taken for bringing cosmetic change rather than for modernizing the governance.<sup>16</sup> Among the commissions, the following has been included to discuss briefly.

#### 4.3.1 Committee for Administrative Reform/Reorganization (CARR), 1982

The CARR was formed under the military dictatorship of the Ershad (1982-90), with a view to reorganising the local government system with the recommendation of the committee based on devolution of authority, and people's participation.<sup>17</sup> The committee recommended for direct elections with an alternative electoral college for Zila Parishad at Union, Thana, and Zila levels. The committee also prescribed for establishment of a permanent inter-ministerial committee to implement the recommendations of the reforms initiative. However, when it comes to the issue of materialisation of the recommendations, it has been found that many of them remained unfulfilled. Ahmed argued that the major parts of the recommendations remained unimplemented and those few that were implemented include government directives for modifications.<sup>18</sup> The bold typeface areas of reform in which the government brought change include upgrading 460 *Thanas* into Upazila as the centre of development administration and authority for regulation, bestowing the authority of development administration of Upazila at the hand of an elected chair. Moreover, subdivisions were replaced as administrative unit with districts. The then government also structured a committee i.e., the National Implementation Committee for Administrative Reorganization-Reform (NICAR) for guiding the government to implement the recommendation of the CARR. Literature showed that the

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<sup>16</sup> Mehedi Masud, "Administrative Traditions and Reforms in Bangladesh: Legacy versus Modernity," (2013): 5, [https://www.psa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/1029\\_550.pdf](https://www.psa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/1029_550.pdf) (accessed Feb. 25, 2018).

<sup>17</sup> The committee head was Rear Admiral MA Khan. Government of Bangladesh, *Report of the Committee for Administrative Reorganisation/Reform*, June 1982. [http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Committee\\_for\\_Administrative\\_Reform/\\_Reorganisation](http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Committee_for_Administrative_Reform/_Reorganisation) (accessed May 16, 2018).

<sup>18</sup> Syed Giasuddin Ahmed, "Public Administration in the Three Decades," in *Bangladesh: on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century*, ed. A. M. Chowdhury, and Fakrul Alam (Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 2002), 336-337.



achievements of the institutionalisation of Upazila approach remained variegated as the process can be credited for initiating some basic development of infrastructures, bringing a sort of deconcentration of the central government authority with invent of new layer of administrative agencies regarding public services instead of toppling the practice of centralised administration, and benefitting the local rural elites for being the support base of the regime instead of marginalised portion of the population.<sup>19</sup>

### 4.3.2 Local Government Structure Review Commission 1991

The commission of 1991 was instructed to identify the loopholes of the then local government system and to recommend restructuring of local government in accordance with the spirit of the constitution of the country, particularly the Article 59 and 60 of the same with a view to institutionalisation of democracy at grassroots level.<sup>20</sup> The commission recommended reorganisation of two tiers of local government i.e. the UP and Zila Parishad in fulfilling the demands of the government to dispense the services of the government. The body furthered its recommendation to establish the village as the key centre of local government through starting *gram sabha*/village assembly as a hub of development and making the UP as the focal point of planning. Moreover, it put forward a plan for making urban government, specifically municipalities and City Corporation more democratic.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the body felt the exigencies of a permanent local government commission to facilitate the activities of the local bodies. However, the government practically did not execute any of the recommendations.<sup>22</sup>

### 4.3.3 Local Government Commission, 1996

The government constituted a high power commission for providing recommendations for improving the governance of the localities. The commission proposed four-tier sub-national government for the country i.e. Gram Parishad, Union Parishad, Thana Parishad and Zila Parishad.<sup>23</sup> The suggestion making body found it pertinent and time befitting to bring the women in the office through direct election. In addition, the body earmarked twenty-two functions for the UP; and these activities were clustered under ten functional areas. To coordinate among the UPs, the body proposed that every UP would have their own five-year plan, and on which the

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<sup>19</sup> Niaz Ahmed Khan, "Challenges and Trends in Decentralised Local Governance in Bangladesh," ISAS Working Papers 222 (22 January 2016), 9; & Ahmed Shapqul Huque, "Traditions and Bureaucracy in Bangladesh," in *Tradition and Public Administration*, Martin Painter, and B. G Peters, ed. (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 63.

<sup>20</sup> Kamal Siddiqui, ed., *Local Government in Bangladesh* (Revised third edition) (Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 2005), 96.

<sup>21</sup> Government of Bangladesh, *Local Government Structure Review Commission Report 1992* (Dhaka: BG Press, 1992), 4.

<sup>22</sup> A T M Obaidullah, *Bangladesh Public Administration: Study of Major Reforms, Constraints and Strategies* (Dhaka: Academic Press and Publication Limited, 1999), 120.

<sup>23</sup> Kamal Siddiqui, ed., *Local Government in Bangladesh* (Revised third edition), 102.

immediate upper tier of UP i.e. the UPZ formulate its five-year plan. The body likewise recommended formation of a permanent local government commission free from control of executive with a view to having strengthened local bodies through empowering the proposed commission for supervising, reviewing, controlling and monitoring functions of the LGIs and advocating apposite measures.

#### **4.3.4 Public Administration Reform Commission (PARC), 1997**

The PARC was entrusted to propose recommendations to enhance socio-economic development and ensure peoples' access to benefits of the government. The committee based on the principles of NPM and good governance such as transparency, efficiency, accountability, effectiveness, delivery of services with value for money came forwarded with three types of recommendations: interim (30), short-term (70), and long-term (37). The areas in which the committee made suggestions include public-private partnership, completion of CC, devolution and/or delegation of power, e-governance, specifying roles of public offices, access to government documents, result oriented performance monitoring and evaluation, strengthening parliamentary oversight and popularisation of legal documents as well as government forms, etc.<sup>24</sup> However, it has been found that few of the recommendations were implemented as window dressing and no mentionable changes were detected.<sup>25</sup> The reasons behind were political turmoil and regime change, unwillingness of the bureaucracy and its deeper structural relationship with political actors.<sup>26</sup>

#### **4.3.5 Committee for Recommendation of Financial Powers and Sources of Financing LG Institution, 1999**

The then government formed the committee to inquire into the existing financial system of local government and to make applicable suggestions for necessary interferences. The committee identified five new sources of income for local government, and the sources included fee for marriage registration, registering polygamy, building of new house, moneymaking butchery, and revenue earning from own constructions of the UPs, etc. Moreover, the body instructed to institute two statutory commissions for localities: 1). Local Government Commission and 2). Local Government finance commission. However, the recommendations of the committee were not implemented.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Mohammad Mohabbat Khan, *From Government to Governance: Expanding Horizon of Public Administration to Public Management* (Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 2009), 142.

<sup>25</sup> Ferdous Jahan, "Public Administration in Bangladesh," Background Paper for the State of Governance in Bangladesh (December 2006), 11, <http://bigd.bracu.ac.bd/jdownloads/WORKING%20PAPERS/30.%20Public%20Administration%20in%20Bangladesh.pdf> (accessed May 18, 2018).

<sup>26</sup> Muhammad Azizuddin, "Administrative Reform in Bangladesh: An Overview of Political Dynamics," *Nepalese Journal of Public Policy and Governance* xxviii, no.1 (June 2011): 59.

<sup>27</sup> Md. Awal Hossain Mollah, "Administrative Reforms and Governance in Bangladesh: How Far the Dream of Success?" annexure, *Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences* 2, no.4 (June 2014): 51.

### 4.3.6 Committee for Strengthening and Making the Local Government Bodies More Dynamic (2007)

In the mid of escalation of political turmoil, the Non-party Caretaker Government (CTG) assumed power dramatically with the backstopping of the military.<sup>28</sup> The CTG formed a strong committee to review the structures, compositions, and functions of the LGS in Bangladesh and recommend suitable measures to strengthen sub-national government. The committee concentrated on organisational structures, sources of revenue earning, autonomy of local government, empowerment of women, setting criteria for candidates of election, etc. Based on the suggestions of the committee the CTG abolished *Gram Sarker* and brought back the Upazila system as the mid-tier between two other tiers Zila Parishad at the top and Union Parishad at the bottom. In line with the recommendations of the committee, the CTG enacted the Upazila Parishad Ordinance. Furthermore, the CTG also legislated new ordinances regarding City Corporation, Pourasabha, and Union Parishad separately after amending the existing laws. The then government emphasised on the recommendations of the committee through forming an ‘independent’ Local Government Commission to make the local bodies free from control of the national government.<sup>29</sup> However, the subsequent democratically elected (Bangladesh Awami League) AL led grand alliance government, though continued the three-tier local government approach of CTG,<sup>30</sup> yet prescinded approximately all the major reforms and did not ratify the ordinances promulgated in the tenure of the CTG putting local government in an indeterminate state.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, the government found the ‘Local Government Commission’ redundant and thus abolished it. Later, the AL led alliance government enacted four Acts - the Local Government (Union Parishad) Act 2009, the Local Government (Pourasabha) Act 2009, single unified act for all City Corporations in 2009, and the Upazila Parishad (Reintroduction of the Repealed Act and Amendment) Act 2009 – amended further in 2011 for opening up scopes for the MPs to play critical roles in the corresponding localities.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> The CTG of 2007 breached the conventions by holding state power for long two years instead of three months. The constitution permits the transient body only to conduct the routine tasks, and principally holds responsible for backing up the Election Commission to arrange a free, fair and credible parliament election within 90 days and hand over the power to the newly elected government, however, it involved with drastic popular reforms in many areas which political government never showed interest.

<sup>29</sup> Niaz Ahmed Khan, "Challenges and Trends in Decentralised Local Governance in Bangladesh," 9.

<sup>30</sup> The AL led grand alliance government headed by Sheikh Hasina assumed state power on 6 January 2009 after winning the 9th parliamentary election that was held under CTG on 29 December 2008.

<sup>31</sup> Niaz Ahmed Khan, "Challenges and Trends in Decentralised Local Governance in Bangladesh," 10.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

#### 4.4 The Reforms Implemented and/or Underway

The government has implemented a good number of reforms, though little against the expectations, in recent years considering the recommendations of the varied commissions/committees towards instituting a strong local government. The major areas of reforms have been arranged in the following way.<sup>33</sup>

**First**, the government established all mandated sub-national government of the constitution and formed both Upazila and Zila Parishad with elected bodies.

**Second**, initiatives were taken to strengthen local bodies; such initiatives include a. specifying roles of WM, b. arranging orientation training for all elected officials, c. upgrading the post of the UP secretary, d. increasing honorarium of the functionaries, e. issuing ideal tax schedule for UP, f. upgrading 11 major municipalities into 12 city corporations (two in Dhaka: North and South), and g. building council complex.

**Third**, the government has materialised initiatives to enhance participation of women in the governing process of the localities. The efforts include a. reservation of seats for women in the UP to be elected, b. constitution of both Zila and Upazila Parishads with women members that include five women members, and one-third of the total members to be women members respectively, c. creation of a post of women vice chairman for the women.

**Fourth**, varied local bodies have been supported with resources by the central government. The steps include a. granting block grant (since FY 2004-05) and performance-based grant to the UP in accordance with the set guidelines, which have been developed, earlier b. providing ADP allocation directly to the Pourasabha, and c. supplementing ADP allocation to the council.

**Fifth**, initiatives have also been taken for activating dormant capacities of the localities; such as pilot projects were in operation to activate standing committees of UP. Furthermore, *Gram Sarker* was established but annulled subsequently.

**Sixth**, non-state actors (NSA) were given spaces to strengthen the governance of local bodies. Varied pilot projects of the NSAs are ongoing to make UDCC meetings inclusive, to dispense best practices of the piloting regarding WS, and OBM, and other aspects of the UP, and to accumulate the experiences of such efforts of the NSAs.

**Seventh**, autonomous oversight and regulatory body namely Local Government Commissions was proposed and formed in 2008 (however, such body was repealed in 2009).

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<sup>33</sup> Hossain Zillur Rahman, and Tofail Ahmed, "Strategy on Local Government Strengthening," Background paper for 7th Five Year Plan, Planning Commission of Bangladesh (2015), 9-10.

## **4.5 Legal Framework for Local Government in Bangladesh**

### **4.5.1 Constitutional Root of Local Government**

The constitution of Bangladesh gave the legal basis of local government in the country. Article 59 of the constitution has mandated to establish local government bodies at every tier beneath the centre with elected people's representatives. The subsequent article, article number 60 has instructed the Parliament through enacting laws to ensure transfer of power to local bodies as mentioned in the article 59, for imposing and raising taxes, formulating budgets, and managing funds. Additionally, in a move to giving power back to the people, the Constitution through article 11, has aspired for people participation through their representatives; and the government would be democratic in form with ensuring fundamental human rights, freedoms, respect for dignity, and worth of the human persons. Moreover, the concerns of the constitution for disadvantaged portion of the country surfaced with article 9, which has mandated the government to embolden LGIs to arrange special representation of peasants, workers, and women.

Moreover, Article 29(1) has articulated the provision of equal rights of all citizens to bear office in the service of the republic. Women have been given special protection by article 28(2), which declares equality of men and women in respect of rights in all spheres of the state and public life. Additionally, article 19(3) mentions the issue of participation of women in all spheres of national life. Then again, article 28(4) has created opportunity to take further action by making special provisions for backward sections of citizen to make them developed. These provisions of the constitution of Bangladesh opened up all spheres of life to the citizens, particularly women to participate.

### **4.5.2 Legislative Reforms in Local Government System in Bangladesh**

The formation of local bodies with people's representatives has been the desires of the constitution and for the excuse of mandate, the democratic and military regimes, as well as CTG intervened in local government for reforms. The change in regimes brought changes in number of tiers, elected officials, devolution of power, area of jurisdictions, etc. with promulgations, amendments, and repeal of varied acts and ordinances. Thus, Bangladesh witnessed confusions regarding formation and structuring of sub-national bodies. The following table has represented the major legal initiatives and the changes in the structures, compositions and functions of the LGIs in brief.

**Table 4. 1: Summary of Acts and Ordinances Related to the Local Government in Bangladesh**

Act/Ordinance	Year	Development in LGS	Status
President's Order 7, 1972	1972	Dissolved all LG committees; new committees were appointed at Union and District level; Thana and Divisional Council committees were not formed	Amended in 1973
President's Order No. 22, 1973	1973	Splitting up Union into three Wards, Direct election of chair and vice chair, DC and SDO was made the ex-officio chair at district and sub-division level localities	Abolished in 1982
Local Government Ordinance, 1976	1976	Introduced three tiers of local government systems: Union Parishad, Thana Parishad and Zila Parishad, abolition of post of vice chair and 4 additional members were included, SDO was given veto power against decision of UP, changes were included regarding TP and ZP	Abolished in 1982, and Amended in 1983
The Local Government (Thana Parishad and Thana Administration Reorganization) Ordinance, 1982	1982	Upazila Parishad was formed with delegating more authority than TP and the UZP was entrusted with imposing tax, rates, fees, and tolls; the authority of UP was reduced	Amended in 1987, 1998, 2009, and 2011
The Local Government (Union Parishad) Ordinance, 1983	1983	UP was divided into three Wards and consisted of a chairperson, nine elected members and three nominated women members.	Amended in 1997
The Local Government (UZP and UPZ Administration) Repeal Ordinance	1991	Abolition of UPZ system, and inception of Thana/Upazila <i>Unnayan Samannaya</i> Committee (T/UUSC)	Abolished in 1998
Local Government Gram Parishad) Act 1997	1997	Ward level local government unit for planning and coordinating development programs	Abolished in 2007
Local Government (Union Parishad) 2nd Amendment Act 1997	1997	UP consists of a chair, nine members one from each of 9 Wards and three women members from every 3 Wards (reserved seats) directly elected by the voters based on adult franchises	Abolished in 2008
The Upazila Parishad Act, 1998	1998	The UZP Chair was to be elected directly, the chairs of the UPs and Poursabhas were to be the ex-officio members of UZP; UZP was created as focal point of services delivery as well as	Amended in 2001, 2009, 2011 and 2015

		development; No election held under the 1998's act	
The Zila Parishad Act, 2000	2000	ZP consisted of one chair, 15 general and 5 women members; inactive up to 2011, administrators were appointed in 2011, and first ever election was held in 2016 with electoral college (all elected officials of LG bodies under a district); entrusted with revenue collection with 80 activities	Amended in 2016
The Local Government (Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad, Zila Parishad) Ordinance, 2008	2008	Compilation of separate Acts relating to different localities like UP, UZP and ZP; elected officials to run all the LGIs; provisions for public declaration of citizen's charters was made mandatory for service delivery, RTI, OBM and WS	Elections were held in some UPZs, the Ordinances were not ratified in the next parliament in 2009
Local Government (Union Parishad) Act 2009, Local Government (Upazila Parishad) Act 1998 and amendment in 2009, Local Government (Municipality) Act 2009, Local Government (City Corporation) Act 2009; all of these acts were amended in 2015	2009	Local MPs are appointed as advisors to the UZP and obtaining advice from the MPs made compulsory, UZP chairmen are assigned as chief executive of the Parishad; Provisions for OBM, WS, Citizens' Charter, RTI; transferred / or made transferable of govt. dept. to UZP (17) /UP (7)	In force (amended in 2015 for introduction of election with party symbol)

Source: Modified and adopted.<sup>34</sup>

Moreover, for the UP, the government has promulgated few others SROs, rules and regulations to specify the acts and implementation of activities effectively. Some of the SROs, rules and regulations are as follow: Accounts and Audit Rule, 2011; Employee Service Rule, 2011; Property Rule, 2012; Agreement Rule, 2012; Business Rule, 2012; Development Plan Rule, 2012; Model Tax Schedule 2013; Village Police Rule, 2015; Power and Distinct Functions of Women Members of Reserved Seats Rule, 2016; Appeal Rule, 2016; Inspection Process and Power of Inspector Rule, 2016; Power and Functions of UP Chari and Members Rules, 2016; and Formulation and Commendation of Budget Rule, 2016. Furthermore, for smooth running of the UP and for expediting release of information the government introduced 'Union Parishad Operational Manual, 2012;' and 'Information Dissemination Policy, 2015.'<sup>35</sup>

The information presented above in tabular form disclosed that since the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, varied actors in power have legislated legal

<sup>34</sup> Waheduzzaman. "People's Participation for Good Governance: A Study of Rural Development Programmes in Bangladesh" (PhD dissertation. Victoria University, 2010), 74-75.

<sup>35</sup> LGD, "Aina o Bidhimala," [http://old.lgd.gov.bd/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=29&Itemid=88&lang=bn](http://old.lgd.gov.bd/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=29&Itemid=88&lang=bn) (accessed Feb. 25, 2018).

documents based on trial and error mechanism to develop decentralised local government systems. Bangladesh experimented with three tiers of decentralised bodies at the village, Upazila, and Zila level during different eras. The significant changes of LGIs have been recorded in 1976, 1982, 1991, 1997, 2000, 2008, and 2009 through legal and legislative reforms. Among these reforms, the introduction of UZP, composition of the same with elected officials in 1982, reinstallation of the UZP in 2008, and introduction of participatory planning and budgeting with citizens' charter and RTI in 2009 can be deemed as a landmark towards the development of local government system in the country. However, in true essence, the local bodies have not been enjoying their power in fullest as there remained loopholes of interventions by the MPs and bureaucracy.

## **4.6 The Policies of the Government in the FYPs to Strengthen Local Governance**

### **4.6.1 Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2000)**

The Fifth Five Year Plan (FFYP) identified varied reasons, which hindered the rural development. The plan, recognised villages were not included as an administrative unit, the poor and disadvantaged groups were not organised, LGIs were not strengthened as needed, tiers of local government were not coordinated, people's participation was absent, and bureaucracy was not supportive.<sup>36</sup> To overcome this, and in pursuit of strengthening LGIs, the FFYP aimed at vesting power for development planning and implementation of the same with inclusion of people's voice through co-operation between LGIs and NGOs.<sup>37</sup> The initiatives of the plan have been discussed below.

#### ***4.6.1.1 Introduction of Four-tier Local Government System***

The FFYP has maintained a plan to introduce a four-tier local government according to the Local Government Commission report. The envisaged tiers were *Gram Parishad*, Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad and Zila Parishad at village (one in each of 9 Ward), union (cluster of villages), Upazila (sub-district), and Zila (District) level respectively. These bodies were planned to vest predefined activities to accomplish at varying level of authorities and responsibilities including local resource mobilisation except for Gram Parishad.<sup>38</sup>

#### ***4.6.1.2 Formation of Standing Committees***

The FFYP desired to establish standing committees in 6 specific fields with keeping opportunities to instituting more to comply with the necessities. The proposed

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<sup>36</sup> Planning Commission, *The Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)* (1997), 140.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 141-42.



standing committees were related to (a) law and order, (b) health and family planning, (c) agriculture, irrigation and environment, (d) education, social welfare, development of women and children, (e) sports, culture and youth development, (f) fisheries and livestock and (g) other fields when become necessary. These SCs in all local level bodes would contribute to conceive, design, formulate and implement local level development projects.<sup>39</sup>

#### ***4.6.1.3 Introduction of Participatory Planning***

In the course of strengthening LGIs, the Fifth plan planned to entrust localities with the responsibilities of performing participatory planning to accumulate the local needs and prioritise development projects for local and national government. Local inhabitants, particularly the poor and the disadvantaged groups were planned to capacitate as the central agent through ‘consciencetisation, consultation and participation’ by both local and national government functionaries, NGOs, community organisations, and local leaders, to visualise their demands to the authorities, make their own development decisions, and exert their control over the LGIs. The organisation of rural people and training for them were designed to be supported legally as required, as well as with a system of social mobilisation, and consultation. Local level elected officials were also proposed to be trained and capacitated for the participatory planning. Zila or Upazila was planned to select as planning unit to prepare development plan at local level. The FFYP further identified Zila as the planning unit, Upazila as the major implementing agency, while Union Parishad, ‘focal point of LGIs,’ as the local operational and supervisory unit at local level. The proposed bottom-up approach of planning cycle was planned to start in December and begin the implementation of the projects of the plan in July after the integration of local needs linking all the tiers of the local government with the programmes of the central government.<sup>40</sup>

#### ***4.6.1.4 Devolution of Power to Local Bodies***

The FFYP identifying interface of devolution and deconcentration, planned to transfer ‘decision-making power’ to the local bodies to make them not the extended arms or subordinate units of the central government rather exclusive authorities in their areas.<sup>41</sup> For this sake, the FFYP proposed new laws to be enacted in future by entrusting increased development roles and exclusive zones of dominion. Furthermore, a considerable power and authorities of the related ministries would be delegated to the local bodies. Simultaneously, the local bodies would be made accountable to their electorates. The urban local government, in particular, was

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 141-42.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 143, 161-62.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 141-42.

planned to be empowered to issue innovative saving instruments, including bonds and debentures.<sup>42</sup>

#### ***4.6.1.5 Empowerment of the Poor, and Disadvantaged Groups***

The FFYP set its vision to empower the marginalised, women and the disadvantaged group. The key area of empowerment involved people's participation in planning and constructive activities at LGIs. Under the social mobilisation strategy, the poor at the grassroots level would be enabled to organise themselves, identify their own problems, make their own development decisions particularly in areas, which concern them most.<sup>43</sup> The government realised the needs of increased women representation in all tiers of the local bodies, and consequently devised plan to get women representatives (against seats reserved for women) elected directly through a universal adult franchise of the respective citizenries.<sup>44</sup>

#### ***4.6.1.6 Local Government Finance***

The FFYP identified resource constraints of the all bodies in all tiers of local government. These bodies, particularly rural LGIs were heavily dependent on the allocation of the grant of central government. The own revenue of the UP was so little that it could scarcely cover the wages and salaries of the staff. To this end, the plan intended to broaden the base of taxes and non-tax revenues alongside with increased allocation of the national government. Tax administration in these local bodies would plan to improve. The proposed plan further chalked out revenue sharing mapping among local bodies, and central government block allocation would be made based on predefined criteria.<sup>45</sup>

#### ***4.6.1.7 Proposed Reforms for LGIs***

1. Local bodies would be delegated more functions(e.g. in the fields of primary health care and education and local irrigation infrastructure) and adequate coordinative and interconnected authorities to accomplish development activities at local level with special measures for dispute resolutions with actors like local MPs, central government bureaucrats at local level, and officials of LGIs.
2. Local elected officials would make responsible and accountable to the local people through legal reforms for recall or removal of elected officials after passing of no-confidence motions against the same.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 143-146.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 161-62.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 226.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 85.

3. Local bodies of all tiers except Gram Parishad would plan to provide more space for incorporation of wider fields for taxation in addition to current bases.
4. The allocation from central government would be disbursed equitably considering population, and needs. A periodic public finance commission might be established to determine the share of LGIs in the central government's revenue.<sup>46</sup>

#### **4.6.2 SLG in the Sixth Five-Year Plan (2011-2015)**

The Sixth Five Year Plan (SFYP) (2011-15), based on the concept of 'Digital Bangladesh' to achieve targets of 'Visions 2021' identified LGIs in Bangladesh as weak institutions with little administrative and financial authority, along with centralised service delivery in the capital as line agencies remained responsible for service delivery and accountable to the ministries rather than local bodies. Thus, "the setting of expenditure priorities, allocation of resources, procurement of goods and services, and the implementation of projects are largely centralized at the ministry level in the capital city of Dhaka."<sup>47</sup> The plan intended to establish strong, efficient, participatory, accountable and dedicated LGIs to deliver greater volume and quality of public services and to aware the citizens economically and socially.<sup>48</sup> The key to strengthening local governance according to plan would be promoting devolution to local governments, which was one of the pillars of four pillars of the capacity development of the government. The LGIs were plan to vest with financial autonomy, mechanisms to be held accountable and progressive decentralisation of delivery of basic services, being conscious on the local context of Bangladesh regarding politics, society, administration, and financial conditions.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, for the positive records in the field of health, education, and micro-credit services, the collaboration with NGOs was planned to enhance.<sup>50</sup> The following sections have included the major desires of the plan.

##### **4.6.2.1 Bestowing Discretionary Power**

The plan envisioned to empower local bodies of all tiers through strengthening legal framework for devolution of service responsibilities, and ensuring discretionary power of LGIs to ensure better functioning of these institutions. Moreover, LGIs were also planned to be vested with administrative control, discretionary financial base for increased revenue, and discretion in staffing to cope with the administrative needs.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 216.

<sup>47</sup> Planning Commission, *Sixth Five Year Plan (2011-15): Accelerating Growth and Reducing Poverty, Part I, Strategic Directions and Policy Framework* (2012), 227-228.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 220.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 32-33.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 9-10.

#### **4.6.2.2 Financial Autonomy**

The SFYP understood the need of fiscal autonomy. The plan envisaged instituting fiscal decentralisation to enhance resource raising for lessening dependency of LGIs on the central government for not only financing their staffs and routine activities, but also for implementing development projects. The plan proposed legislative reforms as well as attention of the national government for assigning responsibilities to the LGIs with proportionate fiscal autonomy.<sup>51</sup>

#### **4.6.2.3 Setting Indicators and Standards for Monitoring**

The SFYP realised necessity of developing a set of indicators and standards for gauging the performances of the LGIs in service delivery at local level and ensuring upward accountability. The plan was also in favour of expanding the area of jurisdiction of oversight institutions to conduct audits on service delivery, financial transactions, and investigate incidence of corruption and irregularities. Moreover, for ensuring transparency the findings of the audits were proposed to make open for all.

#### **4.6.2.4 Capacity Building**

Capacities of the LGIs, as well as the functionaries, were in need of reinforcement to implement dispensed tasks. The plan intended to make use of skilled officials, technical assistance, and training programmes for capacity building. Particular attention was given to enhancing capacity of developing of plan and preparation of budget to accomplish local level programmes.

#### **4.6.2.5 Ensuring People's Participation**

Full participation of all citizens would be ensured in respective local bodies to strengthen democratic process. People from varied groups of the society, and the committees of the citizens would be encouraged to participate actively in prioritising, implementing, and monitoring of development programmes and functions to ensure appropriateness of the programmes, and the proper implementation of the same.<sup>52</sup>

#### **4.6.2.6 Establishing e-Governance**

The Sixth plan envisaged introducing and establishing e-governance at local level. For this, a well prepared and designed ICT programmes, necessary software, technical assistance, as well as training were designed to dispense to the functionaries at local level. The Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives ministry would implement the strategies to strengthen the use of ICT, besides a standing 'Local Government Commission' was planned to be developed with representatives of other ministries, which have services at localities, to monitor the changes to the legal

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<sup>51</sup> Planning Commission, *The Mid-term Implementation Review of the Sixth Five Year Plan: 2014* (April 2015), 148-149.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

framework.<sup>53</sup> To this end, Union Digital Centre (UDC), and District e-Service Centres (DESCs) will play crucial roles to provide services to the citizens, such as supplying government forms, examination results, livelihood information, birth and death registration, mobile banking, provision of internet, computer training, etc.<sup>54</sup>

#### ***4.6.2.7 Gender Mainstreaming***

The SFYP planned to ensure participation of women in local political institutions, influence decisions in favour of women, and ensure women representation in LGIs with authority and responsibilities. Initiatives would be taken to make women politically more conscious, encourage women to participate in politics and to build leadership among women at all levels.<sup>55</sup>

### **4.6.3 Seventh's Plan Strategy for Strengthening Local Governance (2016-2020)**

The Seventh FYP aspired for establishing strong and efficient local governance at all tiers through devolution of responsibilities and resources for implementing pro-poor projects with active and wide participation of the local people to ensure the path of resources to the most appropriate needed area. Nowadays the focus of the LGIs concentrates on making the lives of rural people more comfortable and meaningful with rural development. The overall rural development can contribute to the economic upscaling of the country. The key area of the Seventh FYP involved with developing a well-articulated legal framework, which ensures transfer of responsibilities in consort with necessary financial autonomy. The following sections have included the policies and strategies for strengthening local governance of the 7th FYP.

#### ***4.6.3.1 Development of a Framework Law***

Identifying the existence of 9 basic laws and several hundred rules regarding LGIs in Bangladesh, and absence of a unified local government legal framework the Seventh Plan found there was no 'local government system' flourished in the country. The Plan proposed the development of a single instrument 'Local Government Legal Framework' (LGLF) for all LGIs of all tiers whether rural or urban, and cover all aspects of the local bodies including election, formation, activities, taxation, budget, finance, etc.

#### ***4.6.3.2 Enhancement of Monitoring and Oversight***

The Plan envisioned formulation of a bunch benchmarks and indicators to measure LGIs performance. The jurisdictions of the oversight bodies were planned to enlarge further to scrutinise delivery of services and financial assignment, and to examine

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<sup>53</sup> Planning Commission, *Sixth Five-Year Plan (2011-15)*, 231.

<sup>54</sup> Planning Commission, *The Mid-term Implementation Review of the Sixth Five Year Plan: 2014*, 147.

<sup>55</sup> Planning Commission, *Sixth Five-Year Plan (2011-15)*, 425.

irregularities in the LGIs, and lastly, the oversight reports will be made accessible for the citizens and stakeholders.

#### ***4.6.3.3 Capacity Building of LGIs***

The Seventh Plan intended to build the capacity of LGIs through training programmes, technical help, and assigning proper officials. The immediate past Plan, the Sixth Plan also envisaged to capacity building of the LGIs; however, the process remained unfinished, and therefore, more actions are required.<sup>56</sup> The capacity building process of LGIs and the officials was plan to guide to give focus on the following issues: development of local level planning and formulation of, legal and inter-organisational cooperation framework with local bodies, financial solvency as well as social and legal requirements for resource mobilisation, incentives structures for the volunteers of LGIs, and relationship with other service providers at local level.

#### ***4.6.3.4 Financially Self-reliant Local Government***

Local government finance consists of three dimensions, such as local resource mobilisation, grants from central government, and transfer from the same through project and project financing. The government might develop a model tax schedule, and the local bodies would follow the same to levy taxes, tolls, rates and fees. With a view to ensuring financial autonomy, the Plan aspired to introduce modern property tax and handing the responsibility to the LGIs, besides supply of resources will increase self-reliance of finance.<sup>57</sup> The government was proposed to increase allocation of block grant and direct transfer from ADP spending gradually in proportionate to performances. For project finance, national government was prescribed to integrate participation of local government during formulation of the projects.

#### ***4.6.3.5 Tackling Shortage of Human Resources***

To address the shortage of the human resources to discharge the services of LGIs, the plan proposed for rethinking of establishment of ‘Local Government Service’ to develop a professional pool of officials with mobility to work any tiers of local government. For capacity building of officials at local level, the plan envisaged development of an independent group of experts and policy framework. In addition, establishment of separate training institutes for the officials of urban local government was proposed with developing of standard training modules.

#### ***4.6.3.6 Enhancing Participation of Citizens***

The 7th FYP perceived the importance of people’s participation in the governing process at local level as the previous SFYP. Thus, the Plan suggested government take

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<sup>56</sup> Planning Commission, *Seventh Five Year Plan (2016-2020): Accelerating Growth, Empowering Citizens* (December 2015), 385.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

initiatives to broaden the role of varied citizen committees and strengthening participation of citizens including disadvantaged groups, women, and ethnic minority, etc. The planned participation of people envisioned to develop plan, prioritise projects, and monitor implementation of the projects to oversee whether the implementation processes follow the expected standards.

#### ***4.6.3.7 Gender Mainstreaming***

The issues gender mainstreaming, agency building and empowerment of women remained as important as it was in the previous five-year plans. Attention was given to the gender mainstreaming with continuation of reserved seats and direct elections for women in the local bodies and providing more space for ensuring their participation with impacts through imparting increased roles and responsibilities within their purview.

#### ***4.6.3.8 Facilitation of e-Governance***

The 7th FYP aspired to facilitate e-governance in accordance with the vision of digital Bangladesh and vision 2021. The proliferation of e-governance at all level of governments will bring transparency and ensure accountability of the governing bodies through creating opportunities for pro-poor service delivery and enhanced participation of people. The a2i project under the PM office has brought development towards establishing strong e-governance system. The Plan suggested integration of e-governance with the functions of the LGIs; and the process will be supported through ensuring supply of skilled human resources, training, ICT programmes, software as well as hardware. The LGRD Ministry will be responsible to establish seamless horizontal and vertical connectivity among government institutions whether local or national; and the mechanisms will speed up and streamline decision-making, amplify implementation process and increase efficiency.

#### ***4.6.3.9 Developing Formula-based Tax Sharing***

The Seventh FYP urged to develop a formula for sharing national tax revenue with local bodies. National Tax Policy was planned to adopt the formula to cover a comprehensive area of tax sharing, which would ensure the accountability of both national and local government to the citizens, particularly to taxpayers.

### **4.6.4 Alignment of Local Plans with National Planning Goals and Strategies and Vice Versa**

LGIs have been suggested to use resources after developing respective annual and five-year plans with keeping alignments with national plans for development. The Planning Commission will be entrusted for formulation of “Planning Commission Guidelines” for LGIs, providing technical supports to LGIs for formulation of plans, and dispensing appropriate orders for relevant ministries and departments for

following the guidelines of the commission. Local plans will include the development programmes of the national level that are scheduled to be implemented at local level; and reciprocally participation of local government in local level project of national programmes will be ensured during formulation of the same. The Plan proposed to promote inclusive development with the cooperation of LGIs among the government agencies and Private Sectors.

Furthermore, efforts, such as formulation of guideline will be taken to develop and integrate local level plans into national plan during the implementation of the 7th FYP. LGIs are to be supported intensively for the preparation five-year plans to articulate local requirements, and integration of the same into the national plan with the facilitating roles of the of the Planning Commissions in consultation with the line ministries' wings for planning.<sup>58</sup>

**Table 4. 2: SLG in Brief in FYPs**

Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction of four-tier of local government (Gram, Union, Upazila and Zila Parishad)</li> <li>2. Formation and activation of SCs</li> <li>3. Devolution of power, authority and functions to the LGIs</li> <li>4. Introduction of participatory planning</li> <li>5. Direct election of Women members in reserved seats</li> <li>6. Empowerment of the poor and the disadvantaged groups through capacity building and participation</li> <li>7. Making official accountable to the citizens and bestowing the power of recalling or removal on loss in no confidence</li> <li>8. Expansion of tax and non-tax bases for increasing own revenue earning</li> <li>9. Setting criteria for allocation of block funds from the central government</li> <li>10. Establishing a periodic commission for examining of sharing of revenue between central and local government</li> <li>11. Engaging NGOs in local development</li> <li>12. Implementation of the recommendations of the Local Government Commission</li> </ol>
Sixth Five Year Plan (2011-2015)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Capacity building of LGIs to for delivering basic services</li> <li>2. Empowering local government to play a more prominent role in local development with transfer of authority and constant monitoring of the utility and appropriateness of such a transfer</li> <li>3. Enhancing participation of citizens of all strata in public governance</li> </ol>

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 386.



	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Providing both human and financial resources for carrying out mandates for delivery of increased services with responsibility</li> <li>5. Defining the responsibilities and accountabilities of LGIs lucidly</li> <li>6. e-Governance for speedier services and transparency</li> <li>7. LGIs to make accountable to the people to ensure performance</li> <li>8. Measures would be taken to avoid overlapping in functions and authority among tiers of local government</li> <li>9. Quality services would be delivered through segmenting the target groups based on inherent attributes</li> <li>10. Institution of district-level budgets</li> <li>11. Gender mainstreaming and ensuring women's representation in the local bodies with authority and responsibility</li> <li>12. Strengthening role citizens, and committees in monitoring functions of the LGIs</li> </ol>
Seventh Five Year Plan (2016-2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction of 'Local Government Service' for developing a pool of skilled officials</li> <li>2. Initiation for formula-based transfer tax revenue to local bodies</li> <li>3. Developing the Model Tax Schedule to levy taxes, rates, tolls and fees</li> <li>4. Increase block grant corresponding to performance</li> <li>5. Integration of local components of national plans into local level plans and vice versa</li> <li>6. Establishment of independent group of experts, and policy framework for capacity building</li> <li>7. Promotion of intergovernmental cooperation</li> <li>8. Gender mainstreaming in LGIs</li> <li>9. Development of umbrella legal framework 'Local Government Legal Framework'</li> <li>10. Enhancement of overseeing, and building capacity of the monitoring agency</li> <li>11. Strengthening participation of the citizens in planning and budgeting</li> <li>12. Facilitation of e-governance at local level</li> <li>13. Formulation of 'Planning Commission Guidelines' for LGIs</li> <li>14. Inclusion of Planning Commission, line ministries in facilitating planning process</li> </ol>

Source: Adopted and modified.<sup>59</sup>

It has been found that varied FYPs since 1997 to present include the aspiration of the government to establish strong and effective local government in all tiers. The key areas of reforms as identified by the planners were legal framework, people's

<sup>59</sup> Hossain Zillur Rahman, and Tofail Ahmed, "Strategy on Local Government Strengthening," 9-10.

participation, gender mainstreaming, capacity building, strengthening oversight, bestowing more responsibilities, making LGIs financially autonomous, introducing e-governance, improving service delivery, etc. However, over the years, it has been found that the implementation of the components of the plans remained poor, in some area there found no observable change due to lack of ‘ethos of democratic governance,’ and strong political commitment; distorted implementation of the recommendations; scarcity of resource, authority and autonomy; bureaucratic averseness, corruption, and usage of reforms for creating support base.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, these Five Year Plans exhibit lacking in visible promise on transfer of resources from centre to the periphery on the basis of countrywide calculation.

#### **4.7 SLG in other Plans and Strategies**

There are other plans of the government, which documented provisions for SLG in their visions and missions. Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 aspired for having autonomous LGIs in supplying higher level of services to their constituents through raising local taxes and levies, and promoting participatory planning.<sup>61</sup> Post-2015 Development Agenda has emphasised on making local bodies strengthened financially and administratively.<sup>62</sup> Additionally, both ‘Perspective Plan of Bangladesh’ and ‘National Sustainable Development Strategy’ urged government to strengthen governance of the sub-national governments.<sup>63</sup> The Perspective Plan put forward plans for conforming to constitutional provisions to devolve power, functions, and fiscal authority to localities. The Plan furthered its conception with emphasising local resource mobilisations, and capacity building of the LGIs to administer the expenses.

##### **4.7.1 SLG in National Integrity Strategy of Bangladesh**

The government with a view to institutionalising good governance formulated ‘National Integrity Strategy of Bangladesh’ (NISB).<sup>64</sup> One of the components of NISB has been local government. It identified loopholes of LGIs, viz. dependency of LGIs on national government for resources, scarcity of local earnings, lack of skills and capacity of officials, lack of devolution of responsibilities and authority to rural LGIs, lack of transparency and accountability, lack of coordination among GO, NGO, LGI and local enterprise, ambiguity in recognising reserved and transferred issues, and focal point of local government as well.<sup>65</sup> The NISB specified a work plan to frustrate

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<sup>60</sup> Abu Elias Sarker, “The Political Economy of Decentralized Governance: An Assessment of Rural Local Government Reforms in Bangladesh,” *International Journal of Public Administration* 29:13 (2006): 1296-1302.

<sup>61</sup> Planning Commission, *Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100* (2007), 406.

<sup>62</sup> Idem., *Post 2015 Development Agenda: Bangladesh Proposal to UN* (June 2013), 15.

<sup>63</sup> Idem., *Perspective Plan of Bangladesh: 2010-2021, Making Vision 2021 a Reality* (2012), 16-17; and *National Sustainable development strategy* (2013), 130.

<sup>64</sup> *National Integrity Strategy of Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Cabinet Division, 2012), 1.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 18-19.

the problems and challenges of local government. The following are the recommendations of the NISB to establish good local governance:

1. to increase government allocations based on socio-economic-geographical realities;
2. to increase the circumference of the base of income of LGIs (legally allowing LGIs to collect sales tax, VAT);
3. to ensure transparency and accountability of the officials of LGIs through peoples' initiatives (introduction of report cards to evaluate officials by citizens, and dissemination of information);
4. to specify the roles and jurisdictions of MPs and bureaucrats in local government (particularly in Zila and Upazila Parishad);
5. to set work scopes of ZP and make the same focal point of local government;
6. to incept 'Local Government Service;' and
7. to capacitate all the officials of local government.<sup>66</sup>

#### **4.7.2 SLG in Annual Plan**

The national budget of FY 2018-19 has planned for a major reform in local government for attaining higher growth rate as high as 10% through decentralisation of power to establish 'autonomous and self-reliant' district and city governments in all 64 districts and nine metropolitan cities.<sup>67</sup> Such bodies' have been planned to be equipped with their 'own type of bureaucracy,' and specific functions and responsibilities. Furthermore, a list of joint responsibilities of central government, and district government and metropolitan as well will be specified with measures of coordination. The proposed budget has intended to have been formulated a policy for revenue collection and sharing between the district governments and national government with keeping the main responsibility of revenue collection in the jurisdiction of central government, allowing district government to collect only property tax, and fees for particular services. The eventual plan of the budget has been making district government responsible for defraying of expenditure over 60% of national budget, and through which the decentralised and strengthened local government will be institutionalised.

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>67</sup> Abul Mal Abdul Muhit, "Budget Speech of FY 2018-19," June 7, 2018, 89-90, [https://mof.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/mof.portal.gov.bd/page/b29661b6\\_927f\\_4012\\_9f83\\_5ac47dbd6ebd/Speech\\_EN\\_18\\_19.pdf](https://mof.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/mof.portal.gov.bd/page/b29661b6_927f_4012_9f83_5ac47dbd6ebd/Speech_EN_18_19.pdf) (accessed June 7, 2018).

## 4.8 Some other Efforts of the Government for SLG

### 4.8.1 Construction of ‘Home’ for the Local Bodies

Initiatives have been taken to build UP/UPZ complex in the UP/UPZ to arrange one-stop service delivery. With a view to confirming construction of complexes at all UPs, the government relaxes the provision of minimum land required, as required area of land was 0.50 acre initially, now it is fixed at 0.25 acre.<sup>68</sup>

### 4.8.2 Activation of National Institute of Local Government (NILG)

NILG is the solo organisation, which has been entrusted with the responsibilities of conduction of training for officials related with local government. Furthermore, the body also conducts researches, arranges workshops, seminars, and conferences, takes up collaborative programmes with international organisations on issues of local government, etc.<sup>69</sup> The officials of the NILG has been providing training in and out of the country. Efforts have taken to enhance training facilities, and use of ICT, etc. The NILG has heightened its relationship with NGOs, and developed a policy for the NGOs named, ‘Guidelines for Strategic Engagement: Experience-based Guidelines for Non-governmental Organisations’ to help NGOs to connect with UPs more effectively, and assist to institute ‘a strong, responsible and accountable system of collaboration between NGOs and Union Parishads.’<sup>70</sup> Additionally this national institution through a partnership framework with collaboration of sector partners formulated a ‘National Basic Capacity Development (CapDev) Framework.’ Under the CapDev framework, a common course curriculum has been designed for both government and NGO officials, and organised a resource pool of 150 members. The framework is to organise both supply and demand driven training programmes. To conduct the supply driven training programmes, a trained Upazila Recourse Team (URT) has been developed at each UPZ to train UP representatives; and for demand-driven training, such as peer/ horizontal leaning or specialised learning NILG has worked closely with NGOs to support UPs.<sup>71</sup>

### 4.8.3 Increasing Use of ICT

Making dreams of Digital Bangladesh true, the government promoting e-governance; and as a part of e-governance- e-procurement, GIS mapping inventory has been updated and modernisation of software has been implemented. Furthermore, software on accounting, water billing, tax management, and trade license management have been developed and transferred to the Poursabhas to use with providing skill

<sup>68</sup> Local Government Division, *Annual Report: 2014-2015* (Dhaka: LGD, 2015), 3.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>70</sup> Santanu Lahiri, and Kabir M. Ashraf Alam, *Guidelines for Strategic Engagement Experience-based Guidelines for Non-governmental Organisations* (Dhaka: SDC, and NILG, 2014), 9.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 13.

development training, and the Pourasabhas started using the software. In addition, the government has planned to complete all tenders through e-procurement.<sup>72</sup> The LGD introduced specialised and secured e-mail services for the LGIs.

#### 4.8.4 Learning Foreign Trip for the UP Chairs

The government has been sending elected and non-elected officials of local bodies abroad to learn practices of the local level institutions; for example, in the FY 2013-14 and 2015-16 total 200 UP chairs and secretaries (25) were sent to foreign countries.<sup>73</sup>

#### 4.8.5 Increasing Honorariums of the Representatives<sup>74</sup>

The government took initiatives to increase the honorarium of the elected official of the local bodies. The officials include with their amount of current honorarium in parenthesis: mayors (BDT. 85,000) and councillors (BDT. 35,000) of city corporations, chairs (BDT. 54,000) and members (BDT. 35,000) of Zila Parishads, chairs (BDT. 40,000) and vice-chairs (BDT. 27,000) of UZP, and chairs (BDT. 8,000) and members (BDT. 5,000) of the UPs.<sup>75</sup>

#### 4.8.6 Increased Budget Supply to LGD and UPs

The government has increased resource flow to the LGIs through LGD, which has the vision to establish participatory and lively local governance. To materialise the vision, the national level body fixed its mission. “To improve living standard of people by strengthening local government system, rural and urban infrastructural development and implementation of socio-economic programmes.”<sup>76</sup> To attain these visions the government has increased budget and ADP allocation in favour LGD. The table below shows that the budget and ADP allocation though has been increased in amount but decreased in proportionate to ratio of total budget and ADP respectively. Both the components of budget showed an upward trend of allocation.

**Table 4. 3: Allocation for LGD in Budget and ADP (BDT Crore)**

FY	Budget 2018-19	Revised 2017-18	Actual 2016-17	Actual 2015-16	Actual 2014-15	Actual 2013-14	Actual 2012-13
Budget Allocation	29,150	26,540	15,387	17,701	16,060	12,406	12,314
Ratio of Budget	(6.27)	(7.14)	(5.71)	(7.37)	(7.69)	(6.56)	(7.01)
ADP Allocation	25,338	22,791	12,374	15,285	13,983	10,544	10,425
Ratio of ADP	(14.6)	(15.4)	(14.7)	(18.9)	(21.5)	(19.1)	(21.1)

Source: Derived from the Ministry of Finance, GoB.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>72</sup> LGD, *Five Years of Success: 2009-2013* (Dhaka: LGD, 2013), 41.

<sup>73</sup> LGD, *Comparative Report of Achievements of Present Government and Previous Coalition Government* (Dhaka: LGD, 2016), 2.

<sup>74</sup> LGD, *Five Years of Success: 2009-2013*, 3.

<sup>75</sup> “Honorarium of Mayors, Chairmen, Councillors Increased,” *The Daily Observer* (online desk), January 10, 2017, <http://www.observerbdt.com/details.php?id=52636> (accessed May 30, 2018).

<sup>76</sup> LGD, “Mission Statement and Major Functions,” <http://www.lgd.gov.bd/site/page/> (accessed May 31, 2018).

<sup>77</sup> Abul Mal Abdul Muhit, “Budget Speech of FY 2018-19,” June 7, 2018, 138.

**Table 4. 4: Budget Allocation for UPs (BDT in Crore)**

LGI	2016-17P	2015-16R	2014-15A	2013-14A
Union Parishad	204.00	208.70	197.35	195.87

Source: Mahfuz Kabir (2017).<sup>78</sup>

It has been further found in the table that UPs have received a steady and persistently increasing budget allocation with an even annual adjustment over the years. However, the challenge has been reaching of government resources to the targeted people due to the existence of the top-down policy. According to UNDP estimation, only two percent government resources reach the Unions against the allocated twenty percent.<sup>79</sup>

#### 4.8.7 Facilitation of NGOs' Activities

Government has been promoting GO-NGO collaboration both at national and local level. Conventionally the poor functioning of local government in face of comparatively successful and resourceful operation of NGOs brought them in the prominence. It has been evident in Five-Year Plans that the government understood the importance of the NGOs for supplementing the government's delivery system to reach the poor and the disadvantaged group more effectively and to play a creative role to make them aware. The Fifth FYP envisioned including the fields through mutual discussions in which collaboration would be viable.<sup>80</sup> The Sixth FYP underscored the necessity of widening the area of collaboration in other areas with NGOs success in social sectors such as education, health, training, women's empowerment, micro-credits, climate change and social protection.<sup>81</sup> The Seventh FYP indicated gradual making of inroad of NGOs in the sphere of local governance in both urban and rural context.<sup>82</sup> The Plan furthered its goals to cooperate NGOs in piloting innovative ideas.

The government in 2016 enacted a new law 'Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Act, 2016' for NGOs accommodating couple of laws i.e. Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Ordinance, 1978, (Ordinance No. XLVI of 1978) and Foreign Contributions (Regulation) Ordinance, 1982 (Ordinance No. XXXI of 1982) into a single one. Earlier in the 90s, there was a 'Government-NGO Consultative Committee,' to fine-tuning the cooperation between these actors, developed through a gazette notification, however, in course of time, the body

<sup>78</sup> Mahfuz Kabir, "Local Government and Economic Empowerment," *The Daily Star*, February 27, 2017, <https://www.thedailystar.net/towards-just-and-inclusive-society/local-government-and-economic-empowerment-1367632> (accessed June 1, 2018). [P: proposed, R: revised, and A: Actual]

<sup>79</sup> The Hunger Project, *MDG Unions: Villages that Work* (Dhaka: The Hunger Project, 2012), 3, [https://mdgunions.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/mdgs\\_union-strategy\\_2013.pdf](https://mdgunions.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/mdgs_union-strategy_2013.pdf) (accessed January 22, 2017).

<sup>80</sup> Planning Commission, *The Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)*, 160.

<sup>81</sup> Idem., *Sixth Five-Year Plan (2011-15)*, 232.

<sup>82</sup> Idem., *Seventh Five Year Plan (2016-2020)*, 383.

gradually allowed to pause its activities.<sup>83</sup> There is also NGO Affairs Bureau since January 1990 as the regulatory authority to facilitate NGOs activities and provide one-stop service under PMO with a view to synchronisation of NGOs, line ministries, state agencies, and development partners as well.

#### 4.9 Conclusion

Bangladesh yet to be contented with the tiers of LG. Over the period of varied regimes, the local government, as a matter of fact, has turned into a zone of experiments with the functions and the structures. The government realised the urgency of strengthening of LGIs. Varied documents, commissions' reports, FYPs, and legal reformations are the evidences of such recognition. However, in comparison to the needs of the perspectives, the initiatives of the government have not been found complementary in line with devolution of responsibilities and authority, and making LGIs financially autonomous. The promises, pledges and commitments of the government seem rhetorical, in the absence of actual implementation in the field level due to lack of strong political commitment disregarding the essence of democracy deliberately, and unwillingness of the bureaucracy for retaining control over central level planning.<sup>84</sup> In recent times, the government based on principles of NPM, good governance, social accountability mechanisms has enacted new laws. The citizens and representatives at localities fall short to implement provisions of such acts, rules and regulations for their lack of knowledge and skill. In this backdrop, donors, development partners and NGOs have shown intentions to play significant roles for strengthening local governance with collaboration of central government as well as LGIs at local level, though there exists lacking recognisable and perspicuous aspirations in varied plans and guidelines in legal documents, except Seventh FYP, which has included aspiration for NGOs inclusion in improving governance. The Next chapter has included discussions on varied efforts of GO-NGO collaborative efforts at length for making local bodies strengthened with capacity to implement participatory planning and budgeting and deliver the services efficiently with confirming customer like satisfaction for the citizens.

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<sup>83</sup> Satyajit Singh, *Capacity Assessment for NGO Affairs Bureau, Prime Minister's Office, Bangladesh*, executive summary (Dhaka: UNDP, 2016), 3.

<sup>84</sup> Pranab Panday, "Decentralisation without Decentralisation: Bangladesh's Failed Attempt to Transfer Power from the Central Government to Local Governments," *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Administration*, 39, no. 3 (2017): 177-188; and Mahfuz Kabir, "Local Government and Economic Empowerment."

## Chapter 5

### Collaborative Programmes: Collective Measures of GO-NGO

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter has dealt with the process part of the collaborative efforts. The process parts include the inputs, actions, and outputs of the efforts. The main thrust of this chapter is to discuss collaborative initiatives of Sharique with the UPs. Along with the issues of Sharique, the chapter has made an endeavour to highlight some of the collaborative efforts of different NGOs that are working for strengthening the governance of local government bodies in general, and UPs in particular and explicate how these actors are implementing their plans. These discussions on strategies and activities of other such collaborative efforts have contributed to uncovering the commonalities among the programmes.

#### 5.2 Major GO-NGO Collaborative Initiatives at the Local Level: Initiatives of Sharique

Sharique- a Local Governance Project, an endeavour of Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), has been working for strengthening local governance since 2006 and completed more than a decade of involvement and activities through Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation (hereinafter Helvetas). The very word Sharique means ‘partnership’ that has been taken from Bangla (originally Arabic). It has completed three phases, and the third phase ‘Sharique-III,’ has brought dimension in addition to their previous programme goals. Phase III of the project has emphasised on strategic planning and fiscal autonomy, as well as poverty reduction and social inclusiveness. This phase has taken initiatives to persuade central government’s policies and practices to change, through promoting good practices of the project and strong research endeavours.<sup>1</sup> Sharique has collaborated with the lowest two tiers of local governments- the UP and UZP, and involved with other NGOs, NILG, and different ministries. Having finished three phase, Sharique has been implementing another phase, they called it fourth phase, since 2017 with different strategies and goals. Being the last phase of the project, it has planned to institutionalise the collaboration practice for SLG by BRDB (Bangladesh Rural Development Board), a government agency and to transfer the activation processes to the agency to replicate all over Bangladesh.

Sharique has planned to tackle the matter of getting people emancipated from poverty by smoothening the progress of services of governance well; through firstly,

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<sup>1</sup> Tofail Ahmed et al., *Social Accountability Mechanisms: A Study on the Union Parishads in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: BRAC University, 2016), 1.



capacitating LGIs at Union and Upazila level, and secondly, providing assistance to citizens to take part in decision-making process of the localities. It has given emphasis on making LGIs strengthened by capacitating functionaries of LGIs, and communities as supply and demand side respectively. The project has recognised officials, and citizens as key actors to establish pro-poor good local governance. Furthermore, it has also acknowledged that actors from outside can play significant roles in expediting the formation of poor and marginalised people sensitive local bodies through facilitation of supports to both officials, and inhabitants. It has also remained flexible in implementing, promoting learning by doing, and sharing the learning with other actors.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 5. 1: Sharique Project at a Glance**

Name of the programme	Sharique: A Local Governance Project
Duration	Phase I: 2006-2009; Phase II: 2010-2013; Phase III: 2013-2016
Goal	Contribute to the empowerment of local citizens to make and implement inclusive, gender sensitive and pro-poor collective choices about their lives and livelihoods through more democratic, transparent, inclusive and effective local government systems.
Working area	207 UPs, and 29 UZPs, of 4 Districts (Rajshahi, Chapai Nawabganj, Sunamganj, Khulna)
Funded by	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Implementing Agency	Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation
Field implementing partners	Sachetan, MSP (Multi-Stakeholder Platform), SNKS (Samata Nari Kallyan Sangstha), SUS (Swabalamby Unnayan Samity), ERA (Efforts for Rural Advancement), CNRS (Centre for Natural Resource Studies)
Strategic partner	NILG, Mass Line Media Centre
Consortium partner	BIGD (BRAC Institute of Governance and Development)
Total budget	Phase I CHF 4,950,000; Phase II CHF 8,990,000; Phase III CHF 9,700,000
Number of groups /person impacted	1,900 community groups with about 50,000 members, 1200 networks of citizens group

*Source: Project documents of Sharique.*

Sharique has facilitated and provided capacity development opportunities to both UPs and UPZs in the following key areas: open Budget meetings, formation of UDCC, tax assessment and collection; development and implementation of Local Governance Self-Assessment Plans (LGSA) and Governance Improvement Plans (GIP); and roles and responsibilities of local government functionaries, financial management, disaster risk reduction, right to information (RTI) act, power and gender analysis, women's public speaking and leadership.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> SDC, *Supporting Local Governments and Citizens Practice Pro-Poor Good Local Governance: A Handbook Based on the Experience of the SDC Local Governance Programme Sharique in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation Bangladesh, 2013), 8.

<sup>3</sup> Maheen Sultana, and Jordanka Tomkova, *Sharique Mid-Term Review (2009-2011)* (Dhaka: SDC, 2012), 10, <https://ext.d-nsbp-p.admin.ch/NSBExterneStudien/externestudien/477/it/1865.pdf> (accessed January 16, 2017).

## 5.2.1 Sharique's Involvement in Strengthening Local Governance

### 5.2.1.1 Seeing through the Lens: Local Bodies and Citizens

The programme has recognised the list of attributes that good local governments and active citizens should possess. According to the list, a good UP should involve citizens and be proactive, form different committees timely, organise ward Sabha, open budget session, and the meeting of UDCC, formulate strategic planning, disclose information, be open in working days, assess and collect tax, maintain register and manage information, ensure voice of marginalised, conduct financial audit, participate in social audit, run village court, and select beneficiaries of social safety net programmes properly. Furthermore, the programme has idealised a good citizen volunteer to be part of Ward platform and active in committees with voice, monitor projects, seek information, rectify lists for safety net programmes, pay tax, vote in election, participate in trainings, challenge child marriage and human trafficking, inspire others to get involved with UPs with raising awareness.<sup>4</sup>

### 5.2.1.2 Strategic Components of Sharique

#### 5.2.1.2.1 Horizontal/Peer Learning

Sharique has introduced and promoted horizontal learning, in other words, peer learning in the project area. The learning process involves learning by observing, at first hand, the activities and practices of the successful actors by the actors who are performing in the same arena poorly. Sharique has adopted the role of matchmaker to introduce those units, which have been underperforming, with successful units, which have practised local governance effectively. The poor performing units observe and participate in the process of implementation and other related activities and acquire knowledge, skill, and expertise from direct experiences of field level activities. The peer learning process enables officials and volunteers to realise, and imbibe the learning properly for introducing the good practices in their respective areas.<sup>5</sup>

#### 5.2.1.2.2 Converting Good Practices into 'Union Parishad Local Academies'

The good practices have been given a formal shape with a view to disseminating the learning to other actors all over the country. Sharique has developed a dynamic idea of introducing 'Union Parishad Local Academy' (UPLA) programme which has been planned to promote learning through the practice of sharing and observing the good practices that are related to governance of the UPs.<sup>6</sup> The initiative depends on the dedication of the LGIs, which offer the role of facilitation with their good practices, strategic partnership with national level institution 'National Institute of Local Government' (NILG), which is responsible for providing training on local governance

<sup>4</sup> SDC, *Supporting Local Governments*, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Md. Zahirul Islam, *An Alternative Way to Replicate Good Practices* (Dhaka: SDC, n. d.): 1-5.

<sup>6</sup> Helvetas Bangladesh, "The Compendium of Laws on Local Government is Launched," [https://bangladesh.helvetas.org/en/news\\_bangladesh/?1257/compendiumlawLGLaunch](https://bangladesh.helvetas.org/en/news_bangladesh/?1257/compendiumlawLGLaunch) (accessed January 8, 2017).

at national level. The good practices that have been practicing effectively by UPs with their own capacity and resources will be selected as UPLA programmes. Interested persons have been sent to these UPs for getting knowledge and practical experience. The local government representatives have given the responsibility to run and manage the UPLAs with support from resource persons of the communities, and the performances have been designed to evaluate by UPLA accreditation commission. These academies have been given NILG accreditation to provide an official status. In addition, Sharique has collaborated with two-community radio stations to promote UPLA. In its final stage, the UPLA programme has planned to be included in the training programmes of all possible platforms (LGSP-II, NILG's Network – BARD, RDA, BRDTI and other 12 NGOs and so on).<sup>7</sup>

#### ***5.2.1.2.3 Knowledge Sharing and Replication of Good Practices***

Sharique has achieved progress and got local governance improved through its designated efforts. The project has understood that there have been a number of development actors including GoB working for SLG. Local governance programme Sharique has found its good practices at local level in its way to establish pro-poor good local governance. The project has planned to share its knowledge that gains from experience, and replicate its good practices nationwide.

#### ***5.2.1.2.4 Giving Accompaniment***

The notion of accompaniment is the main operational approach of Sharique for the capacity development of project staff, NGO partners, and local governments. As external actors, Sharique plays the role of companion in the process of SLG.

#### ***5.2.1.3 Systematic and Integrated Approach of Sharique***

Sharique project has targeted four milestones to reach, and for that, fixed eight vertical steps to climb up to establish self-motivated PLG.<sup>8</sup> The milestones and related steps to reach self-sufficient local governance have been given below:

##### ***a) Milestones of Sharique SLG***

Sharique has set four milestones to achieve; the milestones include first, awareness and empowerment to have actors conscious on good governance and able to detect targets. Second, the capacity building leads to practising of components of good governance. The third milestone has involved with mobilizing and managing resources effectively with participatory and pro-poor way. The fourth milestone has been marked by a continuity of the process of exercising good local governance, taking of supervision and targeting quality improvements, and managing budgets for the poor by both local bodies and citizens.

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<sup>7</sup> SDC, "The Concept Note for Developing Strategy for Sharing Good Practices," *UPLA* (2013): 1-6. [http://horizontallearning.net/Files/19122013041057pmCN.UP\\_Local\\_Academy.Dec\\_2013.docx](http://horizontallearning.net/Files/19122013041057pmCN.UP_Local_Academy.Dec_2013.docx) (accessed January 15, 2017).

<sup>8</sup> SDC, *Supporting Local Governments*, 9-33.

### **b) Steps of Sharique's Initiatives for Establishing PLG**

Milestones have been fixed as indicators to determine when to leap for the next stage. The initiative by Sharique has categorised various kinds of tools, such as manuals, guidelines, etc. to be used in moving forward step by step in establishing pro-poor local governments. Step 1-3 of the first milestone involved with context analysis, formulation of GIP through LGSA, organisation of training to make citizens and local governance functionaries aware on roles and responsibilities, reactivation of UPs' committees, exchange of information between supply and demand sides, and erection of boards for disclosing information by UPs. Step four of milestone 2, was related to providing assistance for formulating budget through organizing WS and OBM, and orientation of SSNPs. Step 5 and 6 of milestone 3, engaged with tax assessment and tax collection, and mobilization and management of resources participatory way. Finally, step 7 and 8 of milestone 4, dealt with arranging tailor-made training programmes by responding to requests, consolidating PLG through focusing on budget allocation and quality of service delivery, and social auditing.<sup>9</sup>

#### **5.2.1.4 Activities of Sharique**

Sharique has engaged with UPs through: first, holding series of bilateral exchange meetings with identified stakeholders, second, organizing a meeting by assembling all interested UPs, third, request for meeting with officials at UPZ, district and divisional level, and finally, fourth, formalisation of working relationship with an inception meeting. After that, the scheme has identified both the supply and demand side actors. For selecting active actors of demand side, the programme has brought all the leaders of such groups, which have been motivated by other NGOs in a Ward to form a new group of volunteers (Ward Platform, WP) who have chosen themselves to be active citizens. The platform has been planned to play catalyser's roles to organise citizens of all strata, and incorporate the interests of the citizens of a Ward and to contribute in identifying priorities of demands, supervising development projects, participating in decision-making process, promoting women participation in UP committees and with other activities, helping UPs in the process of selecting SSNP beneficiaries.<sup>10</sup>

To activate actors of both sides the project has employed Local Government Self-Assessment (LGSA) to identify the strength and weakness of the UPs and based on the findings to develop a Governance Improvement Plan (GIP). Through GIP, both supply and demand sides have identified lists challenges for establishing pro-poor local governance, and from the lists, issues have been prioritised and implemented with technical support and strategic grant of Sharique. The grant has been termed as

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 9-32.

<sup>10</sup> Daniela Christina Buchmann, "Accountability at the Local Level in Fragile Contexts: Bangladesh Case Study," *IDS Working Paper 2013, no. 419* (April 2013), 3, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.2040-0209.2013.00419.x/pdf> (accessed February 8, 2017).

reinforcing column of Sharique approach. The grants are though small (up to 400,000 Taka – approx. 5000 CHF), yet it has been used for pro-poor development, arranging own training programmes and implementing GIP.<sup>11</sup> The project has also extended assistance to tax assessments with public hearing, social auditing, organisation of WS and OBM, placing information boards, technical support for formulation of FYP, etc.

Sharique project has organised varied training programmes for both officials and citizens, particularly for the members of the WPs on RTI, tax assessment, and collection, selection of beneficiaries of social safety net programmes, gender issues, budget, and strategic planning, roles and responsibilities of standing committees, etc.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the project has arranged refresher training programmes to keeps both supply and demand sides active with changed context and challenges. Moreover, for tackling the poor capacity and the weak governance, the project has developed varied tools: training modules, guidelines, checklists, questionnaires, flashcards, and Compendium of Laws, LGSA, participatory gender analysis, etc. Additionally, the project has awarded project grant of BDT .8 million to the women groups headed by a woman member through competitive selection of projects, with a view to activating women for project planning and implementation. Women have also provided with speaking up training for public speaking to place demands and make queries.

Sharique has conducted advocacy at the national level for policy change for devolution of power and responsibilities to the LGIs. On the other hand, at the local level, the programme has enhanced interlinking among different tiers of local government, and most prominently, the UPs and UPZs have absorbed the attention.

### **5.2.2 Key Results Achieved Till Today**

The project itself has claimed success in different sectors at different levels. Some of them are as follows: 130 UPs enhanced their capacity of managing good governance, and the majority of them institutionalised the practices, through employing bottom-up strategy, providing information, collecting tax in the one-hand, and delivering services and information to citizens on demand on the other hand. Additionally, female members have their voice raised; 70% rational demand of the extremely poor have been considered at the annual planning meeting, and on average 26% of budget has been allocated for projects that have only been implemented for the extremely poor, as well as 75% of UZPs have been practising participatory and open budgeting exercise.<sup>13</sup>

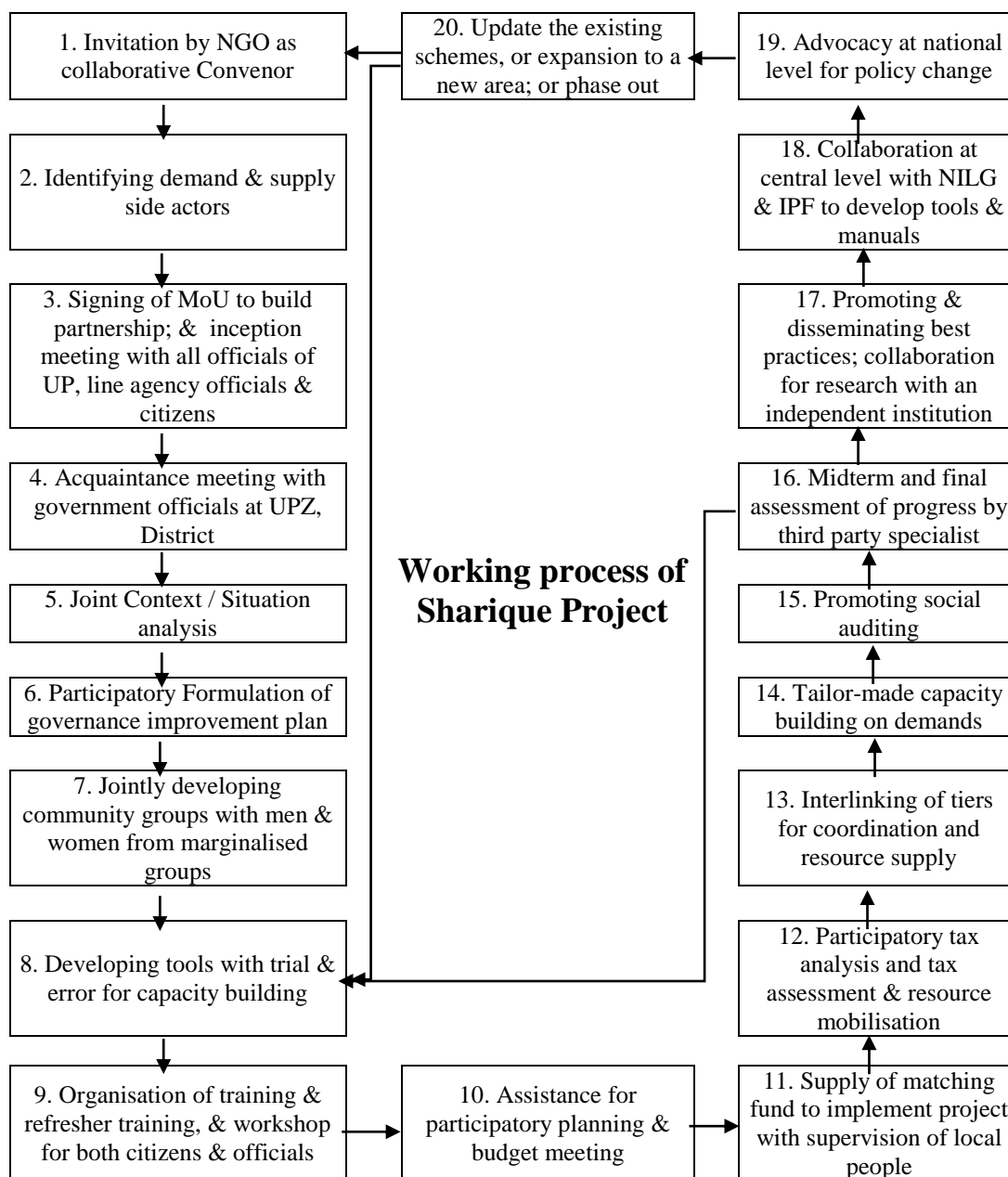
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<sup>11</sup> Maheen Sultana, and Jordanka Tomkova, *Sharique Mid-Term Review (2009-2011)*, 10.

<sup>12</sup> Rosemary Mcgee, and Celestine Kroeschell, “Local Accountabilities in Fragile Contexts: Experiences from Nepal, Bangladesh, and Mozambique,” *IDS Working Paper 2012*, no. 422 (2013), 16, <https://www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/Wp422.pdf> (accessed January 17, 2017).

<sup>13</sup> Helvetas Bangladesh, “Local Governance Programme Sharique.”

### 5.2.3 Working Flow of Sharique Project in Collaboration with UPs



**Figure 5. 1: Functional Flow of Collaboration between UPs & Sharique.** Source: Developed by the researcher.<sup>14</sup>

The simplified functional flow chart of collaboration programme has summarised the activities of the project and its varied stages from inception to the phase-out or continuation of another phase. It has included 20 steps, the details of which have been given earlier in the description part.

