

Union Parishad and Poverty Reduction Strategies at the local level: A Study of Governance Failure

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fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of
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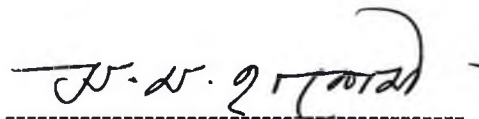
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Poverty and poor governance system has a correlation because poor governance impedes the poor people's access to public resources. This study carried out to understand the impact of and partyarchy on the UP governance system which ultimately affect the poverty reduction process. The study finding revealed that strong presence of partyarchy and patron-client relationship causing governance failure and thus poor people's access to public resources was not ensured. The elected UP representatives became helpless to the parallel UP run by the ruling party members.

Samadhan, a local NGO that has been working in Jessore, Khulna and Satkhira districts since 1990 for the development of the poor nad vulnerable community assisted to organise FGD, identifying Key Informants for interview. I am very thankful to the Director and workers of the NGO.

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ABSTRACT

Union Parishad (UP) is the local body and lowest tier of the local government that has huge potential in poverty reduction. This 140 years old institution has wide roles and responsibilities in rural development and poverty reduction empowered by the Constitution and Ordinance but partyarchy and patron-client relationship impacted largely on the governance system. Governance failure affected and impeded the access of the poor and vulnerable community to the public resources. The ruling party run the parallel UP to pull public resources for addressing the patron-client relationship.

The study finding reinforced the assumption of impacts of patron-client relation relationship and partyarchy over the UP governance which impeded UP's role of poverty reduction. The key findings of the study are:

- The informal power system is stronger (supported by the partyarchy) than that of the formal power system in UP. The ruling party run parallel UP;
- UP representatives are delegated authority and power officially but they are not empowered enough to perform their roles and responsibilities properly avoiding the pressure of ruling party;
- Most of the decisions come from top means the decision making process is top-down. A bottom up decision making process is far away;
- Public resources are managed by the ruling party to strengthen patron-client relationship;
- UP's relationship with MP, ruling party members and local level bureaucrats are not beneficial but sometime a hostile relationship is exist;
- Patron-client relationship and partyarchy is very strong and emerging in the UP governance system;
- People's participation in the decision making process is a symbolic process, practically people's participation specially the poor and vulnerable communities' participation occurred in very low degree.

The overall recommendation included empowerment of the constituency to raise their voice and involve the media and civil society to reduce the impact of partyarchy and patron-client relationship.

TABLE OF CONTENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	3
ABSTRACT	4
TABLE OF CONTENT	5
ACRONYMS	6
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	7
1.1 Background of the study	7
1.2 Rationale of the Study	8
1.3 Objectives of the Study	9
1.4 Conceptual and Analytical Framework	9
1.5 Research Questions	10
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW	11
2.1 Governance	11
2.2 Governance Failure	12
2.3 Local Government	12
2.4 Union Parishad	13
2.5 Patron-client Relationship	14
2.6 Partyarchy	16
2.7 Poverty	16
2.8 Poverty Reduction	18
2.9 Public Resources	20
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY	23
3.1 Desk Research	23
3.1.1 Identify relevant literatures and documents	23
3.1.2 Review and analyse the relevant literatures and documents	23
3.2 Primary data collection	23
3.2.1 Meeting with UP Representatives (LEBs)	23
3.2.2 Focus Group Discussion with the opinion leaders	24
3.2.3 Key Informant Interview	24
3.3 Analysis both primary and secondary data and prepare a report	24
CHAPTER IV: KEY FINDINGS	25
4.1 Formal Power system of UP	25
4.2 Informal Power system of UP	27
4.3 UP Representatives' Authority and Power	27
4.4 Decision Making Process of UP	28
4.5 Relationship of UP with local MP, Ruling Party Members and Bureaucrats	29
4.6 Formal and Informal Resource Management Process	30
4.7 Patron-Client Relationship and Partyarchy in UP Governance System	31
4.8 Local People's Participation in the Decision-Making Process	32
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION	34
CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	36
REFERENCES	38
Annex-1: List of UP Representative of of 2 UPs	39

ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADP	Annual Development Plan
BAL	Bangladesh Awami League
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
BSCIC	Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HES	Household Expenditure Survey
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JP	Jatya Party
LEBs	Local Elected Bodies
LGI	Local Government Institute
LGSP	Local Government Support Programme
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
TR	Test Relief
UP	Union Parishad
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VGf	Vulnerable Group Feeding
WB	World Bank

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Autonomous, democratic local governance is an integral part of the Bangladesh constitutional system. Article 59 of the Constitution mandates the creation of elected local bodies at each administrative unit- District, Upazila and Union. Union Parishad (UP) is the lowest tier of the Local Government structure of Bangladesh. As defined by different scholars, Local Government is the people's organisation that works comparatively in a smaller area of the country as part of the National Government. Charles Barrow defined Local Government as "an organisation that is run by the locally elected representatives whose roles and responsibilities are limited within their areas and they can impose taxes to create their own source of income to run the regular activities". The current Union Parishad system was introduced by the British Colonial Rulers during late 19th century (1885) and reformed by different rulers over the last century. Article 30, 31, 32 and 33 of the Ordinance for Local Government (Union Parishad, 1983) described 5 distinct roles of Union Parishad, these are- civic/municipal, police and security, revenue and administration, development and poverty elimination, and law.

Local government in many Asian Countries, such as, Indonesia, Philippines and India is playing a vital role for poverty reduction but empirical evidence shows that Union Parishad, the most important grassroots level Local Government Institution (LGI), could not play such role in Bangladesh. Different political regimes, since the independence in 1971, ignored the effective reform of local government, eventually to implement the existing policy/ordinance/laws. They rather preferred politicise this institution. However, the International Financial Institutes (like World Bank, ADB, and IMF); official donors (USAID, DFID, SDC, SIDA, CIDA and others) are very keen to promote good governance in the LGIs, specially in the UPs to make them enable to contribute poverty reduction and growth. Numbers of projects by many donors jointly with the government implemented over last two decades but no significant changes occurred in the UP system for contributing poverty reduction.

As a dissertation under Master of Development Studies in BRAC University, this study is planned to identify the problems, responsible factors and reasons including their root causes those are creating gaps between the UP and poverty reduction .