<sup>14</sup> Model adopted from Afroza Begum, Government-NGO Interface in Development Management: Experiences of Selected Collaboration Model in Bangladesh 3rd ed. (Dhaka: A H Development Publishing House, 2008), 127.

### 5.3 Union Parishad Governance Project (UPGP) and Upazila Governance Project (UZGP)

Both the UZGP and UPGP started their journey in 2012. These projects have been taken to support local governance reforms of GoB by UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and UNCDF (United Nation Capital Development Fund) according to their programmatic framework with the assistance of EU, SDC, and DANIDA. UPGP targets to improve governance of UPs institutionally and innovatively in a broader spectrum. The project has carried the legacy and inherited the success of two other successful projects- Sirajganj Local Governance Development Fund Project (SLGDFP) (2000-2006), and Local Government Support Project-Learning, and Innovation Component (LGSP-LIC) (2007-2011). These two projects have been attached horizontally and vertically through their project documents and the process of implementation, as they have been the part of the wider local government support programme. Both the projects have been managed and implemented by shared teams to achieve a common yield of capacity and policy improvement.

**Table 5. 2: UPGP and UZGP Project in Brief**

Goal	UPGP	Government institutions at national and sub-national level are able to carry out their mandates more effectively, including delivery of public services, in a more accountable, transparent and inclusive manner.
	UZGP	
Specific Objective	UPGP	To strengthen Union Parishads (UPs) by creating a model of effective public service delivery, in line with high accountability and citizens' participation.
	UZGP	To strengthen the capacities of local governments and other stakeholders to foster participatory local development services for the MDGs.
Duration	UPGP	Dec 01, 2011 - Nov 30, 2016
	UZGP	
Working Area	UPGP	Seven districts of seven division (Kishoreganj, Brahmanbaria, Sunamganj, Sirajganj, Khulna, Barguna, Rangpur)
	UZGP	
Number of UPs and UPZs	UPGP	564 UPs
	UZGP	65 UPZs (Capacity building support to all UPZs of Bangladesh[487])
Field Level Partners	UPGP	Local Government Division Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives, Bangladesh
	UZGP	
Total Budget	UPGP	US\$ 18,391,108.00
	UZGP	US\$ 19,312,916.00
Funded By	UPGP	GoB, European Union, Danida, UNCDF and UNDP
	UZGP	GoB, European Union, SDC, UNCDF and UNDP

Source: Project documents<sup>15</sup>

#### 5.3.1 Union Parishad Governance Project (UPGP)

The project has been mechanised to involve with improving governance of the UPs, promoting people's attachment in every stage of development activities, ensuring supply of enhanced and improved basic services, generating local resources to recede the pressure on government efforts, promoting gender equity in participation in the affairs of UPs, capacitating UPs to manage their mandated activities by the UP Act of

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

2009, and promoting answerability and openness in the management of activities of UPs.<sup>16</sup> The UPGP project has planned to work with four core institutional platforms e.g., the UP, the SC, the WS, and the Women Development Forum (WDF) of local governance. Furthermore, the project has been given responsibility to build an active and effective connection with Upazila administration, as well as with LGD, to have an impact on policy support for local government. UPGP, with a view to materializing these plans, has engaged in activities like- backstopping for four institutional mechanisms in executing their mandates successfully, enhancing the quality of interface of the same four with communities, strengthening planning, and financing, improving the process of resource mobilization, capacitating relevant stakeholders, and generating knowledge and policy instruments to hold up the above activities.<sup>17</sup>

The project has initiated training programmes related to legal issues, organizational structures and functions of UPs, activation of WS, formation and functioning of SCs, preparation of five-year and annual plan, formulation of budget, execution, monitoring, and overseeing of projects, as well as initiatives to strengthen services by UPs for the people. These sessions have included preparation of action plan by every UP for three months. The project has introduced peer-learning visits in its endeavour to promote the interchange of knowledge, good practices, experiences, and to boost efficiency of governance and service supply techniques to citizens. It has also supported formation and nursing of WDF at UPZ level. There have been initiatives for information disclosure and furnishing and dissemination of CC for greater social awareness on service delivery as well as to ensure and institutionalise local accountability. Financial grants have been supplied based on 41 indicators dependent performance scores through 4-stage approach viz. performance assessment, ranking on the score, allocation of grant and revision of allocation based on performance.<sup>18</sup> Citizens have also been made aware through mass gathering, rally, cultural event, pot show, miking, folk song, drama, sports and debate competition based on local culture and heritage. Initiatives have also been taken to train auditors for Financial Audit of Union Parishads, Performance Assessment of Union Parishads and Environmental Safeguards and Compliance of Union Parishads.

### **5.3.2 Upazila Governance Project (UZGP)**

The project has planned to contribute to the implementation of local governance reforms of GoB to strengthen UZPs and other LGIs. In addition, the project has aimed at

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<sup>16</sup> *UPGP & UZGP Midterm Evaluation (Final) Report: 2014* (Dhaka: Local Governances Decentralization Programme, 2015), 27, [http://upgp.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/mid\\_term\\_evaluation\\_dec\\_2014\\_upgp\\_uzgp.pdf](http://upgp.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/mid_term_evaluation_dec_2014_upgp_uzgp.pdf) (accessed July 26, 2016).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Md. Sarwar Bari, ed., *Annual Report 2013: Union Parishad Governance Project* (Dhaka: Local Governance Programme, 2014), 38-39, [http://upgp.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/UPGP\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2013\\_Final.pdf](http://upgp.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/UPGP_Annual_Report_2013_Final.pdf) (accessed July 26, 2016).



improving institutional and functional capacities of local government to ensure transparency and answerability in service delivery and implementation of projects.<sup>19</sup> Outcomes have been set for UZGP, as making UZP strengthened to be more functional, democratic, accountable, and transparent institution. The second broader result has involved with preparing plan and formulating budget for pro-poor supply of services with MDG orientation. The third output has been designed to get strengthened national capacity for effective policy review, monitoring, lesson learning and capacity development of LGIs. In addition, the programme has included assistance to strengthen LGD (Monitoring, Inspection and Evaluation wing), DLG/DDLG for UZP/UP backstopping and monitoring. It has further engaged with elaborate research and development to generate knowledge.<sup>20</sup> UZGP project has engaged with capacity building through training for both UZP functionaries and citizens, exchange visits to other districts to share good practices at first-hand, as well as increasing consciousness. In addition, the project has planned to equipped districts and divisions with tools to coordinate and review the progress regularly.<sup>21</sup>

Both the projects have worked for development of a National framework for local government capacity development.<sup>22</sup> The UPGP has also created a transmission belt for the exchange of 'good practices' among all other LG projects including LGSP-II.<sup>23</sup> These programmes have invested endeavours for development of secondary legislation instruments and guidelines, which have been designed to fill the gap and supplement the UP act of 2009.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, checklists, charts, formats, etc. have been developed as monitoring tools to examine the compliance of the act of 2009.

Both UPGP and UZGP have contributed in establishing transparent, accountable and inclusive pro-poor local government units, particularly UPs in Bangladesh. The projects have employed their innovative approaches to reach marginalised people and elected representatives to have them capacitated for active participation in the functions of the LGIs. Through WDFs, women representatives have been mobilised to raise their voices in the meetings and regular activities of the LGIs. Statistics from both the projects have shown that the system of PBG has played the role of catalyst in achieving outputs of the programmes.

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<sup>19</sup> *Annual Report 2014: Upazila Governance Project* (Dhaka: UZGP, 2015) 8, <http://www.uzgp.org/annual-report-2014/> (January 19, 2017).

<sup>20</sup> *UPGP & UZGP Midterm Evaluation (Final) Report: 2014*, 75-85.

<sup>21</sup> LGD, *Baseline Survey Report on Upazila Governance in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: UZGP, 2013), 59, <http://www.bd.undp.org/content/dam/bangladesh/docs/Publications/Pub-2013/UZP%20Baseline%20Report%202013.pdf> (accessed July 4, 2016).

<sup>22</sup> *UPGP & UZGP Midterm Evaluation (Final) Report: 2014*, 88-89.

<sup>23</sup> UPGP, *Joint Programme Document* (Dhaka: GoB, and UNDP, 2011), 4, <https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/BGD/Signed%20Prodoc%20UPGP.pdf> (accessed July 22, 2016).

<sup>24</sup> *UPGP & UZGP Midterm Evaluation (Final) Report: 2014*, 88.

## 5.4 Strengthening Community-Based Organizations for Pro-poor Democratic Governance (SCOPE)

SCOPE has been working for ensuring good governance and inclusiveness in the community governance including local governance.<sup>25</sup> The approaches of the project, based on empowerment and rights, have been different from those of other Non-State Actors (NSAs) as they usually work for filling the space in service provisions left by the government. The project has been implemented by Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service (RDRS) and Dustha Swasthya Kendra (DSK) in North West and North East part of Bangladesh respectively with assistance from Dan Church Aid (DCA). The mechanisms they have followed: to form and strengthen community-based organisations (CBOs)/Federation (project mobilised citizen forum) to raise voice collectively and to participate in the activities of LGIs to make them accountable and transparent. Federations have moved for making poor people conscious about their rights, empowering them to claim entitlements and to tackle their social, economic and political exclusion in particular, assisting them for networking with LGIs, other CBOs, and local administration to identify and solve local problems and other agenda.

**Table 5. 3: SCOPE Project at a Glance**

Name of the Project	Strengthening Community-Based Organizations for Pro-poor Democratic Governance (SCOPE)
Implementing Agencies	RDRS and DSK
Donors	EU, DCA, and CoS (Church of Sweden)
Project Area	31 Upazilas of 6 North Western and North Eastern districts: Rangpur, Kurigram, Lalmanirhat, Nilphamari, Netrakona and Sunamganj
Duration	48 months from January 2013
Fund	EUR1,950,000

Source: *Project Documents*<sup>26</sup>

### 5.4.1 Strategies and Activities of SCOPE

The project has replicated its model to other parts of the country to bring more hard to reach areas under its cover. It arranged training on leadership, organizational development and financial resource management for the potentials leaders, 50 percent of whom have been women and 20 percent come from communities of ethnic minority. These efforts have been introduced to enhance Federation capacities to run the same in an accountable and transparent way and engage with local authorities (Las) in formulating Community Action Plans. Additionally, the project has promoted well-developed Federation, for weaning of gradually from the project, to be registered with Department of Social Welfare and to make their entities public to get fund from the Bangladesh NGO Foundation. RDRS and DSK have conducted advocacy,

<sup>25</sup> RDRS Bangladesh, *Annual Report 2013* (Dhaka: RDRS Bangladesh, 2014), 8.

<sup>26</sup> DCA, "Strengthening CBOs for Democratic Governance," <https://www.danchurchaid.org/where-we-work/list-of-projects/projects-in-asia/strengthening-cbos-for-democratic-governance> (accessed January 4, 2017).

networking, and proposal writing training for fundraising in their way to be independent and sustainable through community volunteers taking the role of supervisor.<sup>27</sup> The project has provided training to the UP officials for having voice for constituents in the UPs and expanding opportunity for citizens' participation in decisions making to change the mindset of self-serving local politicians, promoting bottom-up approach of development, and downward accountability through increasing participation of the stakeholders especially women and poor.

Citizens have been made aware of resources and poverty through mapping for making them, advanced planners. Efforts of SCOPE have been invested to form Federation Coordination Committee at varied level of UPZ, district, and division for coordination and finally, activating the same for taking the roles of organising NGO in its way to make the system sustainable. Citizens have been made aware on provisions of RTI to claim information. Moreover, they have been engaged with developing a community action plan jointly with UP officials and list of eligible government benefits recipients in accordance with the supply of government. Awareness building campaigns, cultural shows, publication of newsletters, organisation of rallies, observance of special day have been utilised to build or enhance linkages with government departments and spread information on human rights, the status of women, migration and disaster preparedness etc.<sup>28</sup> The project has developed issue-based working groups with the members of Federations under the leadership of community volunteers for greater involvement with these issues and promoting evidence-based dialogue with government officials of higher stages, and monitoring projects at local levels.

#### **5.4.2 Achievements**

A midterm review, conducted in 2015, found that the project has gained success in various fields.<sup>29</sup> The report disclosed that the project's initiatives were found effective regarding training and capacity development, participation in community mobilization, facilitation of members to access to services of the government, knowledge enhancement of forum members, inclusiveness in management of Federations, participation in community, local governance, and different committees, selection of beneficiaries and monitoring of government services, and improvement in service delivery. The platforms created by SCOPE, and local government (UP) act 2009 have created space for interaction between service providers and recipients. The project has helped to build a sense of collectiveness and community solidarity among the poor so that they, especially female and girl child could stand collectively to safeguard their rights against abuses of individuals. The programme has also been

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<sup>27</sup> RDRS Bangladesh, *Description of the Action* (Rangpur: RDRS, 2011), 9-10.

<sup>28</sup> RDRS Bangladesh, *Description of the Action* (Rangpur: RDRS, 2011), 13-14.

<sup>29</sup> Pranab Kumar Panday, *Midterm Review of Strengthening Community Based Organization for Pro-poor Democratic Governance* (Dhaka: SCOPE, 2015), 7-28.

found successful in ensuring inclusiveness of marginalised people into the power structure and getting services, which have been allocated for them. However, the number of Federation members, who have participated in various activities, found low, and the performance in North West zone has been better than that of the North East zone.<sup>30</sup>

## 5.5 BRAC's Community Empowerment Programme (CEP)

BRAC's CEP has been designed to establish pro-poor community institutions through empowering the destitute, particularly women socio-politically since 2003, through various steps and mechanisms with some designated tools and techniques.<sup>31</sup> Rural communities have been strengthened through forming institutions by bridging the lacuna between communities and LGIs, scaling up access to information, and making successful and answerable institutions at all stages.<sup>32</sup> The components that have been employed for community empowerment are capacity building, motivation to move up voice and take combined actions aiming at strengthening the local governance for initiating programmes for poverty reduction, generating consciousness, making information accessible, thwarting violence, particularly those happened against women.<sup>33</sup>

### 5.5.1.1 Strengthening Local Governance of CEP

BRAC has been implementing its programme entitled 'Strengthening Local Governance' as part of CEP. It has extended its working areas in 61 districts from 21 districts on 30 June 2015, to improve governance of LGIs through capacity building, institutionalization of participatory democracy, gender mainstreaming, advocacy, and forming forums of elected female representatives of LGIs and improving bonding between community and LGIs, particularly UPs.<sup>34</sup> The goal of the initiative has been set to make LGIs transparent, answerable, and sensitive to the pro-poor through effectuating efficient governance of public service delivery.<sup>35</sup> The programme has motivated and sensitised UP members and chairs for gender mainstreaming, and extended capacity building assistance.<sup>36</sup> In order to materialise the objectives of the

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> BRAC came to existence after independence, 1972 to be exact as Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee and subsequently as Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC). Its vision is making 'A World free from all forms of exploitation and discrimination where everyone has the opportunity to realise their potentials.' Its interventions aim to achieve large-scale, positive changes through economic and social programmes that enabled women and men to realize their potential.' [Source: BRAC Annual Report 2015, 2, <http://www.brac.net/images/reports/BRAC-Bangladesh-Report-2015.pdf> (accessed January 6, 2017)].

<sup>32</sup> BRAC Annual Report 2015 (Dhaka: BRAC, 2016), 31, <http://www.brac.net/images/reports/BRAC-Bangladesh-Report-2015.pdf> (accessed January 6, 2017).

<sup>33</sup> BRAC, *Community Empowerment Programme* (Dhaka: BRAC, n. d.), <http://cep.brac.net/images/cep%20brochure%20b160413.pdf> (accessed January 2, 2017).

<sup>34</sup> BRAC, *At a Glance* (Dhaka: BRAC, n. d.), [http://www.brac.net/images/At\\_a\\_glance.pdf](http://www.brac.net/images/At_a_glance.pdf) (accessed January 2, 2017).

<sup>35</sup> BRAC Annual Report 2015, 31.

<sup>36</sup> BRAC, "Strengthening Local Governance," <http://www.brac.net/community-empowerment/item/840-strengthening-local-governance> (accessed January 7, 2017).

project, the following activities have been implemented under the SLG component in collaboration with the local bodies: Capacity Development of UP Representatives, the formation of Upazila (Sub-District) Forum, Ward Council, Advocacy, Citizen Committee, Supporting Open Budgeting, etc. Moreover, the project facilitated collaborative bottom-up enterprises of *Palli Samaj*, a community group, and UPs to fulfil citizens' needs by employing available resources. The project has taken action to disseminate information to the citizens through entertainment, particularly through theatre shows and community radio (Pallikantha 99.2) employing local dialect with a view to building responsiveness of and promoting easy access to information.

### 5.5.2 Achievements

BRAC's SLG initiatives have provided support for capacity building, efficiency improvement and gender sensitization of 30,022 UP functionaries from 2003 to 2015 in Bangladesh. It has extended support for the formation of 306 Upazila Forums with participation of female UP members and organised 206 Upazila advocacy workshops.<sup>37</sup> The initiatives have developed capacity of local government to engage in pro-poor governance, enhanced transparency and accountability and promoted participatory democracy.<sup>38</sup>

## 5.6 Journey for Advancement in Transparency, Representation and Accountability (JATRA)

JATRA project has been incepted by CARE Bangladesh, aiming at strengthening the UPs; and public management systems of UPs to conform to the conditions of the UP Act of 2009.<sup>39</sup> Its initiatives have concentrated on effective participation of community leaders, especially women, in the key decision-making spaces and organizations. Additionally, JATRA has emphasised on social accountability mechanisms to ensure inclusive democratic procedures, equity in access to quality services and information at all level of UPs.<sup>40</sup> The gross target of the project has remained to strengthen UPs by effective budgetary process and delivery of services, which would foster legitimacy of the LGIs and increase local revenue flow.<sup>41</sup>

Before JATRA, CARE Bangladesh implemented Social and Economic Transformation of the Ultra Poor (SETU) project, funded by DFID in selected UPs of

<sup>37</sup> BRAC, *Community Empowerment Programme*.

<sup>38</sup> BRAC *Annual Report 2015*, 30.

<sup>39</sup> CARE Bangladesh has implemented the project with financial assistance from Global Partnership for Accountability Trust Fund of the World Bank.

<sup>40</sup> CARE Bangladesh, *Ward Sabha Promotes Citizen Centric Democratic Space for Dialogue* (Dhaka: Care BD: 2015), [http://carebangladesh.org/publication/Publication\\_8252632.pdf](http://carebangladesh.org/publication/Publication_8252632.pdf) (accessed July 25, 2016).

<sup>41</sup> Mirza Hassan, *Baseline Survey of the Journey for Advancement in Transparency, Representation and Accountability (JATRA) project, abstract*, <http://bigd.bracu.ac.bd/index.php/resources/booklets/63-research/themes/politics-democracy-andgovernance/images/SoG/SoG2015/The%20State%20of%20Governance%202020%2014-15.pdf> (accessed January 30, 2017).

Nilphamari, Lalmanirhat, Gaibandha, and Rangpur districts. SETU was initiated to enhance solidarity and empower the poor and marginalised people to promote them for a collective move to institute pro-poor inclusive governance at UPs.<sup>42</sup>

**Table 5. 4: Key Information of Project JATRA<sup>43</sup>**

Programme	Journey for Advancement in Transparency, Representation, and Accountability (JATRA)
Implementing Agency	CARE Bangladesh
Donor	World Bank
Budget	\$644, 138
End Date	March 2018
Number of UPs	15
District	2; Nilphamari and Gaibandha

Source: *Project Documents of JATRA*

### 5.6.1 Project Strategies and Activities

The Natural leaders (locally emerged leaders through JATRA mobilization) and members of Citizen Forum (a group of citizens sensitised by JATRA) have mobilised inhabitants of locality, particularly people from marginalised and ultra-poor communities to express their views and needs and actively participate at WS. The project has arranged special measures to give opportunity to the functionaries of UPs to evaluate themselves by marking numbers for their performances, and the same have been cross-checked with the evaluators of the localities. A satisfactory performance by a representative has won him a ‘green card’, a ‘yellow card’ has been given to that elected leaders who have performed moderately, lastly, an unsuccessful member/Chair has been given a ‘red card’ based on the assessments of the Natural leaders.<sup>44</sup> The project has supported UPs for ‘local political economy analyses’ based on context and locality through involving local representatives, Citizen Forums, and the Natural leaders to carry out tax assessment and development plans. The project was instrumental in organising social audit through presence of Natural Leaders, Citizen Forums, local government representatives, scheme supervision and ward committee members, journalist and a large number of citizens by checking documents, procedures, and visiting the implemented projects physically, and by presenting the findings to the citizens.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, community scorecard (CSC) has been introduced by the project JATRA with Natural leaders and Citizen Forums, and

<sup>42</sup> Extreme Poverty Research Group, *Social Safety Nets and the Extreme Poor: Learning from a Participatory Pro-poor* (Dhaka: Shiree, 2011), 1, [http://carebangladesh.org/publication/Publication\\_4510491.pdf](http://carebangladesh.org/publication/Publication_4510491.pdf) (accessed July 25, 2016).

<sup>43</sup> Global Partnership for Social Accountability, “Journey for Advancement in Transparency, Representation and Accountability (JATRA),” <https://www.thegpsa.org/sa/project/journey-advancement-transparency-representation-and-accountability-jatra> (accessed January 30, 2017).

<sup>44</sup> CARE Bangladesh, *Fostering Responsive Local Government through Self Evaluation of Elected Representatives* (Dhaka: CARE BD, 2015), [http://carebangladesh.org/publication/Publication\\_5157337.pdf](http://carebangladesh.org/publication/Publication_5157337.pdf) (accessed August 18, 2016).

<sup>45</sup> CARE Bangladesh, *Social Audit to Improve Quality of Schemes in LGSP-II Project* (Dhaka: CARE BD, 2015), [http://www.carebangladesh.org/publication/Publication\\_4015069.pdf](http://www.carebangladesh.org/publication/Publication_4015069.pdf) (accessed January 23, 2017).

representatives at local level with the intention of enhancing voices of the poor regarding delivery of services and reshaping of the development plans.

### **5.6.2 Achievements**

The project has contributed to increasing the number of participants in the WSs. In the project area, 130 of 135 Wards conducted pre-budget WS; 49,761 community members including 24,577 female participated in WS, and 60% of the attendees came from poor and marginalised groups. Through JATRA initiatives, citizens have been motivated to participate with increased numbers in the process of project implementation, monitoring and feedback.<sup>46</sup> These have enhanced the situation of accountability and transparency of UPs.

## **5.7 SLG of The Hunger Project**

The Hunger Project (THP) has been working in Bangladesh with an aim to achieve four specific targets. These goals have been set as- to empower and organise citizens, to empower women as an agent of change, to strengthen local governance, and to conduct advocacy and form social alliances. THP's SLG has aimed at establishing effective and strengthened local governance, and concerned with building capacity of local representatives, and extending supports through technical assistance to implement development activities through transparency and accountability, and improving the quality of services of the government, as well as forming Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Unions. SDG Union strategy, which replaced MDG Union Strategy in 2016, is an integrated approach to capacitate both citizens and their representatives to strengthen UPs and accelerate achieving the targets of SDGs. The SDG Unions initiative has been endeavouring for scaling-up mobilization of grassroots level people for self-reliance, women empowerment, building collaboration with LGIs to strengthen them, and community-led development through advocacy and forming associations.

One of the major components of THP's approaches has been a collaboration with local elected representatives and community associates. The SDG Union Strategy has performed through procedures like- 1) Mobilization 2) Capacity Building 3) Taking Action and 4) Gauging the outputs. Informed and active citizens, practice of democracy and accessibility to resources have been planned to achieve SDGs.<sup>47</sup>

### **5.7.1.1 Strategies and Activities**

To attain the targets, the NGO has accomplished various activities, including training, workshops, campaigns, exchange visits, etc. The project in a holistic approach to

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<sup>46</sup> CARE Bangladesh, *Results in Citizen Participation in Local Governance* (Dhaka: CARE BD, 2016), 1-2, [http://carebangladesh.org/publication/Publication\\_1002356.pdf](http://carebangladesh.org/publication/Publication_1002356.pdf) (accessed August 8, 2016).

<sup>47</sup> The Hunger Project, "Bahubal: SDG Union Strategy," <https://www.ngoaidmap.org/projects/5923> (accessed January 9, 2017).

strengthening local bodies, has initiated and developed various platforms and networks to mobilise citizens on various issues. The project's strategies have not been "money-centred, rather volunteer-driven".<sup>48</sup> Some of the platforms have remained Unleashed Women Network, Ward Action Team, Union Parishad Advocacy Group, Participatory Action Researchers, Youth Ending Hunger, National Girl Child Advocacy Forum, and *Sujan*. Volunteer animators, women leaders, and students have played the role of catalysers in inspiring the local people.<sup>49</sup> THP has expanded its supports to organise WS and OBM with people's participation. Technical supports have been extended to the UPs for developing of FYPs of the UPs with the continuous supports of 'Plan Coordination Committee' (PCC). Moreover, with a view to raising the acceptability of the UPs, the project has assisted UPs for the effective functioning of SCs with the active presence of local people and their representatives. Moreover, the project conducted advocacy both at local and national level to bring categorical shifts in policies and attitudes to the development of localities and democratic governance.

### 5.7.2 Achievements

The Hunger Project has mobilised 185 MDG Unions across seven divisions of Bangladesh. In turn, those unions have taken responsibility for improving the lives of 4.9 million Bangladeshis. Through their MDG Union strategy, before 2016, the project has contributed to improving the community development efforts and, ultimately, motivated LGIs and people for building a more peaceful and harmonious Bangladesh.<sup>50</sup>

### 5.8 Local Governance Support Project (LGSP-3)

LGSP-3 has followed the route of 'country partnership framework' of WB with Bangladesh for the duration of 2016-20 fiscal year to alleviate ultra-poverty and to achieve prosperity.<sup>51</sup> To be particular, the project has been promoting incentive-based performance enhancement in the field of planning, public finance management, local level revenue mobilisation, institutionalising social accountability mechanism. The project has furthered its targets to include 'community-based initiatives' and promoted equal share of women in decision making in the societal organisations through continuations of provisions of LGSP-II to make WMs chairs of one-third of WC and SSC, and to implement the same portion of share of projects by them. Furthermore, the project has promoted special measures for small ethnic minorities to be included in the decisions making process through policy change and supplying culture compatible benefits. It has

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> The Hunger Project, <https://thpbd.org> (accessed January 23, 2017).

<sup>50</sup> The Hunger Project, *A Stand for Self-reliant Bangladesh: Annual Report 2015*, 32.

<sup>51</sup> World Bank, *World Bank Report no. PAD2102* (January 9, 2017), 12-13, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/484991486090876084/pdf/Project-Appraisal-Document-PAD-P159683-2017-01-10-01102017.pdf> (accessed May 12, 2018).



further facilitated to continue citizens' engagements and public consultation through WS and OBM.

The principal aim of the project targets institutionalisation of fiscal transfers for the UPs, and testing fiscal transfer system for the municipalities. Based on the goal, the project has set four key indicators to assess the results of the project: a) making fiscal transfer to UP organised and systematic, b) organising of financial audits as well as assessment of performances, c) enabling UPs to satisfy local needs in priority based, d) supplying expended block grants, to the Pourasabhas predictably.<sup>52</sup>

**Table 5. 5: Facts of LGSP-3**

Approval Date	January 31, 2017
Effectiveness Date	March 29, 2017
Closing Date	December 31, 2021
Implementation Agency	Local Government Division, & Economic Relations Division
Total Cost	US \$ 696.13 million (Tk. 5535 Crore in BDT)
Commitment Amount	US\$ 300.00 million (IDA: Tk. 2382 Crore in BDT)
Government of Bangladesh	Tk.3153 Crore in BDT
Donors	GOB & World Bank
Beneficiaries of the Programme	Union Councils, and Municipalities

Source: LGD.<sup>53</sup>

### 5.8.1 Activities of LGSP- 3

The LGSP has disseminated and scaled up the good practices of UPGP all over the country to strengthen governance of the UPs. The project has used transfer of block grants from national government to UPs, and this fiscal flow has planned to contribute to transforming local government practices, particularly in fiscal transfer, transparency, and community participation.<sup>54</sup> For this, 'Ward Committee' has been given responsibilities to plan, procure and implement the public project and 'Scheme Supervision Committee' has the role of monitoring and over sighting.<sup>55</sup> LGSP-3 has been involved with the following activities: transfer of BBGs (Basic Block Grants) and PBGs (Performance-Based Grants), and EBG for Pourasabhas (Expended Block Grant), financial and performance audit, providing capacity building training to district officials and Upazila functionaries, promoting people's participation at Ward Committees and Scheme Supervision Committees, WDFs, open budget meetings, development of Management Information System software and its partial operationalization.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>52</sup> World Bank, *World Bank Report no. PAD2102*, 13.

<sup>53</sup> LGD, "Local Government Support Project-3: LGSP-3 at a glance," <http://www.lgsplgd.gov.bd/lgsplgd/webGeneralContent/view/266?lang=en> (accessed May 12, 2018).

<sup>54</sup> Among total fund of BBG, 25% disbursed equally to all UPs, and rest 75% has been designed to distribute based on fulfilling three conditions: clean audit, evidence of participatory planning and budgeting, timely submission of six-monthly report.

<sup>55</sup> The Partnership for Transparency Fund, *Bangladesh LGSP -II Fact Sheet*.

<sup>56</sup> World Bank, *Bangladesh Local Governance Support Project II (P124514)*, 2; & World Bank, World Bank Report no. PAD2102 (January 9, 2017), 11-21, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/484991486090876084/pdf/Project-Appraisal-Documents-PAD-P159683-2017-01-10-01102017.pdf> (accessed May 12, 2018).

### 5.8.2 Achievements

As LGSP-3 yet to produce results, here focus has been given on achievements of LGSP- II. The project has contributed to enhancing the flow of funds towards UPs. The prominent achievement of the project has attached with bringing a categorical change in the mindset of inhabitants towards the LGIs, especially towards UPs. In addition, the project has generated a space to play roles more autonomously with increased financials supports. However, the programme has a lot to achieve in the field of policy and institutional development at various level of governments.<sup>57</sup>

## 5.9 BRAC-THP SLG

In order to make neighbourhood governance more people-oriented, The Hunger Project (THP) and Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) in partnership implemented a project entitled ‘Local Government Strengthening Project’ with 61 UPs of 14 UPZs of four districts of Bangladesh. The duration of the project was two years; from February 2014 to December 2015. The first project of the partnership, entitled “Social Movement and Accountable Local Government: Towards the MDG Union” was implemented in 2010. The 2010 project was implemented in 10 UPs of Mymensingh District. Major Goals of that project were to ensure transparency, accountability, and good governance for establishing strong UPs and attaining the targets of MDGs. With the guideline of the UP Act of 2009, the project planned to capacitate the UPs and enhance people’s participation, and take special steps to ensure availability of government services for the marginalised people. Besides, it took initiatives to build awareness among local people, as well as organise them to get involved in the process of ensuring UPs’ openness and answerability.<sup>58</sup> Additionally, the project intended to build the capacity of the UP, and conduct advocacy at local and national level.<sup>59</sup>

### 5.9.1 Activities of the Project

BRAC’s CEP-THP in their way to strengthen the UPs took inventiveness to work intimately with the UPs by signing MoUs. Their ways of capacity building included foreign exchange visits, conduction of training and workshops for officials and citizens on the provisions of acts, rules and regulations relating to the UPs. The projects developed volunteer animators, who stood key catalyser at local level to motivate local people on the varied issues of the governance. The project arranged

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<sup>57</sup> LGD, *Third Local Governance Support Project (LGSP- III): Environmental and Social Management Framework, Final Draft* (Dhaka: LGD, 2016), 9-10, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/131541477466720238/pdf/SFG2595-EA-P159683-Box396317B-PUBLIC-Disclosed-10-25-2016.pdf> (accessed December 14, 2016).

<sup>58</sup> THP-BRAC SLG, *Jagaraner galpa: ‘Sthaniya sarkar shaktishalikaran prakalper’ ekti parakashana* (in Bengali) [Stories of awakening: A publication of ‘strengthening local governance project’], (Dhaka: February 2016), 7.

<sup>59</sup> “Sthaniya sarkar shaktishali karaner prachestay the Hunger Project” [The Hunger Project in pursuit of strengthening local government], *Ujjibak Barta* [Animator news] 11, no. 53 (January-March 2014), 1.

special types of training programmes for women leaders, who were followed up regularly with meetings and engagements in WS, OBM, and SCs. Youths were given trainings marked by dissemination of idea on citizenship, constitutional rights of citizen, duties, and responsibilities of citizens, advancement of the country, the depiction of poverty and the ways to emancipate from it, importance of social responsibility, the strategy of knowing the unknown, and necessity of dynamic leadership, etc. to motivate local people through Vision, Commitment, and Action workshops. Moreover, Tathyabandhus (infomediaries) were performing quite a significant function in materializing the right to information act of 2009, through supplying information, bridging the gap among the local inhabitants, and government, as well as non-government institutions that provide services.

**Table 5. 6: Intervention Area of BRAC-THP SLG**

Division	Districts	Upazila	Number of UPs
Sylhet	Sunamganj	4- Jamalganj, Dashkin Sunamganj, Dirai, Chatak	21
	Habiganj	3- Habiganj Sadar, Bahubal, Nabiganj	12
Dhaka	Kishorganj	3- Tarail, Nikali, Itna	12
Khulna	Bagerhat	4- Mangla, Morelganj, Sharankhola, Fakirhat	16
3 Division	4 District	14 Upazila	61 UP
Donors		BRAC	
Implementing Agency		BRAC and The Hunger Project	
Period		February 2014 – December 2015	

Workshops were arranged to make the citizens capacitated to set goals and monitor the progress to provide supplementary advice to the UPs. Members of the SCs were trained and steps were taken to develop bimonthly resolutions of the SCs with suggestions for the UPs. The project extended cooperation for organisation of WS and OBM with technical and logistic assistance through activating people of all strata, particularly, the marginalised groups for making demands and raising questions on issues that affect them. In OBM, Upazila Chairman, Upazila Vice-Chairman, UNO, members of civil society, and other dignitaries of the society were persuaded to present, and budget booklets were supplied to the participants. FYPs were given technical supports through organising workshops, forming plan coordination committee and publishing the same in booklet formats. The project assisted UPs to set information boards and citizen charter in the UP. Varied forums and citizens institutions such as Upazila forum for women members, and Ward citizen committee, self-governing UP advocacy group were formed with a view to making citizens aware, UP officials accountable, and government officials of higher echelon favourable to the citizens' needs at local level. There were efforts for awareness building through campaigns and popular theatre shows. The project arranged regular review meetings for evaluating the programmes of the project and scaling up the pace of implementation with

consultation of field level officials of the project. Efforts were also taken to disseminate the best practices of the project at national level with presence of local government officials of national level, National and international NGO representatives, and journalists.

### **5.9.2 Achievements**

Through imparted knowledge, the elected representatives of LGIs have performed their activities systematically. UPs have informed electorates about the income and expenditure of the institutions. Various committees have been activated through supports of the project and brought accountability and transparency to the activities of the UPs. The interventions of CEP-THP have improved the participation of women in decision-making process, and volunteers groups have played the role of pressure group to hold the UPs accountable to citizens.<sup>60</sup>

## **5.10 Social Engagement for Budgetary Accountability (SEBA)**

SEBA (means service in Bengali), an initiative of World Bank under Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA),<sup>61</sup> has been implemented by the Manusher Janya Foundation (MJF). The project has spent its endeavours to make the process of project implementation using UPs' budget, particularly block grants of LGSP more efficient regarding quality, period of implementation, compliance with social and environmental frameworks with keeping eyes to people's needs, benefits, and satisfaction. It has strengthened the social accountability mechanism through the intermediary role of local CSOs to develop a feedback channel for transfer of information between local government units and citizens. The project has targeted to improve community participation and inclusiveness, and transparency, responsiveness, accountability of UPs.

### **5.10.1 Activities of the Project**

The project has incepted their activities in the selected UPs with organizing inception meetings. Through these ice-breaking initiatives, the partners have come closer to work together for improving the governance of LGIs through participatory way. Introductory workshops have also been organised at the district level with the presence of DC, UNO, DDLG, UP representatives and members of SCs. Prior to getting involved fully with activities, the project has conducted social mapping to identify the social structure, context, power relation and resources of the selected UPs for developing community action plans.

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<sup>60</sup> Saif Ahmed, and Nesar Amin, "Sthaniya sarkar shaktishalakaran' prakalper abhijnatay 'shaktashali o karyakrar sthaniya sarkar gare tola sambhab'" ["With the experience of strengthening 'local governance project' it is 'possible to build effective and strong local governance'"] *The Hunger Project* (May 2016): 1-4. <https://thpbd.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/article-on-brac-thp-strengthening-local-governance.pdf> (accessed January 3, 2017).

<sup>61</sup> GPSA in an initiative of the World Bank that supports civil society and government to work together to solve critical governance challenges in developing countries.

**Table 5. 7: SEBA at a Glance**

Name of the Project	Social Engagement for Budgetary Accountability
Implementing Agency	Manusher Janya Foundation (MJF)
Donor	World Bank
Area	45 Unions of 5 Districts (Tangail, Chittagong, Bogra, Sylhet, Barguna) of 5 Divisions (Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Barisal, and Sylhet)
Fund	\$848,968
Persons/ Groups impacted	44,434 persons and 45 Community Support Groups
Implementing Partners	5 local CSOs (Democracy Watch, BITA, Grammen Alo, IDEA, NSS)
Duration	April 2014 - March 2017

*Source: Annual Report of MJF 2014.*<sup>62</sup>

The project has formed people's committee named, community support group, and trained them with social accountability and LGSP tools to stand as volunteers at local level. Officials have also been given training to make them aware on their job descriptions and responsibilities as people's representatives. The project has arranged horizontal learning programmes to make the learning practical and sustainable. Moreover, for busy, and soft-voiced people the project installed complaint boxes in the UPs to drop suggestions and/or complaints to the officials. For social auditing public hearings, and community scorecard has been introduced in the UPs. Both technical and logistic supports have been directed for organisation of WS and OBMs with active participation of constituents. For activating the marginalised groups, particularly women, courtyard meetings have been arranged to make women capable of public speaking to share their grievances in the WS and OBM. Advocacy has been conducted both at national level and sub-national level for ensuring people's rights and entitlements, as well as disseminating best practices to other actors including GoB to influence policy shift.

### **5.10.2 Achievements**

The project reports have disclosed that in the project area, the UPs have responded actively to disclose information. There has been a tendency of soaring up phenomenon of civic engagement in WSs and OBMs, sector-wise budget allocation. In addition, the inclusion of indigenous people in the committees of UPs, have been recognised and enhanced.<sup>63</sup>

## **5.11 Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP)**

Upazila Parishad (UZP) representing the middle tier of the three tier-local government structures in Bangladesh remains weak with insufficient capacity and lack of coordinating

<sup>62</sup> MJF, *Annual Report 2014* (Dhaka: MJF, 2015), 42. <http://www.manusherjonno.org/files/publications&reports/annual%20report/AnnualReport2014.pdf> (accessed March 4, 2017).

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

roles with UPs. In this backdrop, Japanese organisation JICA in collaboration with LGD has assumed initiatives to strengthen the governance of the UZP (489) for improved, effective, efficient and responsible service delivery.<sup>64</sup> The span of the project remains six years long, starting from 2015 to end in 2021 with the closure of ‘the perspective plan’ of Bangladesh. The key strategies of the project have been to supply financial support, and capacitate UZP grounded stakeholders to perform their mandated responsibilities. The project has targeted to develop infrastructures, make LGIs and line agencies mutually accountable and ensure their complementary and collaborative roles to create synergy, promote UDCC for engendering LGIs and line agencies transparent to the locals, capacitate officials of LGIs and line agencies and champion decentralisation of authority and responsibility to the UZP.

The project has arranged performance-based allocation for the UZPs, based on performance on 16 indicators of four broad spectrums including institutional capacity, financial management strength, capacity of development planning and budgeting, and transparency and accountability. Moreover, primarily the UZPs have been selected on four preconditions: regular organisation of UZP meetings, activation of 17 SCs, formulation of budgets and development plans, performance on ADP implementation, and reporting to the superior authorities for previous three years. Initially, the selected UZPs have been granted BDT 5 million, and after the first year, the amount has varied according to their performances. The project has deployed Upazila Development Facilitators (UDFs) to assist office bearers in implementing projects and organising and providing training to the stakeholders. More training has been planned to organise at national level. Moreover, a special assistant to UNO has been employed from the officials working in the UZP according to the choice of the UNO. The project has taken measures for overseeing of project implementation and mitigating fiduciary risks through regular audits. The project has been implemented by LGD, and civil servants from varying levels have been employed to this end. NILG has remained the partner of the project to disseminate training to the stakeholders of UZPs.<sup>65</sup>

## **5.12 Municipal Governance Support Project (MGSP)**

After completion of Municipal Service Project (MSP), the government has intended commencing another such project by the World Bank. The current scheme has embarked on its journey in 2014 and planned to continue until June 2020 with cost of US\$ 471.76 million.<sup>66</sup> It has been implemented in hand-picked 26 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), which have been selected based on their trends to economic growth, and latent possibilities of employment generation. These ULBs are situated in the three major growth zones of the

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<sup>64</sup> “Upazila Governance and Development Project (UGDP),” <http://www.ugdp-lgd.org/> (accessed September 21, 2018).

<sup>65</sup> LGD, and JICA, *The Study of the Upazila Governance and Development Project in the People’s Republic of Bangladesh*, Final report (Dhaka: LGD and JICA, 2015), ES-1-6.

<sup>66</sup> The World Bank, *Implementation Status & Results Report*, Municipal Governance and Services Project (Dhaka: World Bank, 2018), 1-7.

country; additionally, the programme has included three other district headquarters of the south. The principal intention of the project has been to strengthen municipal governance along with improvement of essential urban services and the process of delivery of the same. Moreover, the scheme has targeted to improve the capacity of the ULBs to be active during disasters or catastrophes in the localities.

The project has adopted four components to attain its aim. The first component has stayed corresponding to supply of financial assistance to the ULBs. The second component has coped with demand and project-based fund supply on grant to loan ratio of 80:20 through Bangladesh Municipal Development Fund (BMDF) for improvement of indispensable services of the municipalities. Moreover, for receiving the BMDF financing the ULBs have to finance 10% of the scheme expenditure. The third component has included the matters of capacity building for efficient planning, budgeting, accountability, management and assistance for implementation of programmes. Lastly, the fourth component has been made involved responding of the project to the emergencies based on the request of the GoB, through redirecting the project credit to satisfy the requirements. The plan has been implemented by three units of the government: Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), Bangladesh Municipal Development Fund (BMDF), and Local Government Division (LGD). The scheme has been taking assistance from Institute of Architects in Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Institute of Planners, and the Municipal Association of Bangladesh in its way to developing urban municipalities.

The project has readjusted its methods and design in accordance with the capacity of the LGED, BMDF and ULBs, which have been involved with the scheme. The initiatives of the project for improving services have created direct benefits for about 670,000 people in the first three years. Among 26, 24 ULBs have demonstrated optimistic results in the improvement of governance, and secured minimum 60% of rating for performance in the targeted areas. The BMDF has also exhibited success by achieving 84% of repayment of disbursed loans, and the results may contribute to the sustainable development and continuation of BMDF.<sup>67</sup>

### **5.13 Commonalities in Activities and Strategies of the Projects**

NGOs have transformed their roles from relief providers to service deliverers and strategic partners to exert sustainable impact of their interventions. Service delivery method was thought to be responsible- for sustaining the top-down policy and lagging behind to reach the targeted groups, as well as continuing the paternalistic approaches that fanned corruption in getting the resources. Nowadays, these organizations have taken initiatives that involved with a bottom-up approach. In Bangladesh, NSAs are

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<sup>67</sup> The World Bank, *Implementation Status & Results Report*, Municipal Governance and Services Project (Dhaka: World Bank, 2018), 1-7.

collaborating with governments to improve the governance not only at the national level but also at the local level. They have planned, through productive collaboration, to break the shackle of the patriarchal system of community governance, as well as local governance. The aforementioned initiatives, which have been discussed elaborately, have depicted the process of GO-NGO collaborative efforts to SLG with a view to graduating marginalised grassroots people from poverty through ensuring their access to decision-making processes that affect them, the SSNPs of the government and making them skilled to be self-reliant.

### **5.13.1 Institution Building**

One of the major components of the NSAs is to form and develop institutions such as Ward Platform (Sharique), Citizen Forum (JATRA), Federation (SCOPE), Palli Samaj (BRAC), Ward Action Team (THP), Community Support Groups (SEBA), Ward Committee (LGSP), etc. These institutions have been planned to form networks of rural marginalised people to enable them to share their ideas and innovations. In addition, these platforms have also been designed to play the role of collective voice of the poor and to claim their entitlements, i.e., they have been intended to mobilise individuals and instill confidence within themselves to be self-reliant, and claimants of rights. These CBOs have been developed to speak out in a way that will have an effect on the decisions, as individual voice- though raised in the assemblies, yet it could be lost. These institutions have been motivated to be watchdog CSOs of LGIs to keep monitoring the activities of the same.

### **5.13.2 Capacity Building**

Major concerns in the process of SLG are that functionaries of local governance and citizens are not capable of practicing the process, under institutional laws related to local governance. The actors of SLG organise training, workshops, peer visits to impart knowledge and improve the skill of both supply and demand sides. With gained knowledge and improved skill, the representatives of citizens at local bodies and inhabitants of localities have been planned to empower to accomplish the mandated tasks in general, and to deliver the services of the government effectively and transparently by the functionaries, as well as to hold the LGIs accountable by the people in particular. In addition, capacity building processes have instilled the confidence in them to act according to their choices and contributed to transfer of knowledge into action.

### **5.13.3 Promotion of Inclusive Governance**

Collaborative efforts have intended to sensitise functionaries of LGIs on gender and pro-poor governance issues. Furthermore, these efforts have intervened to include people of all strata of society, especially poor, marginalised, women, and indigenous



community in the decision-making process of local bodies for establishing inclusive governance and ensuring inclusive development. The UP Act of 2009 mandates the inclusion of citizens through WS, OBM, committee system, etc. NGOs have mobilised local people, particularly women through the platforms that formed at Ward, UP, and UPZ level to speak out in public gatherings. The intention of increased participation of citizens in the decisions making stands for prioritizing their issues of concerned in the list of projects, which have been planned to implement. In addition, the presence of citizens in these meetings allowed them to be familiarised with local politicians and the activities of UPs. These exposures have been intended to remove the paternalistic mindset of the citizens and political leaders including UP functionaries, and instill the courage within inhabitants to raise queries in the local assemblies, which conform to the principle of making the local bodies accountable to the citizens and guide them to be active and pro-poor. The processes have also complied with the principle of downward accountability and conformed to social audit. Furthermore, these process contributed to conspicuous entrance of the citizens in the political process to have shared in the decision-making process and resulted in empowerment.

#### **5.13.4 Making Information Available**

Realizing the essence of information, NGOs have involved themselves in the process of making information available for citizens. Disclosure of information on projects, income, expenditure, beneficiaries of SSNPs and resources make localities transparent and close the door of misappropriation. The programmes have included efforts to make the citizens acquainted with the RTI Act and its provisions for enabling citizens to claim information. Sub-national governments have also been activated to disclose information according to the demands of stakeholders. Information makes local people knowledgeable and aware of their rights and entitlements; hence expedite their access to government services and get LGIs transparent in their activities.

#### **5.13.5 Promotion of People's Participation**

The NSAs have been advocating for participatory planning and budgeting to include the concerns of the citizens in decision-making process. Local government act of (UP/UZP) 2009 has promoted the provisions of participatory budgeting, which has to be conducted employing participatory organisation of WS and OBM, and scrutiny of budgets and plans by SCs. LGIs have been supported by the programmes of donor agencies and NGOs to follow these mechanisms. People's participation, in addition, ensures the preconditions of social accountability and social auditioning. The process of social accountability practices through social auditing is suitable for ensuring

people's partaking and instituting a functional local government.<sup>68</sup> These processes enhance budget related transparency and accountability initiatives, which assert the most dramatic results.<sup>69</sup> Citizen's access to budget information and the process of the same evidently contain the potentiality to make them stronger and have their LGIs to respond in proactive ways to scale up their processes of survival.<sup>70</sup>

### **5.13.6 Providing Financial Support**

Another strategy, employed for SLG has been concerned with financial allocation. Development actors have granted financial assistance for LGIs based on performance with freedom of initiating development activities, which have been found in the WS and included in annual plan or FYP. This process has been designed to play role in developing the capabilities of functionaries to formulate development plan, and to compete for being one of the competent localities to have the fund. In addition, the freedom has been given with the intention of increasing confidence for planning and implementing the new project with their own capacity by analysing the prevailing context. This may contribute in, as per the plan, attaining confidence and skill of functionaries of local bodies to be active for eliminating the concerns of citizens with their own resources.

### **5.13.7 Conducting Advocacy**

NSAs have initiated advocacy with the central government to assist government in formulating favourable policy for devolution of power and resources to the grassroots government institutions. In addition, they have also been doing the same at the local level to build a congenial atmosphere for active linkages within different tiers of governments, and for effective service deliveries. Moreover, the development actors have advocated for support for development of local bodies to the donor agencies.

### **5.13.8 Agency Building and Empowerment**

The initiatives of the collaborative efforts conform to the mode of agency building, which has an effect on empowering people. Empowerment is related to bringing change by increasing capability to choose own way of life in accordance with the desires of oneself, which has, earlier, experienced a denial.<sup>71</sup> The NGOs in Bangladesh have involved with the process of empowerment through firstly, making

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<sup>68</sup> Touhidul Hoque Chowdhury, "Social Accountability Practice for Good Governance in Dakshin Surma," abstract (April 2016): 1, [http://www.academia.edu/27769579/Social\\_Accountability\\_Practice\\_for\\_Good\\_Governance\\_in\\_Dakshin\\_Surma](http://www.academia.edu/27769579/Social_Accountability_Practice_for_Good_Governance_in_Dakshin_Surma) (accessed March 4, 2017).

<sup>69</sup> Ruth Carlitz, "Improving Transparency and Accountability in the Budget Process: An Assessment of Recent Initiatives," *Development Policy Review* 31 (2013): s63, <http://www.ruthcarlitz.com/pdf/BudgetProcesses.pdf> (accessed March 4, 2017).

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Naila Kabeer, "Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment," *Development and Change* 30 (1999): 437.

ways for the poor to ensure access to resources by social safety net schemes, skill development training, providing information, imparting knowledge, developing social capital, etc. Secondly, the resources have designed to build agency, which is linked with individual ability to decide their own life choice even against the opposition on the one hand and overriding the decision of other actors on the other hand.<sup>72</sup>

Both resources and agency constituted the capability, which in other words could be termed as 'being and doing.'<sup>73</sup> In collaboration, GOs have been supplying resources and NGOs have been building agencies, and their joint ventures have been intended to make the grassroots marginalised people empower and capable of claiming and bargaining for rights and make choices with their own way. Overall, training and free flow of information enhance knowledge, skill and the aegis of SSNPs guarantee of assets and combination of them allow people to choose or make a will. In addition, capacity to materialise the will into action leads to empowerment, which will assist poor and marginalised to be graduated from poverty and expedite their way to partaking in the political process to have accountable, transparent and pro-poor local governance.

#### **5.13.9 Developing Volunteers and Promoting Volunteerism**

It has been evident that one of the key strategies of the discussed projects remains active promotion of local volunteers named Natural Leader (JATRA), Volunteer Animator (THP), Community Volunteer (Sharique), Federation Member (SCOPE), etc. The principal target of the schemes involves with developing the volunteers into active citizens to eagerly seek necessary information, participate in planning and budgeting, supervise programmes, challenge social problems, assist LGIs selecting SSNP beneficiaries, etc. These enthusiastic inhabitants have been planned to remain the mainstay of the projects to activate the community people, particularly marginalised and poor to constructively engage with the local bodies. These local community leaders stand predictable to produce citizens in the WS, OBM and other programmes of the localities to place demands, raise voices, seek answers, and to teach their neighbours the democratic process of making influence over decision-making. The projects' precise intentions have been to incorporate these volunteers seamlessly in the varied committees: SC, UDCC, PIC, SSC, etc. to suggest programmes for LGIs to promote community betterment and holding the local functionaries accountable. They are also encouraged to be elected office-bearers of the UPs or other local bodies, and the process helps community people to interact with their political and social institutions through their own people. In this manner, the volunteers are the leading pioneers in the rural area to steer the possible paths for the

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

common people to be benefitted from the sub-national governments with energetic engagements.

### 5.14 Conclusion

Collaboration process between GO-NGO and NGO-NGO-GO (BRAC-THP-UP) is taken place both at national and sub-national level. At national level, government, particularly the LGD, in collaboration with donor agencies has piloted and/or implemented five projects for strengthening the governance at local level: UPGP, UZGP, UGDP, MGSP, and LGSP. Precisely, LGSP, MGSP, UPGP, UGDP, and UZGP have worked for accelerating participatory development, and improving services and the delivery of the same.<sup>74</sup> The MGSP has also component like making ULBs capacitated and accustomed to borrowing and repayment of the same on demand and project basis. The other seven collaborative efforts viz. Sharique, SCOPE, CEP, JATRA, SEBA, THP, and THP-BRAC are being implemented by NSAs and collaboration took place at local level. The programmes have been condensed in the hard to reach area of the country. Only, the LGSP-III and a component of UZGP have covered all the UPs and UZPs of the country respectively. It is found that the actors have targeted to improve participation, transparency and accountability, service delivery, resource mobilization, preparation of the annual and five-year plan, policy formulation at the national level, etc. The schemes have employed shepherding training programmes, building institutions, and awareness, providing financial support, formation, and development of CBOs, conducting advocacy at the higher echelon of government, encouraging, and accompanying actors, dissemination of lessons learned, and development of training materials, etc. to give poor people voice to claim rights and entitlements. Various publications, mostly of the NSAs, have shown evidences of the success of the partnership initiatives of GOs and NGOs. However, there exists a lack of dispassionate reports of evaluation of GO-NGO collaborative activities to detect how far their efforts for SLG have become successful. It is observed that activities and strategies of collaborative efforts have shown homogeneity in forms and natures. With this respect, an in-depth and unprejudiced study on ‘Sharique: A Local Governance Project’ in its intention to strengthen local governance, particularly of the UPs, can be anticipated uncovering the performance and outcomes of the SLG programmes in collaboration.

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<sup>74</sup> Local Government Division, *Annual Report: 2014-2015* (Dhaka: LGD, 2015), 32-57.

## Chapter 6

# Shepherding Capacity Building and Increasing People's Participation at Local Level

### 6.1 Introduction

Capacity is deemed as an enabling factor that includes knowledge, skill, awareness, positive attitudes, and ability to perform mandated tasks. The process of capacitation involves long-term external efforts to enable individuals, organisations and environment as well. On the other hand, people's participation in governing process channels people's demands to the authority, makes the authority accountable with transparency, and enhances legitimisation. The collaboration of Sharique and UPs drives its efforts for capacitation and enhancing people's engagements in governance. This chapter has dealt with capacitation and the shift in participation that has been ensued the collaborative efforts. In order to make explained the roles of the partnership project data were collected on selected variables for both supply and demand side actors from Sharique and non-Sharique areas. The issues related to both the demand and the supply side actors have been included and synthesised in the discussions.

### 6.2 Capacitation

#### 6.2.1 Knowledge and Awareness

##### 6.2.1.1 Knowledge on Citizenship

In the modern era, citizenship includes attributes of both 'Liberal-individualist,' and 'Civic-republican' conception. These theories represent citizens as autonomous entity not only with responsibilities to pay taxes, follow the laws, and engage in income generating activities but also with some entitlements to consume, democratic opportunities to involve, protections to receive, and public spheres to participate in governance to channel lawful demands, frustrations and grievances to the authority and form consensus among community on common concerns.<sup>1</sup> In ensuring good participatory governance, Sharique has worked for instilling the conceptual knowledge of citizenship within the conscience of the people in intervened areas; as knowledgeable and aware citizens can hold their authority responsible and claim their rights and entitlements successfully. Now, the question is how far Sharique has been successful to enhance knowledge of both demand and supply side actors on different issues relating to governance.

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<sup>1</sup> Adrian Oldfield, "Citizenship: An Unnatural Practice?" in *Citizenship: Critical Concepts*, vol. 1, ed. Bryan S. Turner, and Peter Hamilton (London: Routledge, 1994), 188-198; J. G. A. Pocock, "The Ideal of Citizenship since Classical Times," and Michael Ignatieff, "The Myth of Citizenship," in *Theorizing Citizenship*, ed. Ronald Beiner (New York: State University of New York, 1995), 29, 54.

### 6.2.1.1.1 Knowledge and Awareness on the UP and its Functions

In Bangladesh, people have observed UP's activities for almost 150 years. The most visible functions of the UP and its officials are constructions and refurbishment of earthen roads and social infrastructures, reconciliations of social problems and distributions of reliefs in rural areas. Thus, people have gained some sorts of knowledge on UP's functions from common sense and experiences. Moreover, all of the demand side respondents (100%), who received training from Sharique, mentioned that they became more knowledgeable and aware. The survey results have shown the same phenomenon regarding knowledge on UP and its functions. Most of the respondents replied in this line both in Sharique and non-Sharique areas, though the act of 2009 embodied 39 functions for the UP to conduct.<sup>2</sup> Mostly mentioned activities remained concentrated on two issues: construction and refurbishment of infrastructures and distribution of services of SSNPs (Table: 6.1).

**Table 6. 1: Functions of UP Mentioned by the Citizens**

Area Response*	Sharique Areas		Control Areas	
	Responses	Percent	Responses	Percent
Construction and refurbishment of infrastructures	29	74.4	9	47.4
Distribution of services of SSNPs	21	53.8	15	78.9
To run village court	4	10.3	2	10.5
Solving familial & social problems	13	33.3	1	5.3
Project implementation	5	12.8	1	5.3
To serve the people	10	25.6		10.5
Development work	10	25.6	2	-
Water and sanitation	11	28.2	2	10.5
Issue different certificates	12	30.8	1	5.3
Collect tax	5	12.8	1	5.3
Security	3	7.7	-	-
Monthly meeting & yearly budget meeting	1	2.6	-	-
Others	4	10.3	-	-
Total	128	328.2	34	178.9

Source: Field Data, 2017-18. \*Multiple responses taken into account.

When citizens were asked whether they could recognise the functions of the UP they replied affirmatively with 97.5% and 95% respectively in Sharique and non-Sharique areas. However, a noteworthy difference exposed between the citizens of two areas, when they were asked to name some of the activities of the UP. The average numbers of activities of UP as mentioned by each respondent of Sharique and control areas were 3.3 and 1.8 respectively. However, when gender was considered, the numbers of activities mentioned by female respondents dropped both in Sharique and non-Sharique areas from the average 3.3 to 2.8 for the former and 1.8 to 1.6 for the latter. Thus, it could be said that the demand side actors were more knowledgeable in Sharique areas on UP's role than that of the control areas, though female respondents in both areas were struggling to match with their male counterparts.

<sup>2</sup> The UP Act, 2009, sche. 2 (sec. 47).

Now, it is quite relevant here to find out to what extent the supply side actors are knowledgeable about the issues of UP acts, legal frame and the functions the UP i.e., about their job descriptions. UP officials are in a position to deliver services to the demand side and remain involved in day-to-day tasks and procedures of the UP. Hence, they are expected to be conversant and knowledgeable on UP related acts and activities. The respondents from the supply side, while mentioning their duties, in Sharique areas, brought up on an average 13 activities while it was nine in the control areas (Appendix 6.1). As multiple responses were counted, the responses in Sharique areas though signalling heavy choices to ‘construction and refurbishment of infrastructures,’ (74.4%) and ‘distribution of services of SSNPs’ (53.8%), yet the rest of the options were also pointed out with no less importance; as among the rests, seven activities scored above 18% and it climbed up to 43.8%. However, in control areas the responses made a skyscraper for ‘distribution of services of SSNPs’ (78.9%), and ‘construction and refurbishment of infrastructures,’ (47.4%) was their second choice, and the rest of the options were mentioned only by few, as the third choice stood at 10.5% level and rest of the options stayed below of that margin. Thus, it can be argued that larger number of functionaries in Sharique areas was introduced with more diversified functions of the UP.

The same phenomenon, as for knowledge on functions, was observed when it was inquired, how much they were conversant on the UP act of 2009. The variation was very slim. It was observed that officials from both Sharique (78.1%) and non-Sharique areas (62.5%) stood not far from each other with a gap of 15.6%, though the officials of Sharique areas were more familiarised with the act, yet both of them were lagging behind to be adequately aware and acquainted with the act.

Now a pertinent question is- why was it so? The major cause behind the present survey results was lack of education. The data showed that among the officials, 43.75% and 75% completed secondary and below the secondary level of education in Sharique and control areas respectively. This provided a clear indication that in Sharique areas more than fifty percent (56.25) officials came from higher secondary or above such level. This has been reflected in the result as a higher level of education brought higher-level of cognizance and awareness on legal issues, as they could absorb readily the teaching of Sharique. One NGO official echoed:

recently the importance, activities and documentation of the UPs have increased a lot. These require an adequate level of education to perceive the guidelines and directions of the laws and authorities to follow. We trained and guided the officials a lot, but due to lack of capacity bred from low level of education for their access to the guidelines and the laws, they failed to perform their due responsibilities.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> N6, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 7, 2018.

However, in the backdrop of this infirm scenario, one positive phenomenon has been noticed through observing the fact that in Sharique areas more educated people were becoming interested in local politics and were elected in the offices of the UP.

#### **6.2.1.1.2 Knowledge and Awareness on Rights, Entitlements, and Duties**

One of the key issues of citizenship involves with being informed and aware of rights and duties. The collaborated exertion of Sharique has invested its efforts to enhance the level of realization of rights, duties and entitlements of the citizens. A respondent from citizens disclosed, *“I have learnt many unknown things through Sharique project and become aware of my rights and duties.”*<sup>4</sup> One of the questions that was asked to citizens to know how people perceived UP’s services. The responses gained through allowing respondents to complete a half-finished sentence: ‘receiving information, goods & services is . . .,’ revealed high inclination of the answer in favour of the option ‘our rights’ in both areas with 97.5% for Sharique and 90% for control areas. A meagre 2.5% of the respondents in Sharique areas and comparatively a high percentage of 10% of the citizens in control areas deemed theses as the UP’s benevolence. However, a big picture came up with the question: ‘do you know about various services of the UP, their process of delivery and timeframe?’ The respondents of the two areas stayed apart with their responses with affirmative answer at 62.5% and 10% in Sharique and non-Sharique areas (Appendix: 6.4).

The degree of difference in the response clearly laid the platform for the argument to claim that citizens in Sharique areas were more conscious about their rights and entitlements. This fact was substantiated with the comments of a woman of Deopara UP. She revealed

Before Sharique’s intervention I knew nothing what Union Parishad did, for whom they (officials) worked for, and how could my community and I be benefitted from the UP. Sharique has made me aware and opened my eyes. Now, I have become an enlightened person, as I know what to receive from, what to pay to, and how to be engaged with the UP.<sup>5</sup>

The reverse scenario has been noticed at Alatuli UP, when a man named Yeasin, plainly argued that he knew very little about UP, its functions, and services.<sup>6</sup> He added that he did not use to go to the UP and were not aware of what UP did and for what purposes. He remained indifferent and unresponsive when the researcher asked him various issues of the UP. He furthermore added that the UP was the matter of chair and members; he had nothing do with UP. Even, he had not realised that he could be benefitted from UP.

Receiving goods, services and enjoying entitlements is one side of a coin; the other side of the coin demands some duties and responsibilities to be fulfilled from the part

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<sup>4</sup> C27, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> C11, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 20, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> C55, interview with researcher, Alatuli, December 30, 2017.



of the citizens. The key duties for the citizens at UP level are to pay tax and to engage in participatory planning and budgeting processes of the UP. What about paying tax? How did they think about participatory process in the study area? These are the questions, which have promoted discussions subsequently. The discussions relating to participation has included in the later part, here the discussion convoluted with taxpaying duty of citizen. In both Sharique and control areas, people became aware of paying taxes. They were asked whether they knew they had to pay tax. In replies, they affirmed that they knew about paying taxes to the UP. The major admission with responses was that in both areas citizens were fully (100%) aware of the issue. The next question- “how did it so?”- exposed the fact. Respondents were enquired: ‘do you pay tax?’ The retorts manifested that all of the respondents in both areas claimed that they had paid tax, particularly holding tax, and thus became aware of paying tax.

### 6.2.1.1.3 Awareness on Community Betterment

It is of immense importance for the citizens to own their community as well as local institutions of the government. Owning community results in improvement in the society through enhancement of collective bargaining for entitlements and improved delivery of services, as well as holding officials of LGIs accountable. A Likert scale question was placed before the respondents to identify their views on community betterment through UP. The responses in Sharique and control areas varied by a conspicuous margin as 92.5% and 60% of the citizens who participated in the study stated that they strongly agreed to be engaged with UP for community betterment respectively (Table: 6.2).

**Table 6. 2: Engagement with the UP for Betterment of the Community (Citizens)**

Area	Sharique		Control	
	f	%	f	%
Strongly agree	37	92.5	12	60
Agree	1	2.5	4	20
Neither agree nor disagree		-	3	15
Disagree	-	-	-	-
Strongly disagree	2	5	1	5
Total	40	100	20	100

**Source: Field Data, 2017-18.**

**Table 6. 3: Issues for Which Citizens Asked Questions UP Functionaries (Citizens)**

Area	Sharique		Control	
	f	%	f	%
Response*				
Personal problems	10	31.3	5	33.3
Social problems	16	50	-	-
SSNPs	14	43.8	10	66.7
Development	8	25	-	-
Total	48	150	15	100

\*Multiple responses taken into account.

The researcher has tried to unveil what instigated the citizens to approach to the respective UP officials. Data indicated that in Sharique areas citizens were mostly concerned with social problems, and then came the issue of SSNPs, which followed by personal problems (Table: 6.3). Development related demands drove a quarter of a century citizens to be connected with UP. The picture was quite dissimilar in control areas as no respondents showed any inclination towards social problems or development activities. Their main concern involved with SSNPs, which succeeded

only by personal problems. The comparative depiction drawn on collected data conspicuously revealed that citizens of Sharique's intervened areas developed broader consensus to work for the whole community, social harmony and development.

### 6.2.1.2 Understanding of Ward Sabha (WS), and Open Budget Meeting (OBM)

New-fashioned key features have been incorporated in the UP act, 2009, which includes WS and OBM for participatory planning and budgeting; and RTI and CC for ensuring transparency and accountability. Key challenges for Sharique were to make officials and citizens of the UPs aware, capacitated, and accustomed to practise and implement these unprecedented mechanisms. Here, the major concentration has been given to reveal how far the demand and supply side actors became aware and capable of comprehending these features. Other issues related to these features have been discussed in detail at the latter part of this chapter.

Citizens were asked questions to unearth their awareness of the fact that there are opportunities to participate in the various activities of up. The replies represented discernible impact of Sharique's efforts in programme-implemented areas. Colossal size of the respondents (95%) asserted their recognition of opportunities to be the part of decision-making process. Contrariwise, in control areas, only 25% respondents

**Table 6.4: Avenues of Participation in the Activities of the UP (Citizens' Perception)**

Area	Sharique		Control	
	f	%	f	%
Response*				
Ward Sabha	38	100.0	1	20.0
Open Budget Meeting	35	92.1	-	-
Standing Committee	6	15.8	-	-
Monthly Meeting of UP	3	7.9	-	-
UDCC	1	2.6	-	-
Various Sub-committees	10	26.3	-	-
Don't Know	-	-	4	80.0
Total	93	244.7	15	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2017-18. \*Multiple responses taken.

assured that they had learnt about the prospect of participation in the governing process of UP, and an enormous portion (60%) of the respondents in non-Sharique areas retorted negatively; and 15% of the respondents in the same areas stated that they had no idea what the researcher was talking about. The next question placed before them included, whether they knew the avenues of participation. Among those respondents who answered affirmatively for the query of knowing about the participation in Sharique areas, fully recognised (100%) WS, largely realised OBM, and averagely identified various sub-committees were the channels through which they could be part of governing process of the UP (Table 6.4). Contrarily, in the control areas, data portrayed a poor picture, which illustrated that only one respondent among five, who stated that he knew about participation, and ascertained WS as the avenue of participation. However, the rest of the respondents (4, i.e. 80%), in control areas, failed to determine any avenue to be engaged with the UP, through mentioning the exit answer: 'don't know.'

In Sharique areas, citizens showed unequivocal responses in detecting WS and OBM as participatory thoroughfare. One of the respondents from citizens articulated that the project organised a number of meetings, in which we learnt about our right to make demands through participating in WS and OBM. The project officials encouraged us to participate and let us know how to involve in the discussions.<sup>7</sup> The ensuing important endeavour was to reveal to what extent they perceived the motives of institutionalisation of these participatory processes. Outsized portion of the participants of Sharique areas opined that WS and OBM had been introduced to receive the demands of the people (Table: 6.5). They further included that these processes had also been formulated as mechanisms for dissemination of information, and techniques to contribute in holding officials accountable to the citizenry. However, they failed to document WS and OBM as the processes of planning and budgeting indeed. In control areas, the data indicated that the respondents were below par in demonstrating their understanding the ground of inception of participatory procedures. In addition, the supply side actors were also asked the same question to unravel their conceptions on identifying the causes of commencement of WS and OBM. The responses discovered that the functionaries of Sharique areas were more versed on detecting the essence of inception of participatory processes at the UP level than that of control areas. However, the bizarre difference that was observed between two groups of citizens was not witnessed at this juncture between two sets of functionaries of Sharique and control areas (Appendix 6.2).

**Table 6.5: The Reasons behind Introduction of WS & OBM (Citizens)**

Area	Sharique Areas		Control Areas	
	f	%	f	%
To listen to the people's demand	36	92.3%	2	10.0%
To share the information	6	15.4%	-	-
To ensure accountability	3	7.7%	-	-
For planning	1	2.6%	-	-
Formalities	1	2.6%	-	-
Don't Know	2	5.1%	18	90.0%
Total	49	125.6%	20	100.0%

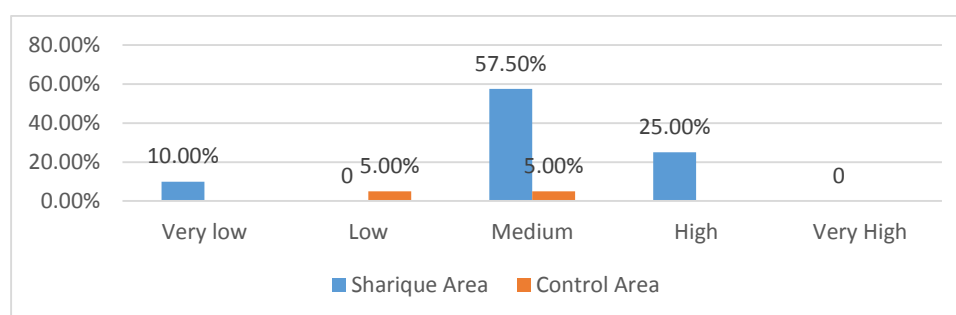
Source: Field Data, 2017-18.. \*Multiple responses taken into account

Vibrancy was observed when one UP secretary of Sharique areas pronounced that these participatory processes functioned as a bridge to connect both supply and demand sides, besides being the platforms to hear people's demands, share information and hold authority answerable. Yet, none of the respondents, in both Sharique and non-Sharique areas was succeeded to ascertain WS and OBM as the process of accomplishment of plan. Additionally, the supply side actors were inquired to find out whether they grasped the importance of people's voice at WS and OBM.

<sup>7</sup> C16, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 20, 2017

The accounts of the officials of both areas coincided in the same point, as all of them believed or at least manifested that people should raise their voice; and the principal reason they furthered was ‘for placing their (people’s) demands (Appendix 6.3). In Sharique areas functionaries also comprehended that if voice raising could be practised successfully, it would ensure establishment of efficient local governance at UP level. Moreover, officials from Sharique areas realised conversantly that people’s voice would induce marginalised access to mainstream course of development.

At this point, it is of great importance to unveil the level of understanding of potential voice raisers (citizens) on diverse concepts used in WS and OBM, as it is believed that without animated level of conception of the citizens, the participation for voice raising would be truncated, or meaningless. Therefore, it was imperative to exhume whether the respondents, who recognised participatory mechanisms, understood the concepts involved with both WS and OBM. In Sharique areas, 9 out of 10 respondents answered affirmatively, while it was only 1 out of 10 in control areas when the respondents were inquired whether they understood various concepts used in WS and OBM. The researcher excavated furthermore, to swot up their level of understating by placing the opinion-seeking Likert scale question: how much they understood the notions recurrently practiced in WS and OBM.



**Figure 6. 1: Level of Understanding the Concepts Used in WS & OBM (Citizens)**

The opinions, given by respondents of Sharique areas, elucidated that they were very conversant on WS and OBM related notions (Figure 6.1). The picture for control areas was something sullen that evidently unravelled a gargantuan lacuna of 72.5% between Sharique and non-Sharique areas. The respondents in control areas lagged too behind to participate actively through raising voice at the WS and OBM with a low level of understanding of concepts used in participatory processes. This dissimilar illustration has exposed the role of Sharique project in the intervened areas to enhance the level of knowledge of the citizens on issues that construct ties between LGIs and citizens.

### **6.2.1.3 Understanding about Right to Information (RTI) and Citizen Charter (CC)**

Making information disseminated and holding UP authority accountable have been two flagship features of the UP act, 2009. These features have been encompassed in the law with a view to upholding people’s power to ensure institution of better

functioning local governance in general, and Union Parishad in particular. Sharique project swotted to augment people's cognisance on these two prominent aspects of the act. It has been evident from presented Appendix 6.4 that citizens from Sharique areas expanded their acquaintance with RTI and CC. In contrast, the citizens from control areas frustrated the process of establishing transparent and accountable local governance at the UP level in line with the UP act of 2009. However, the actual scenario was a little bit nebulous in Sharique areas, as citizens were not shown great interest in both RTI and CC. They though sought information, yet they did not follow the procedures in accordance with the guidelines of the act of 2009. An NGO official, who worked for Sharique from partner NGO, disclosed the fact, as he asserted:

none of the citizens of UP was cognisant on RTI and CC. They customarily did not inquire the boards to get the details of the CCs and its various facets including services, their ways of delivery and timeframe. Men, in few cases, have been seen scrutinising the information boards placed at the UP premise; however, they have not been identified to seek information formally. Contrarily, women have not been noticed looking for information from boards. Equally, male and female of both areas leaned towards the village police to get necessary information in some instances.<sup>8</sup>

A participant of FGD sessions in control areas disclosed the ill-informed state of the people, as he stated that he had never heard of RTI and CC. None ever told him about these issues. He did not understand RTI or CC. Therefore, in essence, he continued that being aware and capable of using these tools, for him, out of question.<sup>9</sup> Another NGO official observed the same scenario in Sharique areas similarly, as he disclosed that the level of understanding of the citizens about CC was low, and people were not aware of CC.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, the rate of implementation of RTI and CC remained at minimal level. However, the responses of the officials in Sharique areas revealed that most of the citizens (65.7%) possessed knowledge on RTI and CC, while 62.5 % of the officials of non-Sharique areas believed that citizens knew nothing about RTI and CC (Appendix 6.5). Few officials (12.5%) from Sharique areas and a large number (56.3%) of officials from control areas exposed the fact actually; and informed that people had no idea on RTI and CC whatsoever.

What happened with the officials? To what extent they understood the RTI and CC. Collected data imparted that functionaries of Sharique areas were much more conversant in identifying the logic behind the initiation of CC than their counterparts from control areas (Appendix 6.6). They prioritised the intention of the commencement of CC as follows in category: first, disseminating information, second, and third, ensuring accountability and transparency respectively, and the fourth, involved with delivery of services. In control areas the same phenomenon was observed, however, the frequencies were very few. The majority of the responses in

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<sup>8</sup> N4, telephone interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 10, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> FGD data, Alatuli UP, December 26, 2017.

<sup>10</sup> N3, interview with researcher, January 9, 2018.

control areas ended with the response ‘don’t know.’ When the researcher inquired further the officials of both Sharique and control areas, they principally acceded their insensibility on RTI and CC with 9.4% for the former and 81.3% for the latter.

A small number of functionaries from Sharique and control areas blamed citizens for not being sensitized on both RTI and CC. While interviewing, the researcher questioned a UP chair from control areas on RTI and CC; and in reply, the chair was wandering and paltering with different issues from citizenship certificates to project implementation. The researcher tried to shepherd him several times to take him to the point of the interview, however, he glissaded away further. The irony was that he had been in the chair for a couple of terms, yet his familiarity was very poor with these issues. If this was the level of cognisance of the chair, what was the conditions of others functionaries, except the secretary, were easily inferable. A member of the same UP disclosed the reason, as he concluded, *“The chair depends on the UP secretary a lot. He runs the office with the advice of the secretary. Basically, the UP is run by the secretary and that’s why the chair’s knowledge on various issues is low.”*<sup>11</sup> The reverberation of the response of the member was found in the expression of the UP secretary. The secretary told that you would discover an empty vessel in him (the chair) when you would have finished the interview.<sup>12</sup> To sum up this section, based on discussion did above, it is as clear as crystal that the arguments depicted that the knowledge of citizens on RTI and CC of both areas were low, however, it was noticeably higher in Sharique areas. The illustration for the same for the functionaries was not the same in both areas, as in Sharique areas the functionaries were found much more conversant on RTI and CC than the functionaries of control areas.

#### **6.2.1.4 Awareness on Strengths and Weaknesses of the UP (Power, & Resources)**

It was learnt from FGD sessions and interviews that citizens were witnessing a transition of fulcrum of power from traditional rural elite to modern-day political elite. Citizens, particularly the citizens of Sharique areas, are very much aware of the changes the society has been experiencing. The comments pronounced at FGD sessions by the citizens in Sharique areas disclosed their state of sensibleness on the power structure and power relations of the UP. Some of the comments are as follow: *“People, nowadays, approach UP officials through local ruling party leaders to get expected services or benefits;”* *“Chair and members are compelled to commit partiality in delivering various services;”* *“Political pressure can never be removed;”* *“At present, political pressure is a social crime;”* *“Sometimes ruling political party leaders are getting the job done bypassing UP functionaries;”* *“There is no benefit to*

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<sup>11</sup> O38, interview with researcher, Maria, December 27, 2017.

<sup>12</sup> O40, interview with researcher, Maria, December 27, 2017.

*approach the members due to the excessive political pressures;*<sup>13</sup> and *“The participation of citizens at WS recedes due to the presence and exercise of party politics at local level.”*<sup>14</sup> These experiences and observations of the citizens indicated the level of people’s awareness of power pattern of their UPs in Sharique areas. UP officials also chorused with the citizens as they explained about the experience of feeling the pressures of politicians. A crestfallen UP member, while interviewing, disclosed that though he had been the member elect, yet he had to beg the cards of SSNPs for the destitute of his area, from local ruling party leaders.<sup>15</sup>

Citizens were also investigated to detect their awareness on probable ways through which UPs could generate income. In Sharique areas, citizens identified 10 different sources, at the same time the citizens of control areas identified only five (Appendix 6.7). The sources of earning opportunities varied according to the location of localities. For example, in Shahbajpur UP, citizens showed interests in having a share of income from Indo-Bangla land port in Sona Masjid area; in Jhilim UP, people were sensibly aware of potentiality of mills and factories to be the source of income; and in Deopara UP, citizens mentioned about brickfields to be the prospective source of revenue. When such big undeveloped opportunities were not identified, in that case, citizens prescribed for usages of *khas* land and water-body, and investing for production of goods and services to sell. In control areas, 75% of respondents failed to identify the potential sources of UP’s income, on the other hand, 82.5% respondents of Sharique areas manifested their cognisance on resources. Thus, in case of need, during OBM, and tax assessment period, citizens could contribute effectively in suggesting UPs, which one to target and which one to omit for further revenue generation. The officials were found less innovative, and more conservative than the citizens of both areas as they (officials) identified ‘demand more fund from government’ option was their principal avenue of augmentation of revenue, as 61.5% and 35.7% of the officials from Sharique and control areas respectively chose this alternative (Appendix 6.8). Citizens craved UPs for being proactive and self-driven in income generation through innovative way; e.g., they mentioned social forestation. Likewise, while identifying the avenues to strengthen the base of financial condition of the UP, the UP officials of both areas exhibited almost an equal level of awareness, and indicated the same sources. However, the difference between them was only observed in the intensity of choosing various options.

Moreover, citizens of Sharique areas mentioned existing diversified sources (total 12) of revenues of UP, though there were some misconceptions regarding the sources they mentioned (Appendix 6.9). On the other hand, citizens of control areas mentioned

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<sup>13</sup> FGD data, Shilmaria UP, December 13, 2017.

<sup>14</sup> FGD data, Shahbajpur UP, December 20, 2017.

<sup>15</sup> O15, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 18, 2017.

about only two very familiar sources of income i.e., holding tax, and issuance of various certificates. The functionaries of Sharique areas demonstrated their clear perception on sources of income of UP, though they missed out some important sources of income like resource supply from NGO, 1% land transfer fee from Upazila. The officials of control areas mentioned only about holding tax and only 4 out of 10 mentioned about issuance of trade licence and certificates could be potential sources of own income, while 25% of the officials failed recognised any sources of revenue(Appendix 6.10). A female member, from Alatul UP of control areas, lamented, “*Even, I, myself, do not know about the income of UP and their sources then, how could I let the citizens know- how much the UP earn and from which sources.*”<sup>16</sup> The data presented and discussed above-portrayed awareness map of both citizens and officials’ of Sharique and non-Sharique areas equally; and the map confirmed the progress attained through the collaborative efforts of Sharique with UPs. One member of Ward platform of Sharique, from Shilmaria UP, gave his account that backs up the differences between Sharique and non-Sharique areas. He explained,

During the development of strategic planning and FYP, the project arranged participatory meeting to conduct resource mapping of the UPs. This extensive process of mapping helped us becoming aware of various sources from which the UPs could earn. The resource knowledge guides us to suggest the UP how to increase its come.<sup>17</sup>

## **6.2.2 Administrative and Leadership Skills of the Officials**

### **6.2.2.1 Performance of the Officials and Audit Queries**

In UP, nowadays, two types of auditing process: revenue audit, (regular government audit), and LGSP audit as third-party monitoring (project audit by renowned C/A farm) are conducted. Between these two, the LGSP audit is more regular, year wise, and detailed, and after finishing auditing, the team supplied printed minutes of the audit. For this study, the LGSP audit reports have been studied (Table: 6.6). The table revealed the UPs in Sharique areas faced lesser numbers of audit queries than the UPs of control areas, as the average queries were 4.25 for the former and 5 for the latter. Regarding documentation and fulfilment of legal bindings, the UPs of Sharique areas were doing better. Furthermore, in control areas, the audit team found unreal buying of goats, sewing machines, and submersible pumps, but no such incidents were found in the UPs of Sharique areas. However, in some areas, the UPs of control region doing better than that of Sharique areas, such as payment of vat/tax, and holding up the retention money of the contractors, proper construction and reforms activities, effectuation of suggestions of the audit teams, and lowering the amount of mismatched money. Overall, the audit team of LGSP evaluated the UPs based on 12 indicators of 5 extensive areas; and in this respect, the UPs of Sharique areas

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<sup>16</sup> O42, interview with researcher, Alatul, December 26, 2017.

<sup>17</sup> C35, interview with researcher, Shilmaria, December 10, 2017.



performed well than the UPs of control areas with performance scores of 19.75 for the former and 17 for the latter.

**Table 6. 6: Incidence of Audit Queries**

Area	UP	FY	No. of queries	Vat/ tax/ retention	Construction / Reforms	Documentation / fulfilment of bindings	Amount of mismatched money	Mismatched money % of total income	Nonexistence of materials	Non-execution of previously given suggestion	LGSP performance Score
Sharique	Jhilim	2015-16	6	4	1	12	23937.00	0.32	0	6	19
	Deopara	2015-16	4	3	0	16	176793.00	0.84	0	5	20
	Shilmari*	2014-15	4	4	0	17	129635.00	0.62	0	3	18
	Shahbajpur	2015-16	11	5	5	24	255819.20	1.34	0	5	22
	<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>585184.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Average</b>		<b>4.25</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>17.25</b>	<b>146296.00</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>19.75</b>	
Control	Alatuli*	2014-15	5	2	0	22	65559.05	1.33	29	4	16
	Maria	2015-16	5	2	2	17	20155.00	0.20	0	4	18
	<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>85714.05</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>34</b>
	<b>Average</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>42857.025</b>	<b>0.58</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>17</b>

Source: Calculated by the researcher based on the yearly LGSP audit report.

\* The LGSP audit report of FY 15-16 has not been found.

Therefore, though the UPs of Sharique areas, in respect of some audit indicators lagged behind, yet in key areas like a number of audit queries, documentation and fulfilment of legal bindings, incidence of corruptions, and success scores they were doing well compared to the UPs of control areas.

However, three UP secretaries among six, disclosed presence of undue process for having a clean audit report, with a high score to be capable of having a burgeoning amount of LGSP grant as PBG. Reluctant to have his name published a UP secretary revealed the open secret,

nowadays, it is become a common phenomenon in the auditing process of UP to manipulate audit report. LGSP audit is more rigorous than that of government. When the auditors come to conduct the official financial examination in the Union Parishads, they offer means of getting higher score for performance through doing only some paperwork. In return, they claim their carrots, with the confirmation of getting the same the findings of the audit report overturned to minimal minor audit objections and an exhibition of good performance that carry high scores.<sup>18</sup>

Moving further, another UP secretary asserted,

both the audit teams are manageable with backhanders. Particularly the revenue audit teams are more manageable than that of LGSP. Through the inducements, the UPs can fabricate the audit reports, as the version they needed.<sup>19</sup>

An NGO official revealed that the LGSP performance scores were manipulated as they found a UP of 'C' grade according to their evaluation, was placed at 'A' grade by LGSP team.<sup>20</sup> These types of phenomena distort the credibility of the

<sup>18</sup> O16, interview with researcher, February 25, 2018.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> N2, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, April 8, 2018.

audit reports; and through the process, the UP manages themselves a licence to misappropriate the funds and grants they were supplied.

### 6.2.2.2 Documentation

UPs are to document many of its activities to send reports and satisfy audits, as well as for evaluation. Through, mapping of documentation analysis it has been found that on an average the UPs of Sharique areas kept their activities documented well in comparison to the UPs of control areas (Table: 6.7).

**Table 6. 7: Mapping of Documentation**

Area	Name of Union Parishads	Names of the Document not Kept Properly																	Total	
		Monthly financial report	Labour Register	Information application & seeking register	Annual financial statement	Preserving photocopy of cheques	Scheme Register implementation	Maintaining Cashbook	Quarterly Purchase Report	Grant, TR, Kabikta, Kabita, ADP, VGD, VGF Register	UDC service Book	Resolution writing	Information Boards	Civil works register	Advance matching Register	Identification code for Assets	Grant Register	Other Register s		
Sharique	Jhilim	X	X	X	X	X	X												6	
	Deopara	X	X	X	X	X		X				X		X					1	9
	Shilmaria	X		X			X	X	X											5
	Shahbajpur	X		X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X				1	12
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>32</b>	
	<b>G.T.</b>	<b>32 / Average = 8</b>																		
Control	Alatuli	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X		3	14
	Maria			X	X				X	X		X	X	X	X				1	9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>23</b>	
<b>G.T.</b>	<b>23 / Average = 11.5</b>																			

Source: Calculated by the researcher based on the yearly LGSP audit report.

A UP secretary asserted, “*Sharique has accompanied us in preparing yearly financial reports, budgets, FYP, income tax statement, resolutions of meetings, etc. Before that, we prepared these documents clumsily in wrong formats.*”<sup>21</sup> The researcher has collected annual financial reports, budgets, and resolutions of WS, SC, UDCC, PC, UP monthly meetings of the UPs. It has been found that the UPs principally depended on UP secretaries for all these writings. A tendency was observed there, the officials kept the documents updated, whether the meeting physically held or not, to satisfy the auditors. The UP secretary of Maria UP told the researcher that though WS, SC, UP monthly meeting did not hold regularly, yet he kept the documents updated.<sup>22</sup> In Alatuli, it was observed that the secretary composed resolutions in computer, and later he just changed the discussions and decisions included in the resolutions. The process was a smart move; however, he used the process only to update the files, and to get the resolutions signed by the officials without an actual meeting. However, almost in all UPs the usages of computer have been observed for keeping documents ready to supply in soft form and get printed hard copy in need.

<sup>21</sup> O24, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>22</sup> O40, interview with researcher, Maria, December 27, 2017.

The annual financial reports, one of the key documents of the UP, have not been found in well matched with the activities they had done. In this regard, 75% and 100% of the UPs of Sharique and control areas respectively fell short of up to the mark. Overall, the performance of the UPs of Sharique areas showed the sign of improvement, but they need more training in this regard, as it is also needed in control areas. One UP secretary remember the role of Sharique,

In the UP, I have to maintain all the documents ready and updated. With new rules, regulations and guidelines the UP required to prepare many documents to store and to send to higher level. Sharique has helped me identifying and developing formation of varied documents, and accompany me in preparing required documents, such as annual financial reports, budgets, resolution books, etc.<sup>23</sup>

### ***6.2.2.3 Active Participation of the Officials in the Meetings***

It has been learned that almost all of the UP officials remained present in the various meetings of the UPs, except emergencies. While scrutinising the documents of and observing the monthly UP meetings, it has been observed that the chair played dominating role and in most cases, s/he remained the decider. In some cases, the meetings became the place of decision dissemination. When there was opportunity of discussions in the meeting, the chair and male members exploited the chances. Among the male members, the members who were closely attached with the UP chair claimed the most and had an influence on decisions. The other male members, who stayed in the periphery of power circle, and the women members in general, participated less actively in the discussions and if raised voice had low-level of effect on the decisions. These phenomena were almost the same in both areas of Sharique and control.

### ***6.2.2.4 Intention to Work Together by Officials***

All of the respondents of officials (100%) from Sharique areas exhibited their high intention to work together as a team. In Sharique areas, the researcher observed officials' eagerness to help each other. A women member from Shilmaria UP of Sharique areas revealed the following account,

In our UP, the chair does not discriminate between men and women members. We work together and help each other. The chair has made us a good working team. We discuss all the issues openly, make plans and execute the same subsequently.<sup>24</sup>

That means the openness, positive attitudes of the, and burgeoning leadership for which the project invested its efforts, contributed to formation of a team with all officials together. However, there were some latent issues in the complex nature of relations among officials including gender divide, communication gap, time constraints, diverse political affiliation, lack of capacity, social status gap, etc. as

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<sup>23</sup> O16, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 18, 2017.

<sup>24</sup> O28, interview with researcher, Shilmaria, December 14, 2017.

soft obstacles that drew an invisible line for being assimilated into a coordinated team. One UP member from Sharique areas disclosed that she was hindered by her male colleagues several times.<sup>25</sup> In control areas, the functionaries were not far behind, as majority of them (75%) believed that they were also performing as a team under the leadership of their chair. The rest, 25% respondents of officials of control areas reported they underwent of a period when they were alienated from the UPs' major activities. These officials of control areas disclosed that they suffered exclusion due to their political identity (50%), weak social status (25%), conflict of interest (25%), womanhood (25%), and unwillingness (25%) of other officials. Thus, the argument can be drawn that, the functionaries of Sharique areas developed themselves into a group to work together for the UP, and they extended their hands towards their colleagues.

#### **6.2.2.5 e-Governance: Procuring through e-Tendering and other Usages**

Digitalisation of the governing processes has been included in the Vision 2021 of the government. The vision is to let the power of ICT to increase transparency and accountability, as well as efficiency and access to services by the stakeholders and other of LGIs. Sharique has encouraged, made understood the benefit of using ICT, and capacitated officials to use ICT in governance. In this regard, the introduction of e-GP (electronic government procurement),<sup>26</sup> is believed and expected to ensure flawless participation of organisations and individuals in tender submissions.<sup>27</sup> The CPD developed vision has also aspired for a transparent procurement system through e-governance in all government agencies.<sup>28</sup> Sharique has facilitated the process of e-tendering in LGIs. The UPs have come under the digitalisation process as government has connected UPs with high-speed internet connection, and promote establishment of development of e-service centre UDC (Union Digital Centre) at every UP. Therefore, the question is to what extent the UPs have been exercising e-tendering in the process of procurements. The inquiry and observation revealed that no UPs of both Sharique and control areas were not exercising e-tendering. It has been found that they were unaware of the process; particularly the UP officials with low-level education and technical capacity did not understand the process well. However, through, UDC varied services of government and private sectors are provided. Moreover, the UPs of Sharique areas opened e-mail ID, and regularly checks these email and send varied documents to the upper echelon of the government as required. On the other hand, the UPs of Sharique areas regularly collect varied orders, directions of the government

<sup>25</sup> O2, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 20, 2017.

<sup>26</sup> The address of the website of e-GP: [www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd).

<sup>27</sup> Hasanuzzaman Zaman and Rokonzaman, "Achieving Digital Bangladesh by 2021 and beyond," Background paper for the seventh Five Year Plan (7FYP) (2015), 18.

<sup>28</sup> Centre for Policy Dialogue, *Bangladesh Vision 2021: Prepared under the Initiative of Nagorik (citizen) Committee 2006* (Dhaka: CPD, 2007), 8-13.

through visiting LGD website. For instance, during field visit the researcher observed that UPs were using ICT.

**Box 6. 1: Order Published on Websites Followed Immediately**

Government has lowered the fees of birth registrations and the news has been notified through government order published in LGD website. The chair of the Deopara UP of Sharique areas having come across the notice, ask the UP secretary instantly to receive the fee as re-fixed by government.  
Deopara UP, December 20, 2017.

Thus, the UPs have become conscious, and have been using ICT to let their constituents benefitted for receiving government and private services.

**6.2.2.6 Decision-making and Prioritisation of Demands (Who decides?)**

One of the key indicators of leadership ability of the officials is to have role in decision-making process. The officials were asked whether their opinions were given due importance when decisions were made on various issues in the UP. In reply, 96.9% and 81.3% of the respondents from Sharique and control areas respectively opined affirmatively. Among those who responded affirmatively were inquired further how frequently their opinions were given importance. The replies illustrated that equal percent (56.3%) of the respondents from both Sharique and control areas, were always given importance, and 40.6% and 25% of the respondents from Sharique and control areas respectively thought that their opinions were given importance less frequently. That is, officials from Sharique areas depicted much more ability to influence the decisions of the UP. One UP member from Sharique areas gave his statement as, “*Both male and female members were provided equal opportunity and importance, and all the concerns were taken into account.*”<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, in control areas, the scenario depicted the dominance of men on women, and political power holder on their rival group. Patriarchal attitudes of the male officials marginalised the voice of the WMs in the process of decision-making at UP. One UP chair could not hide his attitude towards women members, as he included, “*I think, the women members actually do not have any particular job to accomplish.*”<sup>30</sup> The secretary of the same UP summarised the state of women members in the following way,

The women members become the sufferer of inattention and ignorance. There is only one women member against three male members. This disparity in numbers, make them weak, and consequently, they fail to use the power bestowed on them with the UP act of 2009. In decision-making, and distribution of projects, their male colleagues used to deprive women members through using loophole of the laws.<sup>31</sup>

In Maria, one UP member stated that the chair promoted his party men, and he only counted the opinions of those members who supported the same political party as he

<sup>29</sup> O30, interview with researcher, Shilmaria, December 14, 2017.

<sup>30</sup> O33, interview with researcher, Maria December 27, 2017.

<sup>31</sup> O40, interview with researcher, Maria, December 27, 2017.

(the chair) did. This brief discussion signified the role of Sharique in its areas of coverage to make the officials capable of valuing their presence in the office. Male members, as well as chairs, became aware of the rights of the women members, and the legal bindings imposed through the act of 2009.

On the other hand, at Ward level, the members through WS prioritised the demands of the wards and subsequently sent it forward to secure a place in the final list of development projects and to be implemented afterwards. Both male and female members unravelled that the prioritised demand list of their Wards was presented for discussions at OBM. In Sharique areas, 91.7% of the officials who articulated that their shortlisted demands from WS were made public at OBM; on the other hand, 66.7% of the officials from non-Sharique areas found their selected demands of the citizens had been discussed at OBM. Thus, the officials of Sharique areas showed their success in mobilising the demands of the people of their respective wards.

At this stage, it has become vital to expose who usually prioritised the demands, which came from each of every nine Wards of the UP and were displayed at the of OBM in brown papers. It is implied that in both areas the members did not have any control over prioritisation of demands, which displayed and discussed at OBM. In both areas, the decisions had been taken jointly through various committees and the meetings of the UP, though the intensity of the responses was found mixed in both Sharique (34.4% & 56.3%) and control areas (43.8% & 50.0%). The table furthered the disclosure that chairs in both areas played dominant role, while the UP secretaries in Sharique areas were also observed to have prioritised the demands. Moreover, there were also other key role makers in selecting projects. They mostly linked up with ruling political party and local MPs. A UP chair specified, “*After having people’s demands from WS, we UP officials, local dignitaries, and ruling party leaders sit together to select the project for implementation in the next fiscal year.*”<sup>32</sup> This means that the officials from Sharique areas presented higher intensity and ability in bringing the demands of the people to the UP from Ward level than that of control areas. However, the prioritisation process of demands that displayed, presented and discussed at OBM, in both areas exhibited almost the same phenomenon.

#### **6.2.2.7 Formulation of Five Year Plans and their Linkages with Budget**

The UP official mentioned that they were facilitated through the financial assistance for identifying schemes and implementing the same; and most of the officials (65.6%) have had experience of implementation of projects that were offered by Sharique. One of the major tasks of the officials is to formulate long-term plan that is a five-year plan (FYP) and to incorporate various projects from the long-term plan into annual budgets

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<sup>32</sup> O1, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 20, 2017.

subsequently. The collected data uncovered that 87.5% and 50.0% of the officials from Sharique and control areas respectively were informed about their UPs' devising of a long-term plan. A few officials (12.5%) from Sharique areas and a modest number of officials (18.8%) from control areas disclosed their unawareness about FYP. They showed no clue about FYP whatsoever. Some of them (25%) disclosed that they had even not heard about the long-term plan. Moreover, a substantial number of respondents of officials (31.3%) from non-Sharique areas let the researcher know that their UP had not developed any FYP. However, the reality was that every UP of both Sharique and control areas framed the FYPs. That means the officials, who expressed their ignorance and unawareness of having an FYP plan, remained in the dark. The reasons for their darkness were multiple. Firstly, these officials did not participate in the formulation of the long-term plan. The reason behind their non-participation was that some of these officials were newly elected; some of them came from low-level education group to grasp an issue like FYP. In control areas, the UP chairs with the help of the UP secretaries developed the FYPs of UPs, and the so-called prioritised demands included in the FYPs. Secondly, during budget sessions, the FYP was not consulted to incorporate projects in the budget document from the same.

The researcher examined the FYPs of each UP of both the Sharique and control areas to scrutinise their quality of presentation. It was observed that the FYPs of Sharique areas were spotted in a book-like compiled documents, incorporating the detailed procedures of planning, which were followed to formulate FYPs. The FYP documents, more significantly, presented the prioritised demands list with minute details of each project. However, the FYP documents of control areas were not discovered as well formulated state as of Sharique areas, particularly in Alatuli the document was only composed in computer in losing papers cursorily. Meanwhile in Maria UP the document though found in book-like form, still it had not incorporated every detail of planning process, and the projects, which included in the plan.

Now, the question is to what extent the projects assembled in FYPs considered for inclusion in the annual budgets. The officials who were aware of FYP, from Sharique and control areas expressed their opinions by mentioning that in their UP the long-term plan had played crucial roles in the process of formulation of budgets with 92.9% for the former and 75.0% for the latter. However, there were other opinions in both Sharique and control areas. One UP secretary from Sharique areas made the researcher known, "*FYP is only a paperwork, and it has no effect on budgets.*"<sup>33</sup> Another UP

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<sup>33</sup> O16, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 18, 2017.

secretary from control areas echoed the same voice, “*Very few numbers of programmes from FYP were incorporated in the budget, and in fact, the FYP was partially implemented through budget.*”<sup>34</sup>

When the researcher analysed the FYPs, budgets, and project lists (Appendix 6.11), it has been found that 91% and 64% of the projects of the budget of the UPs of Sharique and control areas respectively came from the FYPs. The result has reflected the opinions of the officials, which has been discussed earlier (92.9% & 75.0%). One interesting phenomenon was that in Sharique areas fewer projects (36%) were incorporated in budget than that of control areas (81%). The reason was that in Sharique areas the UPs included more projects for a year (46.25 project averagely) in their FYPs than that of control areas (15.5 projects averagely). Thus, the inclusion of more projects in FYP tended to be implemented in less percentage. Another issue was that in control areas the projects listed in FYPs were not specifically incorporated, i.e. the projects were included in broad sub-heading, not as an individual project. With cautious examination of the FYP documents, it was exposed that, two UPs of Sharique areas named Shilmaria and Deopara among four (50%) conducted resource mapping rigorously with assistance of Sharique. The second set of UPs of Sharique areas, including Jhilim and Shahbajpur, developed their FYPs with a lesser effort for mapping and depended on deskwork too. In Maria, the situation was worst among all the UPs of the study, as the UP totally depended on table work of the UP secretary. Alatuli formulated their FYP only as a formality, as a close look disclosed that the projects they included in the different fiscal year were just reshuffled copies other years of the FYP. It had presented only two projects for each of the wards, as the total projects counted only 18. Thus, it can be summarised that the UPs of Sharique areas documented their FYPs well, and displayed an involuntary linkage with the annual budget to implement the FYPs. The linkages that were observed in some cases were not deliberate rather it happened automatically. A UP chair expressed his observation, “*Our FYP and its projects are so detailed and inclusive that almost all the demands raised in WS later matched causally. Thus, we do not need to consult FYP to incorporate projects from the same.*”<sup>35</sup>

#### **6.2.2.8 Communication Skills of Officials (Horizontal and Vertical)**

Officials were asked a proxy question to understand their strength of communication with their colleagues: do other officials help you? In reply, all of the officials of Sharique areas affirmed that their co-officials supported them, while in control areas it was found that 75% of the officials mentioned having supported from by their colleagues in need. However, the communications among officials past through ups

<sup>34</sup> O48, interview with researcher, Alatuli, December 30, 2017.

<sup>35</sup> O25, interview with researcher, Shilmaria, December 14, 2017.



and down. It depends mostly on political affinity, social influence, gender, etc. There witnessed a core and periphery groups of officials in the UPs regarding scale of communication. Usually, the officials who stayed in the core had developed a very intimate communication among them, and reversely, those who failed to enter into the core had gone through a weak communication channel with the inner core. In this regard, the UP secretary always played a key role with the support of the UP chair. Moreover, the communication among members was much smoother than the channel of communication between chair and members; and the communication between women members and chair was found most uneasy. During field visit, the researcher came across the following incident in Maria UP of control areas.

**Box 6. 2: The Incidence of a Women Member from Maria UP**

The researcher went to Maria UP on December 27, 2018, only to conduct interviews. While he was there, the UP chair was absent; however, a woman member named Mahbuba Begum (40) was present. During the interview she disclosed, “The chair and I are the birds of same feathers, and I have good working relation with him. I am one of those who are consulted during decision making process.” However, later the gesture and behavior she made proved her claims baseless, when she was requested to phone the UP chair to let the researcher know when he (the absent chair) would be in the UP. Showing reluctance and discomfort to phone the chair, she contacted another male member, and asked him to phone the chair.

**Box 6. 3: The Experience of a Male Member from Maria UP**

Another UP member from Maria UP, named Emdadul Haque, during interview, told the researcher, “The chair of the UP does not count me. My opinions have not been given any value. He (the UP chair) takes all the decisions consulting predominantly with the secretary, as well as his sycophants in the UP. To know the fact, even you can ask other members.” He progressed, “I sent the people, when they approached me, to the chair by telling that the power rested on the hand of the chair, as a member I have no power and nothing to do.” He continued, “Even, Ws have been organised leaving me absent with the help of two of chair’s steadfast supporters named Abbas and Humayun. I am not let know how much funds and what types of projects the UP are to implement.” He claimed, “The problem between the chair and me developed from conflicts, of politics, as well as of interest.”

These two cases presented in the above boxes exposed the complexities of communication between the chair and the members. Box 6.2 demonstrated the gap generated from gender born discomforts and lack of confidence. On the other hand, Box 6.3 revealed that political and personal interests deteriorated the relationship to an unworkable stature. Moreover, the gap in wealth and education, i.e. socio-economic conditions, and the level of consciousness engendered communication gaps between the chair and members. The collected data have shown that, as the gap of education and consciousness between the chair and the members was low in Sharique areas than that of control areas, so was the communication gap remained slender there (Appendix 6.12). The members of Sharique areas, through efforts of the Sharique project, with a higher level of education, consciousness and confidence lessened the gap of communication with their chairs.

Vertically, the officials, as people's representatives had good terms with their citizens at the bottom level. During the field visits, it was observed that people from all strata could easily contact the UP officials. Most of the citizens who were interviewed from both areas revealed that the officials had paid their attention to their voice. However, higher level of exposure through the project, as well as the better state of knowledge, education, awareness, and confidence was observed in Sharique areas (Table 6.8), which contributed to lessening the communication gap between officials and citizens in Sharique areas.

**Table 6. 8: Education, Ave. Monthly Income and Awareness on UP**

Area	Sharique Areas		Control Areas	
	Officials	Citizen	Officials	Citizen
Median of Education Level	Higher secondary	Secondary	Primary	Can sign only
Average Monthly Income (tk.)	14,031.25	7,380.00	13,125.00	3,500.00
Ave. No. of UP activities Mentioned	3.47	3.20	3.31	1.79

Source: Field Data, 2017-18.

Here, Sharique played the role of catalyst to mobilise the citizens to feel free to contact with their officials at ease. A UP member from Jhilim UP of Sharique areas told the researcher, *“Sharique has made citizens spirited; now, they are not panicked of any officials. Most of the people have become confident to communicate with their officials to raise their demands and queries.”*<sup>36</sup>

The officials were also inquired to unravel to what extent they have developed communication with government officials of Upazila, particularly with the UNO (Upazila Nirbahi Officer) as the officer is the designated supervising authority, as well as key role players in the coordination between Upazila and the UPs at grass root level. Sharique intended to build a bridge between the peoples' representatives of bottom level LGIs with the higher-level government authorities. For this, the project invited high officials from district and Upazila level and confirmed their presence in various programmes of the UP, like WS, OBM, etc. The UP officials were asked whether they caught frequent appointment of UNO for discussing issues relating to the UPs and local level development; in reply, 65.6% and 50% of the respondents of officials from Sharique and control areas respectively affirmed that they secured appointment of the UNO when needed. In contrary to that, equal percent (12.5%) of respondents from both areas disclosed their beliefs that they did not felt the urgency or need to contact with the UNO frequently. One UP officials from Sharique areas revealed, *“We approach him to solve various problems of the UP.”*<sup>37</sup> Another UP official described that they sought the suggestions of the UNO when they confronted complex issues.<sup>38</sup> Few officials disclosed that it was the responsibilities of the UP

<sup>36</sup> O23, interview with researcher, December 17, 2017.

<sup>37</sup> O8, interview with researcher, December 20, 2017.

<sup>38</sup> O40, interview with researcher December 27, 2017.

chair, and the chair used to maintain the communication with the UNO and other government officials of higher ranks. A woman UP member from control areas stated that *“I do not know him/her, and I do not approach him.”*<sup>39</sup> It is evident from the discussions that the UP officials of Sharique areas exhibited better working communications with UNOs than that of their counterparts of control areas. Among the officials of both areas, the UP chairs and the secretaries maintained continuous communications with the UNOs. In this respect, the general members lagged behind, and the women members lagged far behind than that of their male colleagues.

#### **6.2.2.9 Negotiation for Budget Allocation with Higher Authorities**

Lion share funds of UP are, nowadays, channelled through other local government intuitions, particularly Upazila and District administration. These two LGIs also play major roles in supervising the UPs. The UPZ, in particular, being very close to the UP, the UP officials' ex-officio status in UZP, and with coordinating functions of the UPs under its jurisdiction, has roles to play to enhance fiscal flow to the UPs. Officials were asked whether they had contacted with the UPZ and District authority to increase budget allocation for their UPs. In replies, 31.3% and 12.5% of the officials from Sharique and control areas respectively categorically mentioned that they communicated and negotiated with the authorities of UPZ and District for an increased level of budget allocation. However, most of the UP officials (68.8% and 87.5% from Sharique and control areas respectively) revealed that they did not negotiate with these authorities in this regards. During interview, officials revealed that the UPZ and District authority did not have authority to increase the number of allocations due to these allocations followed certain set of rules and regulations. For example, one UP chair described his experience: *“Usually, the UNO has no particular power to allocate more from the UPZ to UP. However, I have developed a good communication with him, and he does manage some extra money for my UP.”*<sup>40</sup> Another UP chair from control areas let the researcher know that he urged DC of his district for allocation of corrugated tin to build roofing of the houses for the destitute of his area. The officer in District assured him, he would serve the people of his (the chair) area in near future.<sup>41</sup>

In getting extra funds for the UP, the relationship with the local MP or the minister played crucial role. One UP secretary stated, *“Our chair has a very good connection with the local MP, and consequently our chair lobbied with the MP to bring extra funds for our UP and he succeeded many times. The amount even sometimes surpassed our targets fixed in budget documents.”*<sup>42</sup> For example, in Shahbajpur, the

<sup>39</sup> O42, interview with researcher, Alatuli, December 26, 2017.

<sup>40</sup> O25, interview with researcher, Shilmaria, December 14, 2017.

<sup>41</sup> O41, interview with researcher, Alatuli, December 30, 2017.

<sup>42</sup> O16, interview with researcher, Deopara, March 13, 2018.

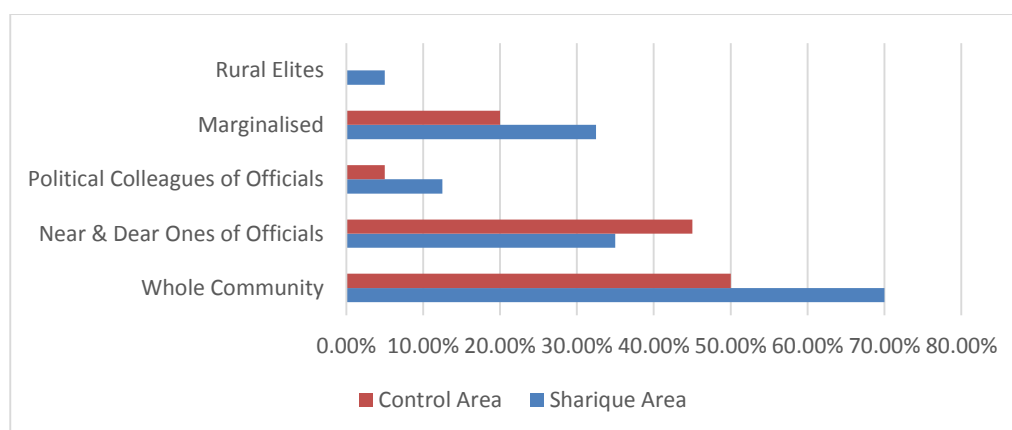
immediate previous chair is the brother of a local minister, during the last year of his tenure as a chair, the proposed income in budget for the FY 2015-2016 was fixed at BDT 9,448,150, while the actual fund received by the UP in that year stood at BDT 19,024,214, which was more than double of the figure fixed in budget.<sup>43</sup> The scenario described here depicted that though there are limitations of the higher-level authorities of other local government units to allocate more in the budgets, yet good negotiations skill created opportunity to get more. In this respect, Sharique project played a pivotal role to encourage, and make them conversant to negotiate with higher-level officials of local government units. Having discussed on issues like knowledge, awareness and skill of both citizens and officials the next section has been dealt with citizens engagement in governing process of UP with roles of officials for the same.

### 6.3 People's Participation/Citizens' Engagement

The development actors, in recent times, have emphasized tackling poor governance, and disparity in access to resources to establish participatory and inclusive governance. Since governance does matter as people's participation in governance is taken as a right with inherent value in itself. Moreover, the outcomes of development activities, poverty alleviation efforts, as well as initiatives aiming at the reduction of inequality are more significant, long lasting, and extensive if people's access to the decision-making process is ensured. The process will not only influence their lives but also help the government to become capable, inclusive and accountable to their citizens.<sup>44</sup>

#### 6.3.1 People's Attitudes towards UP

What do people think about the UP? To what extent they perceive UP as their institution.



**Figure 6. 2: According to Citizens for Whom the UP Work (Citizens)**

<sup>43</sup> LGSP, *LGSP Audit Report of 2015-2016*, Shahbajpur UP; and the Budget of the FY 2015-2016 of Shahbajpur.

<sup>44</sup> CARE Bangladesh, "Governance and Accountability," [http://www.carebangladesh.org/publication\\_list.php?pub\\_cat=Governance](http://www.carebangladesh.org/publication_list.php?pub_cat=Governance) (accessed February 6, 2017).

To unearth the issue citizens were scrutinized through placing, what they perceived who got the much attention of the UP or in other words for whom the UP worked. People from both areas dominantly opined that UPs had been working for the whole community (Figure 6.2). A good portion of the citizens from both areas observed that the UP took initiatives for the marginalised of their respective areas. In both cases, Sharique areas showed better promises and potentials (70% & 32.5%) than that of the control areas (50% & 20%). Here, the comment of a UP secretary of Sharique areas is mentionable, he expressed his experience in the following way,

I have been working for the UP as a secretary for quite a long time. During the period, from my beginning to the advent of Sharique project, I have found the UP like an abandoned and haunted structure. The UP office remained persistently open for few hours of the day, and even not every working day of the week. In some cases, people were seen to graze their livestock and to gamble on cards in the UP premise. Nowadays, the scenario has changed totally; as people realised the need of the UP, and find it essentials to be involved with the UP. The influx of people has increased a lot and the UP office has to be kept open until the end the office hour every working day of the week. The UP, recently, has become a hub of delivery of services and remained full of the noise and chaos of the hustle and bustle of events and activities. Furthermore, with such augmentation of people's visits, SME entrepreneurs have installed tea stall near the UP office building, which one remained barren.<sup>45</sup>

One NGO officials forwarded her account as follows,

We motivated people to be involved with the UPs. We made them understood that government services would be delivered through the UPs; so for being benefitted, they had to be involved with the UPs. As the people's involvement had increased, the UP officials were forced to open the office during the office hour. Thus, the light started shining in the UP.<sup>46</sup>

These accounts of the official disclosed how the attitudes of the people changed on course of time with the efforts of Sharique project. Moreover, when citizens were asked to give rank (the ranks were given corresponding value) their UP in accordance the level of trust, it was found that the average values were 3.65 and 2.95 for the UPs in Sharique and control areas respectively out of five. Thus, it can be argued that the attitude, trust, acceptance, sense of ownership and involvement of the citizens with their UPs have been improved with the efforts of the Sharique project, though there was wide-open scope for doing more. For example, inhabitants disclosed that UP officials showed tendencies to provide priorities to their near and dear ones, as well as political colleagues. In aggregate, these two responses were supported by 47.5% and 50% of the respondents of Sharique and non-Sharique areas respectively.

### **6.3.2 Organisation of WS and OBM**

Officials were assigned to organise WS on regular basis to provide opportunities to the citizens to place their demands. All of the officials who were included in the study claimed that they had organised WS timely and regularly in Sharique areas. In contrast, 75% of the officials from control areas made the bid that they arranged WS

<sup>45</sup> O16, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 18, 2017.

<sup>46</sup> N5, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 8, 2018.

regularly. Sharique project had UP and officials practiced WS regularly during the collaboration period. Few members and a good portion of citizens at that time thought that WS was the meeting of Sharique. With the constant and stubborn like mule efforts of Sharique almost pressed officials to hold WS meetings regularly. All of the officials (100%) of Sharique areas unveiled that they were assisted to organise WS by the Sharique. Sharique project, according to the officials, contributed to organisation of WS and OBM through financial support (53.1%), campaigns (62.5%), inspiring people and officials (81.3%), and accompaniment (25%). In this regard, Sharique played key role to make officials invite all the voters of the Ward. Sharique developed and used Ward Platforms to have citizens informed about WS. One UP officials disclosed his memory, *“When Sharique was there we did not have to do anything much for organising WS. After the departure of Sharique, we are in little bit difficulties to hold WS meeting.”*<sup>47</sup> The reason was that the officials became dependent on the pushes of Sharique to organise the WS meetings timely and inclusively. It has been found that in absence of Sharique project the UP officials showed lack of urgency and motivation. In non-Sharique areas, the officials were found indifferent in organising WS meeting, and if they organised WS meeting ever, they organised only in a tokenistic manner with only the presence of their political colleagues, diehard supporters, and sycophants as a tea party to take photographs. One female official in control areas, when asked if she had ever taken initiatives to hold WS meeting, replied that it was not her duty. According to her, it was the responsibility of the UP secretary and male members.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, in Sharique areas, the newly elected officials showed lack of skill and zeal to organise WS meeting. Respondents from citizens pronounced that after the advent of new members no WS meeting was arranged.<sup>49</sup> A female Ward Platform member of Sharique project disclosed her frustration, *“While Sharique was there we got regular invitation, and remained present in the WS, and participated in the meeting actively.”*<sup>50</sup> The same view was found at the FGD session in Alatuli UP; as all the participants of the same unanimously expressed their inexperience of being informed about holding of WS, or participated in the meeting.<sup>51</sup> However, direct observation and interviews with officials made it confirmed that what was mostly lacked in organising WS was spirited willingness of the officials and supports from the UPs.

Now, the point to ponder over is how much scope and opportunities citizens were provided to participate actively in WS. It was disclosed during various FGD sessions,

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<sup>47</sup> O16, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 18, 2017.

<sup>48</sup> O35, interview with researcher, Maria UP, December 26, 2017.

<sup>49</sup> FGD data, Jhilim UP, December 17, 2017.

<sup>50</sup> C21, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>51</sup> FGD data, Alatuli UP, December 26, 2017.

and interviews that usually people were not stalled during their presentation of demand at WS. Neither political goons nor influential of the local area obstructed the voice of the poor or marginalised. The poor and the marginalised were given scope to discuss any issues that concerned them, to make demands according to the needs of the community. However, there hovered uncertainties and power distance in silence with potent, that invisibly hindered 'feel free participation' of marginalised groups. This latent and invisible obstruction activated when it faced sarcastic accountable questions from marginalised groups. This force sometimes has made the destiny of demands of the marginalised groups precarious. Officials stated that usually, they did not set an agenda for WS; the WS meeting progressed in line with the discussions.

Thus, it has become evident that the UPs under the Sharique areas were at least organising WS, though the regularity and presence of the masses were discontinued in the absence of Sharique project. On the other hand, in control areas, though the officials claimed they have organised WS meeting, however, the citizens did not acknowledge such claims. This means in non-Sharique areas WS meetings were less frequent and the few meetings, which in fact were organised, where the opportunities for the masses were their lucks!

### **6.3.3 Space for Participation**

Citizens were invited through various forms to participate in the WS and OBM. The question is how far citizens have the opportunity to participate in these meetings, as all the officials believed that citizens should raise voice to place demands. Citizens from Sharique areas identified three major causes of the inability of citizens to participate in the meeting of WS. These reasons are 1) citizens engagement with earning activities (45%), 2) absence of information (25%) and 3) improper invitation (15%). On the other hand, officials placed non-existence of information, and indifference of the citizens about participation in the first place (33.3%), and citizens' engagement with work in the second place (22.2%). In control areas, officials principally identified people's engagement with work was the cause of the absence at WS. The citizens of the same areas also supported the claim of the officials with low intensity. The information indicated that the UPs were limiting the space for participation as they had been holding the WS in a time when the marginalised people remained busy with work. Researcher's direct observation exposed that during late April and beginning of May people in the study area stayed busy with harvesting paddy. Moreover, information dissemination process regarding WS failed to reach every inhabitant of the Ward. The officials also showed an intention to fulfil only the mandatory presence 5% voter in WS meeting. The UPs usually organised WS meeting during working hour, yet in this regard, three UPs tended to organise the meeting avoiding working hour, such as at 4-6 pm or last portion of the working duration to

ensure people's opportunity. However, organising WS in the later part of the day brought problem as sunlight decreased quickly, which shortened the meeting hour. Then again, that short hour shrunk further with a late beginning, and introductory speeches by dignitaries emitted from local elites and political personalities. Moreover, UPs with a view to holding OBM with the presence of high political leaders, and conforming to their schedule, in few cases, made the WS less attractive with the organisation of WS after holding of OBM.

It has been observed while scrutinising WS resolution book that in some Wards, only one WS meeting was organised against mandated two by the act of 2009, and some did not organise any (Table 6.9). Moreover, the critical study of resolution books differed further with the claims of officials, as in reality, UPs showed the tendency to manipulate the WS resolutions. For example, in Jhilim UP, the WS resolutions were computer generated one, which was easy to compile, and the lists and the signatures of the citizens who attended the meeting were not attached with the resolutions.

**Table 6. 9: Organisation of WS during FY 16-17**

Area	UP	No. of WS organised*	% of the mandated no. of WS	Time
Sharique	Deopara	10	55.6	3pm
	Shahbajpur	9	50	2pm
	Jhilim	17	94.4	3pm
	Shilmaria	3	16.7	4pm
<b>Total</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>54.2</b>	
Control	Alatuli	2	11.1	11am
	Maria	16	88.9	11am
<b>Total</b>		<b>18</b>	<b>50</b>	

Source: WS resolution book. \*(18 WS to organise in each UP every FY)

In Maria, one official acknowledged the incidence of misappropriations in WS resolutions. Additionally, when crosschecked with the citizens the pictures became nebulous, as 77.5% (100% for officials) and 20.0% (75% for officials) of respondents from Sharique and non-Sharique areas respectively asserted that the WS had been organised timely and regularly. Here, the opinions of the functionaries deviated with the same of the citizens. The causes were multiples: first, in fact, the WS was not organised at all, second, inhabitants were not invited, third, people did not hear about the WS schedule, fourth, WS was arranged as a tea party, fifth, WS was organised only with the people of inner circle of the UP members. Few comments of the respondents, from Sharique areas, disclosed the fact clearly: "the poor and the marginalised do not get invitation properly," "Only known faces get the invitation," "Ward member and his party people remain present in the WS," "Nowadays, conscious citizens of the Ward do not get the invitation, moreover, WS is organised and committees like WC/ PIC, and PSC are formed through including people of the 'Pocket' of the officials with a view to avoiding complexities." During FGD sessions at Shahbajpur UP of Sharique areas, participants revealed that, at that moment, the



WS was not organised, however, when Sharique was there WS was organised regularly, and most of them were invited to be present at WS.<sup>52</sup> This accounts of WS and its organisation exposed that the scope of participation of people was not at desired level that had been planned through the UP act of 2009, and the UP manual. Yet, some officials of the UP showed their eagerness, and ability to hold WS regularly particularly in Deopara and Shilmaria of Sharique areas.

Officials were interviewed to know what impeded the organisation of the WS. They identified the following issues: lack of fund (43.8%), lack of support from UP (3.1%), political tension (6.1%), and fear of people's grilling (3.1%) in Sharique areas. While in control areas 31.3% and 25% of officials claimed that their efforts were hampered due to the scarcity of fund, and lack of support from UP respectively. These mean the horizon for people's participation was shrinking.

Citizens' levels of satisfaction were examined regarding having space for placing demands, and it was found that female (35%) respondents exhibited their satisfaction with terming it 'good,' with higher percentage than that of the male (30%) in Sharique areas. Around 24% of respondents of citizens, whose average monthly income was below BDT 6000, declared that they termed their demand making process also as 'good'. While giving interviews, the respondents categorically mentioned that in the meeting, they could speak without interruptions. These accounts of the respondents confirmed the presence of free space for the marginalised in the WS. However, citizens found it difficult for all the people who were present in the meeting to speak up because of the limitation of time.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, according to citizens, the influence of the chair (62.5%), the members (37.5), and local politicians (20%) sometimes ceased smooth demand making. Nevertheless, a good portion of citizens (40%) believed that the participatory meeting of WS was managed by them. One field officer of partner NGO of Sharique project described,

When the UPs have begun the organising WS, it has been observed that local elites, influential, political persons took the time of WS by discussing on issues they were concerned. We persuaded them not to speak much in these programmes. We became able to convince them that they had many opportunities to reach the officials to have their demand passed to them; however, for the marginalised it was one of the few opportunities to speak before the officials with their concerns. That has broadened the space for the marginalised groups to participate.<sup>54</sup>

That is the demand side actors have used the space of participation. However, there was still domination of power holders and consequently, the process was not free from the influence. Moreover, direct observation unveiled passivity of the participants, remained only as the listener, not the speaker. The participation remained just a tokenistic one with low level of engagement, except some examples of active participation.

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<sup>52</sup> FGD data, Shahbajpur, December 10, 2017.

<sup>53</sup> C23, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>54</sup> N6, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 7, 2018.

### 6.3.4 Access to Participatory Mechanisms

#### 6.3.4.1 Circulation of Information about Meeting of WS and OBM

Here, the question is that to what extent the UPs follows the guidelines to invite people to WS and OBM. The officials were asked to know how they invited people to participatory mechanisms. In replies, they revealed utilisation of multiple methods for publicity to let the people know about WS. In Sharique areas, the dominating processes of invitation were invitation letter (Appendix P 6.1A) (53.1%), miking (mike of mosque/prayer hall) (50%), and circulation of notice (37.5%) (Table 6.10). On the other hand, in control areas, the officials disclosed that they principally invited people to WS verbally through chowkidar (66.7%), and miking (50%). In Sharique areas, 12.5% of officials claimed that they themselves also called people for WS, however, none from the control areas claimed such.

**Table 6. 10: The Process of Inviting People to WS (Officials & Citizens)**

Area	Sharique Areas				Control Areas			
	Officials		Citizens		Officials		Citizens	
Response*	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
Invitation letter	17	53.1	15	40.5	3	25	-	-
Miking	16	50	19	51.4	6	50	2	10
Notice	12	37.5	6	16.2	-	-	-	-
Leaflets	-	-	-	-	1	8.3	-	-
Drumbeats	1	3.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chowkidar	1	3.1	8	21.6	8	66.7	1	5
UP officials	4	12.5			-	-		
Mobile phone	1	3.1	2	5.4	1	8.3	-	-
Socially informed	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5
Others	1	3.1	1	2.7	-	-	-	-
Total	53	165.7	53	143	19	158.	4	20

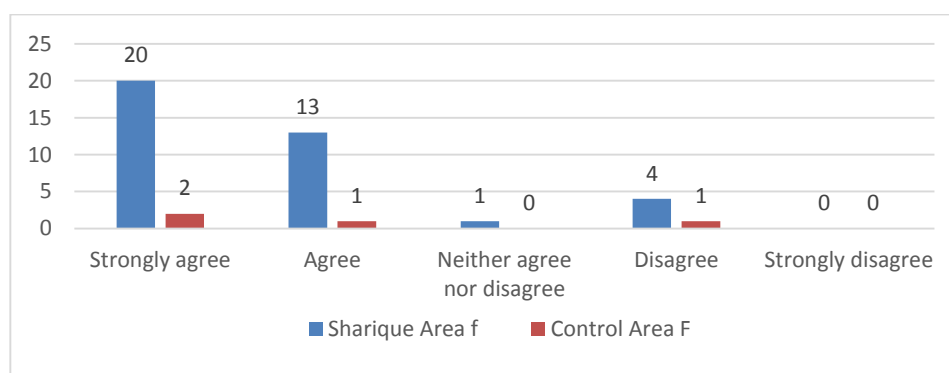
Source: Field Data, 2017-18. \*Multiple responses included.

There were also reports of usage of cell phones for invitation. These processes of invitation indicated that in Sharique areas the UP officials were more ardent to invite people to WS as they dominantly used invitation letter, which was promoted by Sharique, as people felt honoured getting an invitation letter. Contrarily, in control areas, the officials showed the tendency to disseminate the information of WS through the security personnel of UP, the chowkidar. Some officials informed the researcher that they disseminate the news of holding WS in the mosque during Friday Jumma prayer (the principal prayer of the week). However, the usages of loudspeaker for the invitation to WS were limited. The chair of Shilmaria opined that it was not always possible to invite people through miking; still, we used other forms of invitation.<sup>55</sup>

While the citizens were asked to express how they were invited, though their responses exhibited little bit dissonance compare to the same of the officials, yet the respondents

<sup>55</sup> O25, interview with researcher, Shilmaria, December 14, 2017.

displayed congruence in their replies with the same of the officials in Sharique areas. In control areas, only a few got the invitation, among them, none claimed of having an invitation letter or notice. Among those who were invited showed their satisfaction over the ways they were invited to WS (Figure 6.3). One respondent from citizens of control areas mentioned that he was not invited anyway, however, he learnt about WS through listening to people. Most of the officials, 78.1% and 62.5% to be exact from Sharique and non-Sharique areas respectively, thought that the way they invited people to WS all the people heard of it. Reversely, total 17.5% respondents of officials from Sharique areas showed their discontent about the invitation.



**Figure 6. 3: The Level of Satisfaction with the Process of Invitation (Citizens)**

Their major area of disapproval was that not all the people got invitation or information about WS. They argued for use of loudspeaker for the invitation, special measures to be taken to ensure the presence of the marginalised, and enhancement of community involvement in the process of dissemination of information. From demand side actors, citizens, from Jhilim and Shahbajpur 2 UPs of Sharique areas, disclosed at FGD sessions that when there was Sharique project they got invitation regularly, now with the phase-out of the Sharique project they were not invited to WS.<sup>56</sup>

When Sharique project was in operation in our area, WS was organised regularly and we got the invitation duly. Nearly 60-70 people from all occupations came to WS meeting; among them 30%-40% were female. Now, after the phase-out of Sharique project WS meetings are not organised regularly. The members, who have recently been elected, do not invite us.<sup>57</sup>

However, the other two UPs, Shilmaria and Deopara, were practising regular meeting of WS with low intensity, as there observed the organisation of WS only once in a year instead of framed two. In control areas, the citizens disclosed their discontent for not having invited to WS. One of the respondents during interview disclosed, “*Nowadays, WS has become the place of partisan politics. People have been invited to WS based on their political identity. Neither member nor his delegated person has come to invite us.*”<sup>58</sup> In the FGD session at Maria UP, the participants unveiled that

<sup>56</sup> FGD data, Jhilim UP, December 17, 2017; and Shahbajpur UP, December 10, 2017.

<sup>57</sup> FGD data, Shahbajpur UP, December 10, 2017.

<sup>58</sup> C59, interview with researcher, Alatuli, December 30, 2017.

they scarcely had ever heard of WS meeting as their members never let them know there had been WS to participate with a view to making demands.<sup>59</sup> The participants of FGD session at Shilmaria UP echoed with the same voice, as they mentioned that only known faces had been invited, and the harsh critics of the mismanagement of the UPs tended to be avoided and excluded from the lists of invitees.<sup>60</sup> It was found that, though there were negligence and lack of enthusiasms among officials of both areas, yet it was verified from interviews with both officials and citizens, FGDs that OBM was regularly organised by all the UPs with infrequent passions. For OBM, the UPs mostly used miking to invite people. Moreover, they made use of invitation letters, notice, and verbal efforts to have the citizens invited at OBM.

Aforementioned phenomena revealed that in Sharique areas, the UPs with the help of Sharique project during the tenure of the project organised WS and its preparatory activities with due commitment. However, the departure of the project made the officials less promising in organising WS, and OBM and consequently, people did not get the invitation as they got before. In control areas, the UPs were lackadaisical in organising WS regularly; and when they organised WS it remained only formalities. Hence, the people did not get opportunity and feel needs to be present in WS.

#### ***6.3.4.2 Participants of Ward Sabha and their Identities***

To explore the identities of the participants the researcher has analysed the documents of the UPs and synthesised it with citizens' opinions and direct observations. For this, minutes of two consecutive WS meetings of four randomly chosen assemblies of two Wards held in 2016-17 FY were studied. The data found in the WS resolutions revealed that in Sharique areas, there was on average 148 participants remained present in the WS meeting, and in control areas, the average number of participants of WS was 66. However, when people's perceptions were taken into account, the average number of participants of WS in Sharique areas was down to 110, while for control areas the figure was rather a fictitious one or missing. Moreover, when the researcher observed the WS directly, the average number of the citizens who were present in WS meeting slide further low to only 101 in Sharique areas from March to May of 2018. Yet again, when the researcher contacted the officials of control areas to learn the schedules of WS, they received the inquiry of the researcher as a bolt from the blue, thwarted for a while and failed to provide any specific answers, as they actually had no plan for organising WS.

The infinitesimal scrutiny of the WS documents unveiled the incidents of manipulation of the list of names and signatures, as the person who scribed the resolution wrote some of the names and signed against the same. In another resolution,

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<sup>59</sup> FGD data, Maria UP, December 27, 2017.

<sup>60</sup> FGD data, Shilmaria UP, December 14, 2017.

it was observed that there was only the list of names without signatures and fingerprints. That means these people were planned to contact for signatures or fingerprints in future, however for some reasons that had not been finished. Furthermore, when contacted some of the listed persons, stated that they were not present in the meeting, and some claimed that they were requested to sign outside of the WS meetings. One UP official confirmed,

The WS meeting required the presence of 5% voters of the Ward, and when the presence of citizens was below that benchmark, the members and/or chowkidars were given the resolutions book to collect signatures from the citizens of the Ward on request. Otherwise, without confirmation of presence of 5% voters, the UP would face audit objections and consequently, obtain poor points for performance in the LGSP's evaluation report, and the results would be responsible for low supply PBG.<sup>61</sup>

The respondents, who participated in the WS, were studied to examine their identities. The data revealed that the age of the 77.8% participant respondents was 45 or below, and the lowest and the highest age of the participants were 22 and 65 respectively. The indication of the age pattern has made it clear that the most active portion of the citizens participated in the WS, and among the participants 52.8% was male and the rest 47.2% was female. Whereas in control areas, no women participants respondents were found. When education was considered in Sharique areas, 30.6% was found to have primary or below the level education; 58.3% of the respondents were at secondary or below level, and 27.8% was found to have the education of undergraduate level or higher. Among the participants, 91.7% of them were Muslims, while 8.3% came from other religions. Ethnically 94.4% was Bangalee and the rest 5.6% was aborigine.

Moreover, 66.7% of them were involved in traditional professions like agriculture, household activities, day labour, etc., and among the rest, 16.7% and 11.1% were doing business and service respectively. Politically, 66.7% respondents' allegiance was found with ruling party AL, while 8.3% found to be involved with BNP, and the rest 25% declined to be identified with a political colour. When the issue was involved with ownership of land it was found that 13.9% of the participant respondents were landless, while 41.7% declared that they owned five decimal or below the amount of land. While monthly income was considered, it was observed that 30.6% participant respondents earned BDT 4000 or below (BD national poverty line (\$2 per day, means BDT 4800 per month),<sup>62</sup> and the monthly incomes of 58.3% respondents were between no income to BDT 6000. These statistical descriptions revealed that in Sharique areas, people from all corners: women, ethnic minority, poor and educationally backward people participated in WS; and their presence of made the WS inclusive in nature. Researcher's direct observations also revealed the presence

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<sup>61</sup> O40, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, March 1, 2018.

<sup>62</sup> Farzana Misha, and Munshi Sulaiman, "Comparative Cost-Benefit Analysis of Programmes for the Ultra-Poor in Bangladesh," Bangladesh Priorities, Copenhagen Consensus Centre (2016), 2.

of mosaic groups of people in WS in the UPs of Sharique areas (Appendix P 6.1). Officials also claimed that Sharique facilitated the UPs to be poor friendly through promoting implementation of special projects for the poor (75.9%), encouraging the participation of the poor (62.1%), assisting the poor to be included in the SSNP beneficiary list (44.8%), and providing income-generating opportunities (34.5%). Most of the citizens (85%) also believed that the UPs shifted its orientation to the poor of the localities.

One participant of FGD session at Deopara, categorically mentioned that before the intervention of Sharique project the local Bengali people used not to sit side by side with ethnic minorities, but now the scenario has overturned, and they not only work together but also sit and eat together. Sharique removed the barriers of untouchability and poverty.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, the reverse scenario was also visible, as one respondent from Sharique areas pronounced that the weak and the marginalised groups did not get the invitation properly.<sup>64</sup> Overall, the WSs in Sharique areas took the rainbow colour with the presence of citizens from all veins and the made the WS inclusive.

#### ***6.3.4.3 People's Interest in Participation and the Intensity of their Presence***

The data represented in the Appendix 6.13 illustrated people's aspiration to have their demands fulfilled, and causes of participation at WS. A respondent mentioned that through Sharique project their interest in speaking up increased a lot; it taught them how to receive government benefits.<sup>65</sup> Most of the citizens (72.5%) strongly agreed that the project encouraged participating in the meeting, while 15% and 12.5% disclosed their agreement and indifference respectively on the same issue. It was evident that the citizens became self-motivated and spontaneous in their way to join WS to some extent. However, a moderate 16.7% of respondents from Sharique areas clarified that they would not have presented at WS meeting if the officials, who in most cases were closely related with the respondents, had not invited them. Some people found the participation at WS as their duties as a citizen and consequently, they joined WS with. However, in-depth interviews and FGD data disclosed something else. Both the officials and citizens, particularly from Shilmaria and Deopara UP, the two UPs where WS meetings had been organised, observed that though the UPs undertook efforts to disseminate the information of WS assembly, yet the trend of participation of citizens showed gradual declining to a low total from a large outing ranging from 150 to 200 during active period of Sharique project, as People were losing their urgency and interest in participation.

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<sup>63</sup> FGD data, Deopara UP, December 20, 2017.

<sup>64</sup> C6, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 20, 2017.

<sup>65</sup> C28, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

The principal cause, which hindered spontaneous participation of people, was the return of the people empty-handed from WS. Citizens uncovered that their demands for important needs were placed perennially and resulted in assurance giving for several times subsequently, but ultimately their demands went astray, leaving them with frustration and annoyance. The chair of Shilmaria explicitly brought the issue to light,

Being the best chair, I always try to maximize the presence of citizens at WS; however, recently people have shown their dispiritedness and indifference to come to WS. They told me that what they would do at WS, as their demands remained unfulfilled for years. I have been trying my best to respond to their demands with the limited resources the UP received, yet the efforts resulted only in insufficiency.<sup>66</sup>

One female UP member narrated her experience,

Our UP declared the schedule WS in my Ward. With the imminent date of WS, I started to invite women of my area to come to WS on the due date. During the period of invitation, I encountered few tough questions of citizens. They asked me straight, ‘why should I go? What will I get from WS?’ I have tried to assuage them with assurance; however, ultimately they did not make it.<sup>67</sup>

FGD session at Deopara unanimously expressed its view that many of the citizens, formerly who had come to WS, did not come to WS then as they thought, attending WS would not bring any gain for them. Moreover, the session believed that for remaining engaged with earning their subsistence the working people, and the voiceless marginalised groups would not participate without having compensation for their time. However, they thought, this gap created opportunity for the female of the society, and they found women, particularly motivated women through NGO efforts, shown more interest than their men to come to UP, as they (women) wanted to make demands according to their needs, and understood the problems with in-depth insights remaining close to the problems.<sup>68</sup>

One female respondent from Alatuli UP mentioned that she knew nothing about WS and OBM. She heard about WS, but never attended the meeting of WS, as she did not aware what to do and what to say at WS. She added further that if she would be equipped with information and knowledge she would have participated at WS meeting.<sup>69</sup> Another participant of FGD session at Alatuli UP expressed her desires, “*If WS will be organised at the open premise of school, rather than the encircled room, it will be better and I will participate.*”<sup>70</sup> The FGD session at Shilmaria demonstrated that the invitations for WS sometimes channelled in a way, which failed to reach every voter of the Ward. The session additionally added that if the invitation routed through the senior citizens, then the interest of the local people would grow further.<sup>71</sup> A female

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<sup>66</sup> O25, interview with researcher, Shilmaria, December 14, 2017.

<sup>67</sup> O35, interview with researcher, Maria UP, December 26, 2017.

<sup>68</sup> FGD data, Deopara UP, December 20, 2017.

<sup>69</sup> FGD data, Alatuli UP, December 28, 2017.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> FGD data, Shilmaria UP, December 10, 2017.

from Jhilim UP mentioned that if the information of WS made reached every doorstep, the female would hear about the WS and would participate in the same.

The discussions explicated that citizens have an interest in participatory processes of decision-making. In Sharique areas, the participatory mechanisms were practiced more intensely than the UPs of the control areas. Consequently, the people of Sharique areas went through the experience of the process. They showed the tendency of declining interest in participation, as the process failed to fulfil their needs constantly. On the other hand, the non-participants respondents asserted their high interest in participation to the participatory mechanisms if WS would be organised regularly and they got invitation properly. It is also observed that the marginalised who relied on day to day to activities for their subsistence could not be able to participate, as the participation hampered their earning for sustenance.

In Sharique areas, 90% respondents of motivated supply-side actors made the statement of having attended at WS, while in control areas 15% of the respondents claimed so. It was further inquired to them, how many times they had participated in the meeting of WS. The inquiry of the researcher regarding frequencies of people's participation represented in table 6.11. It has been found in Sharique areas that citizens, who claimed

**Table 6. 11: Frequencies of Citizens' Participation at WS (Citizens)**

Frequencies of Participation	Sharique Areas		Control Areas	
	f	%	f	%
1-3	6	16.7	1	33.3
3-5	7	19.4	1	33.3
5-7	8	22.2	-	-
7-9	5	13.9	1	33.3
9-11	7	19.4	-	-
11-above	3	8.3	-	-
Total	36	100	3	100

Source: Field Data, 2017-18.

to have participated in WS, furthered their disclosure regarding frequencies of participation; 90% of them stated that they participated in the WS meeting several times. Nearly 41% of the respondents from Sharique areas seemed to be the common face of the WS, as their frequencies were more than 5 times. In control areas, the picture was a little bit gloomy, as the numbers of participants were low. Among the three, who participated in WS, two

participated several times; and they were found to be the close allies of the UP official. The discussions can be the base of the argument that Sharique's motivation shaped and developed aspirations in the citizens about the UPs, and bridged the gap between UPs and people. The result was observed in peoples' increased frequencies of participation in WS for voicing their demands.

#### **6.3.4.4 Community Satisfaction with Engagement**

Citizens, in Sharique areas, to some extent, were found self-motivated, spontaneous, and interested in participating in WS (Section: 6.3.4.3). Yet some of them participated due to their relationship with the officials. During the awareness building process of the Sharique project, the citizens were motivated and contacted ardently to be present



at the WS meeting. After the phase-out of the Sharique project, the passion of the UP officials declined in both holding WS timely and regularly, and inviting the voters to the Ward level assembly comprehensively. It seemed the participatory processes remained as an imposed mechanism for the UP and yet to be habituated with it and having opportunities they refrained from organisation of participatory meetings; and when citizens got the opportunity they grabbed it to make demands, and hold officials accountable. Data showed that 80.6% respondents of Sharique areas made it visible that their intention of participation was to have their demands fulfilled. When citizens were asked to scale their level of satisfaction, 37.5% and 32.5% respondents opined in favour of the moderate and good level of satisfaction respectively for the way they engaged in the participatory process. However, the phenomena of remaining people's demands unfulfilled frustrated citizens to continue their spontaneity for the participatory process. About 42.5% of the citizens responded with the answer that failure to achieve the demanded tasks accomplished they were losing their zeal to participate in WS. Moreover, 25% officials of Sharique areas termed the intensity of peoples' participation good. While 53.1% of the officials ranked the intensity of people's engagement as average. In control areas, the majority of the officials (56.3%) opined that the intensity of the people to participate in WS was low, and 37.5% thought that it was an average. The discussions revealed that spontaneous people's participation was not enough to be satisfactory.