1.2 Rationale of the Study

The National Government cannot plan the local level development policy on its own. Therefore, the Local Government was formed with an end in view to take the administration at the doorsteps of grassroots people to ensure their active participation in the development process. Being the only functional Local Government Institutions at the grassroots level, UP has a crucial role for poverty reduction. Most of the social security programmes are being implemented by the Union Parishads and it has numbers of responsibilities related to poverty reduction such as, management of public resources (khaslands, water-bodies, forests, bazaars etc.), drafting and implementing development plans etc. It is expected that the UP will have significant contribution to poverty reduction through effective and efficient implementation of policy, ordinance and laws but poor governance, politicisation and lack of awareness of the local people about their rights over the UPs did not fulfil the expectation till today.

In Bangladesh context, the electoral process of UP has high degree of accountability; most of the UP representatives can not return in the next term election if they fail to satisfy the voters. However, although there is a formal governance process of the UP, the elected representatives mostly fail to perform their responsibilities because of:

- the informal governance process is stronger than the formal process. The ruling party run a parallel governance to the UP;
- the ruling party have high degree of influence over the UP, mainly to manage public resources;
- the local administration does not provide proper support to the UPs, they rather act as the party members of the ruling party;

As a result, the UP representatives can not work objectively and the formal governance process of UP do not work properly.

The millennium development goals (MDGs) mainly focused on the poverty reduction. The target set up under MDGs regarding poverty reduction (*Reduce by half the*

proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day; Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger) will not be achieved if the set institutions work properly. Therefore, it has become an important issue for Bangladesh to identify the influence of 'partyarchy' over the formal governance process of UP and effects of patron-client relationship, since it is one of the vital institution for poverty reduction.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to identify the influence of partyarchy over the UP governance which is impeding UP to contribute to poverty reduction effectively and efficiently. The study will have the following specific objectives:

- To review the existing governance structure and process of UP in relation to poverty reduction activities;
- To identify the reality of partyarchy in relation to formal governance of UP; and
- To understand and document the informal governance process of UP;

1.4 Conceptual and Analytical Framework

Local government is viewed as one of the key institution of a modern state, which promotes active relationship between a state and its citizens and a possible way to participate in state administration by the citizens. The legal framework of local government in our country is stipulated by the Constitution of Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, other laws, policies and ordinance which regulate the activities of the local governmental authorities.

As per the concept of local government system, there should be certain autonomy of the institution to develop and implement the local development plans but unfortunately the local government of Bangladesh has become the extended part of the central government to serve the purpose of the political government. Thus local government of Bangladesh could not reflect the aspiration of the local people; rather it has become more and more politicised over time supported by the patron-client relationship and partyarchy.

One the other hand, poverty is a dynamic and complex phenomenon. Poverty reduction is not only related or dependent on the growth. Per capita income does not ensure poverty reduction of all strata of the population. Poor people need access to

public resources, education and services to reduce their poverty. Capacity for claiming and exercising rights is also very crucial for poverty reduction.

Being the grassroots local government organization, UP has the good potential to create opportunities for the grassroots people to communicate their interests, reconcile their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations. Through this practice, the poor people can have access to public/common resources, services and education that will ultimately contribute to their poverty reduction.

This study has been designed based on this conceptual framework that in an ideal situation (regulate own affairs, some decision making power, free from political pressure etc.) Union Parishad can contribute to poverty reduction significantly but it fails due to dominance of partyarchy which compelled to run parallel and informal governance by the ruling party.

1.5 Research Questions

The important research question is: why the UP could not play the significant role for poverty reduction? The following questions are-

- What is the formal and informal power system of UP? Are the UP representatives are delegated authority and power properly?
- What is the decision making process of UP?
- What is the relationship of UP with local MP, ruling party members and bureaucrats?
- What is the formal and informal resource management process?
- Are the patron-client relationship and partyarchy active in UP governance system?
- Do the local people (voters) participate in the decision-making process?

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Governance

The concept of "governance" is not new. It is as old as human civilization. Simply put "governance" means: *the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented)*¹. Governance can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance. Formal government structures are one means by which decisions are arrived at and implemented. At the national level, informal decision-making structures, such as "kitchen cabinets" or informal advisors may exist.

The word governance derives from the Greek verb κυβερνάω [kubernáo] which means to steer and was used for the first time in a metaphorical sense by Plato. It then passed on to Latin and then on to many languages.

Governance is the activity of governing. It relates to decisions that define expectations, grant power, or verify performance. It consists either of a separate process or of a specific part of management or leadership processes. Sometimes people set up a government to administer these processes and systems.

In terms of distinguishing the term *governance* from *government* - "governance" is what a "government" does. It might be a geo-political government (nation-state), a corporate government (business entity), a socio-political government (tribe, family, etc.), or any number of different kinds of government. But governance is the kinetic exercise of management power and policy, while government is the instrument (usually, collective) that does it. The term government is also used more abstractly as a synonym for governance, as in the Canadian motto, "Peace, Order and *Good Government*".

As defined by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), governance can be seen as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and

¹ UNESCAP: Poverty and Development Division>Governance; Link: <http://www.unescap.org/pdd/prs/ProjectActivities/Ongoing/gg/governance.asp>

institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences².

The World Bank (WB) also defined Governance and according to WB, governance (as opposed to “good” governance) can be defined as the rule of the rulers, typically within a given set of rules. One might conclude that governance is the process – by which authority is conferred on rulers, by which they make the rules, and by which those rules are enforced and modified. Thus, understanding governance requires an identification of both the rulers and the rules, as well as the various processes by which they are selected, defined, and linked together and with the society generally³.

2.2 Governance Failure

When the any facility expected announce or by government and it can not reach to last man of country it is governance failure. In this report governance failure refers to inability of local elected bodied to practice the set governance system by the influence of outside power structure and also inaccessibility of constituents to the governance system in a local government constituency.

2.3 Local Government

Local Government is the people’s organisation that works comparatively in a smaller area of the country as part of the National Government. Charles Barrow defined Local Government as “an organisation that is run by the locally elected representatives whose roles and responsibilities are limited within their areas and they can impose taxes to create their own source of income to run the regular activities”. Local government is democratic self-governance that must be accountable to the people. It is meant for management of local affairs by locally elected persons⁴.

The Bangladesh Constitution, adopted in 1972, provided strong a foundation for local government. Article 59 and 60 state:

"59(1) Local government in every administrative unit of the Republic shall be entrusted to bodies, composed of persons elected in accordance with law.