### **6.3.5 Placing of Demands**

#### ***6.3.5.1 Networking and Collective Voice Raising***

The usual tendency is that the voices of the poor, particularly, when raised in isolation, do not get proper attention, i.e. the impact of these voices remain little on the decision-making process, and continual denials become the destiny of them. Networking, and through unification of interest, the poor and the marginalised groups can gain collectiveness, which has been believed to have effects on the decision-making process in favour of the demand makers. An inhabitant from Jhilim UP mentioned, *“Sharique has given us training on how to claim people's rights. The project informed us that the UPs would give importance to the claims if we move with forming group.”*<sup>72</sup> This section has examined how far Sharique become successful to sensitise citizens to network and move forward with collective voice to have an impact. Citizens of both Sharique and control areas were asked, “Do community people help and encourage each other to remain to unite and place demand to UP?” In reply, 95%% and 45% of the respondents from citizens from Sharique and non-Sharique areas confirmed the fact that people tended to continue their procession of helping and pulling others alongside in their way to raise voice collectively to have their demands fulfilled. In

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<sup>72</sup> C29, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

Sharique areas, people have developed a sense of unity, which steered them to work and move forward with the commonness among them for the greater interest of the community. Sharique has developed an institution named Ward Platform (WP) through which people made united to make demands. An FGD participant from Shahbajpur explained the fact as,

Sharique has arranged many meetings with us who have been members of WP. The project officials have made us understood about the need of being united to place demands, and also chance of being successful with such efforts. In the WS and OBM, we used to set together and make demands in chorus.<sup>73</sup>

Now, it is an opportunity to check, how much their networking contributed in making demand collectively with the UP. Citizens of both areas disclosed that they moved collectively to place their demands. However, the rate of response in favour of group action was as high as 85% in Sharique areas, while it was only 50% in control areas. That means people of the Sharique areas trained up to practise collective efforts to influence the officials to make them decided in favour of them. Here, the issue is -to what extent their collective move brought expected results.

It was found that 61.77% and 50% of the collective claims were successfully fulfilled in Sharique areas and control areas in that order. Among the UPs of Sharique areas, Deopara and Jhilim were found to be more sensitive and responsive to the people's demands, as these two UPs satisfied 77.78% collective demands of the citizens. This result, explicate the phenomenon that collective claims have remained more forceful than isolated efforts for placing demands. One female participant from Sharique areas stated her experience,

#### **Box 6. 4: Instance of Successful Collective Demand**

In our area, there are numbers of auto rice mills. When these rice mills run in full swing, there flow fine small dark flecks of ashes in the sky. Few years back, as soon as we wake up in the morning, we found our yards, rooftops, streets, i.e. all uncover surface area became covered by a heavy layer of fly ash. This fly ash became the cause of respiratory problems for the people of our area, particularly the children suffered most with diarrhoea, contamination of water, air, and food, etc. The owners of these mills were powerful and had political affiliation. We collectively approached the members and the chair of our UP. After, our united demand and supports, though the owners were rich and influential, yet the UP took necessary actions and stop flying of ashes from these rice mills. (Kamrunnaheer Itee, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.)

Another resident of Sharique areas, disclosed his account following way,

#### **Box 6. 5: Instance of Successful Collective Demand**

We have a school in our area. I was the president of the school managing committee of this school. Major portion of the students were from aboriginal family. This school was short of furniture, fan, etc. Students, as well as teachers suffered a lot from the heat of summer. For this, I with other local people of the adjacent area went to the chair. He listened to us attentively, and visited the school subsequently. Within very short time, he took action, and supplied eight electric fans, one large *almirah* (closet) for the school office. He pledged for further supply of teaching-learning materials soon. (Mantu Murmu, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 10, 2017.)

<sup>73</sup> FGD data, Shahbajpur UP, December 10, 2017.

These accounts of successful collective efforts, and the discussions that preceded, revealed that people of Sharique areas more readily came forward to help each other in time, and bonded together with the common benefits of the community, to place demands to the UP. Moreover, it has been noticed that the collectiveness of the citizens also transpired into obliging force of people to control not only the LGIs but also other actors in the locality. In addition, it assisted UPs to show its strength and to be capable to take action as demanded against vested interests.

### **6.3.5.2 Demand Making at WS and OBM**

The UP act of 2009 has given citizens the opportunities to place demands to the UP with the presence of common people through participatory mechanisms, i.e., WS and OBM. How far citizens were able to raise their voice with demands was the core issue of debate. Nearly all the respondents from citizens (97.5%) mentioned that Sharique has encouraged them to claim rights, entitlements and information from the UP. A WP member of Jhilim included, “*Sharique has trained us how to detect problems, and subsequently to place it to the UPs to solve.*”<sup>74</sup> Citizens of both areas were specifically inquired to know to what extent they comprehended the concept of ‘budget’ or ‘written information on budget.’ Almost equal number of participants from both areas revealed the reverse scenario regarding understanding the concepts of budget and budget-related technical issues, as in Sharique areas nearly 90% of the respondents retorted affirmatively, and the same percentage of citizens from control areas answered negatively. However, during direct observation of OBM, it was found that the budget-related technical issues remained far to grasp by the marginalised groups. Moreover, earlier it was realised that citizens of both areas lagged behind in seeking information regarding income, expenditure, fund release, and other WS and OBM related issues. Furthermore, direct observation of WS and OBM disclosed that though general people began to speak in the participatory processes, however, many of them remained uncomfortable to speak publicly. In this regard, women found themselves in the most awkward situation, particularly with the presence of men and dignitaries. For instance, while interviewing for piloting semi-structured questionnaire in another UP named Belpukur other than the study area, on November 15, 2017, the researcher observed that even a female member felt uncomfortable not only, but also was trembling with her uneasiness when she was just talking to the researcher. However, a participant of an FGD session disclosed that women came to WS in large numbers than the male did, because, she thought, female understood the problems better way, and thus their demands were high in numbers.<sup>75</sup> However, in Sharique areas, it was discovered that mass people, particularly women, who particularly in Bangladeshi

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<sup>74</sup> C27, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>75</sup> FGD data, Deopara UP, December 18, 2017.

settings, once lag behind, acquired the skill of public speaking. A woman stated her account of experience,

I did not know anything. I understood nothing. I have learnt a lot on various issues regarding my rights and responsibilities, UPs' activities and an array of issues of development after the beginning of Sharique project in our area. Sharique made me capable of speaking publicly. Nowadays, I took every opportunity to raise my voice.<sup>76</sup>

It was also observed that citizens felt more convenient in WS. With the guidance of Sharique, citizens of Sharique areas had become practised with writing their demands in the brown papers to be presented subsequently in OBM. Nevertheless, as it has been observed in WS of Ward number eight of Shilmaria UP held on May 3, 2018, that groups of the women in the WS found themselves in discomfort zones as none of them capable of writing down their demands in the brown paper, and they searched for a writer but in vain. In OBM, the number of participants was high, however, the time given for raising questions was limited, and consequently, the opportunities became narrowed down. Overall, through the efforts of Sharique, the citizens from Sharique areas became capable of placing demands.

#### ***6.3.5.3 Placing of Demands with Ownership***

Observations of participatory planning meetings disclosed that in Sharique areas, ownership was built among the citizens on a limited scale. In a WS meeting, it has been observed that the participants of the WS, emphasising on being the taxpayers, and with positional benefits for a high revenue source, made their demands to the UP.<sup>77</sup> The built ownership made the voice of the participants more forceful and demanding. However, the direct observation of OBM unveiled rare instances of such engagement. Some of the participants raised questions in OBM, but were not self-bred rather they were fabricated earlier by the other NGOs working in the areas to be presented. As observations revealed OBMs were held with presence of a large number of citizens and high officials including UNOs, MPs, and other dignitaries, therefore, the marginalised people could not amass enough courage to speak out in the meeting.

#### ***6.3.5.4 Issues Citizens Usually Discussed***

In the WS meeting, citizens could speak on any issues regarding community problems. Usually, the UP secretary fixed the agenda of the meeting. The chair and the members also played role in setting agenda. However, few officials (12.5%) disclosed that no agenda was fixed for the WS meeting. They just followed the chronological order of a meeting, getting started to reach the finished line, and in between citizens were allowed to speak up and make demands. UP operational manual prescribed to include projects in the following eight categories: communication,

<sup>76</sup> C26, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>77</sup> Direct observation of the WS meeting of Ward number eight of Shilmaria UP held on May 3, 2018 with the presence of UP the chair and the secretary.

health, education, water supply, management of natural resource, human resource development, agriculture and marketing, sewerage and waste management. WS resolution exhibited that the agenda was set on broad heading of “Planning and Approval of Development Projects.” This actually, opened the opportunity wide to participate on the issues citizens were concerned.

**Table 6. 12: Issues on Which Citizens Made Demands or Discussed at WS (Citizens)**

Area	Sharique Areas				Control Areas			
	Official		Citizen		Official		Citizen	
Response*	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Infrastructure	25	78.1	23	63.9	10	76.9	-	-
SSNP	9	28.1	9	25.0	2	15.4	1	33.3
Water and Sanitation	8	25	18	50.0	-	-	-	-
Education	10	31.3	2	5.6	3	23.1	-	-
Social problems	23	71.9	5	13.9	6	46.2	-	-
Health	7	21.9	-	-	3	23.1	-	-
Poverty Reduction	19	59.4	-	-	8	61.5	-	-
Didn't make any demands	-	-	4	11.1	-	-	2	66.7
Others	5	15.6	8	22.2	4	30.8	-	-
Total	106	331.3	69	191.7	36	277	3	100

Source: Field Data, 2017-18. \*Multiple responses have been taken into account.

Table 6.12 showed the issues what officials and citizens were found in the discussions of the WS meeting. The table indicated that there were similarities between the opinions of officials of both Sharique and control areas, while for citizens the comparison cannot be concluded as the people’s participation was very poor and active engagement was further low. However, in Sharique areas officials and citizens found the issues alike with little bit nonconformity. Officials intensified the issues of communication infrastructure, various social problems, and poverty reduction, while citizens’ focus concentrated mostly on communication infrastructure, and various social problems. In control areas the demand making opportunities were poor, so did their issues of discussions were also poor. This presentation confirms that people in Sharique areas got opportunities to speak on the issues they were concerned, which on the other hand reflected by the opinions of the UP officials.

## 6.4 Conclusion

The findings reveal that the citizens of Sharique areas have become conversant on functions of the UP, and service related information. They become aware of their rights, entitlements and duties as well. A sense of community betterment develops among the citizens of Sharique areas with the ability to contact UPs for wide-ranging issues, which affect them and their society. They have been transformed into aware actors to deal with provisions of the participatory process of WS and OBM and made understood the varied concepts used in the same. However, when the notions are entangled with technical

issues the level of understanding of the citizens becomes less prominent. Citizens of both areas, except very few, have suffered from lack of knowledge on RTI and CC and related provisions. However, the citizens of Sharique areas become aware of the major spirit of the RTI and CC. On the other hand, the officeholders turn out to be knowledgeable on provisions of UP Act of 2009, RTI and CC, though their level of understanding is not promising except few instances. The office bearers from non-Sharique areas have shown their lacking knowledge on the same. The officials of Sharique areas have increased contacts with higher-level government officials for the betterment of the UPs, and enhanced networking horizontally with office bearers of neighbouring UPs. Additionally, the officeholders have attained ability to organise WS and OBM for planning and budgeting with inclusion of people's demands. These narratives of the capacity buildings have mainstreamed the outcomes that the project of SDC has enabled both citizens and officials of the UPs to some extent with knowledge, skill, and conscientisation on varied issues that can shift the pattern of governance of LGIs. Moreover, the UPs of Sharique areas have streamlined the processes of invitation of people to WS meeting; however, the processes have been tainted by selective invitations to own people in some cases. Thus, the WS meeting suffers from lack of quorum with the presence of at least 5% voters of the Ward. The OBM stay rather open to all as the invitation through miking covers greater area of the UP, and the result exhibits in the good number of participants ranging from 400 to 500 individuals (Appendix P 6.2). In spite of the fact, people's participation reveals a declining trend because of incapacity of UPs to cope with the grassroots' demands with resource constraints. Now, the question, which instigates a further investigation, is that how much the increased capacity and people's participation have translated into action in governing process. To reveal such links, the next chapter provides arguments whether there exists any shift regarding accountability and transparency and fiscal autonomy.

## Chapter 7

### **Collaboration between Sharique and UPs: An Effort to Improve Accountability, Transparency, and Fiscal Autonomy**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter has hinted on signs of increased capacitation of both citizens and officials, as well as shift of people's participation in decision-making as a result of collaborative efforts. This chapter aims to discuss results incurred in outcomes of capacitation and people's participation on diverse components of governance, such as openness of the activities of the UP, answerability of the UP officials, and level of self-reliance of the UPs on their own income. The sets of results have been drawn on the distances of performances between the actors of Sharique and non-Sharique areas on the ground of natural experiment and theory-based impact evaluation.

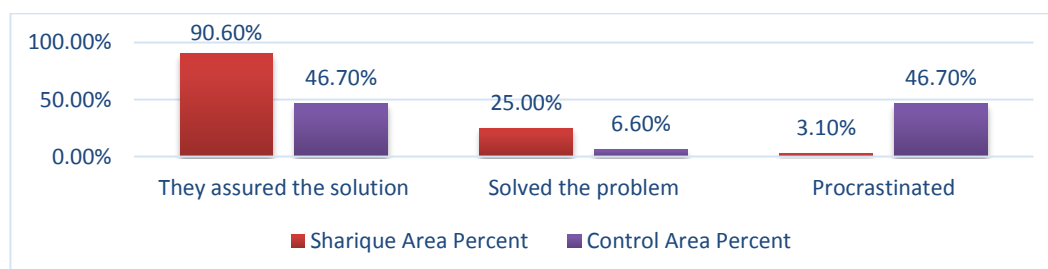
#### **7.2 Accountability**

##### **7.2.1 Responsiveness of the UP Functionaries towards People's Demands and Queries**

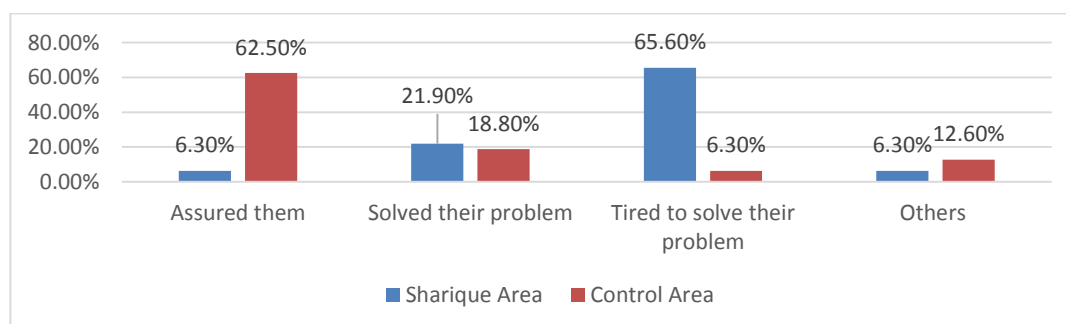
###### ***7.2.1.1 Listening to, Solving of, and Showing of Empathy to People's Demands***

The overwhelming majority of the UP officials (96.9%) of Sharique areas declared that they were encouraged by Sharique project to get involved seriously with the citizens. Thus, at this point, it is of great importance to divulge, to what extent, the functionaries responded to the inducements of the citizens. Data disclosed that 25% and 6.6% respondents of citizens from Sharique and control areas respectively approved the notion that the functionaries had solved their problems (Figure 7.1). When officials were scrutinized to find out how many times they solved people's problem, the responses were a little bit higher in Sharique areas (21.9%), as compared to control areas (18.8%) (Figure 7.2). The citizens in Sharique areas perceived officials more active than the officials thought themselves, regarding solving of problems, as the percentage was 25 for the former and 21.9 for the latter. On the other hand, in control areas, the functionaries claimed that they had solved people's problems three times higher percentage than the statements made by the citizens (18.8%, and 6.6% respectively). Now, a pertinent question is- why is the result so? In Sharique areas, the differences between the percentage of claims made by citizens and officials existed not very far from each other in the cardinal scale, and thus the results represented seamliness and complemented each other. However, the scenario in control areas signified some ambiguity, as the claims made by officials were very high in percent than that of citizens. The results found for control areas, could not reciprocate each other. That means in control areas, officials wanted to present themselves as people's friends, and thus they claimed to have solved the problems of

the citizens in a higher percentage, which was not supported by the citizens. Thus, it can be inferred that officials of Sharique areas were much more active, from that of control areas. Data unveiled that most of the officials (75% strongly agree & 9.4% agree) believed that through the intervention of the project the orientation of the UP shifted to the poor and extremely poor.



**Figure 7. 1: Responses of the Officials against Questions and Demands (Citizens)**



**Figure 7. 2: Initiatives Taken by Officials as Mentioned by Officials**

The functionaries of Sharique areas were more responsive through giving assurances; as the percentage of responses was almost double (72.5% and 35%) than that of control areas. The officials in Sharique areas revealed that they were more active in responding to people's demands, than their counterparts in control areas, as 62.5% functionaries of Sharique areas stated that they tried to solve people's problems, while in control areas, it stood only at 6.3%. The functionaries of Sharique and non-Sharique areas declared that they could at least manage to assure their citizens when they approached them with demands or problems. One UP official from Sharique areas, while interviewing, expressed:

When people come to me, I listen to them attentively, and then if it is possible to solve or fulfil their needs at once, I do solve instantly. If it requires time, I assure them to accomplish it later and try to satisfy him/her as per as my capability. In one word, I help the citizens by all means.<sup>1</sup>

It means that officials in Sharique areas did not rest only giving assurance as they claimed with a higher rate but they also employed their efforts to solve the problems of the citizens, while in control areas officials were relying heavily on giving

<sup>1</sup> O8, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 20, 2017.



assurances, and engaged in sedentary pursuits and the efforts of them were very low. One respondent from control areas expressed his frustration: “*Chairs and members make commitments only; they do not give us anything or do not fulfil our demands.*”<sup>2</sup> The same occurrences, in making commitments and failing to fulfil, were observed in Sharique areas also, as one UP member, unveiled her inability by saying that: “*I used to assure those, who come to me with their demands. However, unfortunately, in many cases, I could not be able to keep my promise.*”<sup>3</sup> Another WM from control areas included that she had nothing to do without giving assurance to gratify the demand makers.<sup>4</sup> Notwithstanding that, people unveiled their discontents through making complaints of procrastination against their respective UPs’ functionaries in both areas, the rate of the same in Sharique areas was very low (3.1%), while it was very much high in control areas (46.7%). These results exhibit presence of better empathetic officials in Sharique areas.

The aforementioned discussions provide a clear indication that in responses to the questions or demands of the citizens, the officials of Sharique areas exhibited their promptness in responding with a higher rate than that of their counterparts in control areas to listen to their problems or demands, and then to some extent to solve the issues. When they were thwarted for lack of resource or complex nature of the demands, the UP officials in Sharique areas displayed their high intention to spend their efforts to bring positive results for the demand makers. In control areas, there has been observed the same intention, however, it was markedly low in frequency and short in urgency. In control areas, it was perceived that officials had the tendency to evade responsibilities. Two UP officials from control areas reported that they had sent the demand makers to the chair, when citizens approached them. In spite of that, when failed to fulfil the demands officially, officials from both areas, responded personally towards the needs of the citizens. One UP official put the grievances of officials into words with an incident as follows:

During the pre-winter season of 2017-18, our UP has been given some blankets, to be distributed among the poor. For my Ward, I got only 10 blankets. When I counted the number of eligible destitute in my Ward, I found the number as high as 30. What could I do? I became nonplussed. I felt bad and dejected. Finally, I came out with a big decision to buy another 20 blankets by myself, and I did so. Thus, the number of blankets rose to 30, and I distributed the blankets to the selected needy person of my Ward.<sup>5</sup>

### **7.2.1.2 Incorporation of Citizens’ Demands in the UPs’ Documents**

It has already been known from the previous chapter that all the UPs of the study from both areas prepared FYPs. Now, the question is whether the UPs incorporated people’s demands in the FYP. When the officials of Sharique and control areas were

<sup>2</sup> C47, interview with researcher, Maria, December 27, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> O2, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 20, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> O35, interview with researcher, Maria, December 27, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> O45, interview with researcher, Alatuli, December 30, 2017.

asked if they integrated people's demands in FYP, in response 75% for the former and 43.8% for the latter replied affirmatively. While citizens were inquired, 52.5% of them from Sharique areas replied affirmatively. On the other hand, none from control areas claimed that their demands were considered for FYP. The basis of incorporation of the people's demands in the FYP was the betterment of a large number of people, as affirmed by the officials from Sharique (75%) and control areas (43.5%) respectively. Those who replied negatively were found ignorant, and thus it indicated that they prepared FFY plan without ensuring citizens' participation. In this endeavour, the WS resolutions and year plan, as well as FYP were studied and crosschecked to examine to what extent the UP incorporated people's demands in their long and short-term plans.

Among the studied six UPs of both Sharique and non-Sharique areas, Deopara organised WS regularly, Shilmaria and Jhilim were also found regular with some exceptions. The other three UPs, documented the WS resolutions without organising the WS. Therefore, to analyse, the demands of WS and their fates these three UPs left out of consideration for analysis.

**Table 7. 1: Inclusion of Demands (from WS) in Budgets (2016-17)**

UPs	No. of WS demands	Inclusion in Budgets	Percent
Shilmaria	224	36	16%
Deopara	116	24	21%
Jhilim	152	23	15%
Total	492	83	16.87%

Source: WS resolutions, and budget documents.

It has revealed that only 16%, 21%, and 15% of demands made in WSs have been included in the annual budget of 2016-2017 to get them accomplished. Thus, it implies that most of the demands of the citizens remained unfulfilled. A member of CBO in Jhilim area revealed that the demands were documented, but were not implemented.<sup>6</sup> In these UPs, there has been observed inclusions such schemes that did not come through WS. Why did so happen? A UP official gave his account,

It is found that in few cases the citizens failed to realise the importance of problems, and so, did the issues not voiced in the WS. Therefore, when we observe the severity of the problems, or have grants for allocation, which not sorted in WS, then we take such projects that do not match with the demands of the WS.<sup>7</sup>

An NGO official, who closely worked with the UPs, disclosed more; his narration was,

UPs are not accustomed to conducting WS. When we worked with them they organised WS, but now they do the job only in the papers in the name of WS. During the period when

<sup>6</sup> C27, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> O14, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 18, 2017.

Sharique was there, people made demands, and it was observed that the UPs could not even fulfil 10% of the demands. Worst more, even in some cases, the officials did not include the demands made in the WS and they just overlooked the same. They took projects in accordance with their choice and prioritised such projects, which would preserve his/her interests.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, it can be argued that the UPs are struggling to match with demands of the citizens raised in the WS due to availability of funds against huge demands. Moreover, the process has been impeded further for inclusion of such projects that satisfy the stakes of the officials. Yet, three UPs of Sharique areas showed their commitment to include the demands of the citizens in the FYP and budgets to implement with limited scale.

### ***7.2.1.3 Implementation of Projects in Response to Citizens' Demands***

The UPs are instructed to implement those schemes that come through WS in accordance with people's demands. When citizens were interviewed, 52.5% of them let the researcher know that the demands they made at WS were implemented. An inhabitant from Jhilim UP revealed, "*With the motivation and encouragement of Sharique project the UPs have become eager to fulfil people's demands.*"<sup>9</sup> The WS resolutions and the project lists were scrutinised to check whether there was homogeneity between the demands sorted in WS resolutions and project lists. The UP secretary of Jhilim disclosed in an interview on March 6, 2018 that typically each UP implemented 25-30 schemes on an average in a fiscal year, thus, each Ward of a UP got only three to four projects averagely, while it was observed that participants of each Ward assembly demanded more than 18 schemes to be implemented, which means most of the demands ended in no result. Thus, some of the demands voiced repeatedly and perennially without having proper concerns.

While studying the WS resolutions the researcher found an interesting phenomenon. It was observed that in the WS resolutions, demands of the citizens were listed, but after the lists were written in the resolution book, there was a gap between the list and the next portions of the writings. When inquired the secretary of the UP illustrated the issue, as in few cases, the officials wanted to implement schemes according to their choice or in other cases, they had to tackle the changed conditions. In Jhilim, and Alatuli the case was slightly different, as these two UPs composed the WS resolutions with computer, so when they needed new schemes to be included rather than that which came through WS, they just destroyed the previous one, and included the new one, and filed it up again with the dateless signatures. Therefore, the officials used the gap or fabricated WS resolutions to incorporate such schemes to implement that actually did not come through the WS with people's choice. The UP secretary of a UP

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<sup>8</sup> N4, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 10, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> C22, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

of Sharique areas asserted three basic reasons for incorporation of new schemes and the denial of the demands of the citizens made in WS. The reasons are:

first, in a few cases, there arise emergencies, which need to be concentrated more than the prioritised list of schemes. Last year, during the rainy season, a heavy rain destructed culvert and its approach roads. Then the UP took initiatives to make it usable again and had to expend an amount, which was settled for other three projects. Secondly, the elected officials have a tendency to satisfy those who have voted him. In that case, the officials have taken such projects, which will contend his/her supporter. Thirdly, in a few cases, the officials want to implement such projects, which will bring his/her fortunes and benefits.<sup>10</sup>

A UP official commented on the process of how the schemes were chosen to implement:

Actually, we do not have to bother much about the schemes to choose in accordance with the demands of the citizens, as the demands of the citizens have been numerous, so when we choose projects to implement the projects matched with the demands automatically.<sup>11</sup>

The documents of Deopara UPs' WS revealed that even the UPs hardly even picked the number one scheme of the WS list for implementation. In a list of seven schemes, only one scheme was selected from the nine 'first positioned schemes' from nine Wards. That means the priority shown by the citizens tended to be ignored by the officials.

Therefore, the argument can be made that as the demands of the citizens are huge in numbers, and so it becomes difficult to balance between the enormous demands and the funds supplied and earned. Nevertheless, with the inclusion of other factors, the percentage of the implementations of the demanded schemes stays down to only 5% to 10%. That result frustrates the citizens who participate in the WS meeting with lots of zeal and aspiration, as their demands remained unfulfilled.

#### ***7.2.1.4 Selection of SSNP Beneficiaries through WS***

The legal documents have mandated WS to formulate the final prioritised lists of beneficiaries based on fixed indicators and subsequently send the same to the UP for SSNPs, i.e. VGD, VGF, Old Age Allowance, Widow Allowance, etc.<sup>12</sup> However, the direct observation of WS meetings witnessed no such discussions though people raised demands on the issue; and the WS invest no efforts to formulate lists of beneficiaries. The researcher has identified multiple reasons from the responses of the respondents: **firstly**, the number of the claimants were very high, **secondly**, the opportunities to include them in the list remained difficult, as the number of opportunities offered was few against the demands, **thirdly**, chair of the UP, ruling party leaders of Ward, Union, Upazila level, as well as local MP had their own people to be included in the lists; and **fourthly**, the Ward members had their people, who

<sup>10</sup> O24, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>11</sup> O16, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 18, 2017.

<sup>12</sup> The UP Act, 2009, sec., 6 (ga.), and UP Operational Manual, sec., 1.3.2 (1) (ga).

campaigned and cast their votes to send them in the office, and influence of local traditional power holders to have their people in the lists. One UP officials explained,

If we had ever tried to finalise the list of beneficiaries in the WS, the WS would not have been a meeting, rather it would have become another ‘Kuruksheetra’<sup>13</sup> i.e. a battlefield of demand makers. Therefore, we do not formulate the beneficiary list in WS. We were given a few offers, after the accomplishments of unwritten, unpublished and so-called quota (almost 50%) of the power holders. In a few cases, I denied to accept the offers, as it were so few, and with these, it was impossible for me to satisfy the needs of my area. Most of the cases, I selected beneficiaries with the suggestions and consolations of my close allies in the area.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, the fair selection of beneficiaries was a far cry. During interview, all UP chairs of the study areas agreed that the beneficiary selection was not fair enough, and there were such people included in the list and awarded benefits of SNNPs, actually, they did not deserve any place in the lists. The destitute contacted the officials personally; in most cases, they were sent back empty handed. Even, people’s name had been cancelled from the list for their support to the other candidates rather than the member-elect. A man from Alatuli UP, mentioned, “*I have been receiving the benefits of the SSNP, however, after the sworn in of new member, I am not getting the benefits, as I cast my vote for a person who has not been elected.*”<sup>15</sup> A woman from Jhilim UP shared her experience, “*When I asked for inclusion of my name in the list to get the benefit of SSNPs, the official, in response denied my request, telling me that they were following the old list, and there were also the directions of the so-called higher authority.*”<sup>16</sup> A physically challenged woman narrated, “*The selection of the SSNP beneficiaries is performed undercover. Own people of the officials are included in the list, and for others to be included in the list have to pay money.*”<sup>17</sup> Another woman claimed that 50% of the beneficiaries of SSNPs were selected from those who actually need it, and the rest 50% went to those who were closely related with the officials. She continued that if there was good term in relation between the beneficiaries and officials, then after the expiration of one offer another benefit was allocated for him/her or if not possible due to legal bindings, then the beneficiary’s close relation was included in the list.<sup>18</sup> One more female from the same area did not agree with 50:50 ratio, with former woman, as she claimed (about) in 70% instances the officials committed ‘*dui nambari*’ i.e. wrong means in selecting the beneficiaries of the

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<sup>13</sup> The Kuruksheetra War, also called the Mahabharata War, is a war described in the Indian epic Mahabharata. The conflict arose from a dynastic succession struggle between two groups of cousins, the Kauravas and Pandavas, for the throne of Hastinapura in an Indian kingdom called Kuru. It involved a number of ancient kingdoms participating as allies of the rival groups.

<sup>14</sup> O14, interview with researcher, Deopara, March 6, 2018.

<sup>15</sup> C55, interview with researcher, Alatuli, December 28, 2017.

<sup>16</sup> C21, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>17</sup> C23, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>18</sup> C22, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

SSNPs.<sup>19</sup> A man from Maria UP termed the procedures of getting SSNP benefits as a matter of ‘game of money.’<sup>20</sup> The same statement was echoed in the FGD session at Jhilim UP, as it forwarded that the cards for delivery of benefits of SSNPs were only distributed to those who could pay.<sup>21</sup> A UP secretary revealed that for distribution of reliefs through varied cards like VGD, VGDF, etc. the selection of benefices shared between UP and ruling party with 60:40 ratio correspondingly.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, it is obviously transparent here that in both Sharique and non-Sharique areas, the scenario remained unchanged, as the political power, and power holder cut short the power of UP officials for selection of beneficiaries of SSNPs freely. In Shilmaria, a Ward president of ruling party AL forced the Ward members to award a card to a person, who actually was not eligible according to the given criteria.<sup>23</sup> In this backdrop, one noteworthy case was observed in Alatuli UP. There the UP official managed two eligible beneficiaries to share one card to ensure access of the beneficiaries to the list. Through this, both beneficiaries made happy. Overall, the selection of beneficiaries of SSNPs remains a very lumbering task and there remain opportunities to improve the scenario largely. To untie the deadlock Social Welfare Department, recently, started other open meetings for selection of beneficiaries, however, the process was also marred by political influence.

#### ***7.2.1.5 Inclusion and Rectification of Beneficiary List of SSNPs on Demands***

It was observed that the selection of beneficiaries for SSNPs was biased based on political identity, nepotism, paying off bribe, etc., though some were selected from real beneficiaries. Now, the question is to what extent the officials pay heed to the demands of the citizens regarding the selection of beneficiaries. It was observed that in the case of collective demand the UP officials tended to show respect to the demands. The case of a destitute woman from Sharique areas has explicated the response of the officials.

#### **Case Study 7. 1: Marzina Khatun Got the Old Age Allowance**

Marzina Khatun is a poor, destitute and a sexagenarian woman. Children left her. She became too penniless to run her household. People in her areas noticed her sufferings. They had the chance during WS to make known the condition of Marzina Khatun to the officials. They grasped the opportunity and 20 of them collectively demanded for an old age allowance for her. The member present in the meeting nodded positively and subsequently the official managed a card for Marzina. The demands makers became happy and disclosed their satisfaction with such actions of the official. (Abdur Rashid Shah, interview with researcher, Shilmaria, December 11, 2017).

<sup>19</sup> C24, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>20</sup> C49, interview with researcher, Maria, December 26, 2017.

<sup>21</sup> FGD data. Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>22</sup> O32, interview with researcher, Shilmaria, May 3, 2018.

<sup>23</sup> FGD data, Shilmaria UP, December 13, 2017.

### Case Study 7. 2: Eidul Pramanik Not Alone, UP Stood beside him

Eidul Pramanik is also a sexagenarian man. He has been running his small business and living with his wife happily. One day, on his way back home from his shop, he was hit by a three-wheeler, and the repercussion of the accident was his broken leg and hospitalisation for few days. His shop remained closed. He fell in difficult condition, as his only children is also a poor mason, who has separate family and is struggling with his family of four members and could not afford to bear the expense of his father. The old man was crushed with destitution and felt lonely. However, the neighbours did not let him be alone. They approached the member of their Ward for seeking assistance for him from the UP. The member obliged and he himself brought a card to the house of Eidul Pramanik; and the destitute felt relieved. (FGD data, Shilmaria, December 14, 2017).

These two case studies showed the power of collective demands. In both cases, the officials failed to disregard the forceful demands of the groups, who unified themselves for common causes. It was observed that when the marginalised raised voice unaccompanied it went nowhere, the demand remained unfulfilled. During the session, an FGD participant of control areas exposed his frustration,

You see! I am an old man. I can do nothing, so I am in terrible condition for poverty. To get rid of poverty-stricken life, I approached UP member and chair several times, and let them know I am a real benefit deserving person, who needs a card, but I have been denied.<sup>24</sup>

Another respondent from Maria UP disclosed his inability to have impacts on the decision of the officials, particularly with getting cards for SSNPs. According to him, “*The beneficiaries were selected politically, and there was no respect for the voice of the people like me. Therefore, I feel no need to make a request to the officials for SSNP benefits and keep myself away from questioning them.*”<sup>25</sup> These incidents materialised the fact that the demands of the marginalised took under consideration by the officials when it came with the force of collective voice.

People were aware of the distribution of SSNP benefits based on various factors, which thwarted the inclusion of the real beneficiary in the list. They were asked whether they had protested against it and asked the officials to rectify the list. Data revealed that 20% and 5% of the citizens from Sharique and control areas respectively raised question on the wrong selection of the beneficiaries. The officials showed their limitation, none of the respondents claimed of a rectification of the wrong selection. The chair of Jhilim UP claimed he had rectified the wrong selection, which was placed before him. However, in reality, the respondents witnessed no such incident. All the chair of the study area accepted that there were the incidents of inclusion of the wrong person in the beneficiary list. The chair of Shilmaria explained,

We are aware of the fact that there are wrong selections of beneficiaries of SSNPs. It is difficult for us to have a proper list of the real beneficiaries. You know there are many factors and actors that influence the lists. Aware citizens sometimes bring the issue before us, and actually, we could do nothing, as once a beneficiary has been selected, the selection remained active for a certain period. At that time, it becomes difficult to rectify the list. Moreover, the

<sup>24</sup> FGD data, Maria, December 27, 2017.

<sup>25</sup> C50, interview with researcher, Maria, December 29, 2017.

cancellation may ignite a political rivalry. Thus, we abstain from rectifying the finalised list of the beneficiaries.

The incidents and the discussion of this section confirmed that in both areas it is difficult for destitute to be included in the list of beneficiaries by themselves without having favours of power holders or a common voice of the community, though there are other disingenuous ways to be included. However, the important finding of this section remains showing of the tendency of being united by the citizens to raise a common voice for the betterment of community people with capacity to bringing decisions in favour of the community. Sharique in this regard work for the instilment of community ownership among the citizens.

#### ***7.2.1.6 Disclosure of information on demands***

It was observed earlier that citizens sought information mostly verbally. Now the question is whether the citizens received the information smoothly or faced any difficulties. Citizens of both areas were inquired to identify their views on getting information; data showed that 60% and 20% of the respondents of citizens from Sharique and control areas respectively affirmed their receiving of information. Next, the citizens were asked to disclose their level of satisfaction on the way information was delivered. It was found that more than half of the (55%) respondents in Sharique areas revealed their satisfaction on the process the way information was delivered, while it was 20% in control areas. Thus, the argument can be drawn that the citizens of Sharique areas more readily fed with information than their counterparts of control areas.

#### ***7.2.1.7 Satisfaction on Complaints Redressal Mechanisms***

Complaints satisfaction begins from making complaints about getting the complaints addressed properly. Deopara and Shilmaria UPs of Sharique areas made the complaints lodging process easy through introducing complaint box.

#### **Box 7. 1: Complaint Boxes Installed (Appendix P 7.1)**

Usually, citizens make their complaints verbally. Sometimes, though people realised misappropriation of funds, inappropriate accomplishment of the activities, yet they do not want to be known in making complaints verbally, or remain busy during meeting or office time. In this regard, Deopara and Shilmaria UP introduced 'Complaint Box' in the UP premises. This was designed to have more complaints, which usually people do not make in public. In the beginning, people dropped complaints, which were regularly checked and satisfied; however, presently the boxes remain almost abandoned.

When asked officials of both Sharique and control areas mentioned that they faced people's complaints on various issues such as un-fulfilment of demands made in WS, wrong selection of SSNP beneficiaries, misappropriation in project implementation, social problems, information dissemination, etc. The UPs of Sharique areas were found more sensitised to the complaints of the citizens. The following case has provided the indication of the officials' action against people's complaints.



### Case Study 7. 3: Solar Panel Reinstalled in Public Place

One day, while I was going through the other areas of my village I saw that a solar panel was installed in the house of a closed ally of a Ward member. I inquired whether it was personal or public. I learnt that it was installed with the expense of government funds. Knowing that I communicated with the UP chair and complaint against the misuse of government fund black-and-white. The chair instantly asked the responsible member to remove it from the personal place and to reinstall it to public place; and yes, it was carried out. (Saidur Rahman, a voter of Ward 5 of Shilmaria UP, on December 10, 2017).

As the complaints were numerous, the officials could not always satisfy the complainants. The major answers of the officials against the demands of the citizens were that they were supplied with insufficient funds; therefore, they failed to execute the demands of the citizens. Furthermore, the functionaries of the UPs mentioned that they prioritised the demands of the citizens, and among the prioritised demands, some were implemented and for the other demands citizens were assured that, their demands would be followed in the upcoming budgets. The chair of the Shahbajpur UP summarised the complaints satisfactions procedures,

It is not possible to fulfil all the demands of the citizens, as the demands are numerous and almost endless, and even in some cases, they have made demands on such issues, which are out of the jurisdiction of the UPs. To balance between the demands and the resource supplies we give importance to the necessities of the majority.<sup>26</sup>

A UP chair who was elected with the ticket of the opposition political party, blamed ruling party MP, and other local leaders to intervene in the functioning of the UP. He argued that the ruling party MP employed local leaders of his party for implementation of projects under *KABITA*, *KABIKHA*, and TR. He added that these interventions hurt the capability of the UP to satisfy its citizens.

When citizens were investigated, it was found that 60% of them disclosed their dissatisfaction on the complaints satisfaction procedures by the supply side actors in Sharique areas, while citizens of control areas did not reveal much on the issues. However, 40% of the respondents from citizens in Sharique areas understood the limitation of the officials or approved the supply side actors' actions, which were taken after the lodging of complaints. A woman UP member from Shahbajpur forwarded her naïve admission regarding making assurances, "*When people made complaints with me for not implementation of demanded projects, I assured them that their demands will be accomplished soon. However, finally, most of the cases I faltered to keep my words.*"<sup>27</sup> A female member from Shilmaria UP came across through the harsh reactions of the citizens. She mentioned that when I made promises to implement their demanded projects in phases, they became angry, and questioned

<sup>26</sup> O1, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 20, 2017.

<sup>27</sup> O2, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 20, 2017.

the ability of the UP.<sup>28</sup> Another UP woman member, from Maria UP, revealed her frustration as she failed to solve the complaints of the citizens. She said, “*I would be happy if I were able to satisfy the citizens of my area.*”<sup>29</sup>

The study has revealed that sometimes citizens mentioned unhelpful and impolite dealings of their complaints, which generated a fissure between the masses, particularly between the marginalised and the functionaries. The citizens revealed that sometimes their political identity became the cause of the impolite dealings. It was observed that ward members were found more sympathised with the complaints of the marginalised than the chair of the UP because of status gap. Data showed that only one of the citizens claimed his complaint was addressed successfully. These tendencies of the UP have been alienating the portion of the citizens, who were brought to the UP through the initiatives of Sharique, from the UP.

## **7.2.2 Social Accountability**

### **7.2.2.1 Social Auditing**

Now-a-days, social audit has emerged as an important tool to hold UP officials answerable. The citizens and the officials of both areas were inquired to know whether there were any open meetings for evaluation other than the WS, OBM, and committee system, was arranged, the answers were negative. However, few of the officials who were serving for long-time in the UPs mentioned that when Sharique was working in the areas, they had faced such meetings, called it ‘Face to Face’ programme. They were further asked why they do not arrange such meeting now. A UP secretary described that the UP officials did not accept the mechanisms cordially; they felt embarrassed and became afraid of facing the grilling of the citizens.<sup>30</sup> Even sometimes, it was found that he mentioned, the UP functionaries took the shelter of diplomatic illness to escape the social auditing process. The fear of social accountability led the officials to exclude those participants who were verbal and critical of the activities of the functionaries. It was disclosed in the FGD session, and interview data, that the UP officials invited only those who were fangless.<sup>31</sup> An interviewee disclosed that after identifying and revealing illogical budget allocation the UP officials never again invited him in WS or OBM.<sup>32</sup> Another respondent, who was physically challenged, unveiled that when she raised questions and inquired the officials they did not give her importance.<sup>33</sup> It can be summarised that the UPs kept themselves away from arranging audit meeting to evaluate their performances.

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<sup>28</sup> O26, interview with researcher, Shilmaria, December 14, 2017.

<sup>29</sup> O28, interview with researcher, Maria, December 27, 2017.

<sup>30</sup> O8, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 20, 2017.

<sup>31</sup> FGD data, Shilmaria UP, December 13, 2017. C2, and C10, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 19, 2017.

<sup>32</sup> C36, interview with researcher, Shilmaria, December 10, 2017.

<sup>33</sup> C23, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

However, the WS and OBM kept opened the opportunity for the citizens to have the officials accountable; but the officials tended to organise the meeting without inviting their harsh critics. During direct observation of WS, the researcher found that one schoolteacher claimed that he was not invited in WS meeting; however, he came there through getting the information from his neighbours. He wanted clarification for not inviting him, the chair or the member present there failed to satisfy him with a reasonable answer. When he was contacted, he revealed that since when he protested the illogical activities of the UP, from then he remained outside the invitee list of the UP.<sup>34</sup> Thus, the social auditing could be an effective tool for the citizens to have their agents accountable and responsible for their deeds. Moreover, the process may work best with the presence of a third party, like the intermediary role of NGO.

### ***7.2.2.2 People's Supervision of Projects***

According to the section 8.2.5 of the UP operational manual, UPs are to formulate a Project Supervision Committee (PSC) in each Ward to oversight the implementation of the projects in the Ward. The WS resolutions confirmed the formation of the PSCs in the Wards of the UPs, at least in papers. Respondents were asked whether they ever supervised any project in their Wards. The data showed that 15% respondents from Sharique areas, 5% from each of Shilmaria, Deopara, and Jhilim and none from Shahbajpur UP of Sharique areas and control areas gathered the experience of supervision of projects. Thus, it is implied that in the latter three UPs, the PSCs were only formed in papers and the committee members were not informed about the fact (more in section: 7.2.2.3). Now the question is how was their experience? All the respondents who supervised projects in their respective Wards claimed that they monitored projects in their areas, and each of them mentioned the projects were implemented successfully and they observed no breach of the guidelines of the UP manual or contracts. However, one interesting issue did not avoid the observation of the researcher. It was observed that 66.67% and 16.67% of those who monitored projects were close political allies, and relatives of the officials respectively. The rest 16.66% of the respondents were found neutral in their relationship with the officials. It can be inferred from the data that the UPs of Sharique areas not only formed PSCs in papers but also they activated the same. However, they tended to be risk-free from the part of PSCs, as the contractors or the WCs headed by Ward members, who take the responsibilities of implementation of the projects had to collect the clearance certificates from the PSCs. Therefore, the officials included their trusted political allies and relatives in the PSCs. Thus, the argument can be drawn here that the answerability through supervision committees started in Sharique areas, yet the process had not been materialised in the true sense.

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<sup>34</sup> Observation WS meeting, Ward number 5, Deopara UP, March 14, 2018.

### 7.2.2.3 Formation and Activation of Various Committees

Union Parishads have been mandated to form various committees with the inclusions of both elected, and government and NGO officials, as well as citizens from different professions and social strata. Among the committees Ward Committee (WC), Project Implementation Committee (PIC), Scheme Supervision Committee (SSC), Standing Committee (SC), Planning Committee (PC), and Union Development Coordination Committee (UDCC) are prominent.

**Table 7. 2: Formation of Various Committees**

Areas	UP	WC / PIC	SSC	SC	PC	UDCC
Sharique Areas	Deopara	√	√	√	×	√
	Shahbajpur	√	√	√	√	√
	Jhilim	√	√	√	×	√
	Shilmaria	√	√	√	×	√
Control Areas	Alatuli	√	√	√	×	√
	Maria	√	√	√	×	√

Source: WS Resolution Book.

The study of various minutes of the meetings of UPs and various committees of UPs revealed that all the UPs of both Sharique and non-Sharique areas formed various committees (Table 7.2) in accordance to the UP act of 2009, and the UP operational manual. In this respect, Planning Committee remained exceptional, as it was formed only by Shahbajpur UP. WC / PIC and SSC are to form in the WS meetings, and these committees have been guided to form through inclusion of UP members (Male & female), teachers, imam of mosques, social workers (Male & female), member of civil societies, NGO representatives, technical personnel appointed by UNO, freedom fighters, etc. The intimate scrutiny of the documents showed that the UPs of Sharique areas formed these committees accordingly. However, it was learnt that only Deopara and Shilmaria formed these committees considering the opinions of the WS participants. The president of WS of Ward number five of Deopara narrated the process,

During WS, I asked the participants to propose the names of the persons of different categories. For example, I told the gathering that I need a teacher as a committee member and they proposed a name of a teacher who would be available in need and had interest in UP. I followed the same process for selection of social workers, freedom fighter, member of civil society, etc.<sup>35</sup>

However, the other two UPs from Sharique and two UPs from control areas were not following the same process. Both WC/PIC and SSC have been guided to be formed including seven members, however, Deopara and Jhilim included five members in some instances. There found a tendency that the local officials formed these committees without consultation of citizens and just had it written in the resolution of

<sup>35</sup> O15, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 18, 2017, and March 5, 2018.

WS. The officials generally included those people in the committees who were close allies, political colleagues, or relations, so that the officials remained free of hassles, while implementing the project according to their choice. A UP secretary remarked,

The ward members are the head of WC/PIC, and are responsible to implement the project under the direct supervision of SSC. As the members of these committees are required to sign the documents that confirm the fair finishing of the project, thus, the officials remain sceptical to include stubborn people outside of their purview. Consequently, they tend to form these committees with their near and dear one to avoid complexities and keep open opportunity to gain from the project.<sup>36</sup>

Almost the same remark reverberated in the voice of an NGO worker,

The UP officials formed various committees at their will and included their own people, the same faces in the various committees. It looked like showing the same hatchling repeatedly in different look to prove all the hatchlings of the crocodile are in good condition.<sup>37</sup>

Moreover, in few cases, the members of these committees did not know that they were included in the list of these committees. A woman (code: C4) from Shahbajpur was the member of WC / PIC, and SC for the next year, however, when she was contacted successively, she retorted with blank eyes,

I do not know, whether I am a member of any committees, none of the UP officials ever let me know about this. I have never engaged with any project implementation whatsoever. Even I have never been called to such meetings.<sup>38</sup>

Close examination of signatures of that woman in the UP documents illustrated and confirmed her claim, as the researcher found that the signatures varied one from others considerably. Yet, when the SSC formed accordingly in the WS meeting with participants, among the participants, then it really works. A UP male member from Deopara, asserted that

nowadays, citizens of our locality with the initiatives of Sharique have become very conscious. When they have been included in the SSC, they, in fact, supervise the process of scheme implementation. Therefore, today it becomes almost impossible for a contractor or a UP official to commit corruption with huge margins, as the members of the SSC to sign the documents after the proper implementation of the project, and without clean implementation of the project, they will not sign the same.<sup>39</sup>

However, though there is a lot of promise in this statement, yet there is a gap of power structure in between the implementers and the SSC members. Here, those who are contractors, or who own offices, involve with politics, engage mostly with ruling party, and thus hold power and stay in the top of power pyramid. Therefore, it is difficult in reality for the member of SSC to hold these powerful men accountable. When the same member asked further, whether ever he or the contractors in his areas faced any problems to get the documents signed, he replied negatively and added that

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<sup>36</sup> O8, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur UP, March 4, 2018.

<sup>37</sup> N5, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 12, 2018.

<sup>38</sup> C4, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur UP, December 20, 2017.

<sup>39</sup> O14, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 18, 2017.

we used to implement the projects and the SSC members signed the papers accordingly with our request.<sup>40</sup>

The act of 2009 mandated UPs to form at least 13 SCs for dealing with various issues.<sup>41</sup> These committees have been instructed to include 5 to 7 members from both supply side and demand side actors of the areas based on their capacities to contribute in respective committees. Furthermore, SCs have been given the opportunities to include expert professionals in committees as co-opt members without voting right. All the UPs were found assembled the SCs, generally including five members, except few with seven members. The principal task of these committees is to suggest, and hold UPs accountable for various issues concerning rural development, and sit together at least once in two months. It was found in the SCs' resolutions that the committees sat in the meetings regularly in Deopara and Maria UP. Among the rest, Shahbajpur, Jhilim, and Shilmaria have shown four meetings of the SCs. However, in Shilmaria, the resolutions of all the committees were not found. In Alatuli UP, the SCs were just formed, and no meeting of the same was observed according to the resolution. However, in realities, it was observed that these meetings and resolutions of the same of SCs remained only fabricated paperwork. The resolutions were just copy of each other resolutions respectively, and in some cases, signatures of the committee members in the resolutions were found contrived. If the committee members had ever sat for a meeting, it just ended in a tea party. One of the UP members of Deopara informed the researcher that he invited other members of the SC, for which he was selected as president and sat together to discuss.<sup>42</sup> When he was furthered inquired what were the issues particularly they had discussed, he failed to articulate mentionable issues. Six secretaries of the study areas confirmed that the SCs were formed only in the papers; the UPs formed these committees to fulfil the legal bindings imposed by the Act. UPs, both in Sharique and non-Sharique areas, indicated the same phenomenon in case of SCs. One secretary cut loose,

I have formed the SCs by including the names given by the members of the UP. Usually, no meetings of SCs are held; however, I maintain the papers of the SCs. Thus, in reality, some SC members do not know that their names are on the list. Recently, the national ID cards of the SC members have to be enclosed with the documents, and the UP members collect the same. Even in few cases, the UP members will fail to recognise the SC, for which he is selected as the president.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> According to the sec. 45 of the UP Act of 2009 the following SCs are to be formed; Finance and Establishment; Audit and Accounts; Tax Assessment and Collection; Education, Health and Family Planning; Agriculture, Fisheries and Livestock, and other Economic Development Activities; Rural Infrastructure Development, Protection, and Supervision, etc.; Law and Order; Birth and Death Registration; Sanitation, Water Supply and Sewerage; Social Welfare and Disaster Management; Development, and Conservation of Environment, and Tree Plantation; Family Conflict Resolution, and Welfare of Women and Children.

<sup>42</sup> O15, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 18, 2017, and March 5, 2018.

<sup>43</sup> O24, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

An NGO official extended her account, “*Though Sharique has a special focus to activate SCs, however, the SCs have just been formed and the functioning of the SCs yet too far.*”<sup>44</sup>

Why this was so? It has been learnt that sometimes the UP officials formed SCs with ordinary and unqualified fellows.<sup>45</sup> It was revealed that the respective officials who were in charge of arranging the meeting of committees were found reluctant to do so. They were not aware and capacitated enough to generate continuous suggestions for the UP. Moreover, when they sat together and made suggestions for the UPs, the suggestions in most cases remained unfulfilled, and consequently, that lead to degeneration of interest in holding of SCs’ meeting regularly.

Union Parishads have been instructed to form a Planning Committee in each UP;<sup>46</sup> and are to include all members, UP secretaries, and all head of transferred department of government at UP level as members of the committee, for which a UP member is planned to be the president. Furthermore, the committee has been given opportunity to co-opt experts in planning as a member of the committee. It has been found that only Shahbajpur UP among all the studied UPs, formed the committee, and minutes of the meetings of this committee were found. However, when inquired in depth, it was revealed that the formation and the creation of minutes were only in papers, no such committee was ever sat in practical.

Another key forum UDCC has been instructed to form with the inclusion of UP officials, government officials who work at UP level and delegated from UPZ level, member of SMC, NGO representative, member of CBOs, representative of businessmen, imam, representatives of women to develop the living standard of the rural people in general, and coordinate the development activities of government and other development partners working at UP level.<sup>47</sup> The meeting of UDCC has been planned to be organised at least one in every two months. It has been observed that the UPs in Sharique areas documented the meetings of the UDCC. In Deopara, Shilmaria, and Jhilim, the meeting of the UDCC found to be held regularly, and in Shahbajpur the meeting also found organised with a bit low frequency. The UP of control areas Maria was no less behind in the process of documentation of the UDCC meeting. Alatuli UP, however, lagged far behind in this respect, as the meetings of the UDCC found to be documented with low intensity and frequency. However, the documents, when analysed closely, revealed that the presence of government officials

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<sup>44</sup> N6, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 7, 2018.

<sup>45</sup> N5, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 12, 2018.

<sup>46</sup> UP Operational Manual, sec. 3.1.2.

<sup>47</sup> LGD Circular no.-46.018.031.00.00.002.2011-74 of February 13, 2011.

at the UDCC was low. When inquired why their attendance was low in the meeting, one UP secretary stated,

According to the act of 2009, the officials have been transferred to the UP optionally. Thus, they though, have offices in the UP building, yet the office rooms remain vacant. Moreover, these officials remain busy with their respective activities. When we called them in the meeting, we cannot provide them with good refreshments, travel allowance, and honorarium. Consequently, they do not get interested to be present in the UDCC meeting.<sup>48</sup>

However, when they sat together, they shared their activities, plans, made suggestions for UPs on various issues, coordinated efforts to avoid replications and disorganisations with a view to establishing harmonious process of development. The minutes of the UDCC revealed that officials of different transferred department presented the activities they or their departments were doing, and let the UPs and officials know their advice for the betterment of the local people.

#### ***7.2.2.4 Informal Mechanisms of Accountability***

The formal mechanisms of holding officials accountable by the citizens have been analysed and discussed in the latter part of this chapter. This section has unfolded people's willingness and capabilities to hold UP officials accountable informally, as well as functionaries receptiveness to people's problems, queries and demands. It was revealed from the opinions given by the citizens of both Sharique and non-Sharique areas that they were eager to approach their representatives. They inquired the UP officials for different concerns: made demands, and sought information outside the formal mechanisms of UP, i.e., through personal communication, social functions, meeting at marketplaces, etc. However, there found a slim difference between the citizens of Sharique and non-Sharique areas in respect of asking questions, as 80% and 75% of the respondents of Sharique and control areas respectively stated that they asked questions and made demands to their officials outside the formal settings. When functionaries were enquired, whether the citizens approached them with their demands and problems, all of the officials of both areas replied affirmatively. This showed that citizens of both areas displayed their character, willingness and skill of asking questions to functionaries in their respective UPs and in the process holding them accountable.

However, some 20% and 25% of the respondents from citizenry from Sharique and control areas correspondingly reported keeping themselves away from asking questions or making demands to the office bearers (Appendix 7.1). Among them, the majority in both areas recounted having questioned or demanded to their officials previously, but they experienced no action, and disregard from the supply side actors, and back home empty-handed, and the rate was for this category of citizens as high as 87.5% in Sharique areas, while it was 60.0% in control areas. Sometimes citizens'

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<sup>48</sup> O8, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur UP, March 4, 2018.



experience of state of neglect, and dissatisfaction degenerated the interest to approach their officials again. In Sharique areas, citizens' reports on '*I do not approach the officials,*' was higher than that of control areas, cause, citizens in Sharique areas were more conscious, thus the rate of approaching the officials also higher, and that higher number of citizens tended to experience higher figure of disregards. A few respondents, in both areas, exposed themselves as uninterested in the affairs of the UP. They stated of having nothing to do with the UP, and vice versa. Thus, people from Sharique areas were more concerned about the UPs, and made their officials answerable approaching and questioning them.

### 7.2.3 Answerability of UP Functionaries

#### 7.2.3.1 Attitudes of the Functionaries towards the Questions of the Citizens

In the earlier discussions, it has been seen that citizens approached their officials and asked questions on issues ranged from personal and societal problems to development related issues of the areas. Through the efforts of Sharique, citizens of Sharique areas gained competence instilled in them to raise questions to their officials, as the 87.5% of the respondents from Sharique areas mentioned the incidence of asking questions to the officials, while it was 80% in control areas. It was found that the nature and pattern of questions differed from Sharique areas to control areas, such as the questions in control areas, took undeviating forms and shapes, and involved mostly with personal and traditional types of problems such as reconciliation (Shalish), SSNPs, and other such services. On the other hand, in Sharique areas, the questions covered diverse and complex issues, which varied from traditional concerns to seeking of explanation of a task- why was implemented in a particular way, or why was not implemented.

**Table 7. 3: The Reaction of the Officials to Questions (Citizens)**

Areas	Sharique Areas		Control Areas	
	f	%	f	%
Response				
Give answer	27	77.1	16	100
Keep themselves away from answering	2	5.7	-	-
Get irritated/angry	2	5.7	-	-
Stop me	3	8.6	-	-
Don't get a reasonable answer	1	2.9	-	-
Total	35	100	16	100

Source: Field Data, 2017-18.

The reaction to the inquiries of the citizens differed from areas to areas. As the nature of the questions was simple so was the reactions of the officials, for instance, those who made questions in control areas, let the researcher know that their respective leaders answered them. One WM revealed, "*Sharique made more congenial atmosphere in the UP to accept people queries. We are also adapted to be more*

*agreeable and patient to people questions and to reply to them accordingly.*<sup>49</sup> However, in Sharique areas, the reactions were multidimensional (Table: 7.2). Data showed that most of the question raisers got their expected answers, and revealed their satisfaction over the approaches, attitudes and replies of the officials.

In many cases, though the officials failed to bring expected change, yet they assuaged the answers or service seekers with soft and constructive words, and assured them for future actions. Yet, 22.9% respondents from Sharique areas encountered disregards, or irritating behaviours, or obstruction, or irrational or threatening replies. Mostly the women or the people of marginalised groups faced these inimical answers, when their raised questions involved with seeking an explanation for wrongdoings or corruption of officials, etc. For example, when a woman from Jhilim UP, asked questions on inclusion of inappropriate beneficiaries in the list, the officials shouted at her with the words, *“The cobbler must stick to his last. It is none of your business.”*<sup>50</sup> Another woman shared her experience: *“When I asked about various issues the officials ignored me, they don’t answer me. Sometimes they attack me verbally as, ‘Why do you need to understand that much? Oil your own machine.’”*<sup>51</sup> Respondents also claimed of rude behaviour of officials in reply to the questions.<sup>52</sup> The researcher witnessed, in the direct observation of WS and OBM, that the officials became enraged, impatient, and irritated, as well as felt discomfort, in the face of accountability questions, as sometimes the replies of the agent contained disrespectful attitude and words with harsh chilling sounds.

These patterns of reactions of the officials represent the tip of the iceberg, as the problems rooted in the deep of the iceberg with socio-power structure, patriarchal hegemony, parochial political cultures existed in the society. The training and orientation of Sharique project brought change in the visible behaviour of the officials to some extent. Moreover, the project developed skill to speak up in the forums and to seek information by people, however, the invisible portions need more time to be changed, and it would not change overnight. Another cause of such behaviours generated from the inability of the officials, as they were limited with resources, and were pressurised by the local political leaders.<sup>53</sup> Consequently, there developed a tendency of avoiding such people who challenged the actions of the officials through not inviting them in WS or OBM, and through inviting only the party men and closed allies of the officials.

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<sup>49</sup> O12, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 18, 2017.

<sup>50</sup> C22, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>51</sup> C21, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>52</sup> FGD data, Deopara UP, December 20, 2017.

<sup>53</sup> FGD data, Shilmaria UP, December 13, 2017.

### 7.2.3.2 Providing Justification for the Deeds

Answerability composed of two components, one involved with the openness of the organisation, which deal with disclosure and dissemination of information, and the second one ensure officials' accepting the liability for their deeds. This section has included the discussion on providing justification by officials, and the issue of information dissemination has been discussed in the subsequent section, which has dealt with transparency.

The provisions of WS and OBM have brought opportunity for the mass people to hold UP officials accountable. The citizens, particularly the marginalised, ethnic groups, and other minorities clutched the opportunity; otherwise, it would be difficult for them to make officials delivered an explanation for what s/he did and did not. Sharique project instilled the confidence and mobilised the citizens to seek clarification. On the other hand, the project officials had UP officials understood the fact that through providing clarification they would be freed from the levelling of 'wheat stealer.'

#### Case Study 7. 4: Woman Member Sought Apology

Fatema Begum, a 48-year-old widowed woman from Deopara, was elected member from reserved seat in 2016 from Ward number 1, 2, and 3 of Deopara UP. She remains present in the meeting of WS in her Ward. On March 2018, at the beginning of WS meeting she stood before the crowd and told them what she did and could not achieve. She mentioned her inability to keep in touch with many of the citizens of her area regularly for her familial problems. She took liability for her deeds and apologised to the crowd. However, she revealed that she met people when they asked her to stand beside them. Furthermore, she claimed that she communicated with people when she came across citizen gatherings. She pledged to work hard for the community people.

#### Case Study 7. 5: Padmaabati Got Explanation

Padmabati, an indigenous woman in her 40s of Adarshagram (ideal village, which was built for the homeless) Colony, of Ward number six of Deopara UP, claimed explanation in the WS. In the last WS, she with her neighbours placed demand for a road to be rebuild and repaired in her area. It caused great difficulties during the rainy season, as the road went under water. Despite the sheer need of the community, the UP neither included the demand in the year plan nor materialised the same. This time, in another WS meeting, she got the opportunity, and exploiting the same, categorically asked the member, "Why have you not executed our demand?" The member accepted the claim that he failed to implement the project. He clarified that we were short of fund. Thus, we could not fulfil all the demands. Hence, we prioritised all the demands that came from the nine Wards of the UP, and selected some to be implemented in accordance to our fund supply in the budget; and during the process, your demand lost in the competition of prioritisation. Notwithstanding that, the member assured her, this time he would work with it to be included in the annual plan and to be implemented subsequently.

Thus, both demand-side actors got encouraged to seek and the supply side actors obliged to provide an explanation for their deeds. The two case studies, showed the glimpse of the process that practiced in the WS of Sharique areas. These cases clearly indicated that the officials changed themselves, and in the WS, before the citizens of their respective Wards, they became accustomed to accepting their lacking willingly. Moreover, citizens became empowered even to seek an

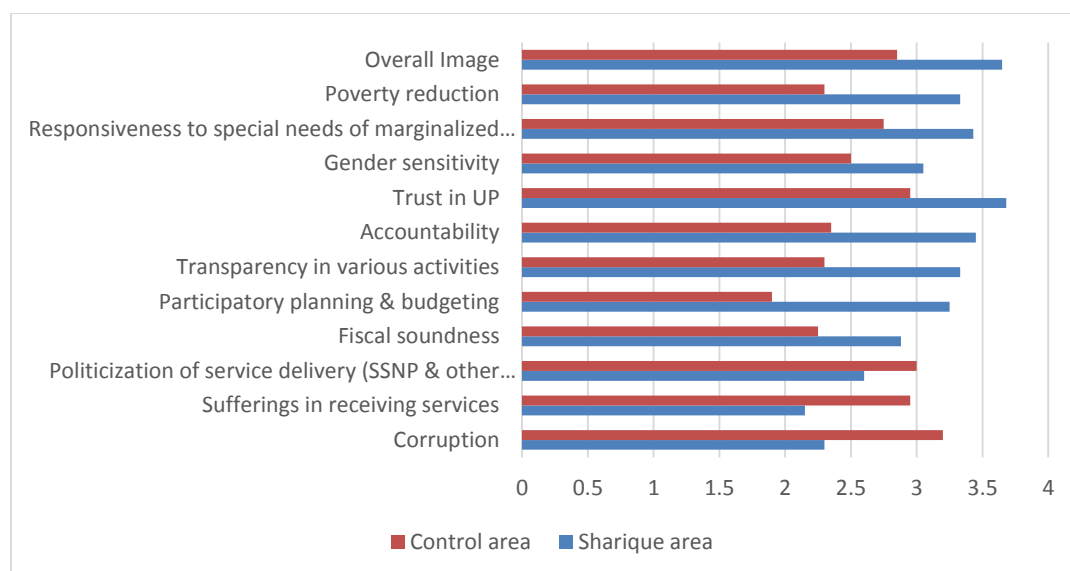
explanation from their officials. The officials responded with an explication of the reasons that actually halted their will of fulfilling the demands of the people.

### 7.2.4 Enforcement

Kluvers and Tippet involved enforcement with legal compliance, obligation and community satisfaction.<sup>54</sup> On the other hand, Schedler identified two dimensions of enforcement, related to the principals' capacity and action to arrange punishment for wrongdoing and rewards for the good performances.<sup>55</sup> However, the act of 2009, and circulars, as well as other legal or quasi-legal documents have provided the principals a very few scopes to arrange punishment or rewards, except elections, which held in every five year. The presence of direct control mechanisms of the ombudsman, recalling of officials, opinion survey, sticker standard conduct, focus groups, and deliberative polling could open the scopes for the citizens to exercise the power of sanctions either positive or negative. However, in absence of these measures, this section includes Kluvers and Tippet's explanation to identify the level of enforcement in Sharique and control areas.

#### 7.2.4.1 Citizens' Satisfaction on Varied Issues of UPs

The demand side actors of Sharique areas deemed shifted UPs interaction with their constituents. One of the respondents from Shahbajpur uncovered that the UP became pro-people with the initiatives of Sharique project.<sup>56</sup>



**Figure 7. 3: Mean Scores of Likert Scale Given by the Citizens**

<sup>54</sup> Ron Kluvers, and John Tippet, "Mechanisms of Accountability in Local Government: An Exploratory Study," *International Journal of Business and Management* 5 (7) (July 2010): 46-53.

<sup>55</sup> Andreas Schedler, "Conceptualizing Accountability," in *The Self-Restraining State: Power and Accountability in New Democracies*, eds. Andreas Schedler, Larry Diamond, and Marc F. Plattner, 13-28 (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1999), 14-15.

<sup>56</sup> C9, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 20, 2017.

To know more and to assert people's opinions on 11 particular areas: corruption, sufferings in receiving services, politicization of service delivery (SSNP & other services), fiscal soundness, participatory planning and budgeting, transparency in various activities, accountability, trust in UP, gender sensitivity, responsiveness to special needs of marginalized groups, poverty reduction, and overall image about their respective UPs, scores were collected through using 5 (five) point Likert Scale. Figure 7.3 displayed the findings by providing an average mean score of the scale. The table depicted that the citizens of UPs of Sharique areas marked their UPs with high standards in comparison to the UPs control areas.

#### **7.2.4.2 Maintenance of Procedures**

The UPs have been prescribed to deposit all the collected money with banks daily after receiving the same. However, all most all the UPs were found breaching the procedures. A UP member substantiated the same, "*Money has been collected, but it was not submitted in the government fund.*"<sup>57</sup> The lacunas were documented in the LGSP audit documents as it has been found that all the UPs deposited a part of the collected money during the audit process. They were also found showing negligence in submitting the vat, tax, and keeping of retention money of the contractor.

Citizens were asked whether their respective UPs maintained procedures for supplying information, goods and services, the replies revealed that 52% and 20% of citizens from Sharique and control areas respectively approved the notion. Most of the citizens of control areas remained indifference in disclosing their preference. The rate was high in control areas regarding disclosure of the negative opinion. Thus, it can be argued that the UPs of Sharique areas were found to be more inclined to maintain procedures more actively than that of control areas; however, the Sharique UPs still have many areas to improve.

### **7.3 Transparency**

#### **7.3.1 Seeking, Understanding and Using Information by the Citizens**

In reply to the question, "Do you seek information?" 72.5% and 25% of the respondents of citizens from Sharique and non-Sharique areas respectively pronounced the word 'yes'. That means people of Sharique areas were more accustomed to seeking information than their counterparts from control areas remained. Earlier, it was observed that people of Sharique (97.5%) and non-Sharique areas (90%) were aware of the fact that seeking information is their right. Majority of the officials (65.7) from Sharique areas believed that citizens use RTI for demanding information (Appendix 6.5). However, both groups of citizens were found not conscious of the fact that their right was protected by the UP act of 2009, as well as

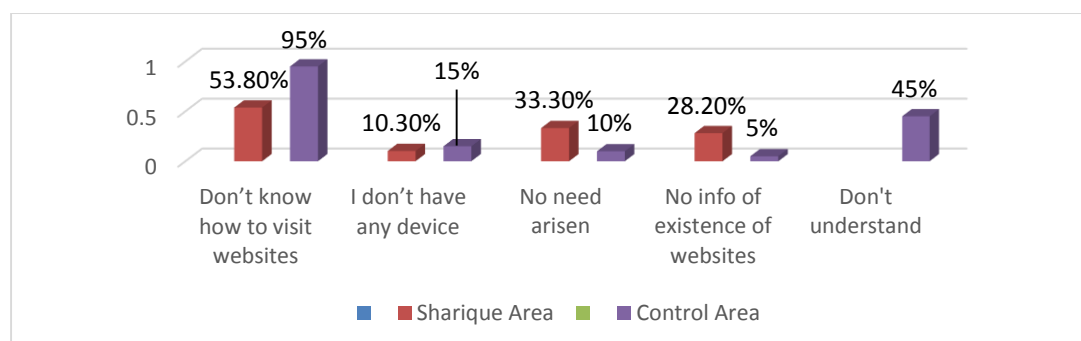
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<sup>57</sup> O22, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

by the RTI act of 2009. Hence, their process of seeking information was not that much formal and forceful. Data revealed that none of the citizens of both Sharique and non-Sharique areas had ever demanded information through written process. Why was this so? The principal reason was that people accustomed to seeking information verbally, as all of the respondents who stated that they sought information added that they tried to find information by asking officials. Furthermore, in most cases, they were not required to apply formally for the information, because they were supplied the information instantly when they hunted verbally. Among the other reasons citizens found it incommodious to write for information as the rate of literacy was low in the rural area and for the process, they needed help of others.

During the field visit, the researcher witnessed UPs of Sharique areas delivered information through information boards. However, the scenery was frustrating as citizens used not to collect information from these boards as only 10% of the respondents expressed they sought information on the boards. A participant of an FGD session, stated that people used not to look for information in the boards that placed in the UP premise, rather they usually exposed their fondness and comfort to ask orally to acquire the needed information.<sup>58</sup> Again, the major cause was their (citizens') low level of education. In addition, people found it difficult to search the particular information from the huge pile of information written on the boards. They found it easy to seek information verbally as it cost less time, and efforts. Consequently, these information boards were seemed to become decorative, in some cases fulfilling the conditions of the donors, and satisfying the external visitors.

Information was also disseminated through websites/web pages. All of the UPs of both Sharique and control areas were provided with websites/web pages under the a2i project of the PM office. The question is- to what extent citizens were using these websites to search for the information they needed. The scenario was rather gloomy and faint because only one respondent from Sharique areas and none from control areas had claimed to have visited the webpage of his UP for information.



**Figure 7. 4: Reasons for not Visiting Websites/Web pages (Citizens)**

<sup>58</sup> FGD data, Shilmaria UP, December 13, 2017.

However, the man who visited the website took the assistance of his children to surf through the internet. Multiple causes backpedalled the use of websites for searching information (Figure 7.4). Firstly, citizens were not capable of using websites for their backwardness in education, and they did not know how to visit websites; secondly, many of them mentioned they actually did not realise what websites were, and how it disseminated information. However, among those who were capable of visiting websites mentioned that they were not aware of having websites by UPs. Some stated that if it had been needed they would have visited the UP website. Few of them could not visit the website, as they had no device capable of internet browsing if they had one they would have visited web pages of the UPs.

It was revealed that citizens of both areas mentioned that they had sought information, and they gathered the required information verbally. In most cases, people seeking information regarding issues like SSNPs, TR, *KABITA*, *KABIKHA*, 40 days employment generation programmes, birth registration, issuance of certificates, etc. This meant the information sought by citizens covered the areas that might induce personal benefits. It was exposed that in both areas people showed a lack of interest in seeking information regarding income and expenditure of UP, CC, and RTI, as well as other information involving participatory planning and budgeting. Thus, it can be argued that people became conversant on seeking information they used for personal gain; however, information relating to technical issues of planning and budgeting was found to be incomprehensible by the citizens.

The observation and collected data revealed that people enhanced their demands, queries, and actions based on the information they were supplied by the UP. Yet, it was found that some people refrained themselves from using the information in both areas, as they made ‘no action by officials’ (83.3% and 90% of respondents from Sharique and control areas respectively) responsible as the central basis of not using information for further action. Moreover, the use of information for planning, development and the fulfilling of demands that came through social mapping was rare. Thus, the discussions make it clear that people have started seeking information, however, they are not still very much aware and accustomed to look for the information relating with resources supplied to the UP, and hence make their demands adaptable in accordance with the availability of funds.

### **7.3.2 State of Information Dissemination**

At the beginning of Sharique project, it was a tall task to convince the officials of UPs to disclose information. They were not ready to open the UPs to the people. One NGO official narrated his experience,

We arranged an exchange visit to Matikata UP of Rajshahi, for the officials of a UP of Chapai Nawabganj district to make them acquainted with the best practices of Matikata. The members of the UP from Chapai Nawabganj learnt that there were other sources of money of the UP

supplied form Upazila; and previously they were not aware of the fact. The members in the visit wanted to know the UP secretary whether their UP received money from mentioned source. The secretary nodded affirmatively. Then the members asked him what their UP did with the money. The secretary showed the UP chair. The chair took his time to reply and asked me (the NGO official) to come up with him. In the other room, he furiously told me, ‘I will quit the chairmanship. Have you brought me here to make me naked? If everyone knows about every penny, how will I run the UP? Better you take the charge of the UP, I will resign.’ However, we made the change to disseminate information.<sup>59</sup>

The scenario changed a lot in Sharique areas, with the intervention of the project. The officials revealed that Sharique project contributed in implementing RTI and CC through encouraging (83.9%), awareness building (51.6%), and disseminating information on RTI/CC (35.5%), which helped them to disseminate information. A UP secretary revealed that Sharique taught, supported and persuaded us to disseminate information through information boards.<sup>60</sup> Officials mentioned that the project assisted them for information dissemination through the installation of information boards (71.9%), dissemination of RTI and CC (43.8%), and building of awareness of citizens to claim information (53.1%). A community member revealed, “*The UP placed information boards, opened the statement of income and expenditure, displayed the phone numbers of the officials, etc.*”<sup>61</sup> Now the question is what were the contents displayed or disseminated through these mediums; and to what extent this information was updated. The close observations of these mediums revealed that UPs disseminated information on annual budget, financial statement, ongoing projects, state of tax collection, varied development activities, resource list, etc.

Citizen charters were found displaying in the UP premises of Sharique areas, however, the two UPs of control areas failed to do the same. It was guided through the legal documents that the CC should be developed taking the citizens’ opinion under consideration, and should be changed from time to time with variation in services and nature of demands, but it was found that citizens were not consulted, changes were not frequent, and the information displayed in the CC across the UPs were found identical. Moreover, though there observed the existence of CCs in the UP premises, both the supply side and demand side actors were found unacquainted on the issues of CC.

UPs have been instructed to disclose information through interactive websites, billboards, boards, notice boards, information boards, wall writing, various reports, budgetary documents, annual reports, etc. It was observed that the UPs of Sharique areas, except Shahbajpur displaying the information board, notice boards, and the other billboards (Appendix P 7.2). The UPs of control areas identified with no such boards in the UP offices. The UPs of both areas composed various paper-based

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<sup>59</sup> N3, interview with researcher, January 9, 2018.

<sup>60</sup> O24, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>61</sup> C28, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.



documents to send to their higher authorities and many of the documents were not made public. Annual reports though can be one of the key documents to disseminate information, yet no UP of any area was found to develop an annual report. Moreover, no UP had brochures or leaflets to disseminate information.

It has been observed that the UPs of Sharique areas were more activated to deliver information (Table: 7.3). On the other hand, the UPs under control areas showed all most no efforts to disseminate information. For example, Alatuli UP owned a Budget board, and it was found last updated with the budget of 2012-13 fiscal year; and Maria UP did almost nothing to disseminate information. Moreover, the information cell that was established there found without electricity for the last six years due to political rivalry, yet the UP did not make any effective measures to confirm the electric supply.

**Table 7. 4: Information Displayed in Boards or Notice Boards and their State**

Areas	Sharique Areas				Control Areas	
	Deopara	Shahbajpur	Jhilim	Shilmaria	Alatuli	Maria
Information	√	×	√	√	√	×
Budget	Updated	-	Updated	Updated	Not updated	-
Financial Statement	√	√	√	√	×	×
	Updated	Not updated	Updated	Updated	-	-
Project List	√	×	√	√	×	×
	Not updated	-	Not updated	Not updated	-	-
Tax Collection	√	×	√	√	×	×
	Not updated	-	Updated	Updated	-	-
UP Activities	×	×	√	√	×	×
Citizen Charter	√	×	√	√	×	×
Office Time	×	×	×	√	×	×
Beneficiary List	×	×	×	√	×	×
Awareness	√	×	√	√	×	×
Resource List	√	√	√	√	×	×
Information Cell	√	√	√	√	√	√

Source: Check list and observation.

Among the UPs of Sharique areas, Shilmaria UP has been found impressive with their efforts to disseminate information on various issues. Shilmaria was the only UP, which disclosed the list of SSNP beneficiaries. The Jhilim and Deopara UP followed Shilmaria UP with their efforts regarding disclosure of information. In the Sharique areas, on the subject of information dissemination, Shahbajpur UP performed poorly. When the officials were inquired, it was revealed that the UP building was newly built, so they had the boards in the storeroom. However, the researcher learnt that the UP moved to new building three years back, which mean, the UP employed no efforts to reinstall the information boards in the UP. Thus, it can be argued that the UPs of Sharique areas were more galvanised, in their way to disseminate information through display boards, than that of control areas.

The researcher expanded his search to find out who was officially responsible to deliver information. There was no name found anywhere in any UP as the information officer. Officials were asked to identify the information officer, 81.3% and 50% of the officials of Sharique and control areas respectively mentioned that there was specific person to deliver information. They were further asked to know who the person was. The replies exposed contradiction in identifying the person, in Sharique areas 75% named the UP secretary, and in control areas, the percentage was 37.5%. On the other hand, 6.3% and 12.5% officials from Sharique and control areas respectively mentioned that it was the responsibility of entrepreneurs of UDC. The interesting issue was that among the UP secretaries, who were described as the information officer by the elected officials, 50% mentioned that there was no specific person to deliver information. Moreover, it was learnt from the data that 15% respondents of citizens from Sharique areas mentioned that they had faced problems to identify whom to seek information. The confusion in identifying specific person, and the hectic nature of activities due to lack of personnel in the UP caused chaos in the UP. A respondent revealed,

We are to search for information to the secretary, as there are no specific persons to do so. You know, almost all the time the UP secretary remains very busy with various activities. Thus, it becomes very difficult to get information from him. A few days ago, I have sought information from him; however, he refused to provide me information showing his busyness as the cause. It annoyed me greatly; and we exchanged heated words. The matter has not finished there; I have made complaint against him with UNO. The UNO assured me of taking action against him.<sup>62</sup>

It was revealed in an FGD session that the officials sometimes hide information.<sup>63</sup> In few cases, the officials took the shelter of the reservation of the act regarding RTI, mentioning as classified documents and the information could not be supplied.

### ***7.3.2.1 Websites/Web pages: Gateway of Digital Dissemination of Information***

Government has promoted development of websites/web pages to deliver information. Sharique project encouraged LGIs to disseminate information to open up the local bodies not only to their constituents but also, to the whole world through publishing documents in the websites. The study of websites of four UPs under Sharique areas and two UPs of control areas showed that every UPs have their own websites with good-looking graphical interface and navigational textual tools, with frames, tables, banners, hyperlinks, etc. All websites exhibited the pictures of important establishments, scenic beauty, historical places, and artefacts, etc. of their respective areas. However, the most important issues about the website study were to find out: to what extent these web pages are updated with necessary information and

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<sup>62</sup> C10, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 20, 2017.

<sup>63</sup> FGD data, Shilmaria UP, December 10, 2017.

relevant contents. How far these sites are reflecting the willingness of the UPs to disseminate information voluntarily on their goods and services, as well as activities. The table (Appendix 7.2) shows that no UPs have uploaded their CC on the websites. In the Sharique areas, Shahbajpur UP performed poorly, the web page remained almost inactive, the information, though little, was outdated without any significant updates after the initiation of the page. Jhilim UP was also another poor performer in terms of feeding websites with information. On the other hand, Deopara UP showed promises regarding uploads of information. Among the UPs in the both Sharique and control areas, Shilmaria stands tall with not only volume of updated information but also with quality of the information. Visitors of the website would have the chance to deepen their understandings and knowledge through experiencing the various parts of it. On the other hand, the websites of both UPs of control areas were not updated regularly, and the information uploaded was three to 10 years old.

No UP uploaded the yearly fiscal statement. Moreover, the then latest budget of 2017-2018 fiscal year was not found at any of the websites of any UP. Moreover, these websites were not shown any citizen charter of UP, and were not been given any opportunity for the citizens, stakeholders, and visitors to interact among themselves and with the authorities. However, two UPs of Sharique areas were found active in social media namely on Facebook with a Facebook page.

Overall, this study of websites reflects that the website of Shilmaria was doing exceedingly well. Two websites of two UPs of project areas and all of UPs' websites of control areas were fed with information very poorly with almost no updates. Conclusively, the UPs of Sharique areas were doing better in the world of internets in comparison to their counterparts of control areas.

### 7.3.3 Use of Information by People

It has been observed that people were using information to hold the officials accountable, and to be empowered to claim their rights and entitlements, and save the interest of the community.

#### **Box 7. 2: A Conscious School Teacher Caused Budget Rectification**

A schoolteacher (Code: C36), was invited in the OBM of Shilmaria UP. During the meeting, he was provided with draft copy of the budget. In his words, "I have gone through the whole budget; suddenly I stuck up in a point, which read 'Excursion of UP officials - BDT 25,000.' In a moment, I took decision that I would raise question on the issue. With the presence of Upazila chair, UNO and other dignitaries, I grabbed the very first opportunity, and formulated, 'For an UP BDT 25,000 is good enough amount, particularly from the own fund; I think such an amount should not be allocated for the excursion of the officials, as almost all of them are capable of bearing their expense, and UP should use the same for the betterment of the destitute.' I was appreciated with claps. Having realized the fact, the UP chair proposed that he would reduce the budget for excursion to only BDT 5,000 and the rest would be used for income generating project for the marginalised. Everyone present in the meeting welcome the outcome."

This case of a conscious citizen of Shilmaria UP denoted that with information disseminated at OBM, the participants made the UPs to answer reasonably and to rectify the inappropriate budget allocation. Information dissemination made the citizens empowered, and through this, the UPs became transparent and accountable. Their opportunities to misuse of the fund were decreased. It was claimed in FGD session in Shilmaria that 90% of the citizens became aware of UP and its services.<sup>64</sup> A respondent of citizens from Deopara UP revealed his realisation, *“I think, probably the best change that Sharique induced was the fact that now everyone knows everything about the UP. Thus, with the information to all, it has become difficult to escape the eyes of the citizens.”*<sup>65</sup>

### **7.3.4 Incidence of Corruption**

#### **7.3.4.1 Presence of Corruption**

The level of corruption as disclosed by the citizens has not been different in Sharique or control areas. When citizens were asked whether they bribed to get SSNP services, 30% of the respondents from citizens of both areas uncovered that they had to pay or were known that their neighbours had to pay to enlisted for services, and subsequently to be a beneficiary. On the other hand, when citizens were further asked whether they were supplied less in case of delivery of goods, 47.5% and 65% of the respondents from Sharique and non-Sharique areas mentioned that they received less, from the volume they were declared to be delivered. To curb the corruption in supplying food grains, the government began to supply food grains in sewed up jute bags. The bags full of food grains were collected directly from the silo and in the same day, the food grains were delivered to the beneficiaries instantly with the presence of selected NGO officials who collected a certain amount of money as deposit from the beneficiaries to return them to use in future as capitals. Still, some of the beneficiaries mentioned that they were supplied 2 to 3 kg less of food grains from the volume supposed to be found in the bags of 30 KG. In such case the UP officials were not found to be involved in the mechanism, other people committed it at other stages. However, in other cases, the researcher learnt that the beneficiaries were to share with the representatives, for getting the allocated benefits, a portion of the benefits s/he received from the UPs.

A naïve disclosure of a UP chair of control areas hinted the presence of corruption in project implementation. When he was asked to learn whether he received the amount from the UP's own fund he was entitled to accept; he stated that in some cases he and his colleagues did not receive the amount from the UP. However, he revealed his

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> C16, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 20, 2017.

elected colleagues implement various projects, and they offered him money, which he accepted.<sup>66</sup> Few of his colleagues mentioned that he (chair) offered that lucrative projects to those, who served the interest of the chair more.

While reviewing audit documents of LGSP, the researcher found that the UPs of both areas tended to be late in depositing the cash collection in Banks. Almost all the UPs had to deposit money during the audit procedures to avoid audit objections. Astoundingly, the authenticity of audit exploration was in question as the UP secretaries revealed that they had to pay the auditors; and the payment depended on the level of misappropriation. An NGO official, who worked in Sharique areas, being unnamed mentioned that the LGSP audit team was compromised through bribery of an amount of BDT 0.10 million to 0.50 million, and/or political pressure.<sup>67</sup> However, an NGO official, terming the condition as ‘a virus in the antidote,’ exposed that in the beginning the rate of audit compromise remained a bit low ranging from BDT 20 thousand to 70 thousand.<sup>68</sup> The NGO official further mentioned that the rate of corruption was high in the projects that were taken with the allocation of KABIKHA, KABITA, TR, and GR.

## 7.4 Efforts for Achieving Fiscal Autonomy

### 7.4.1 Mobilisation of Own Income

One NGO official commented that previously the officials were found not interested in imposing a tax and collecting the same, mainly for losing popularity. On the other hand, citizens were not accustomed to paying tax, particularly holding tax. Furthermore, the UPs were not aware of the sources of tax and non-tax. Moreover, citizens were found sceptical of the use of tax money. Few believed that the tax revenue has been used for the pocket money of the officials. Some raised questions, as they have not seen any perceivable and tangible change with increased tax revenue.<sup>69</sup> A schoolteacher was complaining, “*Why I should pay tax? We have not found any visible change in service delivery or development activities.*”<sup>70</sup> However, Sharique motivated both supply side and demand side to mobilise tax and non-tax revenue. One UP member claimed, “*Sharique has given us training on tax collection. Now we know the sources of taxes and become interested in taxation to increase local revenue.*”<sup>71</sup> Sharique helped to assess tax rate and sources, and develop a database of the taxpayers. To encourage the UP officials, the project offered and awarded foreign

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<sup>66</sup> O33, interview with researcher, Maria December 27, 2017.

<sup>67</sup> N4, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 10, 2018.

<sup>68</sup> N6, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 7, 2018.

<sup>69</sup> N5, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 12, 2018.

<sup>70</sup> C36, interview with researcher, Shilmaria, December 10, 2017.

<sup>71</sup> O28, interview with researcher, Maria, December 27, 2017.

trips for those UP chairs, who collected most revenue from their own sources. About 75% of the officials mentioned that Sharique helped them in increasing own income of their UPs through identifying new sources of tax (65.4%), and non-tax sources (53.8%), encouraging citizens (42.3%), as well inspiring them to increase tax rate (38.5%) (Appendix 7.3). Moreover, citizens were made aware that paying tax has been their duties, and through the process, the UP would be able to implement those projects, which were demanded by the community. A UP chair mentioned that

We are not interested to collect tax regularly, and not aware of the sources of tax and non-tax income as own revenue. Sharique has made us realised that increased own income build the capacity of the UP to expend more for development with our discretion. With the assistance of the project, the UP has conducted resource mapping, which has given us a clear indication of sources from which we can earn, and we have been trying to expand the sources of own income and have increased the same.<sup>72</sup>

It has been observed during field study that all the UPs of both Sharique and control areas strengthened their efforts to raise more taxes as own income through expansion of sources and increase the tax rate. In some UPs, the respective authority hired a third party, mostly NGO to raise taxes. Through, these exertions inhabitants became noticeably aware of paying taxes and started to pay tax.

#### ***7.4.1.1 Diversification of Sources of Income from Tax***

Sharique project worked for the generation of income from various local sources. They mobilized both citizens and the officials for paying taxes and enlarging the base of the taxes to increase reliability on own income. The UPs have been seeking new bases for tax collection. Table 7.5 has illustrated whether there has been an enhancement of the base of tax sources. The data represented in the table has shown a tax map of the Sharique and non-Sharique areas. On an average, the UPs of Sharique areas collected tax from four different sources, whereas it was only one and a half in control areas. Among, the Sharique areas the efforts of Deopara are worthy of mention. It has been trying to expand the base of taxes in its area. In this respect, though the positional advantage plays an important role, yet other UPs have their own positional advantage, but they have not been found as enthusiast enough or showing great interest in exploiting the same. For example, in Shahbajpur, the area was renowned for mango orchard and related business, land port-related activities warehouse, non-motored vehicle, etc., however, when analysed, it was found the UP did not take initiatives to include these sources as their base of taxes. Another, example, all UPs have been allowed to impose a tax on construction and reconstruction of brick made house, but close look discovered that except Deopara no other UPs had endeavoured to include this as their base of tax.

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<sup>72</sup> O17, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

**Table 7. 5: Sources of Tax and Rate**

Sources of Tax		Areas (UPs)						
		Sharique Areas				Control Areas		
		Deopara	Shahbajpu	Jhilim	Shilmaria	Alatuli	Marria	
Holding Tax		√	√	√	√	√	√	
Non-holding Tax	Tax on Construction and Reconstruction	√	×	×	×	×	×	
	Tax on Business, Profession and Industry	Rice Mill	×	×	√	×	×	×
		Brick Field	√	√	√	×	×	×
		Saw Mill	√	×	×	×	×	×
		Cell Phone Tower	√	×	×	√	×	×
		Others	√	√	√	√	×	√
	Land Tax	×	×	×	×	×	×	
	Tax on entertainment	×	×	×	×	×	×	
	Rate for electric light, theme park, water supply, sewerage, slaughtering	×	×	×	×	×	×	
	Firm and Other organisation	√	×	×	×	×	×	
	Tax for honourium of village police	×	×	×	×	×	×	
Tax on price of Ijara (one percent)	×	×	×	×	×	×		
Total	6	3	4	3	1	2		

Source: UP budget and Financial Statement

Overall, the UPs of Sharique areas showed more promises for the expansion and diversification of the tax base in the respective areas. In these areas, Sharique's tax mapping, motivation and encouragement, as well as competition to be best UP in the District or even in the country exhorted them to the enhancement of tax base. The secretary of Deopara revealed, "*We constantly tried to be the best UP of the District, we have already done it once, but our chair wants more. You know, though in that endeavour when have not been the best, yet we have fought strongly as we have placed at top five each time.*"<sup>73</sup>

#### **7.4.1.2 Diversification of Sources of Income from Non-tax**

UPs have other sources of won income other than taxes, these include various fees, *Ijara*, assets, capital goods, etc. The table (Table: 7.5) has depicted the comparative scenario regarding the sources of non-tax income. The table included the data of five fiscal years from 2012-2013 to 2016-2017 in this regard. The presented data have shown that the UPs of Sharique areas diversified their sources of non-tax income, as on an average each UP of Sharique areas collected non-tax revenue from eight sources while the UPs of control areas identified five sources of non-tax income. Among the UPs of Sharique areas, Shilmaria has expanded its sources more with nine particular areas of revenue, while Jhilim remained in the 2nd place with little margin.

<sup>73</sup> O16, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 18, 2017.

**Table 7. 6: Sources of Non-Tax Income**

Sources of Non-tax Revenue	Areas (UPs)					
	Sharique Areas				Control Areas	
	Deopara	Shahbajpur	Jhilim	Shilmaria	Alatuli	Maria
Licence for Business, Professions and Permit fee	√	√	√	√	√	√
<i>Ijara</i>	Ferry ghat	×	√	×	×	×
	<i>Khowar</i>	√	√	√	√	√
	Hat/Bazar	√	√	√	×	×
Registration fee on Non-motored Vehicle	√	×	√	√	×	×
Property Rent and Profit	×	×	√	√	×	×
Village Court Fee	√	√	√	√	×	√
Transfer fee of Livestock	×	√	×	×	×	×
Birth, Date, Succession Certificate fee	√	√	√	√	√	√
Private clinic, paramedical institute registration fee	×	×	×	×	×	×
Tutorial school, coaching centre registration fee	×	×	×	×	×	×
Fee for approval of construction of bricks made building (BDT 1/sft)	×	×	×	×	×	×
Sale of Tree	√	√	×	×	√	×
Fare of Ambulance	×	×	×	√	×	×
Marriage Registration Fee	√	×	×	×	×	×
Training Institute	×	×	×	√	×	×
Personal Donation	×	×	×	√	×	×
Total	8	8	7	9	6	4

Source: UP budget and Financial Statement

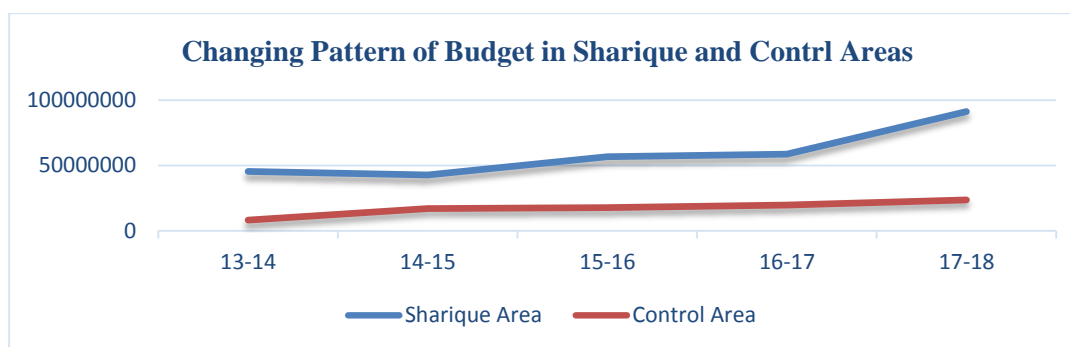
#### 7.4.2 Shifting Patterns of Budget

The budget documents of all the six UPs of the study area were examined thoroughly to understand the changing patterns of their budgets (Appendix 7.4). The budget analysis of both areas illustrated that the progress rate of the UPs of Sharique areas was more prominent than that was for the UPs of control areas (Figure 7.5). UPs, in accordance with the UP Operational Manual, have been prescribed to formulate budget based on the received funds and the expenditure incurred in immediate previous financial year.<sup>74</sup> The UPs in every new fiscal year brought changes in the budgets. In some cases, the changes in the budget were just made arbitrarily without any logical base. For example, Maria and Alatuli UP of control areas changed their budgets without any preparatory work; the UPs just altered the figures of the previous year whimsically to set a new target in budget for new fiscal year. Budget preparations were also found little bit jagged in two UPs of Sharique areas Shilmaria and Deopara with sharp ups and downs (Appendix 7.5). However, Jhilim and Shahbajpur UPs of

<sup>74</sup> LGD, *Union Parishad Operational Manual* (Dhaka: LGD, 2012), sec. 3.2.2.



Sharique areas exhibited a continuous smooth growth in their budget formulations. Another finding of the study of the budget was that all the UPs displayed their lack of skill in proper accounting and documentation in yearly financial documents. Moreover, the documents showed some sorts of anomalies, which were found non-conforming to the audit documents of LGSP. The UPs showed tendencies to incorporate the cost of establishments other than salaries in the head of development expenditures.



**Figure 7. 5: Changing Pattern of Budget in Sharique and Control Areas.**

The other important issues included in the section 3.2.2 of UP operational manual maintained regarding budget allocation that the budget allocation should be made available for women empowerment, benevolence of children, the young, physically challenged, and the old. Furthermore, it has been guided that the budget should be formulated dividing the budget amount for sector-based schemes; and the sectors are - general establishments, development, and miscellaneous. In development, the sub-sectors include communication, health, water supply, education, management of natural resources, agriculture and markets, sewerage and waste management, human resource development and sundry. Budget document scrutiny disclosed that almost all the UPs divided their budget allocation into sector-based schemes, though they did not cover all the sectors in the same budget. The UPs under Sharique areas displayed more concerns on human resource development compare to the UPs of control areas. Overall, the budgetary skill of the UPs of both areas required further development for proper mapping of change and development.

### 7.4.3 Cost of Governance

The cost of UPs can be divided into two sets. One for running the administration and maintaining day-to-day tasks, and the other for the development activities. Calculated figures (Table: 7.6) revealed that the per capita expense for running the government of UPs were much less in Sharique areas than that of control areas, to be exact the figure was BDT 28.10 for the former and BDT 41.30 for the latter. Likewise, average cost for governance in Sharique areas was BDT 1,098,261 and it was BDT 685,841 in control areas, and it is obvious that the cost is much higher in Sharique areas.

**Table 7. 7: Use of Funds for Governance**

Fiscal Year		2014-2015			2015-2016			Aggregate P/C Exp.*
Areas	UP	Govern. Expense*	Total Population	P/C Exp.*	Govern. Expense*	Total Population	P/C Exp.*	
Sharique Areas	Jhilim	1.256	26194	48.00	1.668	26194	63.70	<b>28.10</b>
	Deopara	1.267	39249	32.30	0.881	39249	22.50	
	Shilmaria	0.960	37010	26.00	0.871	37010	23.50	
	Shahbajpur	0.994	53901	18.40	0.887	53901	16.50	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4.478</b>	<b>156,354</b>	<b>28.70</b>	<b>4.308</b>	<b>156,354</b>	<b>27.60</b>	
Control Areas	Alatuli	0.576	16620	34.70	0.784	16620	47.20	<b>41.30</b>
	Maria	0.750	16554	45.30	0.634	16554	38.30	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1.325</b>	<b>33,174</b>	<b>40.00</b>	<b>1.418</b>	<b>33,174</b>	<b>42.70</b>	

Source: Calculated by the researcher. \* Expense shown in million BDT. (P/C= per capita)

If all the UPs are taken together, the average cost of governance (BDT 30.41) remains very close to the average of Sharique areas. However, the result cannot be taken as conclusive, as there is some fixed establishment cost irrespective of population of the areas. The population pattern disclosed that averagely around 39,089 and 16,587 people lived in Sharique and control areas respectively. As a result, the lesser amount of population could be found responsible for higher-level of cost for governance in control areas.

## 7.5 State of Fiscal Autonomy

LGIs could make a very little effort to carry out development activities from their own revenue, and thus, depend heavily on the central government as national government bears 85 percent of local government development expenditure.<sup>75</sup> Sharique has efforts in this connection to lessen the dependency of UPs for fund supply to the central government. The results below revealed what was achieved in the way to instituting fiscally autonomous UPs.

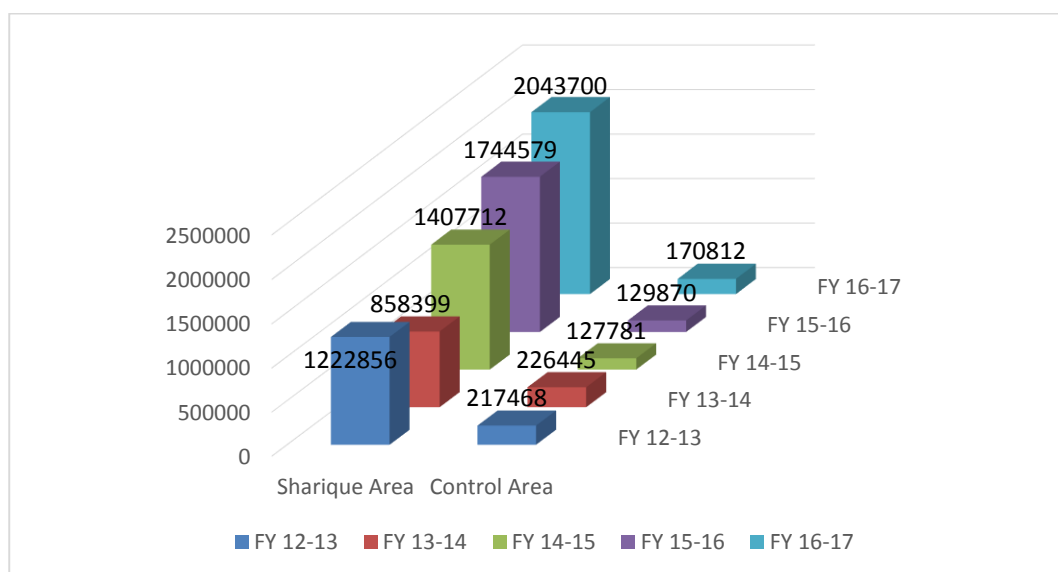
### 7.5.1 Tax Autonym

One of the essential traits of activities of UPs involves with mapping revenue sources and taxing them accordingly. To facilitate the efforts, the government promulgates conducive legal frame named ‘UP Model Tax Schedule of 2013.’ Through this model, the UPs have been given limited opportunity to expand the base of tax and non-tax revenue, and to eliminate taxation from weak areas. However, the LGIs enjoy autonomy within the limited space to increase revenues receipt locally. Evidence revealed that the UPs were not exploiting the prospects to the last. In that lacuna, Sharique took initiatives to expand the sources of revenue, and raised the number of revenue receipts. The following sections have included the analysis of revenue collections.

<sup>75</sup> World Bank, “Bangladesh Empowering Local Governments,” <http://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2016/10/07/bangladesh-empowering-local-governments> (accessed January 9, 2017).

### 7.5.1.1 Income from Taxes

One UP member revealed, “Through the efforts of Sharique there observed increased tax collection.”<sup>76</sup> Most of the citizens (80%) mentioned that they were encouraged to pay tax with the motivation (52.5%) of the Sharique project. Citizens were also made realised that paying tax would accelerate development;<sup>77</sup> here, the matter of argument remains how far the UPs exploit the opportunity to raise tax-based revenues. Figure 7.6 depicts the tax map of the UPs of Sharique and non-Sharique areas. The average income of five years from tax was BDT 363862 and BDT 87238 in Sharique and control areas respectively, and the figures denoted strong footing of UPs of Sharique areas (Appendix 7.6). Moreover, the UPs of Sharique areas outperformed the UPs of control areas with a high average growth rate of 15.1% for the former and -1.3% for the latter. Moreover, the UPs of Sharique areas have exhibited their continuous mushrooming in the areas of tax collection, except a hiccup in the fiscal year of 2013-14, because of political unrest that stems from the national election. Separately, on an average, Deopara has been the best performer, which was followed by Jhilim, Shilmaria, and Shahbajpur UP. Before 2016-17 Shahbajpur collected tax poorly, but in the FY 2016-17 it hopped a great leap through increasing their income almost three-fold from just BDT 106923 as the average income from tax for last four year, to BDT 458109.



**Figure 7. 6: Income from Taxes**

The achievement marked by the assessment of the tax collection and tax mapping in Strategic Five-Year Plan accomplished with the technical help of Sharique project. The mapping exposed the weakness of the UP, as well as the opportunity to collect more tax from a huge number of 10850 households. The UP secretary of Shahbajpur

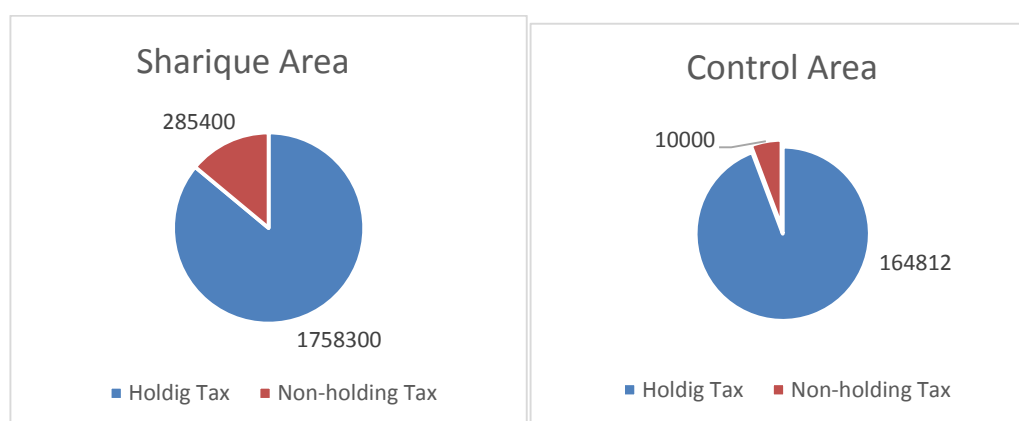
<sup>76</sup> O22, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>77</sup> C38, interview with researcher, Shilmaria, December 13, 2017.

clarified that the UP was not aware of tax collection. Thus, it did not try to detect potential sources of tax collection, and thus, the process of tax collection remained less intensified. Sharique project through resource mapping made them conscious regarding tax rate fixation and tax collection. These helped them to be dedicated in tax collection and they appointed an NGO to collect tax.<sup>78</sup> On the other hand, Jhilim was the most consistent performer crowded with small-scale industries, as the income from tax of the UP gradually increased to double in every five year. The growth of tax-induced income in Deopara was inconsistent. The scenario was reversed in the UPs of control areas as they collected tax poorly, particularly Alatuli. The other UP of that area, Maria, though the amount is poor, yet it was moving forward with slow steps. Thus, the debate can be concluded that the UPs of Sharique areas displaying a sign of improvement in tax collection.

#### 7.5.1.2 Holding and Non-holding Tax: An Analysis

It has been found that the UPs of both areas heavily depended on holding tax (Appendix: 7.15). In Sharique areas, Shilmaria earned 26.6% of its tax-based income from non-holding tax, and that is the best ratio of holding and non-holding tax in the study UPs, and Shahbajpur and Deopara followed that UP.



**Figure 7. 7: Income from Holding and Non-holding Taxes of FY 2016-2017**

In this regard, Jhilim UP did not separate the tax revenue from other sources. The UPs of control areas could not earn much from non-holding tax. Overall, the UPs of Sharique areas diversified their base of income from taxes and evidently, the amount of revenue from non-holding tax was better, in comparison to their counterparts of control areas, as the UPs of control areas not doing much to increase their tax collection. The table of tax collection showed that the UPs were not using their potentials up to the mark, as they were not collecting tax from all the households of the UPs, as the Strategic Five-Year Plan identified that the rate of tax collection was 42% for both Deopara and Shahbajpur, and 92% for Shilmaria. The mapping of tax

<sup>78</sup> O8, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 20, 2017.

collection indicated that the UPs became aware of their potentials of collecting more tax. However, the fear of officials of losing popularity and reluctance of the citizens to pay increased tax posed threat to exploit the potentials in full. In this regard, Sharique has motivated citizens and officials to increase tax collection for the betterment of the UP. Recently, UPs have appointed professional tax collectors for accumulating revenues, and the process created an exit opportunity for the officials to be free of fear of decreasing popularity and to overcome the confrontation of citizens. The scenario was rather gloomy for the UPs of control areas; as holding tax of per household in Sharique and control areas were BDT 49.70 and BDT 23.23 respectively. It is evident from the data that the UPs are still to collect more household tax both in Sharique and control areas, particularly the UPs of control areas lagged far behind in this regard.

On the other hand, the collection of non-holding tax was not at its best. The UPs have opportunities and potentials to accumulate more tax from non-holding tax, and Sharique has persuaded UPs to identify more bases of non-holding tax. The UPs of Sharique areas on an average collect 14% of its tax revenue from non-holding tax, while it was 6% for the UPs of control areas. Thus, it can be argued that opportunities are there, and the UPs are to materialise the opportunities.

## 7.5.2 Other Sources of Income

### 7.5.2.1 Income from Other Sources (Except Tax)

The mapping of income of UPs from non-tax sources has been presented in table 7.8, which depicted that the UPs of Sharique areas were, on an average, earning near about five times higher amount of money than that of their counterparts in control areas.

**Table 7. 8: Income from Non-tax Sources**

Areas	UP	Fiscal Year Wise Non-tax Income in BDT (in thousand)						
		12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	Ave. Growth	Average
Sharique Areas	Deopara	169.95	246.51	99.20	153.66	105.04	1.7%	154.87
	Shahbajpur	247.11	100.72	510.16	409.10	331.43	61.7%	319.70
	Jhilim	143.28	196.31	266.75	312.41	466.17	27.8%	276.98
	Shilmaria	145.40	137.99	141.63	97.77	131.98	0.03%	130.95
	<b>Total</b>	<b>705.74</b>	<b>681.53</b>	<b>1017.73</b>	<b>972.94</b>	<b>1034.62</b>	<b>9.6%</b>	<b>220.63</b>
Control Areas	Alatuli	4.99	119.52	27.40	12.27	60.11	510.4%	44.86
	Maria	195.00	13.60	11.63	9.50	19.58	-3.9%	49.86
	<b>Total</b>	<b>199.99</b>	<b>133.12</b>	<b>39.03</b>	<b>21.77</b>	<b>79.69</b>	<b>23.6%</b>	<b>47.36</b>

Source: Financial Reports of UPs.

In Sharique areas, Shahbajpur UP outclassed other UPs with high average growth rate (61.7%) and high average income from non-tax sectors with BDT 319703. The principal sources of non-tax income of Shahbajpur were license, permit fee and *ijara*. Moreover, conducive components like larger areas with larger population helped the cause of that UP (Appendix 6.14). Regarding the income from non-tax sources,

Deopara and Shilmaria lagged behind with slow growth rate of only 1.7% for the former and 0.03% for the latter. The principal cause of this phenomenon in Deopara and Shilmaria was their geophysical location in purely agro-based areas, where they lacked opportunity to push further to increase the growth rate of income from non-tax sectors. However, when the average growth rate has been considered between two areas the rate was high in control areas in contrast to Sharique areas, which happened due to outlier figure in income and erratic pattern of non-tax income in Alatuli. The growth of income from non-tax sources was negative in the Maria UP of control areas. Overall, the UPs of both areas required more conscious efforts to drive the growth rate upwards consistently.

### 7.5.3 Financial Condition and Expenditure Autonomy

#### 7.5.3.1 Reliance on Own Income (Ratio of Total Own Income/ Expenditure)

The table (7.7) presented below depicted that all the UPs of both Sharique and non-Sharique areas were heavily depended on the government grants to run the UPs and accomplish the development expenditures. Nevertheless, Sharique initiated to reduce the dependency of UPs on government for funds with a slow pace.

**Table 7. 9: Ratio of Total Own Income and the Total Expenditures**

Areas	UP	Fiscal Years					Ave. Ratio
		12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	
Sharique Areas	Deopara	4.3%	4.1%	3.8%	4.4%	2.4%	3.8%
	Shahbajpur	7.4%	5.5%	9.6%	7.6%	10.0%	8.0%
	Jhilim	16.5%	13.8%	5.6%	11.9%	9.1%	11.4%
	Shilmaria	2.2%	2.3%	2.2%	2.9%	3.5%	2.6%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>
Control Areas	Alatuli	0.1%	0.7%	1.1%	0.3%	0.9%	0.6%
	Maria	8.4%	2.2%	1.3%	1.5%	2.1%	3.1%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>

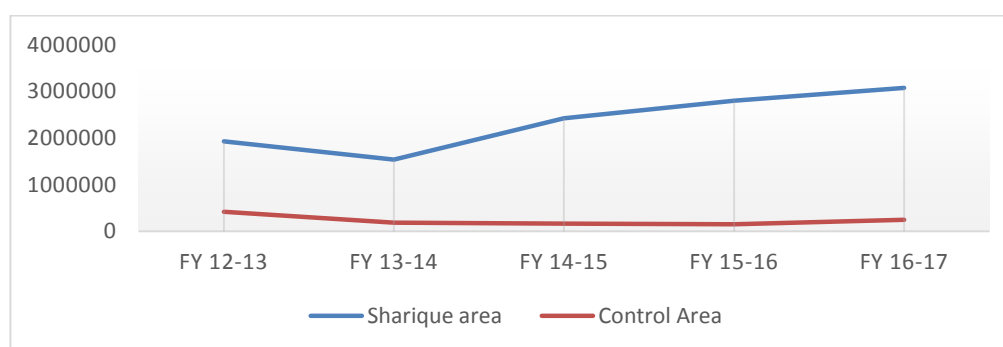
Source: Financial Reports of UPs.

Resources and potential sources of income mapping with the help of Sharique project made the UPs aware of increasing self-income of the UPs. The results in the table showed that the UPs of Sharique areas (4.7%), on an average, contributed more than nearly three times to the total expenditures of the UPs than that of the UPs of control areas (1.8%). Among the UPs of Sharique areas, Jhilim raised the average contribution of own income to the total expenditures to double digits. Shahbajpur closely followed Jhilim, as its average contribution was 8%. On the other hand, Shilmaria and Deopara depended more on the government money, one of the causes of the phenomenon was that these two UPs were getting more fund from LGSP as PBG, and for the social safety nets, as well as employment generation programmes for their lobby with local MPs. In control areas, Maria was not far behind from Deopara and Shilmaria, but after the FY 2012-13, the ratio showed a steep downward trend. However, Alatuli

lagged behind in the race with the average ratio of only 1.1%. Thus, the argument could be drawn that the UPs of Sharique areas were promisingly showing a trend to enhance the role of their own money in the expenditures of the UPs. Moreover, data revealed that per-capita own income for the FY 2016-2017 was BDT 19.69 and 7.55 in Sharique and control area respectively. Overall, these results clearly indicated that the UPs remained dependent on the government fund supply.

### 7.5.3.2 Changes in Own Income

The average own income of the UPs in Sharique areas was BDT 588747, while it was BDT 134597 for the UPs in control areas (Appendix 7.7), almost four times greater than that of control areas. When the growth rate has been considered it has been shown that the UPs of Sharique areas gained more momentum in this respect and the rate was 12.5% in Sharique areas and -2.3% in control areas. The reason was that the UPs of Sharique areas has exploited the opportunity to raise the amount of own income, while the UPs of control areas yet to surge high to expand their base to push forward the income from own sources. Deopara UP of Sharique areas seemed struggling to maintain a high growth rate among the UPs of Sharique areas.



**Figure 7. 8: Shift in Own Income**

The inquiry revealed that late surge in Shahbajpur gradually expanded the base of sources to earn more as own income in comparison to its neighbours and pushed the growth rate to as high as 48.4%. Alatuli, the UP in control areas also maintaining a high growth rate erratically. These two UPs possessed unused sources to enhance own income and now these UPs strident fast to accumulate more from the unused sources. Thus, it can be concluded that the UPs of Sharique areas evidently push their efforts to increase their income from own sources.

### 7.5.3.3 Amount Received as Own Income against the Amount Assessed in Budget

The UPs of both areas fixed their targets to achieve an ambitious amount of money as their own income. The results in the table 7.10 disclosed the fact that all the UPs failed to accumulate the amount of money they fixed in budgets. However, the UPs in Sharique areas on an average earned 56% of its targeted amount, while the UPs of control areas amassed 37.2% of their targets. Among all the UPs of this study Jhilim

UP of Sharique areas was the leader in this respect with fulfilling 78.6% of its target fixed in the budget. The figure in the table forwarded the argument that the UPs of Sharique areas were better performer with nearing close to their targets.

**Table 7. 10: Ratio of Own Income and the Expected Own Income in Budget**

Areas	UP	Fiscal Years					
		12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	Ave. Ratio
Sharique Areas	Deopara	76.6%	35.1%	47.2%	42.7%	40.8%	48.5%
	Shahbajpur	30.8%	24.1%	74.1%	54.2%	65.8%	49.8%
	Jhilim	67.0%	71.4%	80.7%	96.9%	76.8%	78.6%
	Shilmaria	43.7%	54.6%	62.8%	56.2%	60.8%	55.6%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>55.1%</b>	<b>44.2%</b>	<b>62.7%</b>	<b>58.0%</b>	<b>60.1%</b>	<b>56.0%</b>
Control Areas	Alatuli	3.9%	19.2%	12.3%	3.8%	12.5%	10.4%
	Maria	101.2%	41.4%	46.8%	47.2%	64.1%	60.1%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>75.7%</b>	<b>32.5%</b>	<b>25.2%</b>	<b>21.7%</b>	<b>30.7%</b>	<b>37.2%</b>

Source: Financial Reports of UPs.

#### 7.5.3.4 Pattern of Total Fund Received by the UPs

Table 7.11 illustrated the maps of total fund received i.e. government, non-government, own income by the UPs of both areas.

**Table 7. 21: The Pattern of Total Funds Received by the UPs**

Areas	UP	Fiscal Years wise total income in BDT (in million)						
		12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	Average	Ave. Growth
Sharique Areas	Deopara	19.037	10.814	19.833	21.141	27.382	19.641	15.3%
	Shahbajpur	3.252	5.559	8.941	7.710	8.012	6.695	24.4%
	Jhilim	2.958	3.762	12.531	7.528	11.873	7.731	55.6%
	Shilmaria	17.000	17.527	20.818	18.415	16.100	17.972	-0.4%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42.247</b>	<b>37.663</b>	<b>62.123</b>	<b>54.794</b>	<b>63.367</b>	<b>13.010</b>	<b>11.6%</b>
Control Areas	Alatuli	6.417	6.479	4.938	5.261	7.316	6.082	4.6%
	Maria	4.927	8.798	9.459	9.908	5.852	7.789	49.9%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11.344</b>	<b>15.278</b>	<b>14.397</b>	<b>15.169</b>	<b>13.168</b>	<b>6.935</b>	<b>4.2%</b>

Source: Calculated by the Researcher from Financial Reports of UPs.

The average amount of fund received by the UPs of Sharique areas was BDT 13,009,700 while it was BDT 6,935,478 for the UPs of control areas. The growth rate (11.6% and 4.2% for Sharique and control areas respectively) showed the promise for the UPs of Sharique areas as the rate was almost three times higher than that of control areas. Thus, it can be argued that the UPs of Sharique areas were accumulating more funds from various sources. These figures in Sharique areas also unveil the capacity of the UPs of Sharique areas to lobby for increased supply of grant to the higher authorities. Moreover, these UPs were also getting recognition for their better performance with an increased supply of BBG and PBG from LGSP.

#### 7.5.3.5 Use of Funds for Development

The annual financial reports and LGSP audit documents were analysed to observe the patterns of the fund usages, particularly for development purpose. It showed that the UPs of Sharique areas earn more from the UPs of control areas from own sources to



expend for development activities after managing the establishment cost (Appendix 7.8). However, the development cost from own fund was very little as it was just 2.1% and 0.14% of aggregate development expenditure in Sharique and control areas respectively. Moreover, when per capita development expenditure from own fund was taken into account, the result showed the UPs of Sharique areas were expending more from own source, though it was very poor, BDT 1.21 and BDT 0.19 for Sharique and control areas respectively (Appendix 7.8). Overall, the UPs of Sharique areas contributed more to expend for development from their own source, though with some inconsistencies, than the UPs of control areas.

The calculated table showed that the UPs of control areas outperformed the UPs of Sharique areas regarding expending for development in ratio of total receive as it was 55.4% and 58.1% in Sharique and control areas (Appendix 7.9), however the difference between the two groups was not remarkable as it was only 2.7%. It was also discovered that the UPs in Sharique and control areas expend BDT 58.43 and BDT 129.42 respectively per person annually for the development that means that the UPs of control areas were expending more per person than that of the UPs of Sharique areas. The reason behind this picture was that in Sharique areas population was much higher than that of control areas (Table: 7.6). This large size of population lessened the per capita expenditure for development in Sharique areas. When the average development cost was calculated for each UP of both Sharique and control areas per year, it was found that the figures were BDT 9,135,203 and BDT 4,293,311 respectively. The results clarified that the UPs of Sharique areas were expending more than double the amount of control areas for development. Evidence revealed that against development expenditures the amount of own revenue remained poor in both cases. The poor amount made them less autonomous regarding expenditures. On the other hand, the high dependency of the UPs on government fund for development, and the earmarked status of the most of the funds supplied to the LGIs for development hurt the expenditure autonomy of the UPs.

#### ***7.5.3.6 Granting Allowances, or Reliefs to Individuals***

In both Sharique and non-Sharique areas, the UPs were limited by central control and lack of ability to grant allowance and reliefs independently. UPs though have roles in beneficiary selection of government services, yet the processes remain under the jurisdiction of varied other line agencies of the government, particularly of Ministry of Social Affairs. One of the UP chairs unveiled,

We with the presence of UP level social worker of Social Welfare division select probable beneficiaries against allocated number of benefits and send it to Upazila. The lists are finalised through a meeting organised by Social Welfare officer at Upazila level and our role is limited here, however, people approach us for being

benefitted. Likewise, though demands for allowances and reliefs are high, the UPs have no other funds to initiate granting allowances and benefits from the UP.<sup>79</sup>

On the other hand, one social welfare officer pointed out that the UP chairs, particularly those who are powerful with ruling party linkages play influential roles in selection of beneficiaries within allocated opportunities. However, the amount of money and reliefs, the number of beneficiaries, and frequencies of getting benefits have been predetermined.<sup>80</sup> Thus, granting allowances, and reliefs to individuals according to the needs to stay outside the control of the UPs with ominous presence of central mechanism and lack of financial capacity of the UPs with own income.

## 7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has covered three important components of SLG including accountability and transparency, and fiscal autonomy. The officials display their responsiveness towards people's voice, as demands placed in WSSs are documented and enlisted in resolutions and some of them are implemented later. However, officials and party-men at local level influence selection and implementation of projects. In most cases, the participants can pitch their voice freely and are replied with explanations. The UP office-bearers seem becoming agreeable to the acceptance of liabilities for their deeds, and explain the causes behind their deeds to justify their actions. However, critics, marginalised groups and opposition party men with voice have not been treated well. In UPs of Sharique areas, standing committees are formed but the activation of these committees remains far distance. In case of transparency, the UPs in Sharique areas display CC, regularly update the information boards, particularly the budget boards are found quite up-to-date. Moreover, the UPs of Sharique regions are thriving further to collect increased amount of revenue from taxes and they lessen dependency on holding tax, increase non-holding tax for revenue generations. The UPs in Sharique zones also exhibit diversification of earnings from non-tax sources. However, one question remains relevant here, in all mechanisms what women are actually doing, and how they are placed in the governing process. The project has employed special measures and cares for making equal and equitable opportunity for women in the UPs. In this background, the next chapter plans to see through the process to identify where women actually are placed in the mainstream of administration of the UP.

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<sup>79</sup> O25, interview with researcher, Shilmaria, December 14, 2017.

<sup>80</sup> G10, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, March 15, 2018.

## Chapter 8

# Mainstreaming Gender in the UPs: The Outcomes of Collaboration of UPs and Sharique

### 8.1 Introduction

Gender Mainstreaming (GM) involves with the removal of imbalances between the men and women in society and institution. Thus, both men and women and their roles become important for gender mainstreaming. It requires a social change, a change that shifts the relationship nature between male and female. Furthermore, an intended and deliberate effort remains the principal strategy of GM. The collaborative endeavour has given such attention to mainstreaming gender in the UPs, and empowering women both as officials and as service recipients. Consequently, an attempt is made in this chapter to discuss the fallouts of the efforts of Sharique project in collaboration with UPs to mainstreaming gender in the governing process of the UP.

### 8.2 Awareness on Gender Issues

#### 8.2.1 Cognitive Change towards Gender

One of the key issues, covered by the Sharique project, was to enhance reasoning of the actors from both sides regarding gender. How far the actors under the project areas were sensitised on gender has been inquired in this section. When asked 95% and 90% of the male officials from Sharique and control areas respectively supported the quota system for women. The UP chair of Shilmaria mentioned that until and unless the full potentials of the women would not be used, the development of the UP would not be sustainable.<sup>1</sup> He further argued that women should be mainstreamed; however, the proposed reforms in the present quota system for the UP. He proposed,

I do not like the present quota system for women; though created opportunity for women to participate in politics, yet it is deteriorative. The existing system made women members suffered from inferiority complex due to first, they represent three times larger area and citizens than their male colleagues, second, they, though were elected directly, yet their seats are reserved, and third, their constituencies are solely not their own as three male colleagues of them, in parallel, covering the same area, which has been designed to cover by each woman member. To overcome the present complexities, I propose a system, which will allow fixation of constituencies of Ward numbers in a UP according to population and the number of Wards can vary from one UP to another UP with the variation in a population. After getting the number of Wards, a certain number of Wards, ideally 50%, will be fixed for women. These seats of women will rotate in cyclic order in every new election, which means that the constituencies for women will be changed in every new election and to cover the whole area of the UP by women it requires two five-year terms of office.<sup>2</sup>

However, the chair of Jhilim though, of the same opinions of his counterpart in the UP of Shilmaria, yet his way of quota reformation was different. He proposed that

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<sup>1</sup> O25, interview with researcher, Shilmaria, December 14, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

there would be one general member and one WM from each Ward of a UP that meant a total of 18 members from each UP aggregately. He advanced his idea that the jurisdiction of the men and women members would be separated.<sup>3</sup>

Now, the key question is how the males from both sides perceived the skills and potentialities of women. It was found that in Sharique areas, male from both groups of officials and citizens developed rational thinking about the women, than their counterparts of control areas (Table: 8.1). The male of Sharique areas identified that if women got the opportunities and environment they would respond in the same manner as men. Sensing the matters the chair of Jhilim considered, *“I think the projects for the empowerment of women should be given more space and budget, so that they can be included in the mainstream.”*<sup>4</sup>

**Table 8. 1: Carrying Same Skill/Potential by Women as Men.**

Male of →		Demand-side actors		Supply-side actors	
<b>Sharique areas</b>	Responses	f	%	f	%
	Yes	16	80	19	95
	No	2	10	1	5
	Not all times	2	10	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Control areas</b>	Yes	3	30	5	45.5
	No	5	50	4	36.4
	Not all times	2	20	2	18.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2017-18.

Sharique project instilled gender issues in the cognizance zone of the general people. People’s level of understanding and awareness increased to a new height. The FGD session in Jhilim revealed that the people of the area became aware of gender as they ascertained that women should participate in WS and OBM.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, FGD participants in Deopara claimed that men began to show respect to women and welcome their involvement in local level politics.<sup>6</sup> Officials were found lagged no far behind, as one UP member mentioned that he brought his sister to the UP, as he realised her participation in WS and OBM would encourage others to participate in the same.<sup>7</sup>

The officials also identified that focusing on only women would not be enough to ensure mainstreaming gender. It is also required to enhance the role of men as well. A UP secretary told, *“It is needed to include women as well as their men to increase*

<sup>3</sup> O17, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> FGD data, Jhilim UP, December 17, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> FGD data, Deopara UP, December 18, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> O37, interview with researcher, Maria, December 27, 2017.

*the participation of women.*”<sup>8</sup> It was also identified that the *purdah* system barred women’s participation in local politics.<sup>9</sup> UP secretary of Alatuli realised, “*To participate in the UP, in large numbers, women have to come out of the custom of purdah.*”<sup>10</sup> The cognisance of the people has been realised in the observation of the FGD participants, as they observed, “*People do not understand or trying to realise the necessity of women or WMs in the UP. Thus, the election of women members was not caught in heated competition as people do not show mentionable interests.*”<sup>11</sup> It was also learnt that people became also aware of ‘post participation complexities’ of women, as it was noted that those who got into politics faced unwelcomed situation.<sup>12</sup> They have to fight against patriarchy continuously to claim their space in the decision-making.

Based on the discussions above, it can be argued that both officials and citizens identified gender issues with cognisance. They became aware and developed insights on the issue. It was perceived that the people of Sharique areas were more versed in realising the importance of minimising gender gap to ensure sustainable development.

## **8.2.2 Awareness on Rights and Entitlements**

The women of Sharique areas were found more aware of their rights and entitlements than their counterparts in control areas. One WM disclosed,

Sharique has made us aware of our rights, entitlements and existing laws. The project empowered women through conscientising and improving financial status. It has also removed obstacles to women participation in politics.<sup>13</sup>

Data showed that 95% and 77.8% of the women who responded from Sharique and control areas respectively mentioned that they were aware of receiving information, goods and services from the UPs, as their rights. However, when the inquiry furthered to excavate their awareness on the different services and their timeframe, it was found that 50% of the respondents (women) from Sharique areas asserted that they were aware on these issues. However, none of the women from control areas was found to be aware. The participants of the FGD data also ensured that women have become aware of various issues.<sup>14</sup> A member of civil society in Deopara informed, “*Women have learnt about their rights through the intervention of Sharique project,*”<sup>15</sup> and

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<sup>8</sup> O16, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 18, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> *Purdah*, in Muslim society, is related with keeping women away from others male who are not related with them. It involves two forms: the first one is physical segregation of women through remaining behind the bar of curtain, etc., and the second one includes women’s restrictions to be engaged in outside activities.

<sup>10</sup> O48, interview with researcher, Alatuli, December 30, 2017.

<sup>11</sup> FGD data, Deopara UP, December 18, 2017.

<sup>12</sup> O13, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 18, 2017.

<sup>13</sup> O20, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>14</sup> FGD data, Shahbajpur UP, December 20, 2017.

<sup>15</sup> C16, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 20, 2017.

consequently, women had been voicing for their rights and entitlements in WS and OBM.<sup>16</sup>

### 8.3 Equality and Equity

#### 8.3.1 Participation and Voice Raising of Women

Officials agreed that Sharique project contributed in preparing women to participate in discussions with serious issues in the forums (Appendix 8.1). Data and direct observations of participatory process like WS and OBM revealed that female were participating in WS and OBM in numbers (Appendix P 8.1). Sharique's motivation and awareness building efforts made women understood the necessity of being linked with UPs. Officials mentioned that Sharique contributed to activating women to engage actively with UPs through providing training (73.3%), increasing confidence (3.3%), awareness building (53.3%), and developing skill (43.3%). Citizens (70%) also disclosed their agreement in favour of Sharique's role in encouraging women to participate. They found that Sharique contributed to women participation in decision-making process through mostly awareness building (20.7%), encouraging to voice raise (17.2%), motivation (13.8%), and persuading to participate in the meeting (13.8%) (Appendix 8.2). An NGO official described Sharique's initiatives as follow:

Women do not come to UP before. We have made them understood that the UPs are the hub of government services at local level, and if you become engaged with the UPs, you all will be benefitted. We take initiatives to bring the women to UP. For this, we instituted a body, named Ward Platform (WP) of local inhabitants of both gender. We include those who already have an attachment with other NGOs for microcredit or other income-generating activities. In WP, we include those women who are habituated in speaking out. Through WP, women have developed unity, which has been their strength. It has become easy for the UPs to organise WS with the presence of WP members. We get WP members realised that the UP will write letters to you to invite you and this is an honour for you. Later we influence the UP secretary to issue letters to the WP members. With the issuance of letters, the WP members come to WS in numbers.<sup>17</sup>

However, the beginning was not easy. The existing socio-cultural environment made it complex to bring the women in public. For example, in Shahbajpur, the bordering UP, society was found more conservative than the other UPs of the study area. Women showed reluctance and discomfort to speak before the male. At that time, facilitators of Sharique encouraged UP officials to organise separate sessions of the meetings or parting the gathering into two parts for male and female with dividers or curtains. An NGO official gave his account,

In Shahbajpur, the religious obstruction for participation was higher in comparison to present time situation. Men and women could not sit together in the WS meeting. Therefore, in the beginning, we have to organise WS by dividing the people who were present in WS with drapes, in line with their identity as male or female.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> C27, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>17</sup> N5, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 12, 2018.

<sup>18</sup> N4, interview with researcher, January 10, 2018.

Now the question is how Sharique's efforts have worked. Data revealed that 90% of the women from demand-side observed that women became aware to participate in WS and OBM (Table: 8.2). However, in control areas, the women were found

**Table 8. 2: Are Women More Aware than Before to Participate in WS/OBM?**

Area	Sharique		Control	
	f	%	f	%
Strongly agree	15	75.0	-	-
Agree	3	15.0	-	-
Neutral	2	10.0	7	77.8
Disagree	-	-	2	22.2
Strongly Disagree	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Data, 2017-18.

suffering from indecision, as the lion share (77.8%) of them revealed neither agreement nor disagreement on the issue of women being aware to participate in WS and OBM. When inquired to female respondents whether they took part in the WS and OBM, 85% female respondents from demand side in Sharique areas

claimed that they participated in the process. Conversely, none of the same group claimed such in control areas. A woman member (WM), Kiran Mala, from Deopara of Sharique areas pronounced,

Women are coming in WS or OBM with larger numbers; even in some cases, they surpassed the number of men particularly in WS. The reason is that they understand the problems deeply; they get more free time in comparison to their men; and most importantly, the demands are high in quantity and quality from women.<sup>19</sup>

The participants of FGD at Jhilim UP supported that the numbers of the women were higher than that of men. The session further agreed that the women of their areas became aware of their rights, which lead them to participate in WS and OBM to claim their rights and entitlements.<sup>20</sup> The researcher has furthered his inquiry to unearth the observation of the officials, particularly of WMs. Among the WMs, 91.7% and 33.3% from Sharique and control areas respectively mentioned that women had been participating in WS and OBM. A social worker went to express his experience as, "Almost 50% of the WS participants are women."<sup>21</sup> The direct observation of WS and OBM confirmed the claim of respondents, for example in the OBM of Deopara 60% of the participants were female.

One of the reasons was that the area is the abode of ethnic minority groups, who have been motivated easily and the impediments of these groups to participation were very low. The proximate observation of WS also revealed that among the women who participated, the rate of participation of women from aborigine groups was higher in comparison to mainstreamed Muslim. The reason behind the presence of increased number of aborigine women was their reduced (or no) impediments from family, society, religion and culture, and their easy accessibility to the goals of the project.

<sup>19</sup> O12, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 18, 2017.

<sup>20</sup> FGD data, Jhilim UP, December 17, 2017.

<sup>21</sup> C8, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 20, 2017.

The discussion here revealed that in Sharique areas women were having more opportunity to participate in WS than that of control areas. Now the question is what narrowed the opportunity of women to participate in the governing process of the UP, particularly in control areas. The two important causes, which revealed during the field visit and data collection period were first, in control areas, the UPs were not organising WS regularly, and secondly, if they organised WS or OBM the invitation to the assembly did not reach all. The women from demand side and supply side, as well as male officials were asked to identify what were the issues that hindered their participation as men. They mentioned lack of education, patriarchy, loss in familial activities, lack of awareness, lack of exposure, religious bar, poverty, lack of benefit, etc. as the causes of no participation of women. An NGO official realised, “*There are three set of areas, from which women’s participation has been impeded. These major three areas are: familial, social and religious impediments.*”<sup>22</sup>

**Table 8. 3: Impediments of Women to Participate in Politics.**

Areas	Sharique areas						Control areas					
	Male official		WM		Woman		Male official		WM		Woman	
Respondents	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Response*	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Lack of education	5	41.7	-	-	1	11.1	3	50.0	2	50	1	14.3
Poverty	3	25.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	25	-	-
Religious impediments	4	33.3	-	-	-	-	3	50.0	-	-	3	42.9
Existing cultures	2	16.7	-	-	-	-	1	16.7	-	-	-	-
Lack of power	2	16.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Patriarchy	7	58.3	2	100	5	55.6	2	33.3	-	-	-	-
Lack of awareness	4	33.3	1	50	-	-	1	16.7	1	25	1	14.3
Lack of opportunity	2	16.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lack of money	2	16.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
No impediments	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.7	-	-	-	-
Loss in family activities	-	-	-	-	3	33.3	-	-	-	-	6	85.7
No benefit	-	-	-	-	1	11.1	-	-	-	-	1	14.3
Shyness	-	-	-	-	1	11.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>258.3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>122.2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>183.3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>171</b>

Source: Field Data, 2017-18. \*Multiple responses taken into account.

Table 8.3 exposed that in Sharique areas, according to women from demand side and WMs, religion was no more a big threat to participation of women, which was pervasive in control areas. Nevertheless, it has not been removed yet, as a sexagenarian male participant of an FGD session said, “*I have heard about OBM through miking, however, I have not come because I felt discomfort for the presence of women there.*”<sup>23</sup> It was noticed that patriarchy remained as one of the heavy cogs, which impeded the participation of women in Sharique areas. A member of

<sup>22</sup> N6, interview with researcher, January 7, 2018.

<sup>23</sup> FGD data, Shilmaria, December 14, 2017.



Shahbajpur expressed the opinions of the patriarchal society, “*Women’s political participation is not welcomed by the society.*”<sup>24</sup> Supply-side actors from Alatulī supplemented the member,

We do not like women’s participation at WS and OBM. We men will move there. Our wives and other women need not go there. The women of the house will remain at the residents. Religion and the society here do not like these systems of participation.<sup>25</sup>

Another mentionable impediment to the participation of women is their loss in household activities. Women though were aware, yet they had to stay home to accomplish their daily activities. A woman from Deopara opined on the part of the aware women, “*I think, though women have opportunity to participate in WS and OBM, yet, they have not joined in the same due to a possible hamper of their homemaking activities.*”<sup>26</sup> An FGD session in Deopara revealed, “*There are impediments for women to participate in WS or OBM from the respective families and in this respect mother in laws, and husbands were the potential thwarter.*”<sup>27</sup>

Though women were motivated and capacitated, still they need continuous efforts to bring them to the UP and its activities. An FGD session, organised at Jhilim, uncovered that women were not spontaneous in participation in the participatory processes; and unless they were not guided or inspired unbreakably, their participation would drop, though they thought they should participate in the activities of UP.<sup>28</sup> In control areas, the scenario of women’s participation depicted in the following agreed assertion of the participants of FGD session,

Women do not go to WS and OBM, because usually, they do not get right kind of importance from officials. They think that there will be no benefit to be accrued through participation in the UPs activities. Many hide their views/demands within themselves and do not express the same in public. In this area, people, mostly farmers or agricultural workers by profession, and illiterate in nature, are conservative. This demographic phenomenon has made unfavourable environment here for women to participate in WS and OBM. Nevertheless, in face of sheer needs, they go to UPs’ participatory programmes.<sup>29</sup>

It has already been revealed that in Sharique areas women were participating in WS and OBM. Now it is opportunity to unearth to what extent they had been given opportunity to take part actively. Researcher’s direct observation of WS and OBM disclosed that the officials had been seen to encourage women to express their demands. FGD data also revealed that, at both WS and OBM, opportunities were provided to all, particularly women were repeatedly asked to raise their demands.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>24</sup> O7, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 19, 2017.

<sup>25</sup> C56, C58, C59, interviews with researcher, Alatulī, December 30, 2017.

<sup>26</sup> C11, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 20, 2017.

<sup>27</sup> FGD data, Deopara UP, December 18, 2017.

<sup>28</sup> FGD data, Jhilim UP, December 17, 2017.

<sup>29</sup> FGD data, Alatulī UP, December 26, 2017.

<sup>30</sup> FGD data, Jhilim UP, December 17, 2017.

An NGO official claimed, “Women have developed the ability to make demands. They, who have been motivated and trained by the Sharique project found comfortable in speaking up in social gathering and WS.”<sup>31</sup> The researcher testified the assessment through observation and other processes of data collection. For example, a woman from Shahbajpur asserted that Sharique taught us how to speak up in public.<sup>32</sup> However, it has been found that the numbers of speaking women were limited, and most of the women remained silent and continued their inactiveness as a reluctant participant in these participatory processes. The further disclosure was that those who could speak spoke a lot, and those who felt uneasy did not speak at all. Another NGO official observed,

Most of the women remain inactive. For example, usually we have 17 people in a WP, and among them, seven are women. Only three of them have found to be active through raising voice in different forms. The main reasons for their inactiveness are their lack of education and weak social stature. While I was working in Puthia, it was observed that the participation of women in WS was low. When they were paid incentive, then they came to the WS and OBM. It was also seen that the UP officials, to show the participation of women, brought those women who were beneficiaries of SSNPs, in the face of the threat of cancellation of the beneficial status of the women.<sup>33</sup>

Thus, the argument can be drawn here, is that the Sharique’s efforts changed the scenario of participation of women in the intervened areas. Women are coming at WS and OBM in numbers. Still women in Sharique areas facing the hurdle of patriarchy; however, the barrier of religion seemed reduced. It is further observed that at WS and OBM women are provided opportunities to speak up, but the numbers of voice raisers among women are limited.

### 8.3.2 Equal Rewards and Benefits

It was inquired how men from demand and supply side actors from both Sharique and control areas were thinking about women’s getting equal benefits and rights from the UPs. It was detected that (Table 8.4) male officials from both areas almost staying close in their discernment about women’s getting equal benefits. However, citizens from both areas staying apart as almost half of the male of control areas were not found it reasonable that women should receive equal benefits as men.

**Table 8. 4: Do Women Should Get Equal Benefit as Men?**

Male of →	Demand-side actors				Supply-side actors			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
Areas	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Sharique areas	19	95	1	5	18	90	2	10
Control areas	6	54.5	5	45.5	8	80	2	20

Source: Field Data, 2017-18.

<sup>31</sup> N6, interview with researcher, January 7, 2018.

<sup>32</sup> C4, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur UP, December 20, 2017.

<sup>33</sup> N5, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 12, 2018.

Those who did not support the equal benefits for all forwarded the logic of, firstly, women lack skills, secondly, they know and understand less, and thirdly, men usually work more in comparison to women.

The next search involved with how UP treated women regarding benefits and rewards. It was observed that women were being awarded equal rewards and benefits as men from the UPs of both Sharique and control areas. A man from Sharique areas mentioned, “*Men and women are getting equal benefits from the UP.*”<sup>34</sup> A chairperson provided the essence, “*We do not discriminate between men and women. Actually, the provisions of various instruments do not allow us to do so. I personally believe that women should get equal benefits from all institutions.*”<sup>35</sup> A 40-day employment generation project was inquired to understand whether UPs discriminated between men and women. It was learnt that the UPs of both areas did not discriminate in payment of equal benefits to both men and women. The principal reason behind the equality was the legal bindings of the project. However, a proxy system was discovered in Alatuli UP of control areas. It was found that in the payroll list the names of women were entered; however, in the field level, men worked on behalf the women. The discussion can advance the argument that the conceptions for equal rights for women has been instilled in the people of Sharique areas, and the supply side actors seemed to be positioned in a balanced state on the issue in both areas.

### **8.3.3 Male Biasness or Gender Blindness with Male-Streaming?**

The observation and the data revealed that in comparison to the UPs of control areas, the UPs of Sharique areas are providing more space and scope to the women members. However, the question is to what extent these increased scopes and spaces removed male biasness in the UPs. The women members of Shilmaria and Deopara UP in Sharique areas could freely express their opinions, as well as accomplish their assigned projects and other activities. Both general members and the women members of reserved seats were treated equally in the office. One women member from Deopara opined, “*Men are evaluating us equally.*”<sup>36</sup> However, in other two UPs of Sharique areas and the UPs of control areas, it was found that to maintain legal mandates fulfilled the UPs maintained official procedures up-to-date, but in practice, the scenario was rather different, as in many cases the women were not entrusted with what they were mandated to be involved or benefited. An NGO official revealed,

Women did get their just share from the UP on many issues, which once they were denied. They were entitled to get one-third of the projects of the UP. In papers, it was maintained

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<sup>34</sup> O30, interview with researcher, Shilmaria, December 14, 2017.