² UNDP Governance policy paper

³ The World Bank website-<http://go.worldbank.org/G2CHLXX0Q0>

⁴ Local Government in Bangladesh: An Overview; http://www.local-democracy.org/archive/documents/historical_background.htm

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

- (a) Administration and the work of public officers;
- (b) The maintenance of public order;
- (c) The preparation and implementation of plans relating to public services and economic development.

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

There are mainly two local government system in Bangladesh viz. Rural Local Government system and Urban Local Government system. Rural system has 3 tiers, these are: Zila Parishad, Upazila Parishad and Union Parishad. However, the Zila Parishad is not active now. On the other hand, the Urban Local Government system consist of two major institutions, these are: City Corporation and Paurasavas. Rural and urban local government bodies are entrusted with a large number of functions and responsibilities relating to civic and community welfare as well as local development.

2.4 Union Parishad

Union Parishad (UP) is the lowest tier of Rural Local Government system. There are 4,486 numbers⁵ of UPs in Bangladesh. As defined in the clause number 30, 31, 32 and 33 of Local Government (Union Parishad) Ordinance 1983, the UP has 5 types of functions⁶. These are:

- i) Civic functions;
- ii) Law enforcement and security;
- iii) Revenuer and administration;
- iv) Development and poverty alleviation; and
- v) Judicial functions.

Whereas, the general functions of the UP are:

⁵ National Institute of Local Government; Structure of Local Government

⁶ National Institute of Local Government, Functions of Union Parishad.

- Conducting socio-economic surveys of households, every five years to be used for development plan preparation;
- Maintain vital statistics like registration of births-deaths, marriage etc.;
- Make plans for natural resource management and development;
- Supervise management of primary educational institutes; motivate parents to send their children to school and create better awareness for adult and female literacy;
- Create awareness for better primary health care;
- Maintain law and order and control terrorism, violence against women etc.;
- Ensure participation in local and central government development planning;
- Encourage co-operatives and NGOs;
- Initiate participatory development of local roads, bridges, culverts etc.;
- Support various development activities related to agriculture;
- Encourage and initiate tree plantation programmes;
- Assist various organizations in their development efforts.

In addition, Union *Parishads* have been assigned with the adoption and implementation of poverty alleviation programmes directly by themselves and through NGOs and co-operatives.

Each of the UPs has 1 Chairman, 9 general members, 3 women members in 3 reserve seats and has an appointed Secretary. Besides there are paid village polices in each UP.

2.5 Patron-client Relationship

The roots of the patron-client relationship have been traced by some to the dependence of plebians on patricians in the Roman Empire. However the relationship is perhaps more obvious in the system of servitude known as serfdom that was widespread in Europe in the Middle Ages. The various systems of tenancy that followed the fall of the ancient societies of Greece and Rome had a common factor in that a large number of those who worked the land were unfree. They were tied to both land and landlord by bonds of service. The system of servitude in Europe was as much a system of authority as it was an economic adaptation. Prestige for the lord lay

in the protection of as many serfs and dependent tenants as possible: hand in hand with this prestige went military capacity and political power.

The ties of patron-clientage were basic to the system of land tenure and agricultural production in feudal Europe, where they still persist in Northern Mediterranean countries. Clientelismo is the basis of the varied contractual relationships throughout Southern Italy, for example. Its essence is not the fixed and contractual but rather the informal and flexible. It is a face-to-face relationship, and many writers stress its importance in giving clients a degree of political power, through their support of the patron in his external political activities.

The conquerors and colonists of Latin America imported many of the values and legal institutions of feudal Europe, including patron-client relationships. In the Arab world, the transition from kin-based networks to the more complex relationships of modern states is also marked by extensive political patronage, although this is not nearly so strongly characterized by economic exploitation as the form found in Latin societies. Despite stressing the asymmetry of the patron-client relationship, writers on this area emphasize the political content: the role of the patron as a cultural broker, and a system of obligations that is moral rather than monetary. Clients may become wealthy, but they do not lose their jural status as clients⁷.

Patron-client systems are organized by people of power, both men and women, who build and keep the loyalty of people of more humble position. Both patrons and clients regard the link between them as a personal attachment similar to the bond of affection holding members of a family or kin group together. However, unlike families, where the linkage is regarded as permanent and often is taken for granted, a patron-client relationship must be renewed constantly and renegotiated continuously. Throughout history, clients have provided the work, income, popular acclaim, votes, political allegiance, and military support that patrons need to maintain power and

⁷ GORDON MARSHALL. "patron-client relationship." *A Dictionary of Sociology*. 1998. Retrieved November 14, 2010 from Encyclopedia.com: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O88-patronclientrelationship.html>

position. For their part, clients have gained protection, access to resources or information, group identity, and opportunities for advancement⁸.

The patron-client relationship is very much distinct in the party politics in Bangladesh. The relationship between the political leaders and their supporters in Bangladesh is led by the patron-client relationship. The political leaders are the patron who has unlimited power and authority and their supporters are the client who try to get benefits by the power and influences of the political leaders.

2.6 Partyarchy

A partyarchy is democratic political system where “political parties monopolise the formal political process and politicise society along party lines”. Partyarchy is also manifestation of the central role that parties play in economic and social spheres. Given the weak and underdeveloped associational realm and an economically interventionist and discretionary state, the role of political parties has become central in linking organised civil society groups and individual interests with the state. This centrality of the party in fact explains the increasing presence of the members of the business community in the major parties and in the Parliament during last decades⁹.

In Bangladesh, partyarchy has become a key characteristic of the major political parties (such as, Bangladesh Awami League [BAL] and Bangladesh Nationalist Party [BNP] and Jatiyo Party [JP]) to control public resources and power in all spheres. Both ruling and opposition parties would like to see local elected bodies (LEBs) as their partisans and to implement development and poverty reduction programme in the line of their party and for the purpose of their client.

2.7 Poverty

Poverty is a condition where people's basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter are not being met. Poverty is generally of two types: (1) Absolute poverty is synonymous with destitution and occurs when people cannot obtain adequate resources (measured in terms of calories or nutrition) to support a minimum level of physical health.

⁸ <http://www.enotes.com/political-encyclopedia/patron-client-systems>

⁹ Dr. Mirza Hassan; Demand for Second Generation Reform: The Case of Bangladesh PhD Thesis, ICS, University of London, 2001 (chapter 2)

Absolute poverty means about the same everywhere, and can be eradicated as demonstrated by some countries. (2) Relative poverty occurs when people do not enjoy a certain minimum level of living standards as determined by a government (and enjoyed by the bulk of the population) that vary from country to country, sometimes within the same country. Relative poverty occurs everywhere, is said to be increasing, and may never be eradicated.¹⁰

Banglapedia, the National Encyclopaedia of Bangladesh also define poverty as an economic condition in which one is unable to enjoy a minimum standard of living. It is a state of existing in amounts (of earnings or money) that are too small to buy the basic necessities of life. The visible effects of poverty are malnutrition, ill health, poor housing conditions, and illiteracy. The impoverished people suffer from unemployment, underemployment and lack of access to resources that restrict their opportunities to earn living. The causes of poverty are rooted in the complex web of cultural arbitrariness and demographic, economic, social, political and various other natural factors such as floods, cyclones and droughts.

A simple unidimensional definition of poverty followed in Bangladesh during the 1980s was the level of food consumption that provides calories of energy below what was required. Indirect estimates of the proportion of people in poverty were made according to the following method. First, a bundle of food providing the specified level of nutrition (2,112 kilo calories and 58 grams of protein per capita per day) was identified based on a compromise between cost and consumer preference. Next, the families with a per capita income below 1.25 times the cost of the specified food bundle were classified as moderately poor, and families with per capita income below 85% of the threshold income for moderate poverty as extremely poor. This method was applied basically for measuring the incidence of poverty in rural areas. For urban areas, the threshold level of calorie consumption for measuring the incidence of poverty was slightly higher. Also the threshold level of kilocalories per person per day was changed in different times under different policy considerations. The data used for estimates on incidence of poverty in this methodology are generated by Household

¹⁰ Business Dictionary.com: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/poverty.html#ixzz16ZcVrvC2>

Expenditure Surveys (HES) conducted periodically by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

According to the BBS estimates, people living under the poverty line in rural areas in 1995-96 accounted for 47.1% and rural people in extreme poverty i.e., those living under hardcore (absolute) poverty line comprised 24.6%. The corresponding figures for urban areas were 49.7% and 27.3% in that year. BBS in 1995 used a 'Cost of Basic Needs' method to measure the incidence of poverty in Bangladesh and identified two layers - the poor and the absolutely poor. According to this method, 35.6% of the country's population were absolutely poor and the poor accounted for 53.1%. A multi-dimensional approach to poverty takes into account a range of quality of life variables such as nutrition, health and sanitation, security, housing, access to safe drinking water, education, life expectancy, access to resources, participation and institutional capacity to cope with crisis. Currently Bangladesh has been ranked 129th in terms of these and other related parameters integrated into human development index (HDI)¹¹.

Continued poverty in Bangladesh may be attributed to many factors including population pressure, limited per capita natural resource endowment, illiteracy, extremely small amount of per capita arable and forest land, poor health and sanitation services, environmental degradation, deforestation, excessive dependence on agriculture, natural calamities, large-scale deprivation of the women folk, and ill governance.

2.8 Poverty Reduction

Poverty reduction is a process that enables the poor and extreme poor in accessing sustainable livelihood options through employment generation, asset creation and controlling over the public resources and services. Poverty reduction strategies refer to those which support the poor and vulnerable groups to change their social and economical condition. The ultimate objective of these strategies is to reduce the numbers of the poor through changing their economic and social condition and contribute to the MDGs.

¹¹ Human Development Report 2010

Poverty has historically been accepted as inevitable as non-industrialized economies produced very little while populations grew almost as fast making wealth scarce. Poverty reduction, or poverty alleviation, has been largely as a result of overall economic growth. Food shortages were common before modern agricultural technology and in places that lack them today, such as nitrogen fertilizers, pesticides and irrigation methods. The dawn of industrial revolution led to high economic growth, eliminating mass poverty in what is now considered the developed world. World GDP per person quintupled during the 20th century. In 1820, 75% of humanity lived on less than a dollar a day, while in 2001, only about 20% do. Today, continued economic development is constrained by the lack of economic freedoms. Economic liberalization requires extending property rights to the poor, especially to land.

Poverty alleviation also involves improving the living conditions of people who are already poor. Aid, particularly in medical and scientific areas, is essential in providing better lives, such as the green revolution and the eradication of smallpox. Problems with today's development aid include the high proportion of tied aid, which mandates receiving nations to buy products, often more expensive, originating only from donor countries.

Government agencies of Bangladesh such as the ministry of health and family welfare, BSCIC, department of social services, directorate of women affairs, local government engineering department, directorate of agriculture, directorate of livestock, and department of fisheries also have a large number of different poverty alleviation projects. Moreover, non-government organisations (NGOs) run a remarkable number of target-oriented programmes and projects to improve the socio-economic conditions of small and marginal farmers, assetless poor and distressed women. Notable among these programmes are the group-based microcredit programmes of Grameen Bank, Brac, ASA, PROSHIKA and other local and foreign NGOs, the government initiated programmes like *Swanirvar* Bangladesh and Small Farmers Credit Project and donor funded special projects like Rural Finance Experimental Project, Bangladesh Swiss Agricultural Project and NORAD projects for small entrepreneurship development.

Also there are some traditional but less focused programmes of poverty alleviation in the country. These are food for work programme, Food for Education, Pension for Elderly People, Vulnerable Group Development, Housing for the Poor and Homeless and the programme of providing insecticides and high yield variety of seeds to rural farmers. The government has undertaken development initiatives to expand the area of non-agricultural activities in order to create more employment opportunities. All these have to some extent increased the entitlement of the poor, their social and economic awareness and empowerment. These programmes, however, had contributed little to improve the poverty situation in the country. The BBS revealed that the incidence of poverty at the national level was 47% in 1996 and could be reduced to 44.7% in 1999. Poverty alleviation, therefore, remains a challenge requiring a proper planning to combat it and a high level of commitment to implement the plans with skill and integrity¹².

The Government of Bangladesh has been identified numbers of strategies for poverty reduction in its “National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction” (Unlocking the Potential) which include i) Macroeconomic Environment For Pro-Poor Economic; ii) Critical Sectors For Pro-poor Economic Growth; iii) Effective Social Safety Nets And Targeted Programmes; iv) Human Development; v) Ensuring Participation, Social Inclusion And Empowerment; vi) Promoting Good Governance.¹³ It is noted that almost all safety net programmes being implemented by UPs with the assistance of local administration. In addition, the UPs are responsible for ensuring participation and social inclusion at grassroots development process.

2.9 Public Resources

A resource is any physical or virtual entity of limited availability that needs to be consumed to obtain a benefit from it. In most cases, commercial or even non-commercial factors require resource allocation through resource management.