<sup>35</sup> O17, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>36</sup> O12, interview with researcher, Deopara UP, December 18, 2017.

according to the guidelines, but in practice, it was something different, as some projects, though headed by women members officially, practically male members were given responsibility to implement them. Moreover, the women members were also elected as panel chairs; however, their getting chances of the job were rare, as, in absence of the chair, the acting power was rested on the hand of the male panel chairs.<sup>37</sup>

The resonance of the NGO official found in the statement of grievances and frustration of a woman member. She disclosed,

I am officially assigned and awarded to accomplish various projects, but the process sometimes remains only in papers, as my male colleagues take the responsibilities to accomplish the same. However, I would like to complete my projects by myself.<sup>38</sup>

This statement affirmed that WMs got equal numbers of projects de jure, but they accomplished fewer projects de facto. It was also revealed that the voice of the men overheard in the office of the UP, and the level of contentment of the same was high for male officials in contrast to WMs. A women member from Alatuli UP of control areas asserted, “*My male colleagues get more than what I receive when demanded, and we are not gratified all time. We sometimes face the negligence of the males at UP.*”<sup>39</sup> It was also unveiled that in both areas when it concerns the issue of important and/or big projects, the UP showed its biasness for men.

### 8.3.4 Gender Budgeting

The budgets of six UPs of Sharique and control areas were studied to unearth how much of these budgets were gender sensitised. Whether the UPs gave special focus on women affairs, and if they did so, then how much was allocated particularly for the women and their development in the budgets. The secretary of Shahbajpur UP stated, “*There was no special allocation for women in the budget of UP. Sharique has suggested us to allocate a portion exclusively for women in the budget.*”<sup>40</sup>

**Table 8. 5: Allocation for Women in Budgets (in real) of the UPs (in BDT)**

Areas	UP	Fiscal Years				Ave. Alloca.
		13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	
Sharique Areas	Deopara	0.00	0.00	150000	0.00	37500
	Shahbajpur	0.00	0.00	175000	0.00	43750
	Jhilim	0.00	100000	0.00	48535	37133.75
	Shilmaria	134950	290000	0.00	120000	136237.50
	<b>Total</b>	<b>134950</b>	<b>390000</b>	<b>325000</b>	<b>168535</b>	<b>63655.31</b>
Control Areas	Alatuli	100000	150000	0.00	0.00	62500
	Maria	0.00	0.00	34000	0.00	8500
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100000</b>	<b>150000</b>	<b>34000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>35500</b>

Source: Annual Financial Reports of UPs, audit reports, and project lists.

<sup>37</sup> N4, interview with researcher, January 10, 2018.

<sup>38</sup> O20, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>39</sup> O42, interview with researcher, Alatuli, December 26, 2017.

<sup>40</sup> O8, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 20, 2017.

When officials of both areas were asked whether there were any special provisions in the budget for the development of women, 84.4% and 56.3% of the supply side actors from Sharique and control areas respectively claimed that they allocated funds in budgets for the development of women and gender related issues. In practice, it was observed that (Table: 8.5) all the UPs of the study has witnessed the budget allocation for the development of women. However, all the UPs were discovered to be inconsistent in their approaches to spend for the women.

The table shows that the UPs of Sharique areas became more sensitised on women related issues than the UPs of non-Sharique areas and the reflection of the same was observed in their budgets. Each UP of Sharique areas allocated on an average BDT 63655.31 yearly for the development of women, while the figure stood at BDT 35500 in control areas. Among the UPs of Sharique areas, Shilmaria was found most sensitised on the issues of women. The expenditures mostly included expenses for distribution of sewing machines, livestock, and development of projects, which particularly targeted to development of women. Here, another issue was mentionable that in all the UPs a tendency was revealed that the UPs in most cases distributed sewing machines. However, it was learnt that distribution of sewing machines was not effective in all the cases to eradicate poverty, as reliance of so many on the same sources of earnings resulted in lesser amount of income for the beneficiaries. Moreover, the UPs also showed lack of interest in sensitising officials and citizens on the issues of gender, as no awareness-building efforts were found supported with the allocation of budgets. Overall, the budget allocation for the development of women was not as high so to match the needs. Moreover, the UPs though struggled with their limited income, yet they were found in a position to initiate more focused action to increase the allocation for the development of women.

## **8.4 Empowerment/Agency Building**

### **8.4.1 Change in Power Relation**

Women were asked about their status during the decision-making process at home. In reply, according to data, 80% of the respondents from Sharique areas confirmed that they were consulted during decisions making (Table: 8.6). On the other hand, in control areas, the women respondents from citizens disclosed that they were unsure about their role in decision-making process. Moreover, the WMs were also inquired whether they were treated properly during decision-making process. Data showed that there were no observable differences were found between the WMs of Sharique and control areas (Table: 8.7). The disclosure of these statuses of women meant that the women in everyday life in Sharique areas became empowered to be considered in decision-making process by the male of the families. However, when it came to the issue of women officials' role making in decisions, it became tough for women as the

male officials played a dominant role in decision-making. The entrance of WMs in power structures was not attained yet. A chair opined, “*In politics, the opportunities for women are limited; they have to overcome hurdles after hurdles, including sheer negligence of men, at every stage.*”<sup>41</sup>

**Table 8.6: Do Men Treat Women Like Human Being in the Decision Making Process?**

Areas	Sharique		Control	
	f	%	f	%
Strongly agree	11	55	-	-
Agree	5	25	-	-
Neutral	2	10	7	77.8
Disagree	2	10	2	22.2
Strongly Disagree	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 8. 6: Do the Male Counterparts Ignore WMs in Decision-Making?**

Areas	Sharique		Control	
	f	%	f	%
No	4	33.3	2	33.3
All the times	1	8.3	-	-
Sometimes	7	58.3	4	66.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2017-18.

It was echoed in the voice of a WM from Shahbajpur, as she mentioned, “*I could not express my opinion in the past at my office, as I was obstructed.*”<sup>42</sup> These hurdles impeded the progress of the women, and the process resulted in less empowered women members with limited opportunities in both Sharique and control areas.

#### 8.4.2 Development of Ownership

Sharique took the initiatives to develop ownership in the women of the UPs. It was learnt that while the project in operation, the women through WP being activated to participate in the planning process, and through which women could demand forcefully which project to be implemented. Later, when the proposed projects of the women were taken into account women felt more attached to the projects and the UPs. In addition, women were involved with the supervisions of the implementation processes of the projects and these types of involvement accelerated the development of ownership. A woman from Shilmaria UP mentioned,

In our UP, a sanctuary for birds has been developed. For this, a watchtower was proposed to be built to see the sanctuary. The UP bestowed us the supervisory role for project implementation. During implementation of the project, I regularly visited the construction site and confirmed following of the project documents appropriately. Now, as the project has been accomplished, I feel proud to let the visitors know that the project was implemented under a team in which I was also a member.<sup>43</sup>

Another woman from Deopara narrated her experience,

<sup>41</sup> O25, interview with researcher, Shilmaria, December 14, 2017.

<sup>42</sup> O2, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 20, 2017.

<sup>43</sup> C34, interview with researcher, Shilmaria, December 12, 2017.

Once the UP has assigned me with few other community members to supervise the task of filling up the small ditches and pits of the roads with earth. During the implementation of the projects, goons, who involved with local politics, came to me to demand extortion, but I did not give them any. After being unsuccessful they tried to stop the work, yet again they remained effectless as we collectively frustrated them.<sup>44</sup>

Moreover, while interviewing the researcher asked women from citizens, whether their projects had been implemented? In reply, 35% of the women mentioned that their proposed projects were accomplished. However, in control areas, no such incidents were mentioned by any of the women. That development encouraged women to be engaged more with the UPs, as 90% of the women in Sharique areas opined so. Furthermore, the women in Sharique areas mentioned that they participated in WS spontaneously to meet the legal bindings (30%), and to make demands (60%). In contrast to the Sharique areas, none of the control areas mentioned spontaneous participation, and only 9.1% of the women respondents mentioned that they participated in the WS to place demands. This pattern of participation depicted that the women developed ownership with the UPs for which their self-guided participation in WS was increased in Sharique areas.

### 8.4.3 Freedom of Choice and Action

Women were asked whether they could take part in WS and OBM at their will. It was revealed that the women of Sharique areas were enjoying more freedom than that of control areas (Table: 8.8). A Physically challenged woman described,

Sharique has provided me training on skill development and income generation. The project has encouraged and made me aware, as well as provided me with a sewing machine. The officials of the project have made me understood various issues. I do not know how to speak up at public gatherings, but they taught me the same. I learnt a lot. I think if the UP follows the technics and the policies of Sharique then we women will be self-dependent and unemployment will be reduced. Consequently, we will gain more space in power.<sup>45</sup>

Through the efforts of Sharique, women become self-confident and courageous to move for meeting up their needs at their will. A woman from Sharique areas revealed,

Previously I did not move outside of my house or I could not move outside due to lack of courage. Now, with the encouragement of Sharique, I move to various places when needed, and I have even travelled to Dhaka solely.<sup>46</sup>

It was also found that the sewing machines that Sharique has given to the poor women, has empowered women financially.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, women were found changed completely from a mere homemaker to high post holders in ruling political party. A woman, who was a member of WP of Sharique in Shilmaria, narrated her life-changing motivational account of Sharique.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>44</sup> C11, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 20, 2017.

<sup>45</sup> C23, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>46</sup> C11, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 20, 2017.

<sup>47</sup> C4, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur UP, December 20, 2017.

<sup>48</sup> C34, interview with researcher, Shilmaria, December 12, 2017. (The two major parties in Bangladesh remain Bangladesh Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party).

### Case Study 8. 1: Mousumi Became an Enlightened Woman

I was mother of a child. I was just a homemaker. One day I got an invitation to join a yard meeting. I went to the meeting, and found quite a few women there. I learnt it was a meeting of Sharique project. I was impressed the way they motivated us. I became a member of WP, and inspired to join other programmes of Sharique and had various trainings like women leadership development, speaking up, participatory gender analysis, etc. This was the start. After the initial stage, I have begun to participate in WS and OBM. Later I was assigned to motivate other women to join UP. I have enjoyed it a lot. The mixing with people encouraged me to sale on broader platform. I got one. You know, now I am the president of Upazila Mahila (women) Juba (youth) League (an associate organisation of the one of the two major political parties in Bangladesh). This season I will consider contesting in the election of the UP for the post of the chair. (Mousumi Rahman, interview with researcher, Shilmaria, December 12, 2017).

### Case Study 8. 2: Jahanara Became a Member of the UP

I have become interested in contesting in the election during my involvement with Sharique project. My dream coincided with same of my father to see me as a member of the UP. The dream matured with increased confidence during the intervention period of Sharique. As a WP member, I have got training from Sharique and become aware, and participated in WS and OBM. I have also selected as a member of SC. Since then I began to aspire for being the office bearer. This time before the election my neighbours have come to me, and encouraged me to contest in the election as they have thought I will be an appropriate and competent candidate for the post. They worked hard during election campaign and now people have casted their votes in favour of me, and I have become an elected member of UP, and I hope I could now contribute for the betterment of the marginalised, particularly for the women. However, I did not get any special supports from fellow WPs. (Jahanara Begum Sathi, a WP member of Sharique project, elected UP member in the UP election held in 27th March 2018 in Shilmaria UP).

**Table 8.8: Women's Participation in WS & OBM at their Will.**

Areas	Sharique		Control	
	f	%	f	%
Response				
No	7	35	5	55.6
Yes	13	65	3	33.3
Others	-	-	1	11.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2017-18.

**Table 8. 7: Can WMs Take Initiative for the Development of their Localities?**

Areas	Sharique		Control	
	f	%	f	%
Response				
Not very much	2	16.7	4	66.7
Sometimes	10	83.3	2	33.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2017-18.

The case of Jahanara Begum Sathi showed the promise, as she translated the encouragement and aspiration into action. Sharique, though phased out, however, the enlightenment still remains alive. Sathi, a marginalised woman, and a mother of two university going daughters, has taken part in the election at her will with the support of her family and won it. However, she did not get enthusiastic support of the members of former WP, which was developed previously by Sharique.

The researcher broadened the examination with WMs, whether they could take initiatives for the development of their area. Data revealed that the WMs of Sharique areas, gained position more extensively to take enterprises for the development of their areas in comparison to the WMs of control areas (Table: 8.9). FGD session in Alatuli UP of control areas revealed that women could not perform any activities



according to their enterprise and will.<sup>49</sup> Here, the argument can be extended that Sharique project has instilled courage and willingness through motivation, skill development, and income generation in their way to empower women to make choice and to act accordingly.

## 8.5 Women Leadership

### 8.5.1 Networking (Reciprocity, Trust, Cooperation and Common Good)

Sharique through WP brought women under common groups. One NGO official narrated the process,

Women brought other women to the WS and OBM. This made the participation of women higher than men did. We trained two community volunteers to motivate the women to come to the UP. In the beginning, mostly poor women participated; however, later we included leaders of the other groups formed by other NGOs working in other sectors. The process made our tasks easy to make women aware and bring more women by inviting the group leaders to come and bring the fellows of her association.<sup>50</sup>

However, there were challenges to bring the women out of home to be involved with the UPs. Another NGO official disclosed,

The members of WP, particularly the women members of the same brought other women in the WS. However, there were great challenges, which included the propaganda of removal of *purdah* and proselytization to Christianity. Moreover, the people of that area exposed the symptom of stubborn radicalism to some extent.<sup>51</sup>

When asked 40% and 10% of the women in Sharique areas opined that, they were and are involved with groups respectively. They realised that they could influence the decisions of the UP if they approached UP collectively in a group. However, in control areas, no existence of such group was mentioned. In Sharique areas, the formation of and involvement with group helped women to learn more and keep united to move ahead with forceful voice. FGD data revealed that women became aware of their rights and entitlements. They discussed many issues of the UPs in groups, which enhanced their knowledge, and developed group solidarity.<sup>52</sup> Data showed that 75% of the women in Sharique areas disclosed that they helped each other to participate in WS and OBM, while in control areas none claimed such. FGD participants asserted, “*Women participated in WS and OBM in groups.*”<sup>53</sup> Further inquest uncovered that 95% of the women from Sharique areas reinforced the community people to place demands in WS. On the other hand, the 45.5% of women from control areas stated that they also maintained supports to the people of the community to make demands to UP formally or informally. Moreover, 80% and 44.4% of the women of Sharique and control areas respectively claimed that they demanded collectively to the UP.

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<sup>49</sup> FGD data, Alatuli UP, December 26, 2017.

<sup>50</sup> N3, interview with researcher, January 9, 2018.

<sup>51</sup> N4, interview with researcher, January 10, 2018.

<sup>52</sup> FGD data, Shahbajpur UP, December 20, 2017.

<sup>53</sup> FGD data, Deopara UP, December 18, 2017.

It was also observed in Sharique areas that the bonding of the women through WP augmented into such a height that they decided to send a woman, who was one of them, to hold the office of the WM in UP. A member of WP of Sharique narrated her incident,

I, though, was not interested, yet with the insisting request of the group, which I belong to, declared my candidacy as WM from reserved seat. In the election, I lost marginally. I felt, general people voted me profusely, but I lost to the influx of black money.<sup>54</sup>

However, in Deopara the WP members did not experience such a defeat. A women member of WP of Sharique project mentioned,

We have a group of 17 women including me in Ward five of Deopara. We met frequently to discuss many issues of the community. In fact, we still sit together, though less frequently. During the last election, we decided to elect a WM from us, in response, an indigenous woman, among us was made a candidate, and in the election, our candidate won the contest. Through her, it has become easy for us to ensure our rights and demands upheld in the UP.<sup>55</sup>

A woman from Jhilim also asserted, “*Women in groups, influenced the decision-making process through their members.*”<sup>56</sup> The discussion can be helpful here to infer that in Sharique areas, the women became interconnected, helped each other, and worked for the community betterment.

### 8.5.2 Capacity of Women Members

Data showed that 58.4% of the WMs from Sharique areas and 50% of the same of control areas have some sort of knowledge on the UP act of 2009. While the percentages were 90% and 70% for male members, who were more conversant on the act, in Sharique and control areas respectively. Moreover, it was furthered explored that all of the WMs and 83.3% of the WMs in Sharique and control areas respectively were aware of their responsibilities. In Sharique areas, 50% of the WMs mentioned that if it was needed, they could contact the higher officials of the government, while the rate was only 16.7% in control areas. When asked whether they implemented CC in their respective UPs, in reply 75% and 20% of the WMs in Sharique and control areas in that order affirmed such claim. Regarding information dissemination, it was revealed that 83.3% of the WMs in Sharique areas contributed to disclosure of information to the citizens, while it was 50% in non-Sharique areas. The women members were also participating in village courts as arbiter. Chair of Jhilim UP of Sharique areas mentioned, “*Women members have played an active role in the Shalish and conflict resolutions in their Wards.*”<sup>57</sup> The data depicted that the WMs of Sharique areas became conversant on various issues and developed their capacities in comparison to the WMs of control areas. However, when male members of Sharique

<sup>54</sup> C22, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>55</sup> C11, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 20, 2017.

<sup>56</sup> C21, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>57</sup> O17, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

areas were taken into consideration to compare with the WMs of the same, it was learnt that in this regard the WMs lagged behind.

Data though revealed that the WMs capacitated on acts, duties and responsibilities, yet they are to travel far. FGD participants of Jhilim UP unanimously disclosed, “*Women members depend on their male colleagues or on the other men of their family or neighbours.*”<sup>58</sup> A freedom fighter observed, “*Women members, in fact, cannot exercise the power they have been vested.*”<sup>59</sup> According to a man from Alatuli, “*WMs are not counted by the chair.*”<sup>60</sup> Moreover, one of the senior UP secretary, who closely observed the WMs, mentioned that the women were less skilled, and consequently, they finished their task less actively, and agility.<sup>61</sup> The backwardness of the WMs revealed in the elaborative exposures of an NGO official, as she revealed,

Women members are not skilled and educated. They have deficiencies in presentation. They are not cared about and ignored in the UPs. Through analysis of power relation, it has been known that the WMs lag behind due to their lacking in possession of power. Majority of them possess the idea of gaining personally from the office through fair and/or unfair means. They exhibited a lack of commitment to the UPs and their duties, which is necessary to establish good governance. It has also been observed that 90% of the women remained inattentive in the meeting. Their level of knowledge and understanding is low, as it has been found that even some of the women member, who can sign only, found elected in the UP office. I think, if they understand the information well, and become educated, or educated women come to the arena, then the women will be able to exercise their power and fulfil the demands of citizens, particularly of the women.<sup>62</sup>

The claim of the NGO official was also observed in the data set, as it has been learnt that in Sharique and control areas the level of education of WMs was poor. In Sharique areas, 83.4% of the WMs studied only up to the secondary level or below; and in control areas, all the WMs were found passed only primary level. Thus, through the initiatives of Sharique, though the WMs increased their capacity, yet for their low level of education, and lack of skill they failed to achieve what they have been designed to realise.

### **8.5.3 Performance of Women Members**

The state of WMs at the beginning of Sharique project has been depicted with the words of an NGO officer. In her words,

When we entered in the UP, the presence of WMs could not be detected, as they remained only present during disbursement of projects. In other cases, the spouses of the WMs did not allow them to come; instead, the husbands of the WMs visited the UP. They did not know anything about the laws and related issues. They could not speak up in the meeting; bargain

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<sup>58</sup> FGD data, Jhilim UP, December 17, 2017, and O16, UP secretary, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 18, 2017.

<sup>59</sup> C28, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>60</sup> C59, interview with researcher, Alatuli, December 30, 2017.

<sup>61</sup> O24, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>62</sup> N6, interview with researcher, January 7, 2018.

with a chair, and the chair did not let them speak. Additionally, the male in the UPs did not care them at all.<sup>63</sup>

In this backdrop, efforts were taken to unearth how much the WMs have been transformed. Citizens were asked how the WMs performed in the UP. In Sharique areas, 80% and 65% of the men and women respectively thought that the WMs were performing well (Table: 8.10). On the other hand, in control areas, 27.3% and 44.4% of men and women supported the notion that WMs executed their responsibilities well. Moreover, male officials were asked about the performance of the WMs, 70% and 60% of them thought that WMs' performance was satisfactory for Sharique and non-Sharique areas respectively.

**Table 8. 8: Performance of the WMs According to Supply Side Actors**

Areas	Sharique areas				Control areas			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
Citizens	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Response	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Strongly agree	10	50	6	30	2	18.2	-	-
Agree	6	30	7	35	1	9.1	4	44.4
Neutral	-	-	2	10	4	36.4	4	44.4
Disagree	4	20	2	10	3	27.3	1	11.2
Strongly disagree	-	-	3	15	1	9.1	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2017-18.

The data revealed that the WMs in Sharique areas performed better in comparison to the WMs of control areas. However, it was learnt that the WMs faced difficulties in handling the technical issues, like budgeting, planning, documentation, project implementation, etc. A male member mentioned, "*Women member face problems at every task they have been assigned.*"<sup>64</sup> It was observed that in Shahbajpur the WMs were assigned officially to implement projects, however, practically male members implemented the projects, and to keep the documents free of audit objection the WMs signed the documents having been requested by the chair.<sup>65</sup> The chair from Alatuli observed, "*A woman member can perform her activities well if she is directed well.*"<sup>66</sup> Citizens' principal complaint against the WMs was that the WMs visited them during the campaign period for election; and after triumph in the election, the WMs do not visit their constituents frequently. A woman revealed, "*WM did not visit us often. After the election, it already passed about two years, she has not met us further.*"<sup>67</sup> One NGO officials observed that the UP gave project implementation responsibilities to

<sup>63</sup> N2, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, April 8, 2018.

<sup>64</sup> O7, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 19, 2017.

<sup>65</sup> O2, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 20, 2017.

<sup>66</sup> O41, interview with researcher, Alatuli, December 30, 2017.

<sup>67</sup> C21, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017, and C4, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 20, 2017.

the WMs; however, in few cases, they sold the projects to their male colleagues for BDT 500 to 1000.<sup>68</sup> The discussions above can lead the argument that the performance of the WMs and their credibility remain moonshine both in Sharique and non-Sharique areas with varied margins.

#### 8.5.4 Mobilising Citizens against Social Problems

Sharique has made citizens aware of social problems, particularly against discrimination against women, child marriage, dowry system, etc. It was observed that the women became aware of these issues. Table 8.11, showed that the women of Sharique areas intervened successfully on violence against women, child marriage, and development of women besides their regular activities. In control areas, WMs were seen became involved with mostly with child and women health care and the issue of child marriage, the intensity was high in Sharique areas on women's social issues. In Shilmaria UP of Sharique areas, a women member stopped a child marriage with the help of the others WMs and officials of UP.

**Table 8. 9: Significant Jobs Done by WM that Pleased Community and herself**

Areas	Sharique Areas		Control Areas	
	f	%	f	%
Response				
Violence against women	1	8.3	-	-
Distribution of relief	1	8.3	2	33.3
Development of women	3	25.0	-	-
Road construction	3	25.0	-	-
Child marriage	3	25.0	1	16.7
Housing Facility for the poor	1	8.3	-	-
Child & Women health care	-	-	2	33.3
Others	-	-	1	16.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2017-18.

A WP member of Sharique of Shilmaria UP claimed that she personally stopped 5/6 child marriages. She continued, “*When I get the information of child marriage I try to convince the parents of the child, and in some cases, they agreed to stop the same. However, when I failed I let the chair to intervene and when he failed we passed the information to the UNO.*”<sup>69</sup> We have even taken initiatives to punish marriage register with fine to stop him conducting child marriage. However, she mentioned that the parents nowadays temporarily stopped the marriage with the presence of us, but committed the same in the dark; they even did not register the marriage.

However, few parents relocated the girls to get her married. In a few instances, though guardians were managed, the girl could not be managed. In one instance, when we stopped a marriage the girl warned us of her probable suicide, though we managed

<sup>68</sup> N5, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 12, 2018.

<sup>69</sup> C34, interview with researcher, Shilmaria, December 12, 2017.

her later. Most importantly, she observed that these initiations of stoppage of child marriage affect the voting behaviour of these families, as they refrained from voting those officials who were involved with the stoppage of (child) marriage of their girls.

### Case Study 8. 3: JSC Examinee Escaped Child Marriage

Renuka Banu is a female UP member. She narrated an incident. In her voice, “While I was busy with my household activities, my phone rang. I answered the phone call it was my female colleague from the next Ward. She said, “A group of students in school uniform just have come to me, and disclosed that a school friend of them, who would appeared in the JSC examination after few months, was forced to get married by her parents.” Listening the incidence, I asked her to go to the spot and then I contacted with the chair and described the incidence to him, and he told me to move to the house of the destitute girl. In the meantime, the chair reached there. We made the parents of the girl understood the repercussions of child marriage. They realised their fault and refrained from getting their JSC examinee girl married in her child age.” (Mst. Renuka Banu, interview with researcher, Shilmaria, December 14, 2017).

The case study and the discussions revealed that officials, as well as citizens became aware on social problems and achieved the capacity to motivate others, particularly women, as it was easy for a woman to make other women understood the complex issues and their repercussions. However, more awareness building is needed to achieve the targets.

### 8.5.5 Satisfaction of Women Members

WMs were inquired to understand their level of satisfaction over their performances. The opinions of the WMs revealed that 50% and 33.4% of them from Sharique and control areas respectively disclosed their satisfaction how they performed their duties. Thus, the rest 50% and 66.7% of the women members from Sharique and control areas, in turn, exposed their dissatisfaction over their performances. That is in

**Table 8. 12: Women Members’ Satisfaction over their Performances**

Areas	Sharique		Control	
	f	%	f	%
Strongly agree	3	25.0	1	16.7
Agree	3	25.0	1	16.7
Neutral	-	-	-	-
Disagree	6	50.0	3	50.0
Strongly disagree	-	-	1	16.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2017-18.

**Table 8. 10: Causes of Dissatisfaction Shown by WMs**

Areas	Sharique		Control	
	f	%	f	%
Response				
Could not fulfil the demands	3	50	1	25
Want to implement project my self	1	16.7	-	-
Don't get importance	1	16.7	1	25
Don't get equal opportunities	1	16.7	2	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2017-18.

comparison to control areas women members of Sharique areas found them in a position to affirm their satisfaction. When asked what general acceptance you are getting as women representatives, 50% WMs from each area mentioned that they were accepted (Table 8.12). However, in Sharique areas, 33% of the WMs mentioned that they were ignored. Overall, the level of satisfaction of the WMs achieved with the way they accomplished their duties was in a stalemate.

Why is this so? Half of the women members who were dissatisfied in Sharique areas blame UP's inability to cope with the demands of the citizens, i.e. failure to satisfy them as their principal cause of discontent (Table 8.13). A WM mentioned, "*I am not satisfied due to my struggle to fulfil the demands of my constituents.*"<sup>70</sup> However, the rest half of the WMs from Sharique areas directly or indirectly raised their fingers to the dominance of men in the UP. The same phenomenon was also found in control areas, where 75% of WMs made the male dominance responsible for their dissatisfaction. A woman member from Deopara postulated, "*I could not deliver my opinions. If I ever expressed my opinions, it was not given exact attention, which it deserved, and the incident of implementation of my proposed plans and/or projects was very sporadic.*"<sup>71</sup> WMs from Alatuli exhibited their anger and grievance due to unimportance and deprivation in the office. They mentioned, "*We are not given importance for being women. Our rights were denied and opportunities were bottlenecked. We have not been given equal opportunity and rights.*"<sup>72</sup> Another woman member from Maria disclosed, "*My male colleagues have been attended more than us. When we make demands on behalf of our people we are considered scarcely and fulfilled only a few.*"<sup>73</sup> Conclusively, the WMs have faced difficulties in the office and they stay far from to be satisfied with their performance as they failed to fulfil righteous demands of their electorate, and are squeezed into a narrow space in the office by their male colleagues regarding decision-making.

### 8.5.6 Capacity Development of WMs

How women members performed to organise the participatory meeting of the UP for planning and budgeting was inquired. It was observed that WMs did not contribute much in organising WS or OBM. In Sharique areas, the instances of dissemination of information of the WS and OBM, by WMs were few. In most cases, it was done by the male members. Among the WMs in Sharique areas, 10.5% of them claimed that they have invited people to the WS and OBM. Not only that even the WMs themselves were to invite to be present at WS. During direct observation of WS, it was revealed that in some cases the WMs did not come to the WS meeting. On the other hand, in control areas, it was earlier revealed that the organisation of WS were few, and thus the WMs there did not leave much to conduct the inquiry. Furthermore, it was observed, in Sharique areas that in WS and OBM the WMs did not do much to encourage women to formulate their demands and raise the same in the meeting.

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<sup>70</sup> O10, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 18, 2017.

<sup>71</sup> O11, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 18, 2017.

<sup>72</sup> O43, and O44, interview with researcher, Alatuli, December 30, 2017.

<sup>73</sup> O34, interview with researcher, Maria December 27, 2017.

Moreover, the WMs most of the cases remained inactive during WS meeting. Thus, the role of WMs in organising participatory planning meetings was poor.

## 8.6 Presence of Enabling Environment

### 8.6.1 Change of Male Attitudes and Behaviours towards Female

Most of the men disclosed about the stipulation of women's participation in local government politics as half of the citizens remain women and without mainstreaming them, the sustainable goals would not be achieved. The chair of Shilmaria and Jhilim mentioned that the WMs in their respective UPs accomplished their activities well. However, the perception of the male colleagues regarding WMs was not much different in Sharique areas and control areas. Male officials still termed women as weak, because of according to them 'women are women.' A male member from Shahbajpur opined, "*Women mean weakness, because they are women. Women cannot perform any activities well.*"<sup>74</sup> Sometimes male members found the WMs irritating. A WM from Deopara of Sharique areas found, "*The men in the UP assumed us as a disturbance.*"<sup>75</sup> Male also blamed women to be opportunity seekers and exploiters. A male member of Deopara claimed, "*Women in the UP have exploited their womanhood to extract benefiits.*"<sup>76</sup> These statements only lead to a presence of pervasive patriarchal attitude of males in the UP.

In control areas, the officials were yet to develop positive notions on the participation and activities of the WMs. UP chair of Maria opined, "*I do not see any job of the WMs in the UP.*" He raised question, "*Whom will I evaluate: the three women members or nine male members?*"<sup>77</sup> A UP secretary with his near observation, identified, "*Women do not possess the same kind of skills as men, because they do not understand well a lot of issues.*"<sup>78</sup> The male members even raised question about the cause of the participation of women in politics. UP secretary of Maria enclosed, "*Some women have entered into this arena of local governance to satisfy their personal wants.*"<sup>79</sup> He furthered his comments that the WMs were not still participating in local government politics with their own zeal and interest, as the men in the family or tradition of involvement of family in politics brought them in the arena. Thus, they were not found prepared enough to play constructive role in local governance. The perception of the UP secretary was resonated in the comment of a male member of Maria. He perceived,

I do not think it is ever needed for women to participate in the governing process. They are weak. Even I myself do not know various information regarding UP and its activities, then

<sup>74</sup> O7, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 19, 2017.

<sup>75</sup> O10, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 18, 2017.

<sup>76</sup> O13, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 18, 2017.

<sup>77</sup> O33, interview with researcher, Maria December 27, 2017.

<sup>78</sup> O48, interview with researcher, Alatuli, December 30, 2017.

<sup>79</sup> O40, interview with researcher, Maria, December 27, 2017.



how it is possible for a woman to manage all that. Moreover, I think, women members are self-interested. It is not possible to form a workable relationship with them.<sup>80</sup>

The discussion here revealed a severe case of patriarchal dominance. However, in two UPs of Sharique areas, the perceptions of male regarding WMs changed a bit, however, overall the male yet to take participation of women in local governance easily. Furthermore, incapability of WMs also made them nominal office bearers in the UPs, and the phenomenon leads the male to be sarcastic about the WMs.

## 8.7 Conclusion

Inclusion of women, through conscious efforts, in the governing process with the principles of equality and equity stand imperative for inclusive development. There reveals a shift in the domain of rationality of male officials regarding women's involvement in the councils. The women have also become aware of their rights and entitlements, and realise the importance of being connected with UPs. Consequently, the numbers of women in WS and/or OBM have increased markedly to such a level that stays equal to the numbers of men; and even in few UPs, the presence of females outnumbers the attendance of men. The women pitch their voice for placing demands, seeking explanations, and forwarding recommendations. However, the number of speaking women is low, as most of them remain silent, inactive and reluctant to engage. Moreover, the WMs thrive into a better place in Sharique areas with increased spaces and opportunities; they become conversant on their jobs and responsibilities. However, they in both areas are at the same level of capacity regarding technical and legal issues and depend on their male colleagues for managing the same. The performances of WMs have improved and the recognition of it found in the support of men from both sides and women from supply side. Regarding their weakness, people blamed WMs for their disconnections with their constituents in the post-election era. Additionally, inequality in numbers of WMs in the UPs also occupies a role in determining the status of WMs in the council. For these shifts and attainments, the collaborative initiative of Sharique and UPs can be given credits. Thus, it also bears importance to deepen understanding on insights of collaboration to know what propels the process and what decelerates the outcomes. In these directions, the following chapter has been employed to discover the insights of the collaboration.

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<sup>80</sup> O38, interview with researcher, Maria, December 27, 2017.

## Chapter 9

# NGO's Collaboration with Local Government Institutions and its Challenges

### 9.1 Introduction

The collaboration of GO-NGO expands the horizon of the government to enter into the hard to reach area; and complementary and concerted roles of the partners bear importance in the arena of development. Helvetas Swiss Inter-cooperation, with the financial support from Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC), implemented Sharique project, whose main goal was to strengthen the governance of the UPs. The previous three chapters delineated the outcomes and impacts of collaborative efforts mostly outcomes of the project regarding SLG. The main aim of this chapter is to identify the state of sustainability of the outcomes, and the nature of collaboration, and its varied factors, which affect the same. Furthermore, this chapter offers a discussion on the problems that have been faced by the project during implementation stage. Lastly, the researcher encompasses the challenges of the collaborative endeavour for SLG in the future.

### 9.2 Enabling Factors/Formation of Social Capital

#### 9.2.1 Willingness

All of the officials (100%) of Sharique areas indicated that they would welcome NGOs to work with UPs for SLG. It was revealed that at the beginning, the UP officials were in confusions whether to cooperate with the project or not. The project let the chairs know about the project and its targets and requested them to consult the respective council members to decide collectively whether to collaborate or not. In this regard, the members were more proactive to initiate the collaboration process with the project as they observed that the project did not make the chair focus but the council as a whole. Through the process, the members were handed opportunity to have their say. An NGO officer stated,

When we started the process with 20 targets to achieve in Rajshahi, they though agreed to cooperate and successively received us, yet hesitated to practice our guidelines at first. They became frightened of exposing of secrets of the office, and the exposure might lead to allowance of all to know all the matters of the *Parishad*, and to failure in their re-election. At that time, the chairperson and the secretary were all in all in the UP, and the members did not have much influence over the office. They took the initiative positively.<sup>1</sup>

After the initial fluster, there were grudges over the issues of making the UP transparent as an open book. At that juncture, the UP chairs, in some areas, showed their reluctance to work with the project, as the project guided the UPs to become

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<sup>1</sup> N2, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, April 8, 2018.

transparent in views of the citizens; and the officials became fearful of being lost their authority over resources and were to curb their intents of gaining benefits clandestinely. An NGO worker of Sharique project included her experience of Jahanabad UP. She mentioned, “*When we approached the chair, he replied, ‘There are laws, rules and regulations in the country. There is also government in the country. So, for why do we need Sharique here? We do not need any help.’*”<sup>2</sup> In an FGD session, the participants disclosed UPs’ reluctance in the process of collaboration. The views of the FGD can be summarised as in the following manner:

The UP officials do not want Sharique for organising training to, building awareness of, and encouraging citizens, because, through these efforts, the empowered citizens raise uncomfortable questions to the supply side actors. Thus, they want distance between citizens and Sharique project.<sup>3</sup>

However, gradually, the officials accepted the project to guide, capacitate, and accompany them to ensure the implementation of the mandates of the laws. In the course of time, the willingness of the UPs became stronger to work with the project. Moreover, there was a growing aspiration for keeping the project to work with them constantly in the bonding of partnership-based governance.

### **9.2.2 Mutual Respect and Trust**

Both citizens and officials portrayed the images of well-behaved NGO officials; and during interview, citizens particularly, remembered NGO officials with emotions. It has been observed that in collaboration Sharique officials were found little bit sceptical about the UP officials. They took it granted that the UP officials always tended to be corrupted when they got opportunity with some exceptions. On the other hand, during the breeding period of the project, the UP officials remained dubious about the project officials and their goals with predefined accessibility crisis of NGOs to the UP officials. However, as the time passed both parties in collaboration came close to each other and the result was enhanced mutual understanding. Nearly all the officials (96.9%) mentioned that there were trust and respect in their relationships with NGO officials. Through the process, the project officials found some UP officials as their confidant who came forward more than other officials did to cooperate intimately with the projects officials to achieve the goals of the project. In the progressions, some UPs became model UP in the project areas, where the project officials arranged peer / horizontal learning visits for the officials of other UPs and exchange visits for other NGOs and donors for sharing best practices. These achievements can be credited to the NGO officials who worked in the grassroots level with continuous caring accompaniment, which helped the project officials gaining respect and trust from the UP officials.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> FGD data, Deopara, December 18, 2017.

Nevertheless, at the end of the third phase, i.e. the phasing out period of the project from Rajshahi and Chapai Nawabganj, the UP officials of Chapai Nawabganj lost their trust on the project officials due to their failure to supply committed capital, capital goods and services like livestock, sewing machines, etc. to the citizens through UP officials. A UP official mentioned that they lost their creditability to the citizens for the disappointment regarding unsuccessful efforts for the fulfilment of the commitment. People thought that the UP officials looted the delivered money; and the incident made the elected officials swindler, before the eyes of the people and consequently, the UP officials lost confidence on the NGO officials.<sup>4</sup> One NGO official said that some UP officials complained him with unforgiving words as they thought they miscarried in the election due to the ill reputation, which tagged on them with the failure of project in supplying the committed capital goods.<sup>5</sup> Another UP member from Shilmaria UP expressed his discontent on the delay of fund supply by the project.<sup>6</sup> Few officials also remained doubtful about the achievement of the projects though they mentioned, *“Sharique has made us aware on various issues, however, there has not been observed any benefit or result in implementing the programme.”*<sup>7</sup> Thus, the argument can be underlined here that the actors from both sides developed a good working relation with respect and trust in the process of working together with opening wide to each other. However, the pre-existing disbeliefs along with failure of supplying of committed funds, pegged the development of mutual trust.

### 9.2.3 Cooperation

After the icebreaking period, the project officials of Sharique gradually developed a working relation with the officials of the UP. The study reveals that the officials of the UP remained cooperative in achieving the goals of the project, as all of the officials (100%) of Sharique areas mentioned that they cooperated with the project in achieving the goals. They cooperated project officials multifarious ways including participating in varied programmes, following their instructions, providing information, accompanying them to mention few (Appendix 9.1). Data showed that 78.1% of the officials opined that they did not face any problem while working with the project officials (Appendix 9.2). The officials extended their cooperation to project through bringing citizens to the meeting of the project, identifying ultra-poor and marginalised, propagating the goals of the project (*“Go to the UP, and you will be benefitted.”*), demonstrating model activities for the peer visitors, opining on modalities of implementation of the project, implementing varied projects of

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<sup>4</sup> O5, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 19, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> N4, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 10, 2018.

<sup>6</sup> O29, interview with researcher, Shilmaria, December 13, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> O5, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 19, 2017.

Sharique, providing soft skill training to the destitute, arranging food supply, and supplying required information. One UP official commented, “*I have provided various information that Sharique required. I also helped the project in identifying the ultra-poor, and implemented various projects of Sharique.*”<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the chairperson apportioned a room in the UP complex for the usages by the project officials to conduct skill development training on computer for the youth with difficulties. However, there lacked joint identifying of project strategies, and planning, forming a combined monitoring body, and initiation of multiparty analysis of the progress for further changes in future.

#### 9.2.4 Shared Goals

The principal target of the project was to strengthen local governance, which would be pro-poor and sensitised on marginalised groups and gender through the implementation of the UP act of 2009 in accordance with guidelines of the UP manual. All the officials (100%) mentioned that the goals set by collaborative effort bear immense importance. They opined that goals of the project were to improve, service delivery (46.9%), relations with citizens (40.6%), and accountability of the officials (21.9%). Conversely, it has been learnt that most of the UP officials did not own the goals of the establishment of strong local governance as it empowered the citizens to hold the officials accountable and to limit their power to some extent. In addition, it was perceived that the UP officials found the target of instituting strong local governance imposed. They showed more interest in getting fund, which the project planned to supply as matching finance i.e. ‘Co-finance’ as termed by the project, than capacitation, awareness building, gender sensitisation, tax assessment, and other soft skills development. An NGO official revealed that from one UP they were forcefully evacuated for failure of fulfilling continuous demand for supply of money of the chairperson.<sup>9</sup> One local governance expert clearly pointed out that the UP officials’ most desirable demands have been the supply of goods and money of the donors. The expert further added that the officials showed intense interest in having the authority over the money without being controlled or subjected to oversight.<sup>10</sup> The resonance of the voice of the professor was found in the statement of a UP official as he distinctly pointed out, “*Providing financial supports have been the effective way of mobilisation of local governance.*”<sup>11</sup> Further inquiry revealed that in Sharique areas, the lengthy has been the accompaniment of the project the strong has been the adhesiveness to the common goals by the UP officials. Gradually, the UP officials absorbed the goals of the project in the UP with continuous thrusting from the project officials.

<sup>8</sup> O15, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 18, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> N2, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, April 8, 2018.

<sup>10</sup> Zarina Rahman Khan, interview with researcher, Dhaka, April 20, 2018.

<sup>11</sup> O5, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 19, 2017.

## 9.3 Quality of Inputs

### 9.3.1 Initiatives for Skill Development and Motivation

The project organised various training, workshops, exchange visits, cultural programmes for awareness building, as well as formed community groups, and accompanied by the activities of the UP. The training of the Sharique, as opined by the officials, contributed to boosting their confidence (56.3%), made them aware (81.3%), increased skills (62.5%), developed ownership of the UP (37.5%), and assisted in income generation (21.9%). The study revealed that awareness building for the demand side through yard meeting, cultural programmes and participatory gender analysis remained most successful. On the other hand, the accompaniment role of the project officials worked best for the supply side actors. Moreover, the training sessions, and workshops played an important role to capacitate and make aware the officials of the UP. For women, speak up programme worked best to speak out publicly in the varied meeting of the UP, moreover, leadership building training also enhanced the confidence of the women members. It was further learned that the more the recipients were educated the more the inputs regarding skill development remained successful. Finally, Sharique has instilled the concept that if UP wants it will be possible to develop the UP.<sup>12</sup>

### 9.3.2 Publications

The publication of the project has been quite impressive. The published documents of the project can be categorised into three groups, which includes training related, evaluation related, and knowledge and experience sharing related publications. The manuals developed by Sharique were found excellent, as these were cautiously designed for the targets groups considering their status and background. These manuals are easy to follow, and can guide the instructors to disseminate the knowledge gradually, through engaging participants in the learning with the inclusion of key issues of governance along with ways for obviation of boredom of the training programmes. Moreover, the compendium of laws on local government remained a majestic task of the project that compiled the local government related laws into one cover. The project published its various evaluation reports at different stages of the project prepared by renowned specialist on the field of SLG from home and abroad. Sharique with strategic partnership with BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) conducted research on the outcome of the project and published varied papers. Furthermore, the project published systematic guide for other actors of SLG, and the document is worthy of following. Overall, the publications of the project have been a quality and will be helpful for the actors from GoB and NGOs, practitioners, as well as donors.

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<sup>12</sup> FGD data, Shahbajpur, December 20, 2017.

### 9.3.3 Grant and Co-financing

There is quite an intense debate whether the donors themselves allocate the fund to the beneficiaries or channel the money through government mechanisms. The donors want their authorities preserved over their money until it reaches at the end in the form of goods, services or cash, as they have a doubt over government agencies. However, local governance specialist and the government maintained that if the funds are channelled through the government the fund will be used in a coordinated way, and the failure of the same may result in overlapping or duplication of expenditure in the same arena.<sup>13</sup> The debate was also there with the project; and the project took a compromising path, which led them to co-finance in the projects that were taken by the UPs following due procedures. The principal target of the allocation of matching fund was to introduce the procedures of project management and implementations to the officials. For this, the project categorised the UPs into three groups A, B and C according to their performance against some set indicators to provide matching fund of BDT 250000, 400000, and 600000 in that order. In addition, the project also provided support to the UP in organising the WS and OBM with financial assistance.

In quest of finding to what extent the officials became knowledgeable, aware and capacitated on planning and implementation of projects, they were asked questions and in reply, 68.8% of them thought that Sharique's co-finance contributed in enhancing their skill. However, 25% of the officials remained sceptical about the achievement of the project goals in this arena. Moreover, in practice, it has been found that the elected officials remained quite depended on the UP secretary on such technical issue. On the other hand, the support with money to bear the expenditures of the WS and OBM encouraged and stepped up the officials in organising the WS and OBM though the amount was little as BDT 2000 for WS and BDT 5000 for OBM. The reasons behind the supply of low amount money were to make the UP self-reliant in organising the participatory meeting with calculated amount in future in absence of such supports from outsider.

### 9.3.4 Advocacy

Sharique has advocated for some practices to be transformed into policy at the national level. The project, in order to complement the activities of NGOs working at the UP level with UP, initiated a quarterly meeting for GO-NGO coordination. The same process with the name of 'Link Model' was, at that time, practicing by a project of JICA. Both projects exchanged visits and shared the best practices of the coordination meeting, and advocated at the central level with NILG to acknowledge the coordination meeting officially, and implement the process all over the country. Later,

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<sup>13</sup> Zarina Rahman Khan, interview with researcher, Dhaka, April 20, 2018.

with collective inducement, in the year 2011, the government acknowledged and formalised the process with a legal umbrella under the name of Union Development Coordination Committee (UDCC) to arrange meeting bimonthly in the UP. With the inceptions of the UDCC, the UP has the space for coordinating the development activities at UP level, instead of erratic efforts of various GOs and NGOs, which may cause duplication and misuse of funds.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, the formation of UDCC has created opportunities for the line agencies of the government to be accountable to the UP for their activities in the UP area, as well as to channel the necessary information and demands to the upstream and downstream tier of the administration.

The project in 2006, from the beginning, stimulated UPs to include citizens' voice to hear from them to formulate demand-driven projects and make the activities of the UP open. The project exchanged and shared its ideas and practices regarding practicing the participatory Ward level planning, and UP level budgeting with the LGSP, linked project of the GoB and the donors. Later, with efforts from donors and local government activists, the GoB endorsed and enhanced the participatory processes and included the same in the UP act of 2009 to legalise and to make the system mandatory. In recent time the LGSP-III, has made the practices of participatory process compulsory evaluative indicator to measure the performance to allocate PBG.

Sharique for going beyond Local Government Ministry and for bringing other players like Ministry of Finance (MoF) in the picture for intervening on the issue of local level Public Finance Management (PFM) has collaborated with the Institute of Public Finance (IPF). That move has been the first instance in ten years' history of SDC's working in the local governance sector in Bangladesh.<sup>15</sup> Following the collaboration of understanding, IPF has supported Sharique to develop a full package of training manuals on UP's Public Finance Management (PFM) that has been useful for the UPs and other stakeholders in Bangladesh. The MoF has continued to provide all types of support to that collaboration in order to ensure better PFM systems and practices at local level. Furthermore, Sharique has collaborated and advocated with NILG to incorporate the contents and methods of projects in disseminating training to capacitate both the functionaries and the citizens. The collaboration with NILG has furthered with development of a guide to collaboration of NGOs with GOs, which has been uploaded in the websites of the NILG.<sup>16</sup> Against this success, the project is yet to claim success to transform its best practices into policies such as UPLA,

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<sup>14</sup> N1, interview with researcher, Dhaka, April 11, 2018, and N3, interview with researcher, January 9, 2018.

<sup>15</sup> N1, interview with researcher, Dhaka, April 11, 2018.

<sup>16</sup> SDC, and NILG, *Guidelines for Strategic Engagement: Experience-based Guidelines for Non-governmental Organisations* (Dhaka: SDC, and NILG, 2014). [http://nilg.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/nilg.portal.gov.bd/page/9f43afd7\\_d967\\_4676\\_9fb8\\_1d8bd65e61eb/Strategy%20for%20Engagement%20Guideline.NILG-SDC.pdf](http://nilg.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/nilg.portal.gov.bd/page/9f43afd7_d967_4676_9fb8_1d8bd65e61eb/Strategy%20for%20Engagement%20Guideline.NILG-SDC.pdf) (accessed May 12, 2018).



participatory gender analysis, mainstreaming its manuals in NILG, etc. with the slow movement or unwillingness of the government to institutionalise such findings.

## **9.4 Sustainability**

Data revealed traces of success of Sharique project in varied areas, such as capacity and awareness building, institutionalisation of participatory process through promoting organisation of WS and OBM, dissemination of information, practices of social accountability, gender mainstreaming and generation of own income. Almost all the officials (90.6%) were of opinion that the changes in the governance of the UP that have been brought by Sharique will sustain. However, the issue of sustainability requires further investigation. Here, the important question is how far these achievements have become sustainable. The following sub-sections have focused on various issues to unearth reminiscent of the role of the project in the project areas.

### **9.4.1 Activation of Demand Side**

It has been learned that Sharique project during its operation made the citizens aware about the roles of the UPs and their importance regarding fulfilment of demands, and is the lowest tier of local government to deliver the government services to the doorsteps of the citizens. The reflections of the same were found in the presence of large of numbers of citizens, particularly of marginalised groups to raise voice with demands, in the participatory planning meeting, which was organised on regular basis at Ward level during project period. The officials of the UPs of Sharique areas mentioned that they have been facing more demands form their constituents (Appendix 9.3). However, the opinion survey disclosed that after the phase-out of the project, the presence of the citizens in the WS and OBM reduced sharply. Furthermore, there observed no demand from demand-side actors to organise WS or OBM regularly, as the demand side found anticipated only to be invited to be present in such assemblies; and the findings suggest that with well-circulated invitations the demand side actors participate in WS and OBM in numbers. In recent time, both male and female respond to the invitation, come to the meeting, and make demands for their needs. They also place demands for their rights and entitlements and seek information. That refers to creation of demand side; enhancement of people's engagement with the UPs and increase of incidence of placing demands.

### **9.4.2 Developing Ownership**

A WM revealed that through the initiatives of Sharique, there observed an escalation in people's communication to the UP.<sup>17</sup> The challenge was to make the process incessant and enliven with the feeling of proprietorship among the citizens, and the feeling would deliver spontaneous engagement of the citizens with the activities of

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<sup>17</sup> O4, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 19, 2017.

the UPs. However, data revealed that the presence of the citizens was not naturalised in the participatory processes, as citizens were not found searching in advance the information of WS and OBM, and the allocation of the LGSP and other government and non-government grants, own income of the UPs, as well as overseeing of projects actively with self-instigation. The only interest the marginalised people showed on their being benefitted directly through SSNPs. That is, the project, though made the citizens aware, however, the feeling of ownership of the UP was not instilled sustainably in them. Apart from this, direct observation of WS revealed that participants were making demands through referencing to their being taxpayers; and consequently, that deserved attention and expected their demands to be fulfilled.

### **9.4.3 Shift from Elitism to Populism**

The sustainability of the project may be gauged through observing the change in the UPs targets from elitism to populism. It was revealed that the UPs remained far behind in terms of practicing populism. For example, the UPs were not fully being acclimatised in including people's voice in selecting and implementing projects; as the inclusion of projects from WS and FYP were side-lined in many cases, and as a substitute, the officials projected their or their political colleagues' interest in choosing the projects. It was also reported that the officials remained selective during inviting citizens to the WS, through the inclusion of the members of varied committees in line with party affiliation, relations, and roles during elections. In addition, the WSs were observed organised with low people's participation, as in the most cases the presence of citizens was counted below per of the mandates, which directed to ensure presence of at least 5% of the voters of the Ward to confirm the quorum. Moreover, the UPs were also found reluctant in some cases, and unable in other cases to select the beneficiaries in accordance with the popular choice.

### **9.4.4 Gender Sensitisation**

Data revealed that both functionaries and the citizens became aware of gender reasonableness and gender parity issues. The initiatives brought modification in behaviour and instilled empathy into the views of the local government actors though there observed significant roles of electronic media, political socialisation, etc. in promoting gender sensitivity. Both officials and citizens realised the necessity of the participation of women in the process of decision-making and development activities. They pose positive attitudes toward female engagement with UP. However, it has been observed that the changes taken place were not found up to the satisfactory level, as many of the female members reported facing of occurrences of negligence in the UPs. Moreover, the disproportion in numbers of WMs in the office, played decisive role against WMs' choices to be overturned in the UPs. Lack of capacity and performance pegged WMs in the old-fashioned portraiture of weak women. NGO

workers included that more efforts are needed to work for gender related issues for extended time. Now, in the project areas, there exists enabling environment to work with the gender issue.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the notion of reserved seats made general seats ‘Men Seats’ only. Thus, the women tended to contest in the reserved seats and consequently, it has been learnt that no woman was found elected from general seats; even no instance of women contesting in the general seats was reported in the study area.

#### 9.4.5 Pro-Poor, and Gender Budgeting

A UP secretary credited Sharique for making the UP pro-poor.<sup>19</sup> A partner NGO official claimed,

UP do not have any particular budget for poverty reduction previously, though the UP has the opportunity to expend 10% of LGSP block grant for human resource development. Sharique has motivated UP to allocate special portion for the marginalised, extremely poor, ethnic minority and physically challenged people.<sup>20</sup>

In Jhilim, the UP initiated shops for physically challenged people (Appendix P7.2). Moreover, female domestic animals were supplied and after giving birth of calves/billies, the female animals passed to other poor people. Other efforts such as distribution of sewing machines, and house building assistance were observed. However, Data revealed that there was existence of few pro-poor incidences of allocation for the development of soft sectors. The mainstreamed budgeting led to infrastructural development activities, installation of tube-wells, etc. Special allocation for the marginalised, extremely poor, ethnic minority and physically challenged people were not found regular in the budget. Moreover, the allocation for women in the budget was found insufficient, and scanty. The officials claimed a lack of fund supply from the central government, little control over government money, and compelling demand for infrastructure development made them incapable to take such projects. A UP chair from Deopara of Sharique areas disclosed with resentment for little control over government supplied money, tutelage of bureaucracy, “*Should there be the offices of the local government.*”<sup>21</sup>

#### 9.4.6 Change in Attitudes and Cultures

Common People’s engagement with UPs increased markedly. However, the reasons were not laid in the making demands of the UP for the people rather, for example; recently the government has intensified the need of birth registration cards, which further necessitated the contacts with the UP. The assignations of marginalised people

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<sup>18</sup> N5, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 12, 2018; and N4, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 10, 2018.

<sup>19</sup> O24, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>20</sup> N3, interview with researcher, January 9, 2018.

<sup>21</sup> O9, conversation with researcher, May 12, 2018.

with UPs can be credited to the receiving of SSNP benefits. However, the community-driven causes, suggestions making efforts, inquiries for plans and projects were not acting as pushing factors to be engaged with the UPs. The trust and confidence towards UPs and its officials were not instilled in the views of citizens yet. People remained sceptical about the role of the functionaries of the UPs, as they thought the officials maintained a clandestine will to be benefitted personally. The greater environment for the people engagements with the UP changed a bit; however, for significant change it required further acceleration. The acceptance of the citizens, particularly the marginalised groups by the officials has improved in many cases, yet there exist quite a number of examples of threat and humiliation from the functionaries. Officials were not still found ready to welcome the common people cordially. The inquiries and questions of the marginalised looked upon as irritation.

#### **9.4.7 Own Revenue Generation and Fiscal Autonomy**

The thrust for augmenting own revenue generation has been observed in Sharique areas. Data revealed that the withdrawal of intervention of the project has not affected the stepping up of gathering of high own income. It was found that in addition to the project's inducement, these UPs of the study area were also be pulled with holding out a carrot to the officials of being the best chairs of varied stages from Upazila to national level by the government. However, the principal concern about the own income was how far the income contributed in budget. It was found that the UP still to travel to miles to be self-sufficient with its own income, as the total own income covers only the meagre percent (4.7% averagely) of the total expenditure. This means that own income of the UP remained low due to the existence of many sources untapped, partial assessment, people's inability and unwillingness to pay tax, absence of non-populist persons for tax collection, etc. In one hand, the UPs are limited with their own income, on the other hand, delayed supply of LGSP fund, project-based, and formula less grant of the government truncate the autonomy of the UP regarding fiscal power.

#### **9.4.8 Ability to Meet Agreed Community Demands and Services**

The UPs were found burdened with people's demands, which were made in the WS and budget meetings. The listed demands through various processes graduated in the long-term plans or year wise plan. However, it was found that the implementation of projects, those came from WS and varied plans remained low. The major impediments to meet people's demand were lack of fund supply from the central government. Earlier it was revealed that the UPs depended heavily on the funds of central government as the own income was low. The implementations of projects from own income of the UPs remained very small, and rare. However, it has been found that the elected officials made fictitious promises, which ultimately stumbled to be fulfilled

and generated frustrations among the citizens. These situations resulted in such circumstances, which conform to declination in engagement and alienation of citizens from the UPs.

#### **9.4.9 Implementation of RTI/CC**

Evidence revealed that the UPs became proactive and enthusiastic in respect of dissemination of information regarding CC, projects and other related issues. Most of the UPs (3 out of 4) in Sharique areas have been disseminating information regularly. However, the intensity was low from the implementation period of the project. During the field visit, the researcher found many fossils of such boards abandoned in the UP premises, or remained unfed and uncared with latest statistics. However, improvements have been observed in supplying information on demands. On the part of demand side, there observed no evidence of seeking of information formally with written petitions, as people's seeking of information only evident in verbal claims. One WM recounted, "*Sharique has encouraged us to implement RTI and CC in the UP, however, these have not been materialised.*"<sup>22</sup> The substantial findings have been that the functionaries, as well as the citizens, found unaware on the provisions of RTI and CC, however, the realisation was there that information has been their right, but the information has still not been substantiated into power.

#### **9.4.10 Streamlining Social Accountability Mechanism**

Sharique along with other actors of SLG advocated centrally for the legalisation, inception, and the implementation of participatory planning and budgeting.<sup>23</sup> The project has initiated the system of participatory planning and budgeting since 2006, before the formal inception of WS and OBM through the UP act of 2009. It was observed that previously UPs formulated their plans and budgets in closed doors. The preparation of plans and budgets was just routine tasks with no innovations; citizens were not aware what the UPs doing, and for whom they were working. Sharique played key roles in opening the process and materialised it through dissemination of invitation, urging citizens to be present, extending financial (BDT 2000 for the WS and 5000 for the OBM) and technical support for the participatory meeting of the WS and OBM.<sup>24</sup>

It has been revealed that in Sharique areas the practices of organisation of WS and OBM have become regular in some, episodic, or formalities in few, stopped and remained in papers in other UPs. Moreover, some UPs organised WS once in a year instead of assigned two. Thus, the organisation of participatory processes palling gradually and became dependent on the whims of the officials, who in reality were

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<sup>22</sup> O2, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 20, 2017.

<sup>23</sup> N3, interview with researcher, January 9, 2018.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

not interested in engaging with the opening up the meeting, bringing nuisances with peoples' voices, having them in danger of peoples' sarcastic comments to make them (officials) accountable. During the collaboration period, the project persuaded the officials to organise the participatory meetings, which were regularised at that time. However, the absence of the project made the officials same again. Moreover, the same thing has been observed in respect of the citizens' active participation in WS and OBM, as in recent observation of participatory mechanisms revealed that the citizens have made very few or almost no questions to make the officials accountable, but they asked questions previously with the readymade questions formulated by the NGO officials.

The observation crystallised the fact that the citizens' active participation during the collaborative period was fabricated with creation of artificial principal-agent relation and that have not become sustainable. Another striking issue that unsettled the sustainability was that, the election in the UPs brought new faces in the offices, and these new office bearers were not skilful and motivated to promote social accountability mechanism. It has been further noticed that the collaboration period varied in the study UPs from at least 3 years to as long as 10 years. In the midst of the four studied UPs Shilmaria and Deopara were involved in collaboration for full ten years; Jhilim, and Shahbajpur were in collaboration for two phases for 7 years. Results disclosed the fact that Deopara and Shilmaria remained better performer in implementing participatory mechanisms. Thus, it can be summarised as- those UPs, which get a longer period of support from the project, remained more active in organising the participatory meeting. Furthermore, in the third phase the project slowed down the intervention and motivation for the citizens; consequently, the process affected people's participation adversely.

#### **9.4.11 Sustainability of Social Capital**

During its implementation period, the project developed people's associations or community groups of citizens to be involved and informed as well as united. FGD participants disclosed, "*all become united for mutual co-operation, and stay beside to other members in need.*"<sup>25</sup> However, it has been revealed that, with the phase-out of the project, the people of these groups became disconnected and fragmented, and the social capital that was built, weakened further. The groups, formed by the project were not naturalised as no such groups were formed with the initiations of the local people themselves. One NGO official opined that it is difficult for new structure like WP to be sustained against long existing institutions.<sup>26</sup> It has been observed that without continuous nurturing with attachments of the NGO officials these groups and the

<sup>25</sup> FGD data, Shahbajpur, December 20, 2017.

<sup>26</sup> N7, telephone interview with researcher, Rajshahi, April 7, 2018.

social capital would fall apart. A newly elected women member, who was a WP of the project, was categorically asked about the role of her ex-group member in her being elected. In reply, however, he failed to mention any starring role of them.

#### **9.4.12 Development of Human Capital**

Helvetas inserted Sharique project at the grassroots level through the partners NGOs. It has been found that partner NGOs recruited local competent youths mostly to work with both supply and demand side actors. After the phase-out of the project, many of such workers of the partner NGOs became unemployed. Nevertheless, it has been learnt that some of these unemployed NGO workers have been regularly consulted by some UPs to guide and accompany them in implementing numerous provisions of the UP act, as well as LGSP manual to evade audit objection and maximise the supply of LGSP's PBG. Moreover, during the implementation stage, some local people volunteered for the project; and few of them have been recruited by Helvetas for implementation of its mission. Additionally, evidence unveiled that functionaries of UPs also consult these volunteers.

#### **9.4.13 Fragile State of Sustainability of the Outcomes of the Project**

It can be argued that initiatives of SDC for strengthening local governance have been graded well by both demand and supply side actors. However, the questions remained unanswered to know how far the outcome of collaboration of the project with the UP has become sustainable and whether the collaborative efforts impacted the governance of the UP. The discussions in the earlier parts exposed that the project brought positive changes during the tenure of collaboration. Some of the efforts of the project have translated into sustainable practices. Major areas, which have witnessed sustainable development include knowledge enhancement and awareness building, capacity development, own income generation, documentation, and organisation of WS and OBM in some cases. Supply-side actors have become more skilful in implementing their routine activities. However, the demand sides though became knowledgeable, yet they were not made enough skilled to engage actively with the activities of the UP. An NGO official who involved closely with the implementation of the project revealed her observation,

When seeing the level, we realised the changes, as there happened many transformations. Yet, institutionalisation of good governance remained far, as achieving of good governance was not that easy. It cannot be implemented overnight. It requires long-term endeavours with the willingness of the government as well as the awareness of the people.<sup>27</sup>

The study indicated that no sooner had the project phased out than many of the practices that were promoted, though not untarnished as they rooted in the legal frameworks for the UP, have become mere formalities or been stopped practicing. An

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<sup>27</sup> N5, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 12, 2018.

NGO official revealed her scepticism about the sustainability of the project as she mentioned, “*We feared that the UPs would not practice the mechanisms instituted by the UP act of 2009, and UP manual in absence of the project officials.*”<sup>28</sup> One UP officials also asserted that the process requires a strong driving force to shove it forward like a rocket engine.<sup>29</sup> The important question is why has it so happened?

**First**, the ownership of the UP among the citizens was not developed in all the cases, it was promoted through NGO’s collaborative efforts, and thus, when the project stopped its intervention the progress shrunken.

**Second**, citizens’ demands were numerous and most of them remained unfulfilled due to budget shortage, and inclusion of projects in line with the choice of the UP officials; consequently, citizens lost interest in participation with the activities of the UP.

**Third**, the environment for participation was created synthetically with a lack of spontaneity in participation,<sup>30</sup> even some respondents mentioned the WS as the meeting of Sharique not of the UP, that means citizens have not developed the instinct to be engaged with UP, as citizens mentioned that if they got invitation they would be present in the participatory planning.

**Fourth**, the male officials though found sensitised on the gender issues, still, they dominated on the WMs with patriarchal attitudes, inequality of numbers, and weakness of the WMs.

**Fifth**, gender was not mainstreamed fully in the UP; there found the mere nominal presence of gender budget. Moreover, though female were made heads of various committees and one-third of development activities were transferred to WMs’ authority only to fulfil the legal requirements, yet the effectiveness of the presence of WMs in *Parishad* remained in papers, as WMs’ suggestions were ignored, considered lightly, and overturned by a male majority.

**Sixth**, people’s participation has also tainted with political divisions, as officials with party inclination showed a tendency to invite only those who have been in his/her party.

**Seventh**, UP officials have been found reluctant in organising participatory planning meeting. Moreover, citizens have also not pressurised the officials to organise such meetings.

**Eighth**, the accompanier roles of the project have become the pushing factors for the officials to accomplish a number of activities of the UP; the absence of such factors created a vacuum, which demoralised the officials. Moreover, the UP has changed

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> O16, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 18, 2017.

<sup>30</sup> Salahuddin M. Aminuzzaman, interview with researcher, University of Dhaka, April 22, 2018.



from one-man show to two men show of the chair and the secretary, and it was evident from the data that the UP became more dependent on the secretary for the implementation of the provisions of the rules and regulations. Moreover, the secretaries' status of salaried from the government, paid every month, and responsibility to the government, made opportunity for them to exploit the position and as a result implementation of many of the provisions of the UP depends on his/her active willingness. An NGO official accounted, *“The implementation of all these mostly depends on UP secretary. The secretaries were like ‘Jacks of all trades,’ they needed propelling force behind them, otherwise, they cared nothing and just sauntered, doing nothing particular.”*<sup>31</sup>

**Ninth**, the UPs suffered from lack of personnel, as the UP secretary remained the only skilled persons in the UP, as elected officials most of the cases remained unwilling and unable to fulfil the same. Only recently, some UPs have been strengthened with the appointment of an Accountant cum Computer Operator, and the remaining UPs will be fed with the official subsequently.

**Tenth**, there found a lack of incentives in the UPs. To be engaged with the UPs required sacrifice of opportunity to earn the subsistence by general people. Therefore, they required cash and/or kinds for their engagement. Citizens now are included in varied committees, and these committee members do not have any sitting allowance or other kinds of incentive, which is required to activate them.

**Eleventh**, lack of close monitoring system that may closely follow the day to day tasks of the UPs on regular basis.

**Twelfth**, the line agency officials of the government were not fully transferred to the UPs as there remained loopholes in the act, and the UPs do not have any control over such officials.

**Thirteenth**, in the process of collaboration the partners in collaboration became sufferer of ‘wicked problems,’ LGIs have not become the collaborative convenors. Thus, in the process of collaboration, the LGIs exhibit a reluctant interest in the process.

**Fourteenth**, with failure to include UPLA in the mainstream training dissemination process of the NILG, both Sharique and UPLA promoting UPs attempted to continue the academy through offering training to the officials with their own cost. However, the offers were announced with no instance of acceptance by any of officials.

**Fifteenth**, the recent election of the UPs has witnessed the selection of candidates particularly for the post of chairpersons based on their political identities with tickets from higher echelon of party leaders and they contested in the election with party symbol.

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<sup>31</sup> N5, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 12, 2018.

The process brought the UP chairs in the centre of power politics as he became actively engaged with local MP and with the aegis of the MP and other high positioned leaders, through the process, the chair not only generates power distance with his/her colleagues but also minimise gap with his supervising authority of the Upazilas the UNO. The outcome of the process can be seen through observing their increased accountability to the political leaders but not to their constituents. In some cases, the tickets for the nomination of the UP election have been within the purview of business deals; additionally, the high cost in the election has tempted the officials to make their position a moneymaking tool and opportunity. These factors made the officials non-responsive to the cry of the citizens as well as proper functioning of the UP.

## **9.5 Problems and Challenges of Collaborative Efforts**

The collaboration of Sharique with the LGIs faced multidimensional problems in the way to strengthening local governance, ranged from policy relating issues to implementation process. In the beginning, the UP officials became frightened and reluctant to cooperate with the project. However, with the discussion at varied stage including inception meeting the project was able to make them understood that they had nothing to lose rather had opportunities to gain, as opening up the governance brought them esteem through removing people's misconceptions about the UPs' having lots of money and the money being misused or embezzled by the officials. The major areas of problems faced by the project discussed below (More in appendix 9.3, 9.4, & 9.5).

### **9.5.1 Absence of Well-Coordinated Policy for Collaboration**

The collaborative programmes of GO-NGO for SLG required supports of well-articulated policy. The government remained in confusions how to nurture the GO-NGO collaborative efforts. The government formally neither recognised nor diffused the collaborative efforts.<sup>32</sup> Consequently, there has not been observed presence of any specified policy, which might disclose deliberate intent of the government for guided decisions and implementation of collaborative schemes for rational outcomes. In absence of such policy, the LGIs, government officials at local, regional, and national level remained unsure how to be engaged in collaboration with NGOs for SLG. Only, recently, the Seventh Five Year Plan has put forward some indications for such collaboration.

### **9.5.2 Absence of Legal Frameworks**

The present laws for local government and for NGOs are not synchronised in terms of collaboration for SLG, which impeded the progress of the effort. The project felt

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<sup>32</sup> Salahuddin M. Aminuzzaman, interview with researcher, University of Dhaka, April 22, 2018.

the absence of legal frameworks in pursuit of SLG through collaboration with GOs. Since there has not been any legal coverage, and the roles of the elected and non-elected officials were not defined; the collaborative efforts depended mostly on constructive willingness of the officials of the LGIs. This dependency on whims is jabbing the achievements of the projects into risk.

### 9.5.3 Lack of Trust

The NGO officials had a reservation on the elected officials, as they believe the elected officials' trustworthiness at stake due to their tendency of misappropriation, being negligent to their duties, and keeping paperwork done instead of real implementation in field level. On the part of UP officials and citizens, it has been learnt they possessed confidence on the NGO officials, though in some areas failure of fulfilment of commitments, phasing out without information created mistrust in both supply and demand side actors. The resonance of the incident was verbalised in the following way by a partner NGO official.

At the last stage, Sharique has hurried to phase out. The project was not attentive in implementing its activities. There observed lack of trust and honour between the project and UP officials for each other. General people also observed the difference. They began to say, 'There are two projects of Sharique, 'New Sharique,' and 'Old Sharique;,' they are separate, and the new Sharique is fake.<sup>33</sup>

### 9.5.4 Non-cooperation of Local Bureaucracy

The NGO did not include local bureaucrats as subject of SLG and/or partners of collaboration. The project officials reported incidence of non-cooperative attitudes of the local bureaucrats, particularly of UNOs. A UP secretary commented, "*Government officials in higher position did not cooperate with the project.*"<sup>34</sup> They delayed permission of entrance in localities, as well as sending report to the upper echelon. NGO officials mentioned, "*UNO made late in providing clearing certificate to Helvetas, as the NGO did not have good relation with government officials.*"<sup>35</sup> The government officials at local level did not take the NGO into confidence; they were sceptical, confused, and tentative on the projects, and possessed low esteem mixed with mistrust.<sup>36</sup> Every time, when the UNO to prepare reports s/he rigorously crosschecked the matter with the chair and/or secretary and the process suffered from red-tapism.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> N4, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 10, 2018.

<sup>34</sup> O24, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>35</sup> N4, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 10, 2018, & N2, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, April 8, 2018.