The purely economic value of a resource is controlled by supply and demand. This is, however, a narrow perspective on resources as there are many things that cannot be

¹² Banglapedia online edition

¹³ Unlocking the Potential: National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction; 2005

measured in money. Natural resources like forests, mountains etc. are considered beautiful so they have aesthetic value. Resources also have an ethical value as well, because it is widely recognised that it is our moral duty to protect and conserve them for the future generations.

In economics, a public good is a good that is non-rivalrous and non-excludable. Non-rivalry means that consumption of the good by one individual does not reduce availability of the good for consumption by others; and non-excludability that no one can be effectively excluded from using the good. In the real world, there may be no such thing as an absolutely non-rival and non-excludable good; but economists think that some goods approximate the concept closely enough for the analysis to be economically useful.

Graphically, non-rivalry means that if each of several individuals has a demand curve for a public good, then the individual demand curves are summed vertically to get the aggregate demand curve for the public good. This is in contrast to the procedure for deriving the aggregate demand for a private good, where individual demands are summed horizontally.

Paul A. Samuelson is usually credited as the first economist to develop the theory of public goods. In his classic 1954 paper 'The Pure Theory of Public Expenditure, he defined a public good, or as he called it in the paper a "collective consumption good", as follows:

"goods which all enjoy in common in the sense that each individual's consumption of such a good leads to no subtractions from any other individual's consumption of that good".

This is the property that has become known as Non-rivalry. In addition a pure public good exhibits a second property called Non-excludability: that is, it is impossible to exclude any individuals from consuming the good.

The opposite of a public good is a private good, which does not possess these properties. A loaf of bread, for example, is a private good: its owner can exclude others from using it, and once it has been consumed, it cannot be used again.

There are mainly two types of resources – natural (renewable and non-renewable) and human resources (tangible and intangible). However, this study referred to only public resources those are the public goods and have accessibility by all people by payment of free of charge, specially resources in which the poor, vulnerable and marginal people are entitled to access free of charges or paying a nominal/token fees. This also includes the public services such as health, education, water and sanitation, housing, food supply and legal etc.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Both primary data collection and literature review were done under the study using different methodologies. As planned, following methodologies were applied to fulfil the objectives of the study:

3.1 Desk Research

3.1.1 Identify relevant literatures and documents

Available literature and documents (printed and online/digital version) have been identified and reviewed. A wide range of documents including the ordinance, laws and policies, reports of different agencies etc were collected for review.

3.1.2 Review and analyse the relevant literatures and documents

All the collected literatures and documents were reviewed to understand the gaps following the assumption of the study. The literature also helped to understand and clarify the terminology used in this report.

3.2 Primary data collection

An in-depth study of 2 UPs was carried out to collect qualitative data during June and July of 2009. These two UPs are: i) Panjia UP in Keshabpur Upazila of Jessore district. Elected Member of Parliament (MP) of this constituency was from opposition party (BAL) and ii) Durbadanga UP in Monirampur Upazila of Jessore district. The elected MP of this constituency was from the ruling party. This combination of opposition and ruling party was selected to understand the effect of partyarchy by both ruling party and opposition. It could be noted that during the data collection period, the Caretaker Government was ruling the country but the elected UP representatives were elected in 2003 and they passed a long time through an elected government. BNP as an elected government ruled the country from 2001 to 2006.

The primary data was collection through the following methods:

3.2.1 Meeting with UP Representatives (LEBs)

Before conducting the meeting with UP and civil society organisation, the area was visited and informal meeting was held with UP Chairmen and some members of UPs those were selected for the study. The formal meeting dates were finalised with the

UPs during the visit. The formal meeting was held with both the UPs during 14-15 June 2009. UP chairmen and members were present in both the meetings (list of UP representatives were present in the meetings are attached in Annex 1) and the meetings were facilitated following the research questions.

3.2.2 Focus Group Discussion with the opinion leaders

One NGO namely Samadhan that has been working for the development of the poor and vulnerable of the area since 1990, supported to organise Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the opinion leaders of both the UPs included social leaders, school teachers, NGO workers, etc. FGDs were conducted during the last week June and first week of July 2010.

3.2.3 Key Informant Interview

A total of 23 persons were interviewed including women, aged people, school teachers, members of outcaste minority groups¹⁴ and some previous UP representatives to get more insights regarding their access to UP development activities and involvement with planning and implementation.

3.3 Analysis both primary and secondary data and prepare a report

Both primary and secondary data were analysed to prepare this report. All the data are qualitative and the findings are presented in the next chapter following the research questions.

¹⁴ In South Asia, somebody who has been expelled from a Hindu caste for violating its rules or customs are coloured as outcaste minority groups. They are untouchable and do not have access to traditional social and cultural events and festival (e.g. *rishi*, *muchi*, *behara* etc.)

CHAPTER IV: KEY FINDINGS

Two UPs in Jessore district were selected for the study one is Panjia UP under Keshabpur Upazila (election constituency Jessore-6) and the other is Durbadanga UP under Monirampur Upazila (election constituency Jessore-5). Md Nizam Uddin is the Chairman of Panjia UP and he won the election first time in his life. Late Abu Sharaf Hibjul Kader Sadek (who is popularly known as ASHK Sadek) was the MP of this constituency during 2001-2007 and he was nominated by BAL. He also was the MP of this constituency for the period of 1996-2001 and that time he was a cabinet Minister for the Ministry of Education.

Sardar Bahadur Ali is the Chairman of Durbadanga UP and he won the election first time in 1973 and continued till 1987. After 4 years gap (1988-1992) he again won the election in 1992 and since then he has been continuing the chairmanship of this union. In addition to the chairmanship, he was a school teacher from 1962 to 2002. The MP of this constituency was Mufti Muhammad Wakkach and he was nominated by the 4 party alliance that was led by BNP. Mufti Wakkach was the state Minister for the Ministry of Religious Affairs during HM Ershad Regime.

4.1 Formal Power system of UP

Union Parishad (UP) is the lowest tier of local government, currently covering an approximate population of 25,000. The union level body has undergone many changes in nomenclature and is currently called the union parishad (UP). These became fully elected bodies in 1962. Among the various tiers of local government, UPs have the longest institutional history, dating back to 1870. This continuity in institutional life, however, is built on a very narrow functional and financial jurisdiction and on administrative subservience to executive functionaries at thana and district levels. Notwithstanding these limitations, UPs have been the focal point in the local government system, except for a period in the 1980s when the thana became the focal point. Two important policy changes in the 1990s have placed this body more firmly in the spotlight:

- Streamlining of the representational base of the parishad by subdividing a union into nine electoral units, or wards, instead of the previous three, and admitting a

representative from each ward as a UP member; this provision, first suggested in 1993, became operational through the union election of 1997;

- Strengthening of female representation within the parishads through the 1997 provision for reserving three seats for female representatives.