<sup>36</sup> G1, interview with the researcher, Rajshahi, April 22, 2018.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

### 9.5.5 Problems Bred from Supply of Matching Grant

The project was made guilty of delaying of the release of its committed matching fund. The UP officials were found discontented and irritated on the delayed supply of the fund. An NGO official revealed,

Some chairs were of hot-tempered. For being late in getting the fund of Sharique, one of the chairs asked us to leave the UP. Some also revealed their anger for low amount of money supply. Even once, I was threatened to be mutilated by cutting my leg if I visited that UP again.<sup>38</sup>

On the other hand, in Chapai Nawabganj, during the last part of the third phase the project did not supply the fund, and the failure of the project deteriorated the level of trust of UP officials on the Helvetas. One UP member from Shahbajpur disclosed his irritation, “*Sharique has not kept its words; it has made us deceivers in the eyes of the people. The project has not supplied the money and goods in reality, but the people supposed that we have smuggled the allocation supplied by Sharique for them.*”<sup>39</sup> For such projects in the future, the most demanded component to be included in the project frame remains fund supply (Appendix 9.6).

### 9.5.6 Conflict of Management between the UP and Project Officials

In few instances there drifted misunderstanding between the project and UP officials about choosing of plans and activities. An NGO official claimed, “*Sometimes the UP officials did not pay heed to my advice;*”<sup>40</sup> and the WMs were characterised as unmaintainable, uneducated, and poor, as well as hungry for getting benefits.<sup>41</sup> A UP secretary opined, “*There were problems that induced from unmatched plans and activities of Sharique with the UPs.*”<sup>42</sup> Sometimes UP officials, particularly the UP members with their low level of knowledge and capacity were disregarded and uncared, and the opinions of them rebuffed; as Sharique officials played leading and dominating roles with their high status in education, and links with donors. According to a UP secretary, “*There has been observed disagreement between Sharique and the UP officials. Sharique officials seemed not to take care of the views of UP functionaries.*”<sup>43</sup> However, the opinions of the UP officials sometimes remained biased, undeveloped, and personal gain oriented and contrary to NGO’s goals as well. Working with the chairs and members remained very tall tasks as they remained very busy, some of them tended to make money using the office as they expended huge money to be elected, and wanted to follow shortcut ways. For example, NGO officials expressed that they promoted open tender, however the officials interested in

<sup>38</sup> N5, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 12, 2018.

<sup>39</sup> O7, interview with researcher, Shahbajpur, December 19, 2017.

<sup>40</sup> N4, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 10, 2018.

<sup>41</sup> N5, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 12, 2018.

<sup>42</sup> O24, interview with researcher, Jhilim, December 17, 2017.

<sup>43</sup> O16, interview with researcher, Deopara, December 18, 2017.

practising ‘Request for Quotation’ (RFQ) i.e., spot quotation, some influential officials tried forcing them to follow the instructions for inclusion of their chosen ‘pocket’ people for training, committees, project beneficiaries, project, etc. Moreover, they sometimes made the NGO officials waiting for hours.<sup>44</sup> The usual tendency of the officials expressed through negligence in implementation of mandated undertakings such as WS and OBM, and disclosure of information.<sup>45</sup> Some UP officials even tried to guide the activities of the project. These mismatches in interests and lack of mutual understanding stretched out lacunas between these two partners in collaboration.

### **9.5.7 Mismatches with LGSP Requirements**

LGSP programmed to award four points for well-developed FYP in its audit and evaluation report to measure performance to allocate PBG. In Chapai Nawabganj the FYPs were developed and published in book form with technical support, and huge expense provided by Sharique, was made void because those FYPs did not maintain the government provisions. Sharique left out social issues, and included more than five areas in the plan, as LGSP instructed inclusion of no more than five areas in the plan (Sharique included communication, sanitation, tax, employment, education). Consequently, the UPs were in danger to get poor points, these points were determiner for receiving of LGSP’s PBG. Later, to get the points, these UPs with the help of the UNOs developed FYPs only in 2 to 3 days, and they secured points for PBG.<sup>46</sup>

### **9.5.8 Problems Relating to Politics, Politicians and Influential**

Sharique trained people from all walks of life, irrespective of political and religious identity, caste, creed, and socio-economic status as well. The project wanted these trained people to be included in the varied committees, and activities of the UPs. However, the UP denied selecting the trained members of the WPs for the various committees of the UP, as there were people of opposite political parties. Even the UPs were found changing the names of members of the SCs after the formation of the same.<sup>47</sup> Sometimes it became difficult to manage those officials who were engaged in politics with post and position. They showed a tendency to brandish their sticks on the activities of the project. One NGO official provided an account of such case,

When Sharique has donated BDT 0.80 million to the UP, the local MP claimed his share. Moreover, there was pressure of politicisation of UP, as the officials wanted to exercise political influence in evading implementation of requirements of the rules and regulations.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> N6, interview with researcher, January 7, 2018, N4, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 10, 2018, and N5, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 12, 2018.

<sup>45</sup> N6, interview with researcher, January 7, 2018.

<sup>46</sup> N3, interview with researcher, January 9, 2018.

<sup>47</sup> N5, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 12, 2018.

<sup>48</sup> N6, interview with researcher, January 7, 2018.

### 9.5.9 Engaging Political Leaders, Bureaucrats, and the Untapped Youth

It has been learnt that the UPs' activities have been intervened by local leaders of ruling party, though legally they have no responsibility; however, they took decision on many issues that are mandated for the UP.<sup>49</sup> The last UP election was partisan in nature, instead of traditional non-party election at local level. The project did not concentrate on the issue much. On the other hand, local bureaucrats were not included in the project initially; however, later with their intervention at UPZ level they indirectly tapped UNO to some extent. They have critical roles to play in the local government, thus their motivation and active engagement are needed for better performing local government. On the other hand, the youth with education has great potentials; and it has been observed that in the UP, the elected young officials remained promising in implementation of the provisions of the rules and regulations. These untapped youth has not been focused during the collaboration period.

### 9.5.10 Conflict of Interest in the UPs

There were multi-angular conflicts of interest in the UP between mainly chairs and members, members and members, etc.; in varied cases, the members did not cooperate with the chairs. Some officials assumed the project officials intruder in the UPs. They became irritated on the project's efforts. These views brought discomforts in the relation. Moreover, there were conflicts in the UP originated from founding UPLA, which was instituted by Sharique in three UPs in the project areas. The chair and secretary worked as resource person at the UPLA with other experts. In one hand, the opportunity made local experts dignified and renowned, and brought honour and honorarium as well for them. On the other hand, the money, and time spent for the academy, according to dissident officials, could be spent for the development of the UP. One NGO official commented, "*There was conflict in the UPs regarding inception and continuation of UPLA, as the members of the UP found it as wastage of money. They wanted the money for them to implement development project in the UP.*"<sup>50</sup>

### 9.5.11 Expansion of Epicentre of the UP

The UPs exhibited the tendency of the supremacy of chairpersons with the association of UP secretary. Both of them remained instrumental in guiding the UP forward and vice versa. One NGO official mentioned that the epicentre of the UP had been the chair and the secretary, but it would better if the centre changed from present setting to UP plus others.<sup>51</sup> The UPs have to be run as a vibrant council of all the elected officials, and citizens, not just to be an institution led by the chairperson only.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>49</sup> N7, telephone interview with researcher, Rajshahi, April 7, 2018.

<sup>50</sup> N6, interview with researcher, January 7, 2018.

<sup>51</sup> N4, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 10, 2018.

<sup>52</sup> Zarina Rahman Khan, interview with researcher, Dhaka, April 20, 2018.

According to a commentator on local government, in the UP, there lacks democratic culture, and to overcome this, the UP members, as well as the citizens have to play vital roles in decision-making.<sup>53</sup>

### 9.5.12 Dissatisfaction of the Officials of the Partner NGOs

Some partner NGO officials showed mistrust and disrespect for the leading NGO, i.e. Helvetas. One NGO official mentioned, “*There was incident of corruption in collaboration of Sharique worker and the UP;*”<sup>54</sup> though the researcher did not discover any. Additionally, they found that Helvetas cost much on project management though they (partner NGO officials) were paid lowly, and it cut short field level expenditures. One partner NGO official commented,

The project lowered the budget in the field level in the third phase; even it was lower from the budget of the 2007-2008 fiscal year. There were big budgets for the high-level officials and the expenditure for dinner or lunch rose up to BDT 5000 per capita. However, at the UP, we project officials failed to include *Chowkidars* for the lunch except two.<sup>55</sup>

Partner NGO officials’ dissatisfaction aggravated also from getting the project papers in the last hour. Sometimes these partner NGOs did not get papers at all from Dhaka and it was acute in the third phase. Moreover, the papers sent to them by translating the documents into Bangla from English, and the translation were very poor in few cases; for example, according to the same partner NGO official, “*The Bengali form of Strategic Plan guideline documents were not good enough to understand.*”<sup>56</sup> It has been revealed that in the areas where the partner NGO officials disclosed dissatisfaction, there the performance of the UPs found comparatively poor.

### 9.5.13 Problems Relating to Duration of Training and Interest of Recipients

It has been learnt that some of the training sessions were short, and in the third phase, the project shortened the length of the few other training sessions because of phasing out. In Chapai Nawabganj, the project delayed its phase out as the event fell in the mid of transition period, and the newly elected body replaced the old one. The project waited for the new body to come, and hurried up in conducting the training to draw the end of the collaboration there. These short training sessions did not generate expected results. According to an NGO official, “*Short-term training was not much effective, as it has been observed that the newly elected officials in Chapai Nawabganj failed to perceive the training packages.*”<sup>57</sup> It has been further identified that the higher frequencies of training and a longer period of involvement brought better results. Moreover, it was realised that training remained effective for those who were

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> N4, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 10, 2018.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

interested and needy when it matters for income generating soft skill development. Additionally, young and the educated groups perceived the training well, on the other hand, persons with low interest and education just participated and do not gain anything from the training at all.<sup>58</sup>

#### **9.5.14 Conflict with other NGO Officials Working in the UPs**

Nowadays, a good number of NGOs have been intervening in and with the UPs. These NGOs need to be coordinated with the UPs. Thus, all the NGOs working in the UPs needed the schedule of the UP officials, however, the officials found very busy, and allocated little time for the NGOs. Thus, it became difficult to manage fruitful quality time with the UP officials. The meeting with NGOs in the UP frequently became a programme for photo-shoots. However, Sharique managed more time with UP officials, and that made other NGOs' officials envious with Sharique officials and manifested conflicting attitudes.<sup>59</sup>

#### **9.5.15 Problems Relating to Human Resources**

The elected representatives, generally members, particularly women members are found weak, unmaintainable, uneducated, and unimaginative to handle the issues related with the governing process of the UP, particularly the technical issues.<sup>60</sup> It has been observed that WMs came in the offices not for their interest but for family's interest, and dynastical tradition, which lead to election of WMs without judging their quality or qualification. Additionally, after each election, the trained officials left offices though only a few remained unchanged, and there come new officials in the UP, and these officials remained unskilled, unaware, and unmotivated, as they have no training and orientation. Newly elected officials need to be oriented with the UP and its activities as well as varied laws, implementation of the same and processes. These created a vacuum of skill, awareness, and motivation in the UP. Thus, the key responsibilities lie in the hand of the UP secretary, who has been permanent in his post, and in most cases, the only highly educated, trained up, and sound manager of technical issues in the UP. The project depended, during its intervention period, mostly on the UP secretary, and it was believed that he would continue practicing the good practices, and learnings of the project in future in the UPs. What needs most is the change in attitudes and devotion.<sup>61</sup> However, observation revealed that in every case, the secretary found to be opportunity seeker, and when s/he got opportunity then evaded his/her duties. Moreover, it has been difficult for the UP secretary to cover up all the issues, and accomplish all the tasks that have been assigned to the UP. Additionally, the activities and responsibilities of the UP have been increased further. Recently, though the government has appointed an assistant at the UP, yet it is not

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<sup>58</sup> N5, interview with researcher, Rajshahi, January 12, 2018.

<sup>59</sup> N7, telephone interview with researcher, Rajshahi, April 7, 2018.

<sup>60</sup> N3, interview with researcher, January 9, 2018.

<sup>61</sup> N7, telephone interview with researcher, Rajshahi, April 7, 2018.



sufficient, more such personnel are needed in the UP, as more trained and motivated permanent personnel in the UP might make the collaborative efforts sustainable. Until then, the whole system needed to be activated.

#### **9.5.16 Mainstreaming the Best Practices of the Project**

The project found several of its tools, practices and mechanisms being successful to add value to the SLG sector. However, these best practices of the project have become disintegrated and stopped practicing in the UP. These practices should be 1) continued in the UPs of Sharique areas; and 2) mainstreamed in the other UPs of the country.<sup>62</sup> The matter of fact is that the government has not been intended to include these best practices into the policy. To this end, the handover of the project efforts to other organisations and absorption by government mechanisms can survive the best practices.

#### **9.5.17 Managing Compensation, and Incentives**

People's participation and engagement with collaborative efforts and particularly with the UPs need to be supported with incentives, particularly the participation of marginalised cost them, as they have to earn their livings, and come to meeting from distance with paying the cost of transportation, so they become reluctant in participation. On the other hand, citizens' engagements in the varied committees of the UP can be incentivised to activate the citizens. Furthermore, provisions of incentives on tax collection may activate the UP officials for enhancing tax collection.

#### **9.5.18 Inclusion of all Citizens**

The project during its intervention period formed platforms of the citizens including near about 15-17 persons per group. Through, the platform the project planned to cover the whole area. However, the study exposed the target remained far to achieve, as the citizens outside the platforms remained same as they were, except few instances, there exhibited a little gap between the people of collaborative and non-collaborative areas. This means that all of the citizens are required to bring under the intervention process which would be a great challenge.

#### **9.5.19 Contextualising the base of Operation on Needs of Localities**

The study results revealed that among the UPs covered by Sharique, Shahbajpur, the bordering UP comparatively lagged behind regarding capacity building, gender mainstreaming, and continuing participatory process. UP's nearness to the Indo-Bangla border, linked with neighbouring Indian district of Murshidabad and Maldah, and the presence of migrated people from India made the area comparatively conservative. Moreover, the lifestyle of border areas made the people relatively unbendable. Thus, a long and tenacious effort of both GOs and NGOs is required to make citizens capacitated and environment enabled.

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<sup>62</sup> Mobasser Monem, interview with researcher, University of Dhaka, April 22, 2018.

### 9.5.20 Bringing Line Agency Officials under the Collaborative Efforts

In the UP, there work varied agencies of the government. However, officials of these agencies were not made liable to the UP; rather they have been responsible to their officials of higher echelon. On the other hand, there lacks coordination among line agency officials, and they find themselves as opponents of each other. The process allowed these officials to be remained insincere in the effective engagement with the UP. Moreover, these officials needed to be brought under collaborative efforts.

### 9.5.21 Inclusion of Remote Pocket Region

The study reveals that the collaboration initiatives of Helvetas have not been implemented in all the UPs of the study districts of Rajshahi and Chapai Nawabganj. Some 11 UPs remained out of collaboration efforts due to mostly their physical location in remote areas of char land with accessibility difficulties. Only a few UPs of the areas willingly refrained themselves from participation in collaboration. In two other cases, the UPs have suffered from the stable location of office for tension between newly formed municipality in the area of the UP, and for the unstable land of the UP due to river erosion.

## 9.6 Significant Achievements of Collaborative Effort

Data suggest that all of the officials (100%) and citizens (100%) felt the needs of such project for improvement of governance. Moreover, the functionaries of the UPs (96.9%) displayed their contentment on performance of the project (Table 9.5). Here, the important issue of debates has remained disclosure of satisfaction and problems and challenges mentioned contradict to each other to some extent. The reasons lie underneath the close attachment of project officials and the officials of the UPs. During the field survey, it was revealed that both the demand and supply side actors showed gestures of approval to the project officials.

Citizens were inquired to understand what were the significant shifts in them that brought by their attachment to the programme. They categorically mentioned that they became more aware and knowledgeable (52.5%), and skilled (27.5%) to be attached with the UPs. They mentioned some other component with less importance, such as they became courageous (5%), able to place demands (7.5%), and empowered (5%). Furthermore, they recommended this type of project to be continued for establishing good local governance, capacitating citizens and development of the localities (Appendix 9.7). More, efforts were given to unearth perceptions of the actors of both sides regarding Sharique induced significant shifts to the UPs. Both actors, in harmony, pronounced that the UPs became more open and accountable to citizens (37.5% officials and 30% citizens) (Appendix 9.8 & 9.9). Officials further mentioned

**Table 9. 1: Satisfaction of Officials on Efforts of Sharique for SLG**

Area	Sharique Areas	
	f	%
Strongly agree	28	87.5
Agree	3	9.4
Not Sure	1	3.1
Total	32	100

Source: Field Data, 2017-18.

that they became receptive to the people's demands (28.1%), accustomed to organise WS (15.6%), maintained rules and procedures (21.9%), and believed that people became aware (18.8%), tax collections were increased (12.5%), and women became empowered (12.5%). On the other hand, like officials, citizens also found it significant that UPs became more responsive to people's demands (12.5%). However, a good portion of the citizens (25%) categorically unbale to detect any significant change in the collaboration of UPs with Sharique project. The discussions and results, at this point, prompted researcher to forward the arguments that both citizens and officials detected the significant outcomes of the collaboration towards good governance as the UPs become open, accountable and responsive along with aware citizens. Most significantly, the UP has necessitated such other projects in the future.

### **9.7 Conclusion**

At the local level, the collaboration between LGIs, the UPs and NGO, Helvetas exhibits strong base with facilitating roles of enabling key factors of social capital like apparent willingness to collaborate, mutual respect and trust, active cooperation, and shared goals. In the beginning, there have been icebreaking minor malfunctions, however, as time passes by the collaboration between NGOs and LGIs smoothed. The elected representatives of UPs, particularly the members of the UPs agreeably cooperate with the project executives. The project has excelled in documenting their notable success stories, developed guidelines of SLG in distinct phases for other actors of this arena. Furthermore, it develops manuals for training, and compiled varied local government related laws together. The financial supports gently encourage local officials to hold WS and OBM, and the matching grants promote self-formulation and implementation of projects in the UPs to some extent. The programme collaborates and persistently advocates with NILG and IPF of MoF to develop standard manuals for training and skill development. Predominantly, the sustainability of the outcomes of the projects remains tentative as the practices of key provisions of the legal frameworks continue in some, discontinue in others, and reduce in few UPs with the absence of facilitating the role of the project. The collaboration scheme encounters problems and challenges in its way to strengthen the governance of UPs; in this respect lack of mutual trusts, mismatches in goals, political interferences, discontinuations of best practices, and non-cooperation of government officials are some noteworthy impediments to mention. Nevertheless, the endeavour earns trust and respect of common people invariably with aspiration for having same or such efforts with more intent and engagement with them and their institutions. In these lines, the concluding chapter tried to sum up the findings and results, formulate suggestions to make such initiatives unrestricted with inadequacies and obstacles.

# **Chapter 10**

## **Conclusion**

### **10.1 Introduction**

This research has been envisioned to unveil the narratives involving with the objectives to understand the outcomes of collaborative efforts to strengthen local governance based on the causal chain. In line with the causal chain map, it has been examined that whether the collaborative efforts with their inputs, activities and outputs have brought expected results. Thus, the findings of the study environed with manifestation of 1) initiatives of government for SLG, 2) enterprises of the GO-NGO collaborative schemes in pursuit of making local governance strong, 3) outcomes of Sharique endeavours in collaboration with UPs to build capacity of both supply and demand side actors, to establish responsive, participatory, transparent, accountable, equitable, fiscally autonomous, and gender sensitized governance in the UPs, and 4) the problems and challenges the collaborative process withstood while implementing planned project for SLG. Therefore, the study results have been arrayed in four varieties of research outcomes. The first set of findings includes varied efforts of the government to decentralise, strengthen and reform local government. The second set of results represents the different GO-NGO endeavours in Bangladesh, which have been employed for SLG. The third sets the important portion of this study analysed the outcomes and impacts of Sharique project in its intention to strengthen the governance of the UPs in Bangladesh. The fourth and final set includes the analysis of the collaborative process itself and varied problems and challenges of the same.

### **10.2 Discussions and Analysis of the Findings**

The first cluster of findings includes varied efforts of the government to decentralise, strengthen and reform local government. The findings reveal that government efforts for SLG concentrated on the formation of varied commissions/committees to offer suggestions, developing aspirations in FYPs, and enactment of laws and formation of other legal/quasi-legal instruments. Results impart that most of such efforts stumbled because of provisions for true participatory democratic spirit remained absent in these efforts. The major reforms involve principally with renovation of functions and structures of local government. The rhetorical wishes of the political elites are merely for exposition of their passions for public, marked with the tendencies of centralisation of power, and real efforts for devolution process seem unenthusiastic. This result corroborates with the study of Aminuzzaman, and Wahed Waheduzzaman and Quamrul Alam as well, as they have suggested that the initiatives of the government have been figurative, lackadaisical, and disorganised, which only have led to

continuity of absenteeism of illustrious morals of democracy and its practices at local level.<sup>1</sup> NGOs roles in development of arrays of areas like socio-economic status, empowerment, awareness building, and strengthening governance cannot be ignored nowadays. The government only has recently displayed intention to include NGOs in the process of SLG in the long-term plan, the Seventh Five-Year Plan. However, there has not been found existence of any policies and legal framework for national and sub-national government to proliferate GO-NGO collaboration for SLG. The results substantiate the conclusions of Aminuzzaman, as he has included, “*Grassroots-based LGIs are not legally empowered to incorporate the non-state actors and CSOs in the mainstream development and management of UP.*”<sup>2</sup> In spite of the fact that these non-state actors are not waiting for the favourable conditions to be engaged in the process of SLG, particularly the governance of the UP, and have already been engaged in the areas.

The second cluster of results represents the different GO-NGO endeavours in Bangladesh, which have been employed for SLG. Local government institutions in Bangladesh have not been developed at expected level because of not only for failure in true decentralisation but also for incapacitation of both citizens and officials, and existence of patron-client culture. Varied donors, foreign and local NGOs have taken this lacuna as their opportunity to capacitate the actors at grassroots level. The leading areas of intervention of NGOs include awareness raising of citizens on rights, duties and entitlements, developing community ownership, building and promoting CBOs, forming social capital, sensitising on gender, and encouraging involvement with LGIs, etc. These organisations also entail their efforts to support office bearers of localities through capacity building, notifying their job description, legal bindings, and varied procedures, as well as shifting their attitudes. Furthermore, the non-state actors invest their endeavours at central level to trigger changes in policy level through advocacy. The envisioned initiatives have brought success in many areas and varied researches have presented evidences of achievement of the interventions of the non-profit actors.<sup>3</sup>

The third clusters of discoveries stitch up outcomes of collaborative project of UP-Sharique for strengthening the governance of UP. Sharique project has been engaged

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<sup>1</sup> Salahuddin Aminuzzaman, "Political Economy of Local Governance: A Study of the Grassroots Level Local Government in Bangladesh," Paper presented to 23rd Congress of Political Science, July 19-24th, 2014, Montreal Canada, 13, 1-15, [http://paperroom.ipso.org/papers/paper\\_30718.pdf](http://paperroom.ipso.org/papers/paper_30718.pdf) (accessed January 2, 2017); Wahed Waheduzzaman, and Quamrul Alam, "Democratic Culture and Participatory Local Governance in Bangladesh," abstract, *Local Government Studies* 41, no. 2(2015): 260-279.

<sup>2</sup> Salahuddin M. Aminuzzaman, "Governance at Grassroots—Rhetoric and Reality: A Study of the Union Parishad in Bangladesh," in *In Search of Better Governance in South Asia and Beyond*, ed. Ishtiaq Jamil, Steinar Askvik, and Tek Nath Dhakal (Ney York: Springer, 2013), 219.

<sup>3</sup> Pranab Panday, "Making Innovations Work: Local Government–NGO Partnership and Collaborative Governance in Rural Bangladesh," *Development in Practice* 28:1 (2018): 125-137; and Shuvra Chowdhury, and Pranab Kumar Panday, *Strengthening Local Governance in Bangladesh: Reforms, Participation and Accountability* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG, 2018), 94.

in collaboration with the UPs to strengthen the governance of the UPs since 2006. The scheme has covered four districts of Bangladesh, to be exact Sunamganj, Khulna, Rajshahi, and Chapai Nawabganj; located in north-eastern, south-western, and north-western corner of the country respectively. This study has been conducted in two north-western districts namely Rajshahi and Chapai Nawabganj; and because of the existence of identical projects of other NSAs in Sunamganj and Khulna, these two districts have been left out of the study. The strategic target of this collaborative venture has been to establish ‘Pro-poor Good Local Governance’ in the UPs. To achieve the goal the programme has collaborated with the UPs and subsequently included UZP in the process. The collaborative efforts of Sharique have invested innovative strategies, and activities, and included both supply and demand sides to strengthen the governance of the UP through principally promotion of implementations of the provisions of the UP Act, 2009, UP operational manual of 2012, and LGSP guidelines. The outcomes of collaboration of Sharique project with UPs have been categorised into five subsets, based on five propositions, which include the collaboration of Sharique with UPs increases capacity, participation, transparency and accountability, fiscal autonomy, and gender mainstreaming. The five sets of results have incorporated as achievements in capacity building, people’s participation, accountability and transparency, gender mainstreaming, and fiscal autonomy.

The first subset of findings involves with capacity building of both citizens and office bearers. Narrowly, capacity building includes enhancement of knowledge, skill, and awareness. Extensively, it includes relationships, values, and attitudes also. It is a continuous process and has links with performance and sustainability. In broader aspect, capacity building involves with three levels: individual, organisation and societal level.<sup>4</sup> Findings suggest that the collaborative process attains developments in the mentioned areas to some magnitudes. At individual extent, both actors from supply and demand side exhibit improvement on knowledge, skill and attitudes. The demand side, in accordance with the agency theory, as principal becomes aware about its roles, and the functions of the agent, i.e. the supply side. Results put forward substantiation for formation of citizenship as the citizens become aware of their rights and entitlements, sensitise on community ownership, networking, participation, essence of RTI and CC, and information seeking and sharing. The skills they attained, contribute to group building, placing of demands, asking explanations, and holding UP officials accountable formally and informally. However, the citizens expose vulnerabilities in dealing with technical issues of budgets, legal issues, seeking information through written process, and gathering information from web pages.

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<sup>4</sup> Santiago Ripoll Lorenzo, Evaluating Individual Approaches to Capacity Development: A Literature Review, ALINe working paper 6 (September 2012), 8, <http://pool.fruitycms.com/aline/Downloads/ALINe-Evaluating-Individual-Approaches-to-Capacity-Development-Working-Paper.pdf> (accessed September 16, 2017).

The knowledge of officials on legal issues has improved though there still opportunity to move forward. The officials of both areas have been found aware on the participatory planning and budgeting, as both these groups have shown no significant difference. However, regarding RTI and CC, the office bearers of Sharique areas demonstrate intense aptitudes than their counterparts of control areas do. The functionaries of Sharique quarters become aware on sources of resources and new bases from which own revenue could be increased; but they are not seen enthusiastic to expand the bases, yet gradually with small steps, they have been increasing own source revenues. The UP representatives of Sharique regions display better connectivity with their constituents and develop options to access to government officials at upper echelons. The office holders in Sharique realms are capacitated on organising participatory meetings, long-term planning, documentation, and regular budgeting. LGSP performance scores corroborate the better performances of the UPs of Sharique areas. Furthermore, as a whole, as institutions, the UPs become a vibrant place now, capacitated with own income, enhanced access of women, and increased admissibility. While the results of the study are tested with Pareek's four proposition of institution building, such as elitism to populism, percolation to growth, centralism to decentralisation, isolated professionalism to dialogue, it is revealed that the UPs lag behind in all the four areas. However, the institutions represent a bit shift towards populism, dialogue, and inclusive development with increased people's participation in the governing process. Moreover, according to the staircase model, the UPs stay at the lowest level in the four-levelled staircase model of development stage of institution with low and unpredictable output. At environmental level, it is difficult to indicate any shift due to brief duration, whether there any changed occurred indeed. However, in Sharique areas findings suggest presence of enabling environment for participation of women, and attitudinal change towards UPs. Yet a budding shift of power structures at localities is observed with emergence of a youth group, which gain strength from their roots to political affiliation, and these unaccountable flocks exercise distribution SSNPs, etc. bypassing accountable LG officials.

The second sub-set of achievements of Sharique project involved with the issue of peoples' participation in the operation of planning and budgeting. Evidences reveal that endeavours of Sharique project result in regular participation of citizens in planning and budgetary meetings, and formation of varied committees of the UP with inclusion of local inhabitants. Participation brings positive changes in the field of planning, accountability, and empowering citizens through dispersing knowledge, skill and awareness and inspires functionaries of LGIs to be active and inclusive for legitimacy. Peoples' participation in Sharique areas conforms to the mixture of "The Political Model" and "The Democratic Model" of governance. In the political model, community

participation reaches the stage of ‘involving’ from the mere ‘informing’ and ‘consulting’ stage. However, most strikingly in this model the participation for decision-making to accomplish a project occurs in line with political affiliation or connection, which provides evidence to support the results of Waheduzzaman and Saber.<sup>5</sup> The invitation is selective, attendance and engagement in WS and OBM are dominated by folk of same feathers or political colleagues, and the members of the committees are handpicked. Aminuzzaman identified the course as “pseudo participatory” process,<sup>6</sup> where the marginalised groups have limited scope. The study also unveils presence of marginalised groups in the participatory process in Sharique areas; and accordingly, voices of them are heard to some extent to be a considerable factor in decision-making of the UPs to make the UPs a bit predictable, and legitimise the decisions, but in vain. This partaking of marginalised groups supports the arguments of the democratic model theory. However, according to Arnstein’s ladder of participation the level of participation of marginalised, in Sharique quarters, hangs around at the rung of tokenism, which though allows voice, still, this voice possesses little power to muscle the decision-making process.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, as has been found by Pandeya,<sup>8</sup> in Sharique areas, the study reveals incapability of LGIs, to respond timely with a large number of demands, and to have most of them unfulfilled, translates into negative impacts, which includes tokenistic participation, feelings of alienation, powerlessness, and socioeconomic exclusion.

Therefore, “The Democratic Model” of governance, which encompasses spontaneity in participation of citizens particularly of the marginalised and disadvantaged groups, and formation of varied committees with citizens in accordance with their capacity, not based on their political affiliation as well, remains far away to achieve. As citizens of the Sharique areas, yet to feel the urge to be engaged naturally in WS and OBM. Citizens’ lack of spontaneity in participation substantiated the arguments of public choice theory, as the study shows that low level of spontaneous engagement of the inhabitants, with their spotting of little chance of being benefitted (economic self-interest), or incentivised from the UPs, because of resources constraints of the LG units. In some cases, incentives induced participation of marginalised occurs, when there are chances of being entertained with refreshments in the meetings. In the UPs

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<sup>5</sup> Wahed Waheduzzaman, and Sharif As-Saber, “Community Participation and Local Governance in Bangladesh,” *Australian Journal of Political Science* 50, no. 1 (2015): 133.

<sup>6</sup> Salahuddin Aminuzzaman, “Political Economy of Local Governance: A Study of the Grassroots Level Local Government in Bangladesh,” Paper presented to 23rd Congress of Political Science, July 19-24th, 2014, Montreal Canada, 10, 1-15, [http://paperroom.ipsa.org/papers/paper\\_30718.pdf](http://paperroom.ipsa.org/papers/paper_30718.pdf) (accessed January 2, 2017).

<sup>7</sup> Sherry R. Arnstein, “A Ladder of Citizen Participation,” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 35:4 (1969): 217. 216-224, DOI: 10.1080/01944366908977225 (accessed July 25, 2017).

<sup>8</sup> Ganesh Prasad Pandeya, “Does Citizen Participation in Local Government Decision-Making Contribute to Strengthening Local Planning and Accountability System? An Empirical Assessment of Stakeholders’ Perceptions in Nepal,” *International Public Management Review* 16, iss. 1 (2015): 67-98.



of Sharique areas, there observed Gavanta proposed shift that achieves the implementation of participatory process.<sup>9</sup> The shift is ascertained in the outcomes of Sharique project, as people have acquired the attributes of citizenship, joined in decision-making and implementation process with the involvement of community, but the study suggests little evidence of transformation of practices/projects to policies.

Third sub-sets of findings include the role of Sharique in improving the status of the accountability and transparency in the UPs. The study reveals that the officials maintain three varieties of accountability compliance, viz. legal obedience included in UP act of 2009, like organisation of various meetings for social accountability, maintenance of procedures, and documentation of the activities, etc.; project requirements e.g. maintenance of guidelines of LGSP, requisites of NGOs working at local level; and traditional socio-political measures for responding to people's queries and demands., and voting mechanisms. Literature also substantiates the results.<sup>10</sup> These forms compliances are related to the variety of accountability, such as upward, horizontal and downward accountability. In chase of fulfilling these compliances, the UPs of Sharique areas have been arranging WS and OBM for participatory planning and budgeting with citizens' engagement in line with the essence of Public Value Management, which encourages empowerment of the citizens to hold the service providers accountable. However, some degree of inconsistencies and irregularities in organisation of WS and OBM have been noticed. In this regard, the study suggests that the UPs of control areas complete their tasks only in papers without holding such meetings and depriving the constituents' opportunity for seeking answers. In Sharique areas, corroboration of arguments of New Governance Agenda is proven with the detection of presence of members of CSOs, CBOs, and NGOs, as well as local entrepreneurs in WS and OBM. They play catalyser roles to make citizens engaged with accountability mechanism through voicing NGO formulated issues or questions. In this fashion, the two groups, the caretaker and the award provider or punisher engage in debates regarding fulfilling demands to ensure the downward accountability. The citizens have begun to raise voice with their concerns and some of them started to be entertained. This finding substantiates the pronouncements of Kumar, as he found in Kerala, that citizens have become empowered through CBOs' assistance to hold agencies accountable at local level.<sup>11</sup> However, not all voices are entertained and not all questions are answered, which means the responsiveness of the

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<sup>9</sup> John Gaventa, and Camilo Valderrama, "Participation, Citizenship and Local Governance," Background note prepared for workshop on 'Strengthening participation in local governance' Institute of Development Studies, June 21-24, 1999, 1-16, <http://www.uv.es/~fernandm/Gaventa,%20Valderrama.pdf> (accessed May 29, 2017).

<sup>10</sup> Tofail Ahmed et al., *Social Accountability Mechanisms: A Study on the Union Parishads in Bangladesh*, BIGD Special Publication Series No. 02 (Dhaka: BIGD, BRAC University, 2016), 23-42.

<sup>11</sup> Suresh K. Kumar, "Kerala, India: A Regional Community-Based Palliative Care Model," *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management* 33 (2007): 623-26.

officials yet to achieve fully. The reasons behind disorganisation of full range accountability garner from imbalances of socio-power structure, patriarchal hegemony, parochial political cultures, the inability of the officials, and political pressures.

Moreover, all concerns are not voiced because of time constraints in the meetings, busyness of stakeholders, a long gap in between meetings, power distance, and unaccustomed to public speaking. To listen to these voices the UPs set up complaint boxes in their premises. Furthermore, the project has accompanied the UPs to maintain other procedures, and prepare varied documents to supply the upper echelon of governments, and for inspections and audits in the localities to promote vertical accountability. According to the theory of NPM, a consumer like satisfaction of citizens is key to responsive government. In Sharique areas, citizens exert their satisfaction at greater level than that of non-Sharique areas on twelve selected issues. However, the standard of understandings of answerability, power distance between supply and demand sides, low level of practice of overseeing by demand-side actors, absence of formal grievance procedures, presence of corruption and legal gap for recalling the officials, etc. debilitated the process of accountability. Regarding the distribution of benefits, the study results reveal conduction of delivery of SSNP benefits based on patron-client relationship and corruption as the voice of low profiled inhabitants has yet to become enforcing mechanism. Furthermore, in the distributions process the local political leaders, who have no accountability to the citizens, play crucial roles.

Again, according to the Public Choice theory, the agent has been placed in a better place with control of resources; thus, they could promote dictated development, and in this regard, transparency play roles as an antidote to keep them away from tyrannical decisions. The UPs in Sharique quarters exhibit that they disseminate information through display boards, in meetings by way of disclosures of information regarding projects implemented and projects demanded in brown papers and supply of copies of the budget, and verbally on demands as well. However, citizens display no efforts for looking for information formally in written form. Citizens' charters have been found exhibited in the UP premises, while in non-Sharique regions the display boards have been few in numbers and are not updated. Each UP owns a UDC, and a webpage; however, the UPs in Sharique areas are discovered nourishing the same with most recent information in some cases though there are visible gaps between the information in webs and realities, whereas the web pages of the UPs of non-Sharique areas remain at the embryonic stage. However, the information disseminated in boards, notices, or through web pages, remains unserviceable in most cases, as the people do not look for information there, due to mostly their lack of education and concerns.

Third sub-sets of findings involved with issues relating to fiscal autonomy. Theoretically, fiscal autonomy directly stays related with fiscal federalism in broader sense, and narrowly, it includes fiscal decentralisation for varied measures and procedures. The findings uncover that through the efforts of the Sharique project the UPs step up their earnings from own sources. To attain this end the UPs have increased both bases of sources and the tax rate within the limit fixed in the UP Model Tax Schedule of 2013. Accordingly, the findings suggest a swell of amount of money exhibiting recent picks in graphs for own source income in the UPs of Sharique areas. This finding of the study corroborates with the research of Blair et al., as they have found that the collaborative efforts remained successful in increasing the own income.<sup>12</sup> Evidence suggests that the bulk of the fund of the UPs come from the government transfer. As a result, the UPs fiscal autonomy remains at large, and this result substantiates the outcome of the study of BIGD.<sup>13</sup> However, the UPs are not depended on their choice and opportunities. The UPs have to follow the guidelines of the government, consequently the LGIs capacity is truncated to be case sensitive to include new diversified bases for revenue collection, and to increase the rate of tax, toll, fees, etc. beyond the government directions, and as a result, the tax autonomy of the UPs is hurt. Ironically, it has been evident that the UPs of both Sharique and non-Sharique areas dared not to raise the rate up to the granted limit. Then again, government has allowed the limited opportunity to the UPs to exercise discretion for expenditures, as most of the government revenue transferred or shared come with guided projects. Therefore, the discovery of the study asserts that the process of fiscal decentralisation and its components start being practiced, yet the caravan to travel long distance.

The fifth sub-set of findings involved with gender mainstreaming. Theory of good governance and inclusive governance stimulate the process of conferring power back to the people through making government institutions and policies accessible, and answerable to the citizens, particularly to the disadvantaged groups to ensure preservation of their rights and entitlements. Hence, gender mainstreaming in LGIs upholds value in process of strengthening local governance. The study suggests that the presence of women in the varied process of planning and budgeting increased to such a level, which almost equals the numbers of men. Sharique has made the women aware, encouraged, motivated, as well as recognised the necessity of involving with the governing process. On the other parts, evidence confirms that the religious barriers to participation in Sharique areas have lessened to some extent; however, patriarchy

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<sup>12</sup> Harry Blair, William Cartier, Akhter Hussain, and Naim Mostofa, *Performance Evaluation of Strengthening Democratic Local Governance (SDLG) Project* (Dhaka: United States Agency for International Development, 2014), 6.

<sup>13</sup> Sultan Hafeez Rahman, Md. Shanawez Hossain, and Mohammed Misbah Uddin, *Public Finance and Revenue Mobilization of Union Parishads: A Case of Four Union Parishads*, BIGD Special Publication Series No. 03 (Dhaka: BIGD, BRAC University, 2016), 33.

remains pervasive in the region. The findings reveal an indication of growing ownership among the women of the localities. The women in Sharique areas engage themselves in networks, move collectively in need, place demands in harmony, contest in elections, involve in campaigning and casting votes in favour of their candidates. This outcome conforms to the study of Panday and Feldman, as they have also discovered that through NGOs' assistance women developed bargaining capacity and grew interested in engaging in 'local politics.'<sup>14</sup> The women of the project areas, exhibit symptoms of their choices being honoured, and wills being implemented, and movements being independent in needs. This finding substantiates the argument of empowerment and agency building of women.

The study suggests that WMs have been mainstreamed to some extent in the UPs. They have been provided the opportunity according to legal mandates such as: WMs are made heads of standing committees, allowed to implement one-third of the total projects of the UP, made joint signatory of the bank accounts, etc. It has been evident that the UPs of non-Sharique areas are also given the same opportunities; however, they have displayed inadequate level of capacity to obtain firm footing and execute the given responsibilities. In Sharique areas, WMs have demonstrated that they were no more showpieces in the UPs; they have realised what their roles are, and begin to exercise their authority in a limited scale. This finding corroborates Panday's study that mentioned joint efforts of GO-NGO has contributed significantly to empower elected women representatives by building their agency with capacity building on the governing process of the UP and other community related issues.<sup>15</sup> However, the WMs from both areas show no difference on their access to various laws, rules and regulations, most of the cases they are ignorant of such technical issues and become depended on their male colleagues. Nevertheless, in Sharique quarters their colleagues, as well as constituents, have ranked WMs high for their performances in comparison to the same of non-Sharique areas. Overall, the tripartite stakeholders like WMs themselves, their fellow male colleagues, and the citizens showed low level of satisfaction on the performance of WMs for having a few opportunities, low level of capacity, and lack of visible success in fulfilling people's demands. This finding upholds the evidences of a study of BIGD, which conveys that the WMs' failures to deliver on pledges and undertakings made during election discourage them to contest the second time for the office.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, WMs exhibited insubstantial roles in organising participatory meetings at Ward and UP level. In Sharique regions, both

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<sup>14</sup> Pranab Kumar Panday, and Shelley Feldman, "Mainstreaming Gender in Politics in Bangladesh: Role of NGOs," *Asian Journal of Political Science* 23: 3 (2015): 316, doi: 10.1080/02185377.2015.1055772 (accessed September 22, 2017).

<sup>15</sup> Pranab Panday, *Women's Empowerment in South Asia: NGO Interventions and Agency Building in Bangladesh* (Oxon: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>16</sup> Maheen Sultan et al., *Women's Representation in the Union Parishad: Local Governance Programme Sharique-III*, executive summary, BIGD Special Publication Series No. 04 (Dhaka: BIGD, BRAC University, 2016), viii-ix.

WMs and male members become sensible on discrimination and violence against women, child marriage, etc. The male officials of the UPs recognise quota systems for the WMs, but WMs cried for equality in numbers, and few male officials accept the faults and have proposed remedies. UPs of both areas allocate special chunks of budgets for women; however, the frequencies are capricious at both areas, yet when amount is considered the UPs of Sharique areas found in better place.

The fourth cluster of outcomes of the study includes the analysis of the collaborative process itself and varied problems and challenges of the same. LG-NGO collaboration has been tested through Theory of Change, which involves the identification of outputs, intermediate outcomes and long-term outcomes and their logical and causal relations with the interventions. Bottom-up approach of NGOs, democratic pluralism, failure of both government and market mechanisms for balanced development and comparative advantage of NGOs make these organisations crucial partner in development. Helvetas with its Sharique project has collaborated with UPs for strengthening the governance of the later. Here, Helvetas has functioned as a ‘collaborative convener’ or ‘collaborative entrepreneur,’ which deliberately has stressed upon facilitation, and operated as partners to promote such an environment, which has contributed to fruitful collaboration. The outputs and outcomes of the project have been analysed in two categories: firstly, SLG related issues, and secondly, collaboration related factors. The SLG related findings like outcomes, and impacts of the collaborative endeavour have been discussed previously.

This portion involves the issues of collaboration process. It is evident from the study that as outcomes, the collaborative efforts developed social capital among the officials of GOs and NGOs, and citizens as well. This finding is consistent with the detections of Morris at al., who have found that both intermediate and long-term outputs/outcomes have generated social capital.<sup>17</sup> The social capital has worked as the base of the efforts to achieve aspirated shared goal of SLG through developing trust, values and networks. Initially, the linkages between officials of both groups have remained little bit shaky, and later as time passed by the strength of the relationship has cemented further. This outcome validates the findings of Jelinek, as the author has mentioned that NGOs presence in an area for extended spell develops positive impressions of the same and shifts the attitudes of the local people towards the NGO.<sup>18</sup> Better performance of the citizens and officials occurs, in that quarter of Sharique covered areas, where the collaborative programme lasted for extensive period. However, the delay, and failure to supply of matching grant, and quick and silent

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<sup>17</sup> John Charles Morris, William Allen Gibson, William Marshall Leavitt, Shana Campbell Jones, *The Case For Grassroots Collaboration: Social Capital and Ecosystem Restoration at the Local Level* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013).

<sup>18</sup> Emilie Jelinek, *A Study of NGO Relations with Government and Communities in Afghanistan* (Kabul: Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief, 2006), 18.

phase-out of the project has slipped down the level of trust and confidence on NGO and its officials. In this study, the collaborative process has gone against the thought of Downs as the operation of the collaborative enterprise ends abruptly with the decision of the donor. Whereas the collaborative process, as has mentioned by Downs, ends snappily in very few times, and in cases, the operation can continue surviving, as its functions engross by other organisations.<sup>19</sup> However, SDC follows one concern of Downs, as the project authority initiates transferring of the programme to BRDB, a government organisation for rural development, to continue best practices of the Sharique project in an effort to subsist the scheme. That means NGOs cannot substitute governments mostly for resource constraints.

The products and services such as training, workshops cultural show, accompaniment, documentation, etc. of Sharique project for SLG have remained quite competent. The scheme has employed trials and errors to test the goods and services, to promote the same as universal practices, i.e. to change projects into policies. When the sustainability of the outcomes has been tested, the result put forward that, some of its promoted practices have been continued after the end of collaboration term. However, many of the provisions of UP act of 2009, promoted by the endeavour remain unimplemented or lost their intensity after the phase-out of the programme. In addition, the collaborated programme has encountered varied problems and challenges. Major problems/challenges have provoked from limited supply of matching fund, intervention ‘outside dynamics’ like politics, establishing policy linkages i.e. inclusion of best practices as policies, technical incapacity of UP officials, achieving broader and sustained impacts, orientation of fresh representatives, and non-cooperation of local bureaucrats.

### **10.3 Suggestions**

This study has drawn suggestions on two areas including the processes of SLG and collaboration for SLG. The following two sections have been organized to offer suggestions for further development in the respective fields.

#### **10.3.1 Suggestions for SLG**

Government and advocates of well-functioning local government may concentrate on the following issues.

- a. Initiatives for decentralisation of administrative and financial authority should be taken through formulating policy and enacting a new law.
- b. Initiative should be taken to bring the community groups in the UP having ensured their engagement in the various committees, and providing them with opportunity to lead the participatory process and oversight of the activities of the UP.

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<sup>19</sup> Anthony Downs, *Inside Bureaucracy* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1967), 22.

- c. Programmes should be set to institutionalise the best practices of the NGOs in the local governance. To achieve the targets the policies (project to policy) should be included in the government instruments.
- d. UPs need more permanent workforce to accomplish the day-to-day activities and carry the learnings of efforts for the next elected officials. In this gap, expert local people can be recruited locally for the UPs. Moreover, UPs should be adorned with technical personnel such as engineer, accountant and computer operator, etc.
- e. The tax collection process can be incentivised. Furthermore, partnership efforts with NGO/private entities can be engaged for tax collection. Payment of tax by citizens may facilitate the ownership building.
- f. There should have arrangements to stipulate punishments or rewards for those officials who involved with wrongdoings, or renowned for better performances in the localities in that order.
- g. Efforts should be given to arrange more close monitoring and supervisions endeavours for meeting the requirements for implementations of provisions of the varied laws. Moreover, based on this there should arrange further efforts to develop the skills of the underperformed UPs and their officials.
- h. Initiatives should be materialised for the glorification of the taxpayers at the local level. Attempts should be taken to arrange tax fare at the UPs to encourage local people to pay tax. Tax payment should be compensated with services.
- i. Efforts should be made to decentralise NILG training all over the country to ensure continuous and long-term training. Based on performance and advancement, attempts should be taken to ensure refreshment training and provide tailor-made training as demanded. DDLG can be tagged in this process.
- j. Initiatives should be occupied to culturalisation of WS and OBM in the context of rural Bangladesh. Initiatives for institutionalising social accountability in Bangladeshi culture at rural level stay tough task, as the officials have found the process threatening and challenging to their post, position, power leadership, and dignity. It needs long-time patient practices to make them accustomed psychologically to the process.
- k. There should be arrangements for upward streaming of the secretaries of the UPs, as the UP secretary remains in the same post without any promotion.
- l. Arrangements should be there for social service provisions of the local level industries with their tax-arrangement.
- m. For mainstreaming gender in the local level, there should be initiation of policy and project of social movement with inclusion of all people.

- n. Conscious efforts are needed to be taken for reduction of control of outsiders in the governing process of the UP through politics.

### **10.3.2 Suggestions for Future Collaboration**

The study found various loopholes in the joint efforts of UPs and the NGO for strengthening local governance. Based on these loopholes the study has formulated suggestions for the success of such efforts in future.

#### ***a. Promoting Mutual trust and Respect between the Actors of Collaboration***

Mutual trust, respect, and positive attitudes are important preconditions for a collaborative effort to be successful. Lack of these attributes may undermine the progress of the effort. Officials from both sides should concentrate more on intermingling their good efforts by showing positive attitudes to each other. Both actors' careful efforts are needed to heighten the level of interaction with confident being confident.

#### ***b. Formulation of Enabling Policies, and Legal Frameworks***

There observed success in varied collaborative efforts of GO-NGO. These collaborative efforts are needed to be supported by enabling government policies. Furthermore, the collaboration of GO-NGO should bring under legal frameworks. With the presence of lucid legal guidelines, this type of programmes will get strong foothold in the sector of SLG to facilitate an environment in which the innovation possesses space to be activated with inclusion of people from all strata; and the success in this sector might bring other archetypal areas under the collaborative efforts.

#### ***c. Ensuring Transparency in Collaboration***

The collaborative programmes should be made transparent. Both the NGO and GO should keep the process open not only to each other but also the citizens also. Keeping the process open may remove confusions, disbelief, and misguidance.

#### ***d. Engaging other NGOs Working in the UP in Collaboration***

Government has opportunity to involve other NGOs working in the local level in improving governance. In rural Bangladesh, there have been varied NGOs working in the multifarious areas. These NGOs can be brought under collaborative operation to improve the governance of the UP, in addition to the regular missions in the intervention areas. Moreover, the efforts of NGOs working for strengthening governance at localities should be coordinated. However, NGOs roles should be limited to guiding both citizens and officials but substituting the community.

#### ***e. Formation of Joint Committees for Need Assessment, Resource Management, and Monitoring***

Joint committees can be formed to maintain the collaboration governance. These committees may be formed with tripartite actors, such as NGO, and GO officials, as



well as citizens. These committees will assess the needs, plan types of intervention, manage resources, monitor the progress, and suggest further changes. The collaborative efforts may generate a collaborative fund with joint contribution in the agreed rate of amount. Ex-UP officials with their expertise can play a good part on behalf of the citizens in the efforts.

***f. Incentives for Engagement with Collaboration***

Community betterments have yet to become the incentives for active engagement of both the UP officials and the citizens. In collaboration, if the engagement will be incentivised, there will be hope of better performance from the part of demand and supply side actors. Therefore, managing incentives of cash and kinds and providing the same could accelerate target-achieving missions. Furthermore, the NGO should expedite the supply of committed matching fund, which will also be an incentive for the UP as a whole.

***g. Arranging Training for Both Actors of Collaboration***

Actors from both sides of collaboration should be capacitated with training. Further involvement of the NGOs in the governance of the UP requires synchronised training according to their demands. Moreover, there should be arranged common training for both GO and NGO officials and the process connect both actors for dispensing of learning. To conduct the training efforts should be required to establish permanent training institutions at local level.

***h. Engaging Line Agency Officials and LGSP Facilitators in the Efforts***

The UP act of 2009 transferred line agency officials to the UP, and these officials should be activated to perform their activities in the UP. Moreover, LGSP has been a mega player in the field of SLG. For a successful collaboration at UP level, these actors can be included in collaboration. Particularly, the line agency officials, if activated may play a crucial part in the efforts of SLG.

***i. Activation of Forums of Elected Officials for Increased Communication for Collaboration***

There exist varied forums of elected officials at different level. These forums should be given opportunities to be involved with collaborative efforts. The regular meet of elected officials in forums may contribute to enhancing collaboration with different UPs through sharing best practices, and difficulties.

***j. Engaging Local Bureaucrats and Political Leaders***

Local bureaucrats of central government at local level have key roles to play in the affairs of local governance on one hand; on the other hand, political leaders have played crucial roles previously in this field, and now with the inception of party-based election in the UP their roles have been magnified further with direct involvement. The motivation, awareness and strong willingness of them are much-needed cries for

the improvement of governance in the localities. Thus, these portions of powered people should be objectivised to the local governance, and to the establishment of responsible local governance at local level.

#### ***k. Initiation of Partnership Governance***

The expertise of NGOs has become renowned worldwide, and in Bangladesh, they played crucial roles in the development process of the war-ravaged country. The roles of NGO in service delivery, provident implementation of projects, documentation and innovation have made them acceptable partner of development. In this regard, there generate options to include them formally in the process of governance. During the field visits, the researcher has been notified the aspiration of some UP officials and citizens for intimate engagement of NGOs in the governing process. Particularly, NGOs can be involved in service delivery and poverty reduction in addition to soft skill development. Besides, NGOs can be engaged under package programmes of the government, and continue the process as long as possible. In addition to the partnership at the local level, donors and NGOs ought to capitalise their strengths to form strong partnership with central government and its varied agencies to make the project sustainable.

#### ***l. Transferring the Good Practices of the Programme to other Actors***

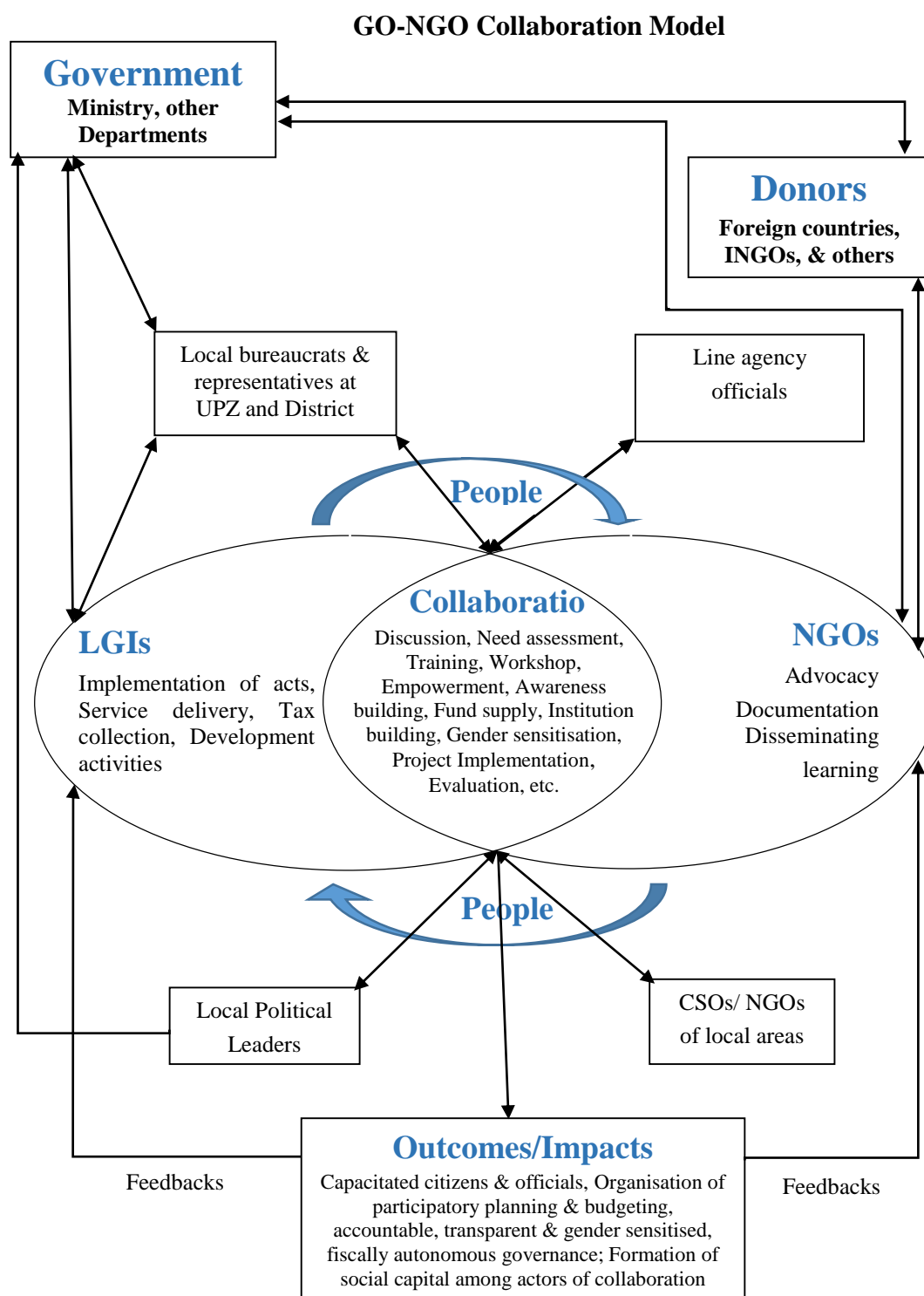
Results provide evidence for having better outcomes in the areas, where the collaborated efforts have been run for long-term. Thus, in case of NGOs phase out for their resource constraints or policy change or another reason, the practices of the projects can be transferred to other government organisations or other actors to continue the process, and which may bring sustainability of the outcomes.

### **10.4 Proposed Model of GO-NGO Collaboration for Strengthening Local Governance**

#### **10.4.1 Collaboration Process**

The proposed model of GO-NGO collaboration explains how collaboration between GOs and NGOs may work better for SLG at local level. In this model, LGIs and NGOs interface at local level, meet up and overlap each other with their strategies and activities to form a shared zone to collaborate. In the shared zone, the collaborative efforts for SLG are placed; and these efforts are proposed to be maintained by a tripartite committee of people, GO and NGO officials. The key actors of the programme are LGI functionaries, and NGO officials for empowering electorate with a view to establishing accountable and transparent governance at local level. In collaboration, the efforts include setting targets, designing strategies, implementing the planned projects, evaluating the achievements, and continuing the cycle, based on feedback. The process should focus on both collaboration itself and the SLG. The nurturing of collaboration enhances the process of implementation of the project by forming social capital. Moreover, to make the process more transparent and

responsible officials of both localities and NGOs may participate in decision-making bodies reciprocally as non-voting members. For SLG, both supply and demand sides should be brought under the intervention processes, which include training, workshop, skill development, institution building, accompaniment, backstopping, participatory analysis, etc.



**Figure 10. 1: Proposed Model of GO-NGO Collaboration**

The progress of partnership is planned to monitor, and the impacts of the same are to evaluate by another trilateral evaluating committee of citizens, LGI and NGO officials, as well as by third-party expert body. The outcomes or the impacts of the collaborative project can be tested by comparing the same with the targets, based on state of variables on baseline survey, which include capacitated citizens and officials, organisation of participatory planning and budgeting, accountable, transparent and gender sensitised LGIs, fiscally autonomous governance, and formation of social capital among actors of collaboration. Through feedbacks, the achievements or nonfulfillment of the desired goals transfers to both LGI and NGO and through them to government and donors. The project where needs, based on the feedbacks can employ renewed efforts in collaboration with redefining its targets, redesigning its strategies and implementation process. The collaboration for SLG to be successful required involvement and support of varied stakeholders. The functions of and relations among these stakeholders have been discussed below.

#### ***10.4.1.1 Government***

Government at the top, in a centralised country like Bangladesh, plays the decisive roles for LGIs, NGOs, and collaboration. The collaboration can be taken placed at central level when government becomes implementing agency or when government contract NGOs directly to implement the programme. Government can respond to advocacy of NGOs or donors, and to demands of LGIs with shifting policies, enacting laws, supplying human resources, increased fund supply to LGIs, providing enabling environment for collaboration, etc. Moreover, the government can monitor the progress, and based on the same, expand the programmes nationwide through including best practices in government programmes, or employing other agencies to continue the process.

#### ***10.4.1.2 Donor/s***

Donors including INGOs / development agencies, or philanthropic foreign countries come forward with the fund and ideas to reform governance. They can implement their programmes through national government and/or can contract local/national or INGOs. The donors make the implementer agencies accountable to them, and according to performances, the fund supplies can be continued and the project areas may be broadened.

#### ***10.4.1.3 Local Government Institution***

The LGIs have close links with grassroots people at the bottom and with other tiers of local government and central government at the top. Thus, they can channel needs and demands of the grassroots level to the top; and the government at the top level can supply resources to LGI directly and indirectly through other tiers of local government on the one hand, and can contract NGOs for interventions on the other hand. In collaboration, LGIs remain one group of the key actors. They will take part in

collaboration with positive intentions, funds, physical infrastructures, information, human resources, and organisational facility, etc.

#### ***10.4.1.4 Non-Governmental Organisation***

The roles of NGOs have been deemed as the most important factor in collaboration. In most cases, the NGOs are the convenors of collaboration. Donors/INGOs, or government can contract them to involve them in the process of SLG. NGOs will take part in collaboration with funds/grants, human capital, soft skill development measures, accompanier roles, advocacy, etc. In addition, the model illustrates that the collaborating NGOs stay accountable to their donors or INGOs or to the government at national level for their performance and activities.

#### ***10.4.1.5 Citizens of the Locality***

People stay in the centre of the whole process. The major attempt of the SLG process stands on giving power back to the citizens. In collaboration, the citizens will support the entire process through taking part in training sessions, skill development procedures, institution building process, being volunteers to promote the missions, and being the members of management and evaluation committees of collaborative efforts.

#### ***10.4.1.6 Associated Stakeholders***

The model collaborative endeavour is proposed to include local political leaders, CSO members, and NGO officials working at local level, line agency officials, local level representatives, and bureaucrats of central government in the process as favourable stakeholders. The roles of local political leaders may become crucial for their influence at local level, and their tendency to bypass local bodies in beneficiary selection and project execution without any kind of accountability to people, and for their connections at central level, through which they can be helpful in policy change. CSOs and NGOs working at regional level may assist the collaboration for SLG with harmonisation of awareness building and encouragement of their respective beneficiaries to engage with UP. The motivated line agency officials may be equally significant actors at the local stage through extending their support for collaboration with their skills, resources and technical knowledge. The favourable attitudes of UPZ and District level elected representatives and civil servants of central government stay very much-needed components for collaboration, which can facilitate the efforts and can transmit the demands of the efforts to national government.

### **10.5 Contribution of the Research**

The research has contributed substantially in the domain of knowledge regarding local government institutions-NGO collaboration for SLG and collaboration process itself. It has uncovered the context of collaboration at local level. Theoretically, the results conform to the arguments of good and inclusive governance, NPM, social accountability, and fiscal decentralisation to some extent. Empirically, the study findings provide full insights to deepen the understanding of the policies and the

processes of implementations, strengths and weaknesses of the programme, which may facilitate NGOs, donors, LGIs, and government to review their attempts for SLG to replicate with alterations in line with the model developed based on the research outcomes. The following areas deserve intensive attention of policymakers, donors, as well as academicians.

1. It stands possible to strengthen governance of the localities with collaborative efforts of the GOs and NGOs. The study reveals a cause-effect relationship between inputs, actions and outputs of collaboration with results, which includes outcomes and impacts. At local level, both citizens and their representatives remained unaware on legal mandates for the governing process of the UPs. Then again, citizens and officials limped heavily due to their low level of formal education, and orientation on issues of governance. Besides, citizens revealed attitudinal complexities with their unconcern to be engaged with the governance of the UP. In this context, they necessitated extensive capacity building efforts and in collaboration, it can be attained.

2. The methods, mechanisms, and devoted efforts that Sharique project has applied can be replicated to other areas of the country with some modifications in suggested areas. The project has included both supply and demand side actors to make them aware, knowledgeable and skilled through intensive training, workshops, learning visits, accompaniment, and establishing training institute at local level to create demands among the marginalised, community ownership, impulsion of officials to practise participatory and transparent governance. All these efforts result in frequent organisations of WS and OBM, proactive disclosure of information, increased receptiveness of the officials, burgeoning of own income, and extended roles playing of women in decision-making.

3. The level of social capital developed among the actors particularly GO and NGO officials and citizens determines the success of the endeavours to a great extent. In their involvement, the functionaries of the UPs, citizens, and the officials of NGOs have dwelled close to each other; and through the process, they have developed a relationship. The relationship needs substantiating by mutual respects and trust, cooperation, flawless dependency to achieve shared goals, and transparency in their activities.

4. The more the length of the collaborated intervention continues, the more the success rate remains attainable and sustainable. In the process of collaboration for SLG, there spirals out an aspiration among actors, particularly amongst demand side actors for engagement of NGOs more intimately in partnership governance with UPs for service delivery and implementation of the provisions of legal mandates.

5. People's participation for placing demands need to be satisfied reasonably and without the same, the participation and social accountability mechanisms will fall short. The engagement of the citizens with governing process demands backstop with

incentives. In this regard, the LGIs require being fiscally autonomous with high own revenue receipts, and getting a share of revenue of national government based on formula, and acceptances of fund supplied from others sectors duly with having expenditure autonomy.

6. The most important issue for SLG entails strong political commitment of the government to develop a congenial atmosphere for active involvement of varied actors of the field. The government needs to respond to the demands of the actors from local level to bring shift in policy, legal framework, decentralisation mechanisms, revenue sharing, and to deliver more services as well as implement Annual Development Programmes (ADPs) through local bodies.

7. The officials stand uninterested in participating in the self-financed training programmes, which have been offered them. Some good functioning UPs with the promotion and sponsorship of Sharique in collaboration with National Institute of Local Government (NILG) developed Union Parishad Local Academy (UPLA) to conduct training at local level with diffusion of practical experience to the participants. After the phase-out of the project, the academy with potentials turns out to be dysfunctional because of lack of financial and technical support, conflict of interest among officials of the UP, and non-cooperation of NILG and LGD.

8. *'Partyarchy'* and *'patron-client relationship'* continue to play critical roles in the governing system of the UP. Party people administer a parallel UP without any responsibility. Where powerful ruling party chairperson runs the UP, the Ward members who are weak and elected from opposition party suffer much from lack of power and opportunity to satisfy his/her constituents; and where chairpersons from the opposition party, the whole body of UP suffers as it is bypassed by ruling party leaders at local level.

9. The NGO tends to include those citizens who have already been supported by non-financial services of other NGOs. Diversification of client selections of NGOs has been limited, as they have targeted unchanged individuals recurrently and simultaneously.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, NGO includes accessible areas and refrains from counting remote pockets under its intervention.

10. Study results discover the occurrence of *'coercive invitation,'* which denotes people's participation in the WS and OBM against their self-will and comforts. This type of persuasive invitation has been observed, when the officials need presence of large numbers of participants for highlighting their performance during NGOs' programmes or attendance of high NGO and/or GO officials. Typically, the process involves with summons of the SSNP beneficiaries, particularly women to participatory mechanisms, creating fear of yielding the benefits. In other cases, the

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<sup>20</sup> In Jhilim UP, one woman has been tagged NGO before her name for her frequent and incessant involvement with different NGOs.

process entails with tempting those, who consider latent desires of securing benefits of SSNPs.

### **10.6 Implications for Further Research**

1. This study has included capacitation, participation, transparency and accountability, fiscal autonomy, as well as gender mainstreaming to examine the state of change in these areas. The researcher has realised that each of these topics deserved a separate study. For an in-depth exploration of the situations and achievements of the collaborative effort, further research is suggested.
2. The collaborative effort developed peoples' forum: 'Ward Platform' to organise the citizens to make ready as collective voice to have an impact on decision-making. These forums can be studied separately to identify roles of these forums in making social capital, and promotion of these forums as civil society, or CBOs at local level.
3. The study has found that through the efforts of the project there has started practices of varied provisions of the UP act of 2009, and the UP manual as well. Current study has not examined the impact of these practices in the UP.
4. The project has also invested its efforts to establish participatory and responsible governance at the Upazila level. However, this endeavour has not included the Upazila for this study. Thus, a study on Upazila will be well worth effort of exploration.
5. The project has founded academies at local level to train officials of localities. How far these academies remained successful and what are the potentials of these institutions, are few questions, which may drive a future researcher to accomplish a study.
6. The collaborative efforts initiated to bring changes in service delivery. The present study has not included the topic for study. A further research on the issues could examine the process of services delivery, and whether there observed any improvement in the UP.
7. The project has also worked for alleviation of poverty with the collaboration of the UP. This corner of the collaborative areas remained unexplored. Thus, collaborative efforts for poverty reduction through employment generation will be a key topic for further research.
8. There are other actors have been engaging in the process of strengthening local governance in Bangladesh. It would be great to conduct a comparative study of such projects. The outcomes of that study could present a universal guideline for SLG in Bangladesh.
9. It will be a substantial research to study on long-term impact of the project. The core areas of the study will be to unveil whether the collaboration contributes to the shift of the living standard of the impoverished through improving governance.



## Appendices

### Code of the Respondents

N = NGO official, O = UP Official, G = Government Official, C = Citizen

#### Appendix 6.1: Duties of officials (officials)

Area	Sharique		Control	
	f	%	f	%
Response*				
Construction and refurbishment of infrastructures	16	50	5	31.3
Distribution of services of SSNPs	18	56.3	12	75
To run village court	7	21.9		
Solving familial & social problems	14	43.8	4	25
Project implementation	6	18.8	3	18.8
To serve the people	11	34.4	6	37.5
Stop child marriage, dowry, violence against women	7	21.9	3	18.8
Developmental work (health, education, water, social)	19	59.38	4	25
Issue different certificates	4	12.5	4	25
Collect tax	-	-	-	-
Organising WS/OBM	3	9.4	3	18.8
Others	6	18.8	9	56.7

\*Multiple responses taken into account.

#### Appendix 6. 2 Reason of introduction of WS & OBM (official)

Area	Sharique		Control	
	f	%	f	%
Response				
To listen to the people's demand	32	100	13	81.3
To share the information	14	43.8	2	12.5
To ensure accountability	2	6.3	2	12.5
To bridge between citizens and officials	1	3.1	-	-
For planning	-	-	-	-
Formalities	-	-	-	-
Don't Know	-	-	3	18.8
Others	-	-	2	12.5

\*Multiple responses taken into account.

#### Appendix 6. 3 Logic behind the people's voice raising at WS & OBM (official)

Area	Sharique		Control	
	f	%	f	%
Response				
To place their demands	32	100	16	100
To be included in the mainstream of development	12	37.5	1	6.3
To be empowered	2	6.3	-	-
To ensure efficient local government	6	18.8	-	-
Others	1	3.1	-	-

\*Multiple responses taken into account.

#### Appendix 6. 4: Knowledge on various services of UP, their process of delivery and timeframe (citizen)

Area	Sharique		Control	
	f	%	f	%
Response				
No	14	35	12	60
Yes	25	62.5	2	10
Not at all	1	2.5	6	30
Total	40	100	20	100

#### Appendix 6.5 Use of RTI to demand information by the Citizen (official)

Area	Sharique		Control	
	f	%	f	%
Strongly agree	18	56.3	-	-
Agree	3	9.4	1	6.3
Neutral	4	12.5	5	31.3
Disagree	2	6.3	4	25
Strongly disagree	5	15.6	6	37.5
Total	32	100	16	100

**Appendix 6.6** Understanding the logic behind the introduction of CC (official)

Response*	Sharique		Control	
	f	%	f	%
Disseminating information	25	78.1	3	18.8
For accountability	20	62.5	3	18.8
For transparency	19	59.4	2	12.5
To deliver services	6	18.8	2	12.5
Don't know	5	15.6	11	68.8

\*Multiple responses taken into account.

**Appendix 6.7** Awareness and identification of (probable) resources by citizens (Citizen)

Area	Sharique		Control	
	f	%	f	%
Increase tax rate	11	27.5	-	-
Expand tax sources	15	37.5	-	-
Increase income from other sources	8	20	2	10
Demand fund form government	1	2.5	1	5
Collect 100% of present tax	1	2.5	-	-
Social forestation	8	20.0	-	-
Collect Grant from Donors/NGO	2	5	-	-
Collect more tax from the rich	2	5	1	5
Generate income by producing goods & services to sell	11	27.5	1	5
Empower UP to take its own decision	-	-	1	5
No other scope	-	-	2	10
Don't Know	7	17.5	15	75
Others	1	2.5	-	-

\*Multiple responses taken into account.