Following the provisions, a UP is consist of 1 Chairman, 9 general Members in 9 wards and 3 women members in 3 reserved seats. In addition, there is an appointed Secretary who is to provide secretarial services to the UP. As a Local Government organisation, UP is accountable to the National Government and is dependent on the Government allocation and resources for meeting recurring cost and implementing the development projects. Although the UP has authority to impose and collect taxes from the local sources but the reality is the sources are vey limited and the UP representatives are not interested to collect taxes from their people from the fear of losing next pole.

According to the functions, roles and responsibility of UP and it representatives, Chairman is the Chief Executing Officer of UP and he is responsible for all administrative functions of a UP. He presides over the meetings and approves the meeting minutes.

There are 13 prescribed standing committees in each UP (such as Water and Sanitation committee, fisheries and livestock committees, Union Disaster Management Committees etc.) and such more committees can be formed with the approval of Deputy Commissioner.

Five types of functions have been determined for UP in the Local Government (Union Parishad) Ordinance 1983 and these are:

- i) Civic functions;
- ii) Law enforcement and security;
- iii) Revenuer and administration;
- iv) Development and poverty alleviation; and
- v) Judicial functions.

The Union Parishad prepares an Annual Development Plan (ADP) and submits to Upazila Parishad for resources to implement the plan. The Upazila Parishad sends the plan to the Central Government after screening for financing the plan. Therefore, the UP is dependent on the Upazila Parishad and the Central Government. In addition to the ADP, UP receives some special allocation from the central government.

Ideally all the decisions should be taken with the consensus of the UP members and all development projects should be developed and implemented with the active participation of the constituency according to the Ordinance.

4.2 *Informal Power system of UP*

Although it is mentioned that all the decision will be taken with the consensus of the UP members, and development projects should be developed with the participation of the constituency, some of the UP members informed that in most cases Chairmen took decision solely without any consent of the UP members. Women member also informed that both Chairmen and general UP members avoid them and did not share any decision with them. In contrary the, chairmen informed that most of the decisions came from the top; sometimes from the MP and sometimes from the Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNO). Thus he had nothing to do but to abide by the decisions of the top level.

In both the UPs under this study, Chairmen were not partisans of either BAL or BNP but both the MPs were active and influential members of either ruling party (BNP) or the opposition (BAL). Thus there were parallel UP structure formed by the MPs and the ruling party.

However, not all but most of the UP members informed about the parallel UP in their constituency and the informal UP was backed by the ruling party to manage (or mismanage) the public resources allocated by the central government.

4.3 *UP Representatives' Authority and Power*

According to the Local Government Ordinance 1983, the standing committees have the authority to take decision of issue based development activities with final approval of the Chairman. Each of the UP members will head at least one standing committee

as per the Ordinance and women members should be chaired at least one forth of the committees.

Both the UPs followed the provisions of the Ordinance in forming the standing committees but practically the standing committees are inactive and they do not sit in meeting regularly. Eventually some of them are not aware about membership in the standing committees. When some of the UP members were asked about their involvement with the standing committees, they could not respond spontaneously, rather they asked Chairmen about their membership in the standing committees.

The UP Chairmen informed that the standing committees were formed following the ordinance but the Chair of the committees are not proactive to sit in regular meeting.

The UP members are delegated to identify development issues with the participation of the local people and then to share the issues in the standing committees. The standing committees will approve the projects after discussion in committee meetings and submit to the Chairman for final approval.

4.4 Decision Making Process of UP

The formal decision making process of UP as mentioned earlier is through meeting in participation of the UP members chaired by the UP members. The decisions are taken in consensus of the meeting participants usually approved by the Chairman. However, the reality is different both the chairmen informed that decisions came from the top level without their concern and they had to implement those decisions. They implemented the decisions of the ruling party's MP and other partisans because of their credibility to their constituency- at least they could show their activities and involvement in the development activities.

The top level referred to the ruling party's MP and the party chairman of the Upazila as well. The Chairman of Durbadanga UP informed that he never received any special allocation from the MP. In contrary the Chairmen of Panjia UP informed that he was offered special allocation with condition to give 50% of the total allocation to the party members of BAI. and finally he regret to receive the allocation by accepting the condition given by the MP.

4.5 Relationship of UP with local MP, Ruling Party Members and Bureaucrats

As an autonomous body, the UP should have freedom to take their own decision in favour of their constituency but the reality is different at UP. The local MP is concern about his/her partisans and vote-bank. They always try to pull the UP Chairmen and members in their parties. Although the UP is a non-political institute but practically it is more than political. Most of the resource allocation is done to serve the political purposes of the ruling party.

Both the Chairmen informed that all public resources were controlled by the MPs and ruling party members. As they were not the partisan of the ruling party, they did not have access to the local MP and upazila level ruling party chairman. However, it is a fact that some of the UP members had good linkage with the MPs and ruling party members and they took the advantage of their relationship and they became prominent than the Chairmen as they could pull resources by the blessings of ruling party's MP and members. Absence of a ruling party's MP in a constituency, the upazila level ruling party chairman are most powerful person to control the public resources those are channelled through the UP.

Ideally the bureaucrats should be impartial and should follow the government procedure and policy to manage resources but practically the bureaucrats are very loyal to the ruling party's MP and members in most cases or they had nothing to do without follow the instruction of the ruling party's MP and members. Both the Chairmen informed that during the BNP regime there were no elected upazila chairmen and the UNOs were the de-facto chief of the upazila parishad. As a member of upazila parishad, both the Chairmen would attend the meetings of upazila parishads but they could not speak much about their practical needs but to agree with the decisions of UNOs. They also informed that both the UNOs acted as the partisan of the ruling party. The Chairman of Panjia UP informed that the MP of the constituency rarely visited the area being the MP of the opposition and most of the resources allocation would done by the UNO and of course in favour of the ruling party's interest. Thus the relationship of UP Chairmen with the MPs, ruling party's members and the bureaucrats were not symbiotic (mutually beneficial relationship); rather it was some sort of enmity type of relationship. Ruling party's MP, members and bureaucrats tried to avoid the Chairmen and non-partisan UP members as they could

not manipulate them in their favour. One of the interesting information provided by both the UP representatives that they could work with freedom in favour of their constituency during the Caretaker Government. They had very good relationship with the local administration in channelling public resources and implementing development projects and safety nets programmes.

4.6 Formal and Informal Resource Management Process

The formal process of resources management in the UP is done following the ADP of UP. In addition the regular resources for safety net programme and special allocation is done as per the requirement of the UP through the upazila parishad decision. The UP usually forms a committee for each item of resource distribution among their constituency irrespective of their political identity.

However, the reality is different than that of the given process of resource management at UP level. The ruling party MP and party members allocate resources for the UP, prepare a list of beneficiaries and project management committees by their own and send for signing of the UP Chairman. One of the Chairman informed that the MP allocated 14 tones of rice in his UP, formed a project management committee and send for his sign with a condition that he can use 8 tones of rice for development in his UP but rest of the rice (6 tones) should be deposited to party fund.

In case of selecting beneficiaries of social safety net programme, the ruling party with the help of the parallel UP (that is consist of the ruling party cadres) members select their clients without considering their socio-economic condition but their party identity only. Thus the real beneficiaries are bypassed and excluded by the social safety net programmes. The Chairmen informed that, although the safety net programme of the government is designed and implemented for the vulnerable and extreme poor community but actually those are used to safe the ruling party cadres and their clients only.

The Chairman of Durbadanga UP informed that there is only exception of influence on the resources management if the project is jointly implemented by an NGO but the political leaders and ruling party members also influenced to include their supporters as the beneficiaries of the project.

4.7 Patron-Client Relationship and Partyarchy in UP Governance System

Both the patron-client relationship and partyarchy are very strong in UP governance system. The ruling party and opposition both like to see the UP in their favour and to work only for their clients. Patron-client relationship and partyarchy impacted not only the resource management but also impacted the judicial process of UP.

In the study area, the UP Chairmen were elected in 2003 after the National Parliament election in 2001. Both the MPs had their own party candidates in the UP election but they failed to win the pole. Immediately after the UP election, both the MPs and ruling party members offered the winning candidates to join their party but they regret their proposal. While the winning UP Chairmen regret to join the ruling party an obvious impact was the parallel UP by the loser candidate.

As found in the resource management in the UP, the ruling party only accept resource delivery among their clients only irrespective of their eligibility of receiving the resources. Both the UP representatives (above 70% of the total members) informed that the ruling party better like to see the UP as their party extension and to work in their favour to serve their clients only. This deteriorating situation of resource management at grassroots level made the clients more dependents on their patrons and thus the patron-client relationship becoming stronger in the political culture.

As found and knew from the local constituency that some of the UP members had good relationship with the ruling party and some are the supporters of the ruling party, they were awarded by numbers of projects. Not only that, the clients of the ruling party got regular benefits though these members in receiving the resources of social safety net programmes and sometimes got access to other public resources such as water-body, khaslands etc. This practice encouraged and promoted partyarchy in UP governance. Patron-client relationship and partyarchy also impacted in addressing the priority needs of the area. Most of the less priority projects were addressed to serve the interest of the ruling party members without informing the UP Chairmen. In that case the UP Chairmen had nothing to do but to observe the impacts of patron-client relationship and partyarchy. Women members as informed became worst victims of patron-client relationship and partyarchy and they are afraid of returning in the next

election. The local people are also surprised to see the influence of ruling party over the UP governance system and they are in dilemma to cast their votes in the next pole, especially those who are bypassed by the public resources during 2001 to 2006. They said, we locally elect the best persons as UP representatives but the result of national election destroy our choice at local level. If the UP representatives are in line with the ruling parties then it results better but in case of opposition from the ruling party or if the ruling party did not like UP Chairman or other members, it created disaster for the poor and vulnerable community by diverting the public resources to their supporter.

The Chairman of Durbadanga UP also informed that he observed highest level of party influence and manipulation of public resources during 2001 to 2006 in his life of chairmanship.

4.8 Local People's Participation in the Decision-Making Process

People's participation in the affairs of the local government activities is an important part of its governance. Participation means people's involvement in decision-making, planning and implementing of development projects. Participatory approach to development has become popular worldwide which is often termed bottom up approaches for management and policy-making. Public participation in this regard is a cornerstone to both community development and community economic development.

Available literature reveals that UP could not fulfil the objective of serving the grassroots following their needs and aspiration. Important gaps in communication with the constituency by the UP representatives found and understand through discussion with the local people. Various institutional problems in UP created governance failure which impede participation of the local people in the decision making process. Moreover, the UP is alleged to be class biased and have little sensitivity, awareness, and concern about pro-poor interventions. Empirical evidences suggest that:

- UP is not pro-poor enough to assess and understand the priorities of the poor. Thus pro-poor issues do not get priority and /or preference in UP programme design and project selection;

- Built-in mistrust about the UP as well as central government extension agencies has also driven the poor away or demotivated them about demanding services;
- The poor are also unaware of their constitutional rights to be assertive in demanding services.

Both the UP Chairmen informed that they could not implement many of the development projects by their choice but so far they could identify and implement development projects, they ensured local people's participation in developing and implementing phases. Moreover, they took the highest opportunity to ensure people's participation in identifying the beneficiaries of the social safety net programmes.

In contrast, the local people and the opinion leaders informed that UP representatives never tried to create opportunity of participation of the local people in the decision making process but sometimes they included local people in the project committees and standing committees as well to fulfil the criteria. They also informed that there is no representation of the poor people in the project committees and standing committees as well.

However, some of the local people mentioned their participation in identifying local problems through Local Government Support Programme (LGSP) implemented by an NGO in Durbadanga UP. As they informed, the NGO took initiatives to participate in the exercise but they did not find any follow-up actions of the intervention. While the issue was raised to the Chairman, he informed that following the exercise ADP was developed and submitted to upazila parishad but it was not fully accepted and approved and thus the local people became upset.

One of the formal opportunities for poor people's participation in the decision making process through the standing committees. The standing committees of Union Parishad need to ensure the participation of the people to engage them with the local level planning as well as local development process. The study revealed that the people have very less access in the decision making process of standing committees mostly because of non functional committees as well as procedural complexity and above all the impacts of patron-client relationship and partyarchy.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

The Union Parishad (UP) has historical background for about 140 years that has been evolved through different changes both in structure and characteristics but it is still far from becoming a local body having adequate institutional credibility to work independently and to serve the local people. Though the UP has a long list of roles and functional responsibilities, its institutional visibility is far too limited as far as the poor and disadvantaged are concerned. Furthermore the governance capacity of the rural local government is inadequate and inefficient. Thus the overall picture of UP governance is indeed depressing and failed to uphold the ideal governance practice through which the local people could articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences (refer to UNDP definition of Governance).