**Appendix 6.8** Identification of (probable) avenues to increase fund) by officials (official)

Area	Sharique Area		Control Area	
	f	%	f	%
Increase tax rate	11	42.3	5	35.7
Expand tax sources	11	42.3	3	21.4
Increase income from other sources	10	38.5	4	28.6
Demand fund form government	16	61.5	5	35.7
Collect 100% of present tax	1	3.8	-	-
Transfer of <i>khas</i> land to UP	1	3.8	-	-
Don't Know	-	-	1	7.1

\*Multiple responses taken into account.

**Appendix 6.9** Other sources of income (except holding tax) of UP as mentioned by officials (official)

Area	Sharique		Control	
	f	%	f	%
Trade license	17	53.1	4	25
Succession certificate	7	21.9	1	6.3
Brick field	2	6.3	-	-
Mill & Factory	7	21.9	-	-
Fees	1	3.1	-	-
Lease (Shop & land)	4	12.5	-	-

Hat/Bazaar <i>Ijara</i>	7	21.9	-	-
Custody for livestock	6	18.8	-	-
Issuing various certificates	4	12.5	4	25
Farming (Orchard)	2	6.3	-	-
Others	7	21.9	1	6.3
No more scope except holding tax	-	-	7	43.8
Don't know	1	3.1	4	25

\*Multiple responses taken into account.

**Appendix 6.10** Sources of income of UP as mentioned by citizens (citizen)

Area	Sharique		Control	
	f	%	f	%
Central government	9	22.5		
District	6	15		
Upazila (Sub-district)	4	10		
Member of Parliament	4	10		
NGO	4	10		
Holding tax	33	82.5	20	100
Own income of UP from resources	7	17.5		
Mills and factories	5	12.5		
Lease of ghat	10	25		
Lease of hat/bazar	12	30.		
Issuing certificates	26	65	2	10
Others	2	5		

\*Multiple responses taken into account.

**Appendix 6.11** Link between FYP and Budget

Area	UP	Fiscal Year	Projects in FYP	Project in Budget	Projects from FYP	% of FYP	% of Budget	Nature
Sharique	Shahbajpur	2017-18	28	30	30	107%	100%	Unspecific
	Jhilim*	2016-17	33	11	10	30%	91%	Unspecific
	Shilmaria*	2016-17	63	10	7	11%	70%	Specific
	Deopara	2017-18	61	23	20	33%	87%	Specific
Total	-	-	185	74	67	36%	91%	-
Control	Alatuli	2017-18	18	31	23	127%	74%	Mixed
	Maria*	2016-17	13	8	2	15%	25%	Specific
Total	-	-	31	39	25	81%	64%	-

Source: Document analysis by the researcher. \* The project lists of 2017-18 have not been found.

**Appendix 6.12** Education, Ave. Monthly Income (official)

Area	Sharique Area		Control Area	
	Chair	Member	Chair	Member
Mode of Education Level	Under Graduate or above		Under Graduate or above	Primary
Average Monthly Income (tk.)	20,000.00	12,250.00	16,000.00	10,666.70
Good Knowledge on UP Act	75%	58%	50%	33%
Ave. No. of UP tasks Mentioned	5.25	3.04	5.5	2.67

**Appendix 6.13** The reasons, which Propelled Citizens to Participate at WS (Citizen)

Area	Sharique		Control	
	f	%	f	%
Spontaneously to fulfil the legal obligation	14	38.9	-	-
To honour the request	6	16.7	1	33.3
To make demands	29	80.6	1	33.3
To be informed and aware	1	2.8	1	33.3
Others	2	5.6	-	-

Total	52	144.4	3	100
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\*Multiple responses included.

**Appendix 6.14 Population**

Sharique areas		Control areas	
UP	Population	UP	Population
Jhilim	26194	Alatuli	16620
Deopara	39249	Maria	16554
Shilmaria	37010	Total	33174
Shahbajpur	53901		
Total	156354		

**Appendix 7.1 Reasons for not asking questions or making demands (Citizen)**

Area	Sharique		Control	
	f	%	f	%
Response*				
Not interested	2	25	1	20
Don't listen to me	7	87.5	3	60
No effect	1	12.5	-	-
In fear	-	-	1	20
Others	-	-	1	20
Total	10	125	6	120

\*Multiple responses taken into account.

**Appendix 7.2 Websites of UPs & their status during the FY 2017-2018**

Area	Sharique Area				Control Area	
	Shahbajpur	Jhilim	Deopara	Shilmaria	Alatuli	Maria
Info. / UPs	Shahbajpur	Jhilim	Deopara	Shilmaria	Alatuli	Maria
Demographic & other information	A brief with no particular information	Key information is available	A well written brief with key information	A well written brief with key information	Key information is not fully available	A well written brief with key information
Details of functionaries	No list of functionaries and other information; List of health worker and agriculture officers without phone nos.	Chair with photo and phone number, secy. are listed without phone number & no list of members are found, list of health worker with phone nos., a name of agri. officer without phone no.	Functionaries are listed with their phone numbers, and no photos except chair, List of health worker & Agriculture officers with phone no. available	Functionaries are listed with their phone numbers and photos, except secy., List of health worker & Agriculture officers without phone nos.	No information on elected functionaries, secretary's name with wrong phone no., List of Agriculture officers, & health workers without phone nos.	No information on elected officials, only the name & phone no. of secretary, List of Agriculture officers without phone nos., & health workers with phone nos.
Information on CC	No CC of UP (land office has a CC)	No CC of UP (land office has a CC)	No CC of UP (land office has a CC)	No CC of UP (land office has a CC)	No CC of UP or land office	No CC of UP or land office
Information of Social Safety Nets	Some lists of beneficiaries, no specific period, some lists showed the name of other areas	Lists of beneficiaries, without time frame	Updated Lists of beneficiaries up to 2014-15, and few cases up to 2015-16	Updated Lists of beneficiaries up to 2015-16	List of beneficiaries without any update.	List of beneficiaries without any update.
Information on Projects	Name of some projects with budgets, no time framework	Name of some projects with budgets, no time framework	Some projects with budgets of the financial year 2013-14	Updated projects list with budgets of the financial year 2015-16	No information except few old names	No information except few old names
Five year plan & yearly budgets	A five-year plan (2011/12 - 2015/16) with some year wise probable projects; A budget found with no duration ; No land tax rate found	A five-year plan (2013/14 - 2017/18) with year wise lengthy lists probable projects; last budget found of 2013-12-13 ; No land tax rate is seen	A five-year plan (2011/12 - 2015/16) with some year wise probable projects; A budget of 2013-14 fiscal year; Land tax rate is mentioned	A well-developed strategic five-year plan (2015/16 - 2019/20) with some year wise probable projects; A budget of 2016-17 fiscal year, Land tax rate is mentioned	A five-year plan for 2011/12-15/16 & year wise projects, a budget but no period,	A five-year plan with no specific period, no year wise projects, no budget,

Comments	A very few information, not updated (last update: no date), & almost dormant (UDC still remained as UISC)	Lack of information, not updated (last update: no date), & almost dormant (UDC still remained as UISC)	There is some information, not fully updated (two weeks ago), & active	Data & information of various area available, fully updated (two weeks ago), & active	A very few information, moderately updated (last update: 5 months ago), & almost inactive (UDC still remained as UISC)	A very few information, not updated (last update: no date), & almost inactive (UDC still remained as UISC)
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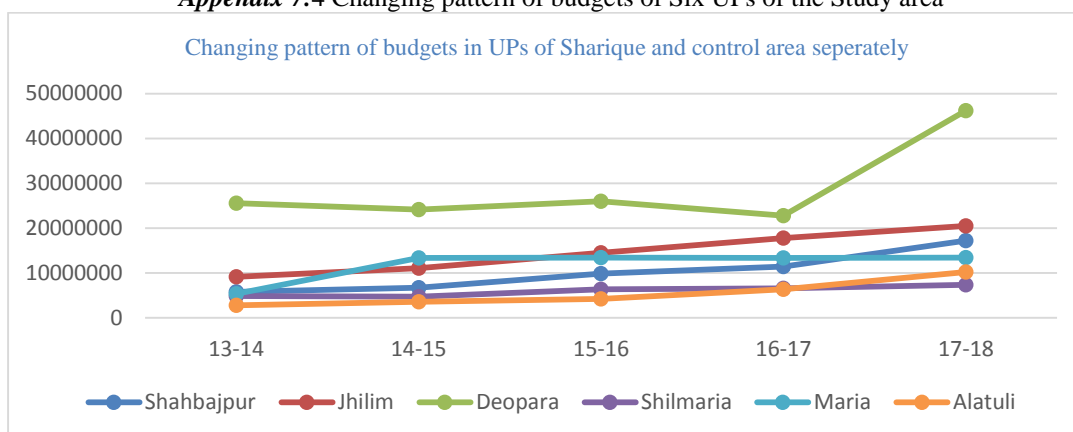
Source: Based on webpage/website visits.

**Appendix 7.3** Sharique’s role in increasing UP's income (official)

Area Response	Sharique	
	f	%
to identify new sources of tax	17	65.4
to inspire to increase tax rate	10	38.5
to unearth others sources of income rather than tax	14	53.8
to encourage citizens	11	42.3
Total	52	200

(Multiple response include

**Appendix 7.4** Changing pattern of budgets of Six UPs of the Study area



**Appendix 7.5** Change of Budget of Six UPs in percent

UP	13/14-14/15	14/15-15/16	15/16-16/17	16/17-17/18
Shahbajpur	16.1%	45.7%	16.4%	50.3%
Jhilim	21.6%	30.4%	22.8%	15.4%
Deopara	-21.1%	28.9%	-12.3%	102.3%
Shilmaria	7.1%	-11.20%	-6.6%	-29.76%
<b>Overall change in Sharique area</b>	<b>-5.70%</b>	<b>32.40%</b>	<b>3.40%</b>	<b>55.70%</b>
Maria	148.7%	0.34%	-0.1%	0.1%
Alatuli	28.5%	17.7%	51.4%	59.4%
<b>Overall change in control area</b>	<b>107.60%</b>	<b>4.00%</b>	<b>12.30%</b>	<b>19.30%</b>

**Appendix 7.6** Income from Holding and Non-holding Taxes for the Financial Year of 2016-2017

Area	UP	Income from Taxes in BDT for the Fiscal Year 2016-2017			
		Holding Tax	Holding Tax Per Household	Non-holding Tax	Percent of Holding Tax of Total Tax
Sharique	Deopara	463127	52.14	91600	83.5%
	Shahbajpur	375809	34.64	82300	82%
	Jhilim	611054*	104.08*	0.00	100%
	Shilmaria	308310	31.55	111500	73.4%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1758300</b>	<b>49.70</b>	<b>285400</b>	<b>86%</b>
Control	Alatuli	6000	2.02	0.00	100%
	Maria	164812	37.60	10000	94%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>170812</b>	<b>23.23</b>	<b>10000</b>	<b>94.5%</b>

Source: Annual Financial Report of the UPs. (\* Did not separate tax sources)

**Appendix 7.7** Changes in Own Income

Area	UP	Fiscal Year wise own income in BDT						
		12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	Ave. Growth	Average
Sharique	Deopara	806253	431181	721478	823507	659769	3.0%	671408
	Shahbajpur	275522	192400	668363	558489	789542	48.4%	496863
	Jhilim	480639	518244	601664	880550	1077220	18.5%	711663
	Shilmaria	366178	398099	433941	540119	551787	8.9%	458025
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1928592</b>	<b>1539924</b>	<b>2425446</b>	<b>2802665</b>	<b>3078318</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>588747</b>
Control	Alatuli	5656	44780	50890	15770	66105	191.1%	36640
	Maria	411803	143673	115921	135865	184392	-6.3%	198331
	<b>Total</b>	<b>417459</b>	<b>188453</b>	<b>166811</b>	<b>151635</b>	<b>250497</b>	<b>-2.3%</b>	<b>134597</b>

**Appendix 7.8** Expenditure for Development from Own Fund

Area	UP	Fiscal Years Wise Total Income in BDT						P/C Dev. Expense from Own Fund
		12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	Average	
Sharique Area	Deopara	773568	0	209856	200000	0	236685	<b>1.21</b>
	Shahbajpur	615867	180082	304719	82279	337230	304035	
	Jhilim	0	0	278860	186000	130200	119012	
	Shilmaria	0	0	143689	244078	105800	98713	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1389435</b>	<b>180082</b>	<b>937124</b>	<b>712357</b>	<b>573230</b>	<b>189611</b>	
Control Area	Alatuli	0	24426	34650	0	0	11815	<b>0.19</b>
	Maria	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24426</b>	<b>34650</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5908</b>	

**Appendix 7.9** Use of Funds for Development

Area	UP	FY 14-15			FY 15-16			Aggregate Ratio %	P/C Dev. Expense
		Dev. Expense*	Total received*	Ratio %	Dev. Expense*	Total received*	Ratio %		
Sharique Area	Jhilim	9472374	12531134	75.6	5651750	7528499	75.1	<b>55.4</b>	<b>58.43</b>
	Deopara	11314184	19832897	57.0	11158450	21140538	52.9		
	Shilmaria	8134123	20817782	39.1	7205963	18414915	39.1		
	Shahbajpur	10294337	12672927	81.2	9850446	19024214	51.8		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>39215018</b>	<b>65854740</b>	<b>59.5</b>	<b>33866609</b>	<b>66108166</b>	<b>51.2</b>		
Control Area	Alatuli	2956943	4937871	59.9	4474256	5261003	85.0	<b>58.1</b>	<b>129.42</b>
	Maria	5329057	9458704	56.3	4412987	9907665	44.5		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8286000</b>	<b>14396575</b>	<b>57.6</b>	<b>8887243</b>	<b>15168668</b>	<b>58.6</b>		

**Appendix 8.1** Officials' views regarding development of women to participate in discussions (official)

Area	Sharique Area	
Response	f	%
Strongly agree	25	78.1
Agree	5	15.6
Not Sure	1	3.1
Disagree	1	3.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Appendix 8.2** Sharique contribution to increasing women participation (Citizen)

Area	Sharique	
Response	f	%
Awareness building	6	20.7
Voice raising effort	5	17.2
Training	1	3.4
Participate in the UP meeting	4	13.8
Gap diminish between UP officials and citizens	1	3.4
Motivation	4	13.8
Demand raising	1	3.4
Empowerment of women	2	6.9

Group building	1	3.4
Don't know	4	13.8
Total	29	100

**Appendix 9.1** The ways officials of up cooperated Sharique (Official)

Area	Sharique Area	
	f	%
Participated in their programme	9	28.1
Called people to their programme	6	18.8
Accompany	7	21.9
Providing Meeting place	3	9.4
Follow their direction	15	46.9
Allowed them to work	3	9.4
Help them by conducting training	5	15.6
Motivate citizen to engage with Sharique's efforts	4	12.5
Formed various committees	1	9.4
Cooking	1	3.1
Organize the programme	6	18.8
Provide information	8	25
Implement project	5	15.6
Others	3	3.1
Total	76	237.5

(Multiple response included)

**Table 9.2** Problems faced by officials while working with Sharique project (official)

Area	Sharique Area	
	f	%
No problem	25	78.1
Problem of trust	1	3.1
Problem of releasing fund	1	3.1
Problem of commitment	1	3.1
Didn't listen to the members	1	3.1
Personal problems	1	3.1
Resistance from people on implementing Sharique project	1	3.1
ICE breaking stage	1	3.1
Total	32	100.0

**Appendix 9.3** Are people demanding more from UP? (Official)

Area	Sharique Area	
	f	%
Strongly agree	26	81.3
Agree	5	15.6
Not Sure	1	3.1
Total	32	100.0

**Appendix 9.4** Challenges of collaboration (official)

Area	Sharique	
	f	%
No challenge	21	65.6
Challenge of legal issues	3	9.4
Timely delivery of goods and services	1	3.1
Delay in fund release	2	6.3
Length of the programme	1	3.1
Non-cooperation of Govt. officials	1	3.1
Not fulfilled our expectation	1	3.1
Lack mutual understanding / communication	2	6.3
Total	32	100

**Appendix 9.5** Problems that require rectification (Official)

Area	Sharique	
	f	%
Response		
Problem of trust	21	65.6
Problem of communication	9	28.1
Problem of understanding	4	12.5
Problem of releasing fund	3	9.4
Problem of mismatched	3	9.4
Problem of commitment	5	15.6
Didn't listen to members	3	9.4
Personal problems	1	3.1
Resistance from people on implementing Sharique project	2	6.3
ICE breaking stage	2	6.3

(Multiple response included).

**Appendix 9.6** More components to be included in future (Official)

Area	Sharique	
	f	%
Response		
Favourable law	4	13.3
Security	1	3.3
More fund	10	33.3
More time for training	7	23.3
Introducing ICT in service delivery	1	3.3
Permanent Training centre	1	3.3
Open Sharique's Components	1	3.3
Campaigns	1	3.3
Partnership governance	6	20
Monitoring improvement	1	3.3
poverty reduction	4	13.3
Good governance	1	3.3
Attitude change	2	6.7
Replicate all over Bangladesh	2	6.7
No suggestion	6	20

(Multiple response included).

**Appendix 9.7** Reasons for such initiatives in future (Citizen)

Area	Sharique Area	
	f	%
Response		
for good local governance	11	27.5
for responsible local governance	2	5.
for better distribution of wealth	1	2.5
For skilled citizens	5	12.5
for aware citizen	16	40
for active participation of citizen	7	17.5
For Development	17	42.5
to fulfil the demand of the citizens	3	7.5
to generate income of the UP	1	2.5
for poverty reduction	2	5
to encourage	3	7.5
Total	68	170

(Multiple response included)

**Appendix 9.8** Significant change Sharique brought (Official)

Area	Sharique	
	f	%
Response		
more open and accountable UP	12	37.5
maintains rules and regulations better ays	7	21.9

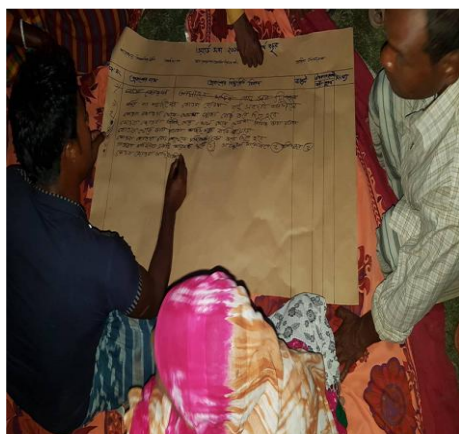


more responsive to people demands	9	28.1
more pro poor	2	6.3
become financially well off	1	3.1
People can make demands	3	9.4
People become aware	6	18.8
No significant Change	1	3.1
Don't Know	1	3.1
others	2	6.3
WS/OBM implemented	5	15.6
Drugs use become less	2	6.3
Tax collection enhanced	4	12.5
Women empowerment	4	12.5
Improvement in service delivery and activities	2	6.3

(Multiple response included)

**Appendix 9.9** The most significant change in UP governance since Sharique program began (Citizen)

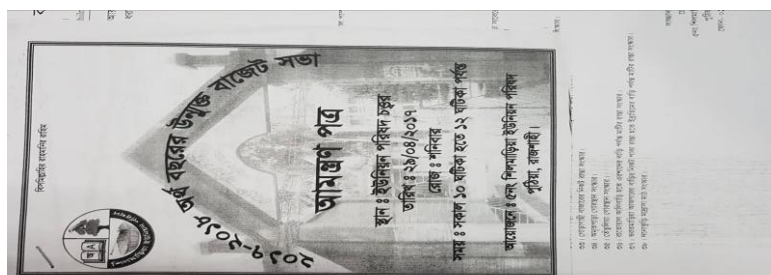
Area	Sharique	
	f	%
Response		
more open and accountable UP	12	30
maintains rules and regulations better ways	1	2.5
more responsive to people demands	5	12.5
more pro poor	2	5
Grow importance of UP and people come to UP in extended number	1	2.5
Performing well	6	15
No change happened	1	2.5
More demand are placing	1	2.5
Development	1	2.5
Don't know	10	25
Total	40	100



**Appendix P 6.1** Citizens are listing their demands in brown paper at WS for FY 2018-19.

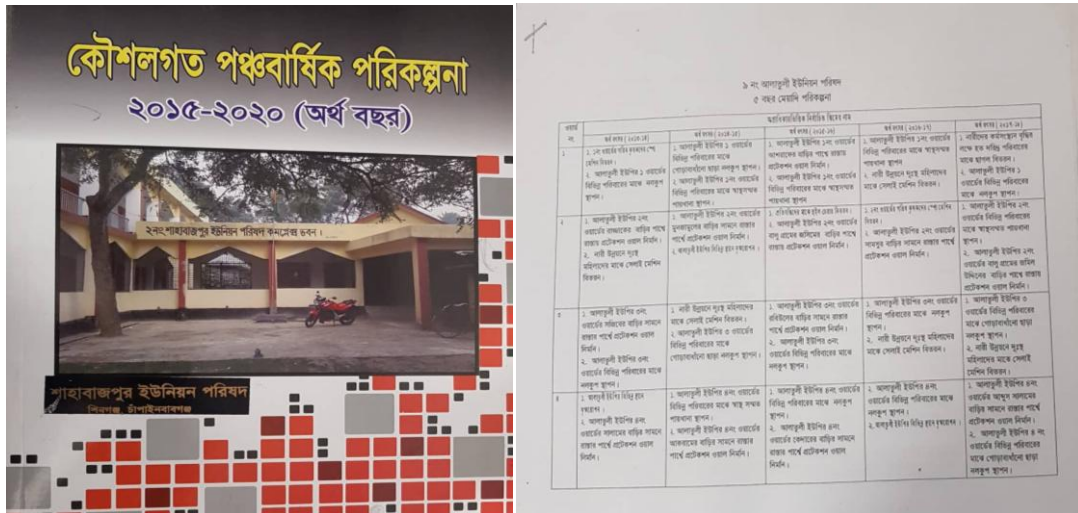


**Appendix P 6.1** Participants at WS of Ward no. 8 of Shilmaria UP on March 3, 2018.



**Appendix P 6.1A**  
Invitation letter for  
OBM

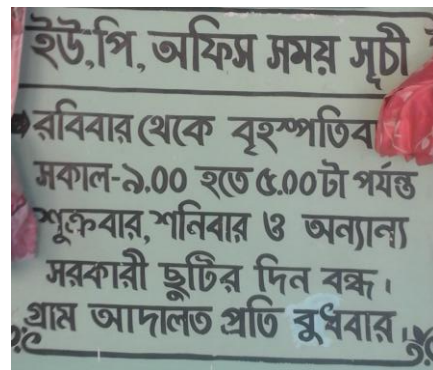




Appendix P 6.3 FYP compilation at Sharique area and non-Sharique area.



Appendix P 7.1 Photograph of Complaint Box at Shilmaria and Deopara UP of Sharique area.



Office time table of the UP displayed in the Shilmairia UP of Sharique area.

Appendix P 7.2 Photographs of Information Boards, Websites, etc.



The list of projects for the FY 2015-2016 in Shilmaria UP of Sharique area.



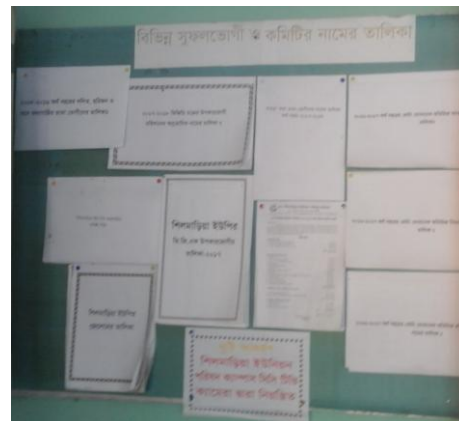
Board of shop for physically challenged people (above). Tax Collection (2017-18) display board. Jhilim UP of Sharique area.

The only display board in control area at Alatalui UP containing budget of 2012-2013 FY.

Annual Budget FY 2017-18 of the Jhilim UP of Sharique area displayed in board.

নাম	পদবী	ওয়ার্ড নং	মোবা: নং
মোঃ তাসিন ইসলাম তাসি	সম্প্রদায়		০১৭৭১-১০৬১৪৭
" জাহরুল ইসলাম	সচিব		০১৭৪৬-০৪১৭৬
মোঃ পারভেজ বেগম	সদস্য	১,২৩	০১৭১৩-৭১৮২১১
" রেহানা পারভেজ	"	৪,৫	০১৭২৩-৩৪৩৬৭০
" তাসলিমা বেগম	"	৭,৮,৯	০১৭৩৬-৭৫৩৮৪
মোঃ মোমাজ্জাম হোসেন	"	১	০১৭১৫-৭৭২৭৬৮
" ফিরোজ আলী	"	২	০১৭৩৭-৭৯১১৫
" সাইদুর রহমান	"	৩	০১৭৩৫-৮৫৩১
" আনোয়ারুল ইসলাম নিলি	"	৪	০১৭৭৫-০২৫২
" মুখতারুল রহমান খনি	"	৫	০১৭১৫-৩৭৮
" আব্দুল ওসাহাব	"	৬	০১৭১৮-৪০৬
" মাইনুল ইসলাম মুন্সে	"	৭	০১৭১৬-৭২৭
" মনিরুল ইসলাম	"	৮	০১৭২৭-৫১
" রাশিদুল হক	"	৯	০১৭১৫-৬

The list of the UP officials with their contact numbers in wall writing at Jhilim UP of Sharique area.



The list of SSNP beneficiaries displayed in the board in Shilmaria UP of Sharique area.



Awareness building wall painting against violence against women for dowry.

৭ নং দেওপাড়া ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ					
উপজেলাঃ গোদাগাড়ী, জেলাঃ রাজশাহী।					
২০১৬-২০১৭ অর্থ বছরের আয়/ব্যয় বিবরণী					
ক্র.সং.	আয়	পরিমাণ	ক্র.সং.	ব্যয়	
	বাজারে		বাজারে		
	১১,০২০/-		০১	অস্ফাল্ট	৫৬,০৪৫/-
০১	২,১৭,১২৬/-		০২	সেতোর	৪৫,৭২০/-
০২	২,৪৬,০০০/-		০৩	টাওয়ার মসিদ	৪,০২৫/-
০৩	৩১,০০০/-		০৪	বিদ্যুৎ বিল	২০,০২৮/-
০৪	৫৬,০০০/-		০৫	সংসদ পর বিল	৪,০২৫/-
০৫	২৪,১০০/-		০৬	মেট্রিক সার্টিফিকেট প্রদান	৮,৪০০/-
০৬	১,৫৭,৭০০/-		০৭	অর্থিক সহায়তা	১,০০০/-
০৭	২২,৬৯,৯০০/-		০৮	জাতীয় দিবস পালন	১০,০০০/-
০৮	১০,৫০,০০০/-		০৯	সেপাহী	৩৭,৫০০/-
০৯	১,৫২,৯১০/-		১০	মসজিদ	৭,০০০/-
১০	৫,৩৬,০০০/-		১১	কৃষি শিক্ষার্থীদের সংরক্ষণ	৩৫,০০০/-
১১	১১,৩৫,০০০/-		১২	সেতোর	৪,৭৮০/-
১২	১৭,০০,০০০/-		১৩	প্রাথমিক ও মাধ্যমিকসহকারী সচিবী কার্য	২,২৭,০০০/-
১৩	৩৯,০০,০০০/-		১৪	মহাপরিষদের বেতন ও ভাতা	৩,৫৭,০০০/-
১৪	৫,৩৯,৯০০/-		১৫	ভ্রমণ খরচ	৪০,০০০/-
১৫	৩৫,০০,০০০/-		১৬	কৃষি পরামর্শ	১৭,৯২৬/-
১৬	১৮,৯২,৮০০/-		১৭	পানি, ময়লা ও পরিচ্ছন্নতা	১,০২,৯০০/-
১৭	৫,৩০০/-		১৮	স্বাস্থ্যকর বাড়ি	৪,৭২,০০০/-
১৮	২,৬৭,০৪,৪৪৫/-		১৯	শিক্ষা খরচ	১০,৯১,০০০/-
			২০	সেত ও বীজ	৪,০৯,৯০০/-
			২১	বি.সি.সি	৩৫,০০,৪০০/-
			২২	বি.সি.এক	১৮,৯২,৪০০/-
			২৩	অন্যান্য ব্যয়	১০,২০,২২৫/-
				সর্বমোট ব্যয়	২,৬৭,০৪,৪৪৫/-
				ব্যয়কে ছাড়া	১,৯৯,৪৬৫/-
				সর্বমোট	২,৬৭,০৪,৪৪৫/-

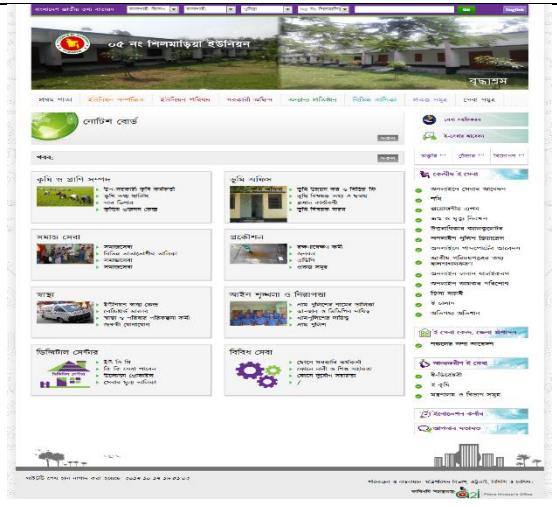
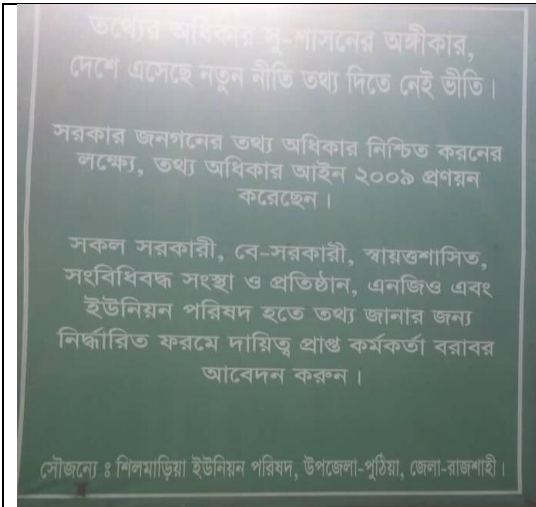
Income and expenditure statements of FY 2016-17 of Deopara UP of Sharique area.

সিটিজেন চার্টার				
৩নং কিলিম ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ, আমদুরা, চাঁপাইনবাবগঞ্জ।				
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৯৭	৯৭	৯৭	৯৭	৯৭
৯৮	৯৮	৯৮	৯৮	৯৮
৯৯	৯৯	৯৯	৯৯	৯৯
১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০

Citizen Charter displayed at the premise of the Jhilim UP of Sharique area.



Appendix P 8.1 Women at WS (Left) and OBM (Right).



Awrness for seeking information

Picture of uniform Websites of the UP

**Questionnaire/Interview Schedule/FGD Guideline**  
**Questionnaire for demand side actors (Citizen)**  
**Strengthening Local Governance through GO-NGO Collaboration: A Study on**  
**Sharique Project in Bangladesh**

[The information received will only be used for fulfilling the research objectives. Your personal details will be dealt with anonymously and confidentially. You will not be benefited or harmed by giving or not giving the information.]

i.	Date:	
ii.	Name of the respondent	
iii.	Cell phone no.	

**Part – 1: Socio-economic information of the demand side actors**

SL	Indicator	Code	Code List
1.	UP (Upazila, District) Ward no:		1=Shabajpur, Shibganj, Chapai 2=Jhilim, Chapai Sadar, Chapai 3=Deopara, Godagari, Rajshahi 4=Shilmaria, Puthia, Rajshahi 5=Maria, Durgapur, Rajshahi 6=Alatuli, Chapai Nawabganj
2.	Sex		1=Male 2=Female 10=others
3.	Age		In years
4.	Education		1=Cannot read or write 2=Can sign only 3=Primary 4=Secondary 5=Higher Secondary 6=Under graduate & above 7=Religious
5.	Religion		1=Muslim 10=Others
6.	Ethnicity		1=Bangali 2=Bihari 3=Adibashi/Aborigine
7.	Major Occupation		1=Household work 2=Business 3=Service 4=Agriculture 5=Labour 6=Remitter 7=Retired/old-age 10=others
8.	Political Affiliation		1=AL 2=BNP 3=JP 4=Jammat 10=others
9.	Homestead+Agricultural land + Fallow land		In decimal
10.	Average Monthly income		In percentage

**Part 2: Capacity**

SL	Question	Code	Code List
11.	Do you know about the functions of the UP?		1=Yes 0=No
12.	What are the main functions of UP?		
13.	Do you think that people can participate in different activities of the UP?		1=Yes 0=No
14.	If 'Yes', what are the avenue of participation? <b>MACA</b>		1=WS 2=OBM 3=SC 4=UP meeting 5=UDCC 6=sub-committee 9=don't know
15.	How have you learnt about the UP and its functions?		1=Govt. training 2=NGO/Sharique training 3=UP officials 4=neighbour 5=media (local newspaper/TV/radio) 6=study 7=Myself
16.	Do community people help & encourage each other to remain unite & place demand to UP?		1=Yes 0=No
17.	Have you made demands collectively to the UP?		1=Yes 0=No
18.	If yes, what steps the UP officials have taken? Please mentions an incident ...		
19.	To you, for whom the UP officials work?		1=all of the community 2=near & dear ones 3=political colleagues 4=marginalised 5=elites 10=others
20.	Do you think, you should engaged more with the UP for the betterment of the community?		1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Not Sure 4=disagree 5=Strongly disagree
21.	What can be done more for enhancing knowledge and skill regarding UP?		

Part -3 (A): Participation (Ward Sabha/ Open Budget Meeting)

22.	Do you understand different concepts used in WS and OBM?	Code	1=Yes 0=NO
23.	If yes, how much?		1=very low 2=low 3=Medium 4=high 5=very high
24.	Why have WS & OBM been introduced? <i>Multiple answers</i>		1=to listen to the people's demand 2=to share the information 3=formalities 4=To ensure accountability 5=For Planning 9=don't know
25.	Is WS regularly organised in your ward?		1=Yes 0=No
26.	Have you participated in WS? <i>If no, then Q no. 37.</i>		1=Yes 0=No
27.	If yes, how many times?		In numbers
28.	What is the average number of participants at WS?		In numbers
29.	What is the average number of women at WS?		In numbers
30.	How have you been invited to the WS? <i>Multiple answers</i>		1=Miking 2=drum beats 3=leaflets 4=notice 5=invitation letter 6=Verbally 7=Mobile phone 8= Heard Socially 10=others
31.	Are you satisfied with the process through which you were invited?		1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Not Sure 4=disagree 5=Strongly disagree
32.	If your answer is 4/5, what the process lack?		
33.	Why have you participated at WS? <i>Multiple answers</i>		1=spontaneously to fulfil the legal obligation 2=to honour the request 3=to make demands 4=to be informed and aware 10=others
34.	What are the issues on which you made demands / discussed?		
35.	Are you satisfied the way you discussed or made demands?		0=not satisfied 1=very low 2=low 3=Medium 4=high 5=very high
36.	If your answer is 0/1/2, what does the process lack?		
37.	Why have others/ you not participated at WS?		1=no information 2=busy with work 3=of no use 4=unsuitable time 5=unsuitable place 6=no compensation 7=demands remain unfulfilled 8=inappropriate invitation 9=not invited 11=Political conflict 12=WS not held 10=others:
38.	Are the beneficiaries of the SSNPs selected at WS?		1=Yes 0=No

Part -3 (B): Participation (Open Budget Meeting)

39.	Do you understand the concept of 'budget' or written information of budget?		1=Yes 0=No
40.	Have you participated at OBM? <i>If yes, then go to Q no. 42.</i>		1=Yes 0=No
41.	If 'No', then why have you not participated?		1=no information 2=busy with work 3=of no use 4=unsuitable time 5=unsuitable place 6=no compensation 7=demands remain unfulfilled 8=inappropriate invitation 9=OBM not held 10=others:
42.	What is the number of the participants at OBM?		In numbers
43.	What is the number of the female participants at OBM?		In numbers
44.	What are the issues of the budget you have discussed?		
45.	Have your demand been shortlisted by UP planning committee and presented in OBM?		1=Yes 0=No
46.	If 'No', have you ever asked your member (M/F) why has your demand not been shortlisted?		1=Yes 0=No
47.	If 'Yes', what was their answers?		
48.	If 'Yes', how much reasonable was the answer?		0=not reasonable 1=Very low 2=Low 3=Medium 4=High 5=Very High
49.	Has any of your shortlisted demand been implemented?		1=Yes 0=No
50.	Who mostly influence Development Planning,		1=UP Chair 2=Member 3=MP 4=Local Politicians 5=Local elite 6=Govt. Officer (UNO/

	Budgeting & Implementation Process in this UP? <b>Multiple answers</b>		PIO/ LGED Engineer) 7=UPZ Chair/Vice-chair 8=General people 9=don't know 10=Others <b>(please specify)</b>
51.	Is there any brawl at WS/OBM?		1=Yes 0=No
52.	What can be done to increase active participation of the citizens?		

Part – 3: Fiscal Autonomy

SL	Question	Code	Code List
53.	What are sources of income of the UP?		1=Central govt. 2=Zilla 3=Upazila 4=MP 5=NGO 7=holding tax 8=own income of UP 11=mills/factory 12=lease of ghat 13=lease of hat/bazar 14=issuing certificates 10=others
54.	Do UP inform you about its income from different sources?		1=Yes 0=No
55.	Do you know that citizens have to pay tax?		1=Yes 0=No
56.	Do you pay tax? <i>If 'No,' then go the Q no. 58 &amp; 59.</i>		1=Yes 0=No
57.	What type tax do you pay?		1=holding tax 2=land tax 10=others
58.	Why don't you pay tax? <b>Multiple answers</b>		1=None comes to collect tax 2=Far distance from home to UP 3=Don't know whom to pay tax 4=After paying I find nothing but my economic loss 5=Nothing received from UP 6=No development work 7=Poor
59.	Do you think you should pay Taxes?		1=Yes 0=No
60.	How can more tax be collected?		

Part 5: Transparency & Accountability

SL	Question	Code	Code List
61.	Do you seek information at the UP?		1=Yes 0=No
62.	If 'Yes,' have you faced problem while identifying to whom or where to seek information?		1=Yes 0=No
63.	How have you sought information?		1=written 2=verbally 3=information board 4=websites 10=others
64.	Have you received your demanded information? <i>If the answer is 'No,' then go to Q no. 66.</i>		1=Yes 0=No
65.	Are you satisfied the way information was delivered?		1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Not Sure 4=disagree 5=Strongly disagree
66.	Have they shown any reason for not providing the sought information?		1=Yes 0=No
67.	If 'No,' have you sought any further remedy?		1=Yes 2=No
68.	Have you visited UP websites for information?		1=Yes 0=No
69.	If 'No,' why?		1=don't know how to visit websites 3=I don't have any device 4=no need arisen 5=no info of existence of websites 10=others:
70.	Receiving information, goods & services is		1=rights 2=kindness of the UP 10=others
71.	Do you know about various services of UP, their process of delivery and timeframe?		1=Yes 0=No
72.	Who does receive the services of the UP?		1=real beneficiary 2=near and dear ones of the official 3=political allies 4=who can bribe 10=others <b>(clarify)</b>
73.	If your answer is 2/3/4, have you asked UP officials about the process?		1=Yes 0=No



74.	If 'No,' why?		1=no change happened 2=to avoid hatching 10=others
75.	If 'Yes,' have the selection been rectified and given it to the right person?		1=Yes 0=No
76.	If 'Yes,' please mention such an incident ...		
77.	Do you know that if UP fails to supply information, services & goods you can seek remedy?		1=Yes 0=No
78.	Do you have to pay for getting various allowances/cards?		1=Yes 0=No
79.	Do the delivered goods weigh less?		1=Yes 0=No
80.	Does the UP arrange social audit meeting?		1=Yes 0=No
81.	Do you ask questions to the UP officials about services to be delivered & demands to be fulfilled? <i>If 'No,' go to Q no. 87.</i>		1=Yes 0=No
82.	How do they react when you ask them questions?		1=give answer 2=keep themselves away from answering 3=get irritated/angry 4=stop me
83.	If your answer is 3/4, please narrate an incident ...		
84.	Have you asked UP officials questions outside the UP meetings?		1=Yes 0=No
85.	What were issues you have asked?		1=personal problem 2=social problem 3=SSNP 4=development 10=others
86.	What have they done?		1=they assured the solution 2=solved the problem 3=procrastinated 10=others
87.	Why don't you ask questions to the officials? <i>Multiple answers</i>		3=not interested 4=don't listen to me 5=in fear 8=no change 10=others
88.	Have you ever supervised any UP project?		1=Yes 0=No
89.	If 'Yes,' please narrate your experience ...		
90.	Do you think that UP maintains the procedures for supplying information, goods & services properly?		1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Not Sure 4=disagree 5=Strongly disagree

Part 6 (A): Gender Mainstreaming (**Only for men**)

SL	Question	Code	Code List
91.	Do you think women should participate in WS & OBM?		1=Yes 0=No
92.	If 'No,' why? <b>MACA</b>		1=they are women 2=they are home maker 3=religious impediment 4=lack of understanding 6=loss in family activities 7=Patriarchy 10=others:
93.	Do women carry same skill/potential as men?		1=Yes 0=No 3=not all times
94.	Have you encouraged women including your family member to raise voice?		1=Yes 0=No
95.	Do you think women should get equal benefit as men?		1=Yes 0=No
96.	If 'No,' why?		1=lack of skill 2=know little 3=don't work properly 4=male work more 10=others
97.	Do you think women member are performing well?		1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Not Sure 4=disagree 5=Strongly disagree
98.	If the answer is 4/5, what is your opinion?		

Part 5(B): Gender Mainstreaming (**Only for women**)

SL	Question	Code	Code List
99.	Should women participate in social and political activities?		1=Yes 0=No

100.	Do you think men treat women like a human being in the decision making process?		1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Not Sure 4=disagree 5=Strongly disagree
101.	Are women more aware than before in participation in WS/OBM?		1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Not Sure 4=disagree 5=Strongly disagree
102.	Can you partake in WS & OBM at your will?		1=Yes 0=No
103.	Are women taking part in WS & OBM as men?		1=Yes 0=No
104.	If 'No', why? / Why have other people not participated? <i>Multiple answers</i>		1=Lack of education 2=Patriarchy 3=Lack of awareness about women's rights 4=shyness 5=religious bar 6=loss of family activities 8=don't get invitation 11=No benefit achieved
105.	Do you think that Men & women should enjoy same rights?		1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Not Sure 4=disagree 5=Strongly disagree
106.	Are women are getting equal importance as men from UP?		1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Not Sure 4=disagree 5=Strongly disagree
107.	If the answer is 4/5, then what should be done to overcome this? <i>MACA</i>		2=awareness on women right 3=increase women education 6=no need
108.	Have you ever been the member of SCs?		1=Yes 0=No
109.	If 'Yes,' describe your experience ...		
110.	Do women help/encourage each other to participate in WS/OBM?		1=Yes 0=No
111.	Do women have any group?		1=Yes 0=No 2=previously there was
112.	If 'Yes,' was any of the group member elected UP officials?		1=Yes 0=No
113.	If 'Yes,' please tell the story ...		
114.	Do you think that the female UP members are doing their job done well?		1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Not Sure 4=disagree 5=Strongly disagree
115.	If your answer is 4/5, what is your opinion?		

Part 7: Collaboration with Sharique

SL	Question	Code	Code List
116.	Have you received training from Sharique?		1=Yes 0=No
117.	If 'Yes', how what type of training?		
118.	Have Sharique contributed in increasing your knowledge and skill?		1=Yes 0=No
119.	If 'Yes,' in what way?		
120.	If 'No,' why?		
121.	Have Sharique encouraged you to participate in WS/OBM?		1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Not Sure 4=disagree 5=Strongly disagree
122.	If 'Yes,' what was the process?		
123.	Have Sharique impacted UP to be more pro-poor?		1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Not Sure 4=disagree 5=Strongly disagree
124.	Have Sharique encouraged you to pay tax?		1=Yes 0=No 3=not sure
125.	If 'Yes,' how?		
126.	Have Sharique encouraged you to claim information, rights, and demands?		1=Yes 0=No
127.	Do you think Sharique has contributed in the process of women participation in UP's decision-making process?		1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Not Sure 4=disagree 5=Strongly disagree
128.	If yes or your answer is 1/2, in what way?		
129.	What is the most significant change in you after the inception of Sharique project?		
130.	What do you think has been the most significant change in UP governance since the Sharique program began?		
131.	Do you want such initiatives to continue in the future?		1=Yes 0=No
132.	If 'Yes,' give your opinion ...		

**Part 8: Overall assessment of UPs**

SL	Indicators	Point	Scale
133.	Corruption		1=Very low 2=Low 3=Medium 4=High 5=Very High
134.	Sufferings in receiving services		
135.	Politicization of service delivery (SSNP & other services)		
136.	Fiscal soundness		
137.	Participatory planning & budgeting		
138.	Transparency in various activities		
139.	Accountability		
140.	Trust in UP		
141.	Gender sensitivity		
142.	Responsiveness to special need of marginalized groups		
143.	Poverty reduction		
144.	Overall Image		

Thanking you.

Signature:

**Questionnaire for supply side actors (UP officials)****Strengthening Local Governance through GO-NGO Collaboration: A Study on Sharique Project in Bangladesh**

[The information received will only be used for fulfilling the research objectives. Your personal details will be dealt with anonymously and confidentially. You will not be benefited or harmed by giving or not giving the information.]

i.	Date:	
ii.	Name of the respondent	
iii.	Designation	
iv.	Ward no.	
v.	Cell phone no.	

**Part – 1: Socio-economic information of the demand side actors**

SL	Indicator	Code	Code List
1.	UP (Upazila, District)		1=Shabajpur, Shibganj, Chapai 2=Jhilim, Chapai Sadar, Chapai 3=Deopara, Godagari, Rajshahi 4=Shilmaria, Puthia, Rajshai 5=Maria, Durgapur, Rajshahi 6=Alatuli, Chapai Nawabganj
2.	Sex		1=Male 2=Female
3.	Age		In years
4.	Education		1=Cannot read or write 2=Can sign only 3=Primary 4=Secondary 5=Higher Secondary 6=Under graduate & above 7=Religious
5.	Religion		1=Muslim 2=Hindu 3=Buddhist 4=Christian
6.	Ethnicity		1=Bangali 2=Bihari 3=Adibashi/Aborigine
7.	Major Occupation		1=Household work 2=Business 3=Service 4=Agriculture 5=Labour 6=Remitter 7=Retired/old-age
8.	Homestead + Agri land + fallow land		In decimals
9.	Average monthly income		In taka
10.	Political Affiliation		1=AL 2=BNP 3=JP 4=Jammat 10=others

**Part 2: Capacity**

SL	Question	Code	Code List
11.	Have you learnt about the UP act of 2009?		1=Yes 0=No
12.	If yes, how do you know that?		1=Govt. training 2=NGO/Sharique training 3=UP officials 5=media (local newspaper/TV/radio) 6=study
13.	Do you know what the main responsibilities of UP officials are?		1=Yes 0=No

14.	If yes, what are your duties as UP official?	
15.	Do you get frequent appointment of the UNO to discuss different issues relating to your UP?	1=Yes 0=No
16.	If 'No,' why don't you get appointment?	1=busy 2=don't give importance 3=relation didn't build up 10=others
17.	Do other officials of UP co-operate you?	1=Yes 0=No
18.	If No, why?	1=politics 2=weak social status 3=conflict of interest 4=being women 10=others
19.	Do people often visit you?	1=Yes 0=No
20.	What type of initiative do you usually take to respond to their problem?	
21.	Has your opinion been given importance in decision-making process?	1=Yes 0=No
22.	If 'No,' why?	1=chair himself 2=chair and his near ones take decision 3=dissidence 4=social causes 5=for being women 10=others
23.	If 'Yes,' how much?	1=always 2=sometimes
24.	Who prioritised the demands raised at OBM?	1=chair 2=member 3=secretary 4=jointly 5=UP meeting 10=others
25.	Does your UP develop a five-year plan timely?	1=Yes 0=No
26.	If no, why?	1=complex process 2=don't have skill 3=haven't heard 10=others
27.	If 'Yes', have the projects of FYP been included in the yearly budget?	1=Yes 0=No
28.	Is there any special provisions in the budget for the development of women?	1=Yes 0=No
29.	Do you procure things through tender?	1=Yes 0=No
30.	If no, why?	1=compromise with contractor 2=time consuming and complex process 3=no need 4=do only for formalities but we do the work 10=others
31.	If 'Yes', have you ever practiced e-tendering?	1=Yes 0=No
32.	Do you think that the UP is using its funds properly.	1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Not Sure 4=disagree 5=Strongly disagree
33.	If the answer is (4/5), specify your opinion.	
34.	Is there any audit queries against the job you done?	1=Yes 0=No
35.	If 'Yes,' what type of queries?	

Part – 2 (A): Participation (Ward Sabha/OBM)

SL	Question	Code	Code List
36.	Why have WS & OBM been introduced? <i>Multiple answer</i>		1=to listen to people's demands 2=to share information 4=Accountability 5=Bridges between UP and the citizens 9=don't know 10=others:
37.	Are WS & OBM organised timely & regularly?		1=Yes 0=No
38.	If 'Yes', do you speak in the meeting?		1=Yes 0=No
39.	Do you think people's raising voice in WS & OBM is important?		1=Yes 0=No
40.	If 'Yes,' why?		1=to place their demand 2=to be included in the mainstream development 3=to empower 4=for ensuring efficient local government 9=don't know 10=others
41.	What are the problems you faced organising WS/OBM?		1=lack of fund 2=lack of support from UP 3=Schedule crisis of authority 4=political 5=no problem faced 10=others:
42.	Who does set agenda of WS?		1=Ward member 2=women member 3=chair 4= UP secretary 5=WC 6=General people 9=Don't set agenda 10=others:

43.	Generally, what types of issues are set to be discussed? <i>Multiple answers</i>	1=poverty reduction 2=infrastructural development 3=social problem 4=education 5=health 6=service delivery 7=beneficiary selection 8=anomaly of UP 11=Drugs 12=Child marriage 13= law and order (smuggling, terrorism) 10=others:
44.	What is the intensity of the participation from the citizens?	1=Very low 2=Low 3=Medium 4=High 5=Very High
45.	If the answer is 1/2, what is the reason? <i>Multiple answers</i>	3=engagement in work 4=lack of information 7=no need 8=No benefit accrued 9= Don't realize the need of the UP 11=Religious causes 10=others:
46.	How do you invite people to attend at the WS meeting? <i>Multiple answers</i>	1=invitation letter 2=Miking 3=Notice 4=leaflets 5=beating drum 6=Verbally 7=Choukidar 8=UP officials 11=Mobile phone 10=others:
47.	Do all people get the information about WS/OBM?	1=Yes 0=No
48.	Are citizens demands incorporated in the annual and FYP plan?	1=Yes 0=No
49.	If 'Yes', what criteria are followed while incorporating public demands?	1=low-cost 2=political reason 3=beneficial for elite 4=beneficial for citizens 10=others
50.	If 'No,' what is/are the reason?	
51.	Have your shortlisted demands of WS disclosed at OBM?	1=Yes 0=No
52.	Are you satisfied the way WS & OBM held?	1=Yes 0=No
53.	If no, why?	1=low participation 2=cannot be started in time 3=influential control the discussion 4=political discussion 5=no decision resulted 10=others

Part – 4: Fiscal Autonomy

SL	Question	Code	Code List
54.	Do you know the sources of tax in the UP?		1=Yes 0=No
55.	If yes, what are major sources of tax in your area?		1=holding tax 2=land tax 10=others:
56.	What are the others sources of income except taxes?		
57.	Have you met with UNO/DC for extra fund?		1=Yes 0=No
58.	Do you think that your UP is financially well-off?		1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Not Sure 4=disagree 5=Strongly disagree
59.	If the answer is (4/5), what can UP do in order to strengthen the base of your UP's financial base? <i>Multiple answers</i>		1=increase tax rate 2=expand tax source 3=increase income from other sources 4=demand fund form govt. 5=Collect 100% tax 6=Khas land 7=Generate income 9=Don't know 10=others:
60.	What types of problems have you faced in increasing tax rate or tax sources?		1=resistance of the influential 2=apathy of the general people 3=losing popularity of the official 4=limited scope of law 10=others

Part 5: Accountability & Transparency

SL	Question	Code	Code List
61.	Have you informed people about the grant the UP received from GO/NGO?		1=Yes 0=No
62.	If the answer is 'No', please tell the reason ...		
63.	How do you contributed in selection of the beneficiary for GO/NGO goods & services?		1=through WS/OBM 2=Myself 3=discussing with influential 10=others:
64.	Are the real beneficiaries of the services selected?		1=Yes 0=No

65.	If 'No', what factors influence the inclusion of people in the list of beneficiaries?		1=political person 2=rural influential 3=near ones of political leader 10=others:
66.	Do people ask why their demands have not been included in the budget?		1=Yes 0=No
67.	If the answer is 'Yes', what was their demand and what was your answer?		
68.	Do the UP arrange other open meeting (social audit) rather than WS/ OBM to discuss issues related with UP?		1=Yes 0=No
69.	Is there any specific person in the UP to provide information to the people?		1=Yes 0=No
70.	If yes, who is he?		
71.	How does the UP make information public?		1=board 2=website 3=leaflet/ brochures 4=Facebook page 5=annual report 10=others
72.	Do you think that people are using RTI to demand information?		1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Not Sure 4=disagree 5=Strongly disagree
73.	If your answer is 4/5, give your opinion....		
74.	Why have CC been introduced?		1=designating information 2=for accountability 3=transparency 4=to deliver services 9=don't know 10=others
75.	Do you implement RTI and CC in the UP?		1=Yes 0=No
76.	If 'No,' why don't you implement them?		1=remain busy 2=don't understand well 3=lack of resources 4=lack of skilled human resources 10=others
77.	Do you think the way charter of services is disseminated at UP is satisfactory?		1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Not Sure 4=disagree 5=Strongly disagree
78.	If your answer is 4/5, what is your opinion?		

Part 6 (A): Gender Mainstreaming (for men only)

SL	Question	Code	Code List
79.	Do you think that quota system for women in local government politics is necessary		1=Yes 0=No
80.	If yes, why?		1=Quota is essential for women political empowerment 2=to increase women participation 3=to develop women position 4=gender mainstreaming in politics 5=overall development 10=others
81.	Do you think women should participate in WS & OBM?		1=Yes 0=No
82.	If 'No', why? <i>Multiple answers</i>		1=they are women 2=they are home maker 3=religious impediment 4=lack of understanding 10=others:
83.	Do women carry same skill/potential as men?		1=Yes 0=No 3=not all times
84.	Have you encouraged women including your family member to raise voice?		1=Yes 0=No 2=sometimes
85.	Do you think women should get equal benefit as men?		1=Yes 0=No
86.	If 'No,' why?		1=lack of skill 2=lack of understanding 3=don't work well 4=men work hard 10=others
87.	Do you think that women member are performing well?		1=Yes 0=No
88.	If 'No,' why?		1=busy with household activities 2=patriarchy 3=lack of skill 4=lack of opportunity 10=others
89.	DO you think that more women are now participating in politics?		1=Yes 0=No
90.	If 'Yes,' why?		1=impact of NGO (Sharique) activities 2=initiatives of govt. 3=campaigns 4=spread of education 10=others

91.	If 'No,' why?		1=lack of education 2=poverty 3=religious impediments 4=existing cultures 5=lack of power 6=patriarchy 7=lack of awareness 8=lack of opportunity 11=lack of money 12=use of black money & muscle power 13=negligence 10=others
92.	How can the participation of women in local be increased?		

Part 6(B): Gender Mainstreaming (for women only)

SL	Question	Code	Code List
93.	Are women taking part in WS & OBM as men?		1=Yes 0=No
94.	If 'No,' why? <i>Multiple answers</i>		1=Lack of education 2=poverty 3=religious impediments 4=existing socio-culture 5=lack of power 6=Patriarchy 7=Lack of awareness about women's rights 8=lack of opportunity 11=shyness 10=others:
95.	Can you take initiative for the development of your locality?		1=Not very much 2=Sometimes 3=Not really
96.	Can you signify any of the given jobs that make you satisfied as well as your community?		1=Violence against women 2=Distribution of relief 3=Development of women 4=Road construction 5=Educational activities 6=Child and women health care 7=Dowry 8=Acid victim 11=Child marriage 12=Girl's education 10=others
97.	What general acceptance are you getting as women representatives?		1=Sometimes are getting 2=Sometimes are ignored 3=get always
98.	Women are getting equal importance as men in the activities of UP.		1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Not Sure 4=disagree 5=Strongly disagree
99.	Do the male counterparts ignore you in decision-making?		1=All the time 0=No 2=Sometimes
100.	If your answer is 1/2, how and why?		
101.	How many projects have you implemented?		In numbers
102.	What are the major impediments of women to participate in local politics?		1=lack of education 2=poverty 3=religious impediments 4=existing cultures 5=lack of power 6=patriarchy 7=lack of awareness 8=lack of opportunity 11=lack of money 12=use of black money & muscle power 10=others
103.	Are you satisfied the way you performed?		1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Not Sure 4=disagree 5=Strongly disagree
104.	If your answer is 4/5, why do you think so?		
105.	How can women member be made more active?		

Part 7: Collaboration with Sharique

SL	Question	Code	Code List
106.	Do you think NGO should be allowed to work with the UP to strength governance?		1=Yes 0=No
107.	Have you cooperated with Sharique project?		1=Yes 0=No
108.	If 'Yes,' through what ways?		
109.	Was there respect & trust in the relation between Sharique & UP officials?		1=Yes 0=No
110.	If 'No,' why and in what circumstances?		
111.	Have you got training from Sharique?		1=Yes 0=No
112.	If 'Yes,' what type of training?		1=knowledge & skill enhancing 2=Vocational 3=awareness building 10=others

113.	How have these training helped you?		1=boost the confidence 2=made aware 3=developed skill 4=generated income 5=developed ownership at UP 10=others
114.	To you, what techniques of Sharique are more effective?		1=Workshop 2=Peer learning 3=exchange visit 4=Union Parishad local academy 5=cultural programme 6=local government self-assessment 7=participatory gender analysis 8=governance improvement plan 11=training manuals 12=women participation at UP: the competition
115.	Are the goals fixed by Sharique important?		1=Yes 0=No
116.	If 'Yes,' why?		1=to develop standard of living of the citizens 2=to reach govt. services to the doorsteps of the people 3=to develop effective relation with citizens 4=to establish accountable government 10=others
117.	How has Sharique contributed in implementing RTI & CC?		1=encouraged 2=increase awareness 3=disseminated 4=inspired to use 10=others
118.	How has Sharique contributed in disseminating information to the people?		1=installed information boards 2=disseminate RTI & CC 3=made people aware to claim information 10=others
119.	Has Sharique assisted you to organise WS/OBM?		1=Yes 0=No
120.	If 'Yes,' what type of assistances?		1=grant 2=campaigns 3=inspire people & their representatives 4=accompaniment 5=to make official present at the meeting 10=others
121.	Has Sharique contributed in increasing own income of the UP?		1=Yes 0=No 3=Not sure
122.	If 'Yes,' in what ways?		1=to identify new sources of tax 2=to inspire to increase tax rate 3=to unearth others sources of income rather than tax 4=to encourage citizens 10=others
123.	Do you think that Sharique's financial assistance had contributed in developing the practice of planning & project implementation?		1=Yes 0=No
124.	If 'Yes,' specify...		
125.	Have you ever implemented any project Sharique?		1=Yes 0=No
126.	If 'Yes,' how was your experience?		
127.	Did Sharique bring any new favourable policy for the local government?		1=Yes 0=No
128.	If 'Yes,' how?		
129.	Have you been encouraged by Sharique to get involved seriously with the citizens?		1=Yes 0=No
130.	Do you think that Sharique's intervention had made the UP to become more poor people oriented?		1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Not Sure 4=disagree 5=Strongly disagree
131.	If the answer is 1/2, in what ways?		1=special projects for the poor 2=encouraged their participation 3=include in SSNPs 4=steps to generate income 10=others
132.	DO you think that Sharique has contributed in preparing women to actively participate in the discussions of UP?		1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Not Sure 4=disagree 5=Strongly disagree
133.	If the answer is 1/2, in what ways?		1=giving training to speak publicly 2=boost confidence 3=develop skill 4=building awareness



			5=encourage to raise voice to make demands 6=building ownership of UP 10=others
134.	Are people demanding more from UP?		1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Not Sure 4=disagree 5=Strongly disagree
135.	Do you think the changes in the governance of the UP that have been brought by Sharique will sustain?		1=Yes 0=No
136.	If 'No,' why?		
137.	Are you satisfied with the overall efforts of Sharique in strengthening the governance of UP?		1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Not Sure 4=disagree 5=Strongly disagree
138.	If the answer is 4/5, why?		
139.	What do you think has been the most significant change in UP governance since the Sharique program began?		
140.	What are the problems you faced in working with Sharique?		
141.	What are the challenges of collaboration between Sharique and the UP?		
142.	Are there any unintended consequences of program participation?		1=Yes 0=No 9=don't know
143.	If 'Yes,' please specify ...		
144.	Will you want more such collaborative efforts in future?		1=Yes 0=No
145.	If 'Yes', why?		
146.	Will you want to add more features in future collaborative efforts?		

Thanking you.

Signature:

### **Interview Protocol**

(Sharique Officials)

Working Upazila/Dist. \_\_\_\_\_ Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_ December 2017

Respondent's name \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>Key issue: Collaboration With UP</b>  <b>Detail Questions:</b> Why is collaboration/partnership important between GO and NGO, particularly with UP and NGO to strengthen the former? How successful were your tools? (LGSA, PGA, GIP, training, workshops, peer learning, exchange visits, cultural programmes, UPLA, various publications, allocation of grants, and advocacy) What are significant improvements Sharique brought in the governing process of UP? Will these changes be sustainable? Were there any unintended consequences of programme participation? How was the relation between UP and Sharique? (<b>willingness &amp; cooperation, trust and respect, common goals</b>) What work well in collaboration? Why? What are the problems Sharique faced? Are there any legal, bureaucratic, political or social barriers? What are the challenges of collaboration with local government? Is the collaboration becoming increasingly seamless over time? Please explain. What are the features of present collaborative efforts you intend to drop? Why have you changed to new model of intervention? What additional features will you suggest for future collaborative efforts for improving governance? What changes will you want to see in policy level of both NGO and GO? Why will you suggest the model of Sharique project to be replicated all over the country?</p>
<p><b>Key issue: Capacity</b>  <b>Detail Questions:</b> Do you think now citizens are well informed, knowledgably and skilled? Do UP officials know their job well? To you, how well annual budget &amp; FYP were prepared?</p>
<p><b>Key issue: Participation</b>  <b>Detail Questions:</b> To what extent the UP planning and Budgeting are participatory? Do people place more demands? Do marginalised group speak up to place demands? Do the participatory mechanisms control by elite? Are citizens' demands being incorporated in the FYP &amp; budget?</p>
<p><b>Key issue: Fiscal Autonomy</b>  <b>Detail Questions:</b> Do UP officials take initiatives to increase own revenue?</p>
<p><b>Key issue: Transparency &amp; Accountability</b>  <b>Detail Questions:</b> Do you think the charter of services regarding WS and OBM is available for people's viewing? (Such as allocation block grant of GO, ADP, others Government grant, NGO grant, Social safety net programs etc. and prerequisites of getting this services) Do you think</p>

citizens utilize their Right to Information regarding WS and OBM? (For not getting any service though they are entitled various GO-NGO allocation) Does the delivery of services of UP improved?
<b>Key issue: Gender Mainstreaming</b>
<b>Detail Questions:</b> Are more women engaging actively in the planning and budgeting process? Are women members discriminating by their male colleagues?
Number of Training Session, workshops, cultural shows, advocacy efforts, person impacted, coordination meeting, Amount of money transferred

**FGD Guideline**

FGD Session:	Union Name:	Ward No.	Male/Female :	Date:
SL	Name/Family Member/Income	Age/Occupation /Education	Know WS/ OBM/ RTI and CC	Comments
1				
2				
...				

**Discussion Topic:**

- Capacity:** important provisions of UP act of 2009 (WS/OBM/CC/RTI) & their implementation (planning & budgeting), making demands (collectively), perception about UP & expectation from the same
- Participation:** causes of participation & no participation, experience of participation (engagement or just attending), influence of influential
- Fiscal autonomy:** participatory tax assessment, improving revenue generation
- Accountability & transparency:** accountability & transparency, responsiveness & answerability of officials, welcoming level by officials, information on SSNPs, & other goods & services, improvement in beneficiary selection, service delivery procedures (health, agriculture, education), redressing system, usefulness of SCs in monitoring
- Gender Mainstreaming:** increase in women participation (what they do now didn't do earlier, problems of participation, & prospect), performance of women member (challenges)
- Sharique:** usefulness of training (useful topic), & other efforts, making impact on UP by Sharique participants, participation of marginalised, most significant change (what has happened at end of the Sharique) & their sustainability, suggestion for improvement in the programme.

**Interview Protocol**

(Key Informants)

Working Station \_\_\_\_\_ Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_ December 2017  
 Respondent's name \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Key issue: Capacity</b>
<b>Detail Questions:</b> Do you think now citizens are well informed, knowledgably and skilled? Do UP officials know their job well? To you, how well annual budget & FYP were prepared? What can be done to build capacity of citizens and UP?
<b>Key issue: Participation</b>
<b>Detail Questions:</b> To what extent the UP planning and Budgeting are participatory? Do people place demands? Do marginalised group speak up to place demands? Do the participatory mechanisms control by elite? Are citizens' demands being incorporated in the FYP & budget? What is your suggestion for increasing people's participation?
<b>Key issue: Fiscal Autonomy</b>
<b>Detail Questions:</b> Do UP officials take initiatives to increase own revenue? What is your suggestion for UPs to generate their own revenue?
<b>Key issue: Transparency &amp; Accountability</b>
<b>Detail Questions:</b> Do you think the charter of services regarding WS and OBM is available for people's viewing? (Such as allocation block grant of GO, ADP, others Government grant, NGO grant, Social safety net programs etc. and prerequisites of getting this services) Do you think citizens utilize their Right to Information regarding WS and OBM? (For not getting any service though they are entitled various GO-NGO allocation) Does the delivery of services of UP improved? How can transparency and accountability of UP be improved?
<b>Key issue: Gender Mainstreaming</b>

<b>Detail Questions:</b> Are more women engaging actively in the planning and budgeting process? Are women members discriminating by their male colleagues? What are the ways to increase women's participation?
<b>Key issue: Collaboration With UP</b> <b>Detail Questions:</b> How much is it important for NGOs to work for governance? Do you think will the improvements brought by GO-NGO collaboration be sustainable? What unintended consequences can be resulted by such efforts? What are the problems NGOs face in implementing governance programme? Are there any legal, bureaucratic or political barriers? What are the challenges of collaboration of NGO-local government? What you want for future collaborative efforts for improving governance? Is there any opportunity of inception of partnership governance with NGOs in local bodies?
What are government are doing for capacity building, and enhancing people's participation, transparency and accountability, and gender mainstreaming? Your suggestions for SLG.

### Interview Protocol

(Upazila Nirbahi Officer / Deputy Director of Local Government)

Upazila/Dist. name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_ December 2017  
Respondent's name \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Background:</b> How long have you been in this position? Experience of working with local government, NGO (Sharique), etc.
<b>Key issue: Capacity</b> <b>Detail Questions:</b> How will you describe citizens' and UP official's level of knowledge on provisions of UP act of 2009 and skill for implementing the same? Do UP officials know their job well? To you, as you received annual budget & FYP, how well these documents were prepared? How are the SCs working? Do the officials select the SSNP beneficiary fairly?
<b>Key issue: Participation</b> <b>Detail Questions:</b> To what extent the UP planning and Budgeting are participatory? Do people particularly of marginalised group come and speak up to place demands? Do the participatory mechanisms control by elite? Are the demands of citizens being incorporated in the FYP & budget?
<b>Key issue: Fiscal Autonomy</b> <b>Detail Questions:</b> To what extent UPs rely on their own income? Do UP officials take initiatives to increase own revenue? Have they approached you for more fund?
<b>Key issue: Transparency &amp; Accountability</b> <b>Detail Questions:</b> Do you think the charter of services regarding WS and OBM is available for people's viewing? (Such as allocation block grant of GO, ADP, others Government grant, NGO grant, Social safety net programs etc. and prerequisites of getting this services) Do you think citizens utilize their Right to Information regarding WS and OBM? (For not getting any service though, they are entitled various GO-NGO allocation). What is the level of corruption in the UP?
<b>Key issue: Gender Mainstreaming</b> <b>Detail Questions:</b> Are women engaging actively in the planning and budgeting process? Are women members discriminating by their male colleagues? How are they performing?
<b>Key issue: Collaboration With Sharique</b> <b>Detail Questions:</b> How is the relation with NGOs? How was Sharique & UP collaboration? Should NGO work for improving governance? How do you help NGOs? What are the problems of NGOs to work? Are there any legal, bureaucratic or political barriers? What are the challenges of the NGOs role? Are the efforts sustainable? What you want for future collaborative efforts of improving governance?
What are government are doing for capacity building, and enhancing people's participation, transparency and accountability, and gender mainstreaming? What are your suggestions for capacity building, and enhancing people's participation, transparency and accountability, and gender mainstreaming?

### Check list & Document Review

(UP premises and documents)

Name of UP \_\_\_\_\_

#### General information

SL	Name of the objects	Seen	Not seen	Comments
1	Information Board at UP			
2	Citizen Charter			
3	Information delivery cell			
4	Complaint box			
5	UDC			
6	RTI related info.			

7	Awareness building wall writing			
8	Project info board outside of UP			
9	CC/RTI boards outside of UP			
10	Rest room at UP			
11	Internet connection			
12	Facebook page of UP			
13	Budget book			
14	Plan book			
15	Annual Report			

**Information in Brief**

SL	Issues	No./amount, etc.	
1	Area		
2	Total Population	Male	Female
3	No. of extreme poor	Male	Female
4	Total household		
	No. of tax paying household (16-17)		
5	No. of ongoing projects (17-18)		
6	No. of audit queries of (16-17)		
7	No. of application seeking info. (16-17)		
8	No. delivery of written info. (16-17)		
9	No. of services		
10	No. of Project under Women (17-18)		
11	No. of Service recipients (16-17)		
12	Time of organising WS & OBM	Working Day	Holiday

**Ward Wise No. of Voters (Population, if voter's no. is not found)**

Ward No.	Total voters	Male / Female					
1		Male	Female	6		Male	Female
2		Male	Female	7		Male	Female
3		Male	Female	8		Male	Female
4		Male	Female	9		Male	Female
5		Male	Female				

**List of Documents**

SL	Name of the document	Duration	Received /Not received
1	Budget Sheet	Last 5/10 FY*	
2	Five year plan	Last two times	
3	UP minutes of meetings	16-17 FY	
4	WS resolution (Prioritized <b>demand</b> ) (9 wards)	16-17 FY	
5	OBM resolution		
6	Standing Committee resolution	16-17 FY	
7	Union Development Coordination Committee resolution	16-17 FY	
8	Planning Committee resolution	16-17 FY	
9	Ward Committee resolution (9 ward)	16-17 FY	
10	Participants list of WS (9 ward)	16-17 FY	
11	Service recipients list	16-17 FY	
12	Income statement **	Last 5/10 FY	
13	Expenditure statement	Last 5/10 FY	
14	Ongoing projects list	17-18 FY	
15	Notice & invitation letter for WS/OBM	2017 CY ***	

\*FY: Fiscal year, \*\*\*CY: Calendar year. **\*\*Income & expenditure statement (\*own source: Local Tax, Fees/Toll/Rant, income from assets, penalties and fines, sales of services and goods, and assets, \*Government Grant: central & other local tyres/ earmarked and non-earmarked grants, autonomous tax revenue/ \*Donor Gant: LGSP-II, Sharique, Operational Expense, Capital Expense,)**

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