In a democratic society, governance should be more responsive, transparent and accountable where all people can equally participate in the decision making process but as found in the UPs under the study, the formal governance system is highly dominant and controlled by the partyarchy and patron-client relationship. The party politics of Bangladesh is so aggressive that occupy everything in their party line.

On the other hand, poverty is acute and persistent in Bangladesh. There is mounting evidence that poverty is associated with governance failure. Since the poor are out of the power structure, they do not get equal access to government services and they are least able to fend for themselves, lacking both the resources and the knowledge to assert their rights. The argument for strengthen local governance arises most critically from the very nature of poverty trends while the rural poor need support in poverty reduction. Thus engaging UP in poverty reduction has become urgent because as a local body UP can play crucial role in poverty reduction programme ensuring inclusion of all group of people that are vulnerable to poverty.

In the recent time, participation has emerged as a new and effective strategy in development thinking. It is believed that people's participation may lead to effective governance of UP paving the way for poverty reduction. People learn how to promote their own development by actually participating in the process of planning,

implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Participation as an educative process contributes to human resource development. It is one of the parameters for promoting effective governance which envisages participation of the entire society in governance through change in their subsidiary roles and their direct involvement in areas hitherto kept exclusive in the public domain. Participation is also discussed as a process whereby the poor people seek to enhance some influence and to gain access to the resources which would help them poverty reduction. The participation of people in the governance process is considered to be very significant and crucial for accessing public resources. With the participation of the local people on a regular basis economic development can be achieved at the level of expectation and political development as well. People's participation in decision-making, planning and evaluating policies plays a key and supportive role in local governance leading to poverty reduction.

The study revealed that-

- The informal power system is stronger (supported by the partyarchy) than that of the formal power system in UP. The ruling party run parallel UP;
- UP representatives are delegated authority and power officially but they are not empowered enough to perform their roles and responsibilities properly avoiding the pressure of ruling party;
- Most of the decisions come from top means the decision making process is top-down. A bottom up decision making process is far away;
- Public resources are managed by the ruling party to strengthen patron-client relationship;
- UP's relationship with MP, ruling party members and local level bureaucrats are not beneficial but sometime a hostile relationship is exist;
- Patron-client relationship and partyarchy is very strong and emerging in the UP governance system;
- People's participation in the decision making process is a symbolic process, practically people's participation specially the poor and vulnerable communities' participation occurred in very low degree.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Governance has three legs: economic, political and administrative. Economic governance includes decision-making processes that affect a country's economic activities and its relationships with other economies. It clearly has major implications for equity, poverty and quality of life. Political governance is the process of decision-making to formulate policy. Administrative governance is the system of policy implementation. Encompassing all three, good governance defines the processes and structures that guide political and socio-economic relationships.¹⁵

Governance is a system where everyone especially the poor and vulnerable get access to the public resources. The disadvantaged people acknowledged that resources for the poor in the form of Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF), Test Relief (TR) and other food aid (e.g. Food for work) is a reflection of effective governance. An effective and fair governance system in the UP would create more opportunities for generating employment of the poor rural people, particularly women and disadvantaged groups in order to contribute poverty reduction. The poor also perceive effective governance as assurance of better health and educational support for them.

Effective governance to the poor is a cultural and political condition where the local elected leaders and officials would be accessible during the most critical needs. They also emphasized that the scope for participation of the poor and disadvantaged in the governmental affairs especially in the UP is also critically important in ensuring better governance. It is now empirically established that though the negative consequences of weak governance affect the entire population, but have a particularly severe impact on the poor, women, and other marginalized groups whose vulnerability to traditional social biases and inequitable power relations place their rights and interests at risk.

As it is found that patron-client relationship and partyarchy have become the central tendency of the major political parties that have potential to form government, and that has huge impact on the UP governance system, it is really very difficult to find effective way forward. However, strengthening local government also has become an emerging issue to uphold the democratic values and to create access of the poor to the

¹⁵ "Reforming Public Institutions and Strengthening Governance: A World Bank Strategy – Implementation Update," March 28 2002

public resources for poverty reduction which depends on improvements in the quality and accessibility to poor people of basic education, health, water and other social and infrastructure services. One of the effective ways for making the political parties and the government accountable can be strengthen the social checks (media, civil society etc.). A few suggestions are forwarded to reduce the impact of patron-client relationship and partyarchy on the UP governance system:

- The local people's capacity to exercise their rights over the UP need to be increased through huge mass awareness. Simultaneously the UP representatives should be proactive to inform their entitlement and how those were impeded by the impact of patron-client relationship and partyarchy;
- UPs can help creating institutional mechanism for ensuring participation of the various socially and economically excluded groups of the rural community in the development process so that they can raise their voice against parallel UP run by the ruling party;
- UPs should follow an open and transparent way of managing public resources involving the local people, media and civil society members. The UPs also can share their experience of partyarchy and patron-client relationship that impede their proper share of public resources.

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Annex-1: List of UP Representative of of 2 UPs

UP Chairman and Members of Panjia Union

1. Md. Nizam Uddin- Chairman
2. Abdul Khalek Gazi- member
3. Md. Ahad Mollah- member
4. Mr. Durga Pada Sarker- member
5. Md. Nur Ali-member
6. Mr. Adhir Kumar Nath-member
7. Md. Rezaul Islam-member
8. Md. Azizur Rahman-member
9. Mr. Nirmal Kormokar-member
10. Ms. Salma Begum- member reserve seat
11. Ms. Jyotsana Begum-member reserve seat
12. Ms. Shirina Begum- member reserve seat.

UP Chairman and Members of Durbadanga Union

1. Sarder Bahadur Ali- Chairman
2. Md. Liakat Ali- member
3. Md. Abdul Karim- member
4. Mr. Sanjit Kumar- member
5. Md. Nowsher Ali- member
6. Md. Anowar Ali- member
7. Mr. Provat Mallik- member
8. Md. Abu Musa- member
9. Md. Muzibur Rahman- member
10. Md. Selim Hossain- member
11. Ms. Rokhsana Begum- member reserve seat.
12. Ms. Rekha Parvin- member reserve seat.
13. Ms. Popi Begum - member reserve seat.