People's Participation in Development Process through Decentralized Local Government

A Dissertation

By

Abu Saleh Mohammad Obaidullah

ID No. 08272016

Approved as to style and content by

Dr. Rizwan Khair
Supervisor
&
Academic Coordinator
Institute of Governance Studies (IGS)
BRAC University
Dhaka

Institute of Governance Studies (IGS)
BRAC University, Dhaka, Bangladesh
September, 2009

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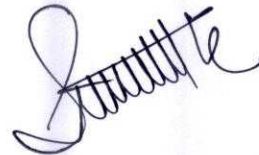
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ABBREVIATIONS

ADP	Annual Development Plan
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
DLG	Democratic Local Governance
EDD	Empowered Deliberate Democracy
LG	Local Government
LGSP	Local Government Support Project
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
RCC	Reinforced Concrete Cast
SDO	Sub-Divisional Officer
UDCC	Upazila Development Coordination Committee
ULO	Upazila Livestock Officer
UNDP	United Nations Development Project
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
UP	Union Parishad
UPZ	Upazila Parishad

Acknowledgement

Abstract

Despite several decentralization efforts by successive governments LG institutions have not yet emerged as autonomous and 'self-governing' units. As a result, the goal of achieving popular participation in the local decision-making process as well as development process has traditionally been very limited. The present study is an attempt to have a fresh look at the local governance status through assessing the level of people's participation in development process. The study also explores the actors and factors shaping participation as well as causes for non-participation. Because of limited time and resources, only one Upazila namely Belabo under Narsingdi district was selected. For the purpose of the study, both randomly selected respondents and purposively selected respondents like Upazila chiarman, govt. officials were interviewed. In addition, seven randomly selected development projects have also been studied extensively.

The study reveals some interesting findings. Though elected members of UPs, both male and female, equally participate in planning development projects, with the exception of one union out of four studied, participation of common people in the preparation stage of those projects is virtually absent. Project implementation committees are mainly official formalities in which the members are neither adequately consulted nor properly informed of the implementation status of the projects. Participation is very limited and often 'managed'. A democratic procedure is maintained in allocating the funds received for development projects. Despite formal meetings, funds are given to each elected member on the basis of size and population of the ward he or she hails from. The practice leaves nobody unsatisfied and helps UP chairmen avoid tussles as the elected members, who freely admitted that development projects for them are means of gaining political support as well as recovering election expenditures, are very keen to get projects.

Major findings of the study reveal that though political participation of the respondents is very high, they are mostly ignorant of the functions of local government. Participation

in project planning is as low as 5 percent while it rises to 30 percent in implementation stage. However, there is a pervasive feeling (91% of the total respondents) that development projects are generally non-participatory. Participation of the common people in the decision-making as well as development process is very low. However, one union shows some significant progresses; but participatory practices in the union are more results of personal initiatives of the UP chairman than any institutional development. Socio-economic backgrounds of the participants are found to be important factors. Participation is mostly limited to the socially, economically and politically powerful. In addition, patron-client relations, rent-seeking behavior of elected representatives also shape the nature of participation. Moreover, the structure of UPs and UPZ as LG institutions does not also encourage participation. The elected representatives seem to have established ties with the rural elites in sharing mutual benefits; a tacit system has been in operation, which keeps the poor and the marginalized outside the development process. Major policy initiatives are needed to avert the situation. Besides bringing transparency in the whole process and imparting trainings to the elected representatives as well as key stakeholders, efforts should also be taken to incorporate local institutions like local NGOs, social groups in the decision-making process. Evaluation of projects should also be done.

Chapter – 1
Introduction: Setting the Stage

1.0 Introduction:

People's participation in governance has been for quite sometime regarded as one of the cornerstones of good governance, but there always exists divergences between the rhetoric and the reality in the context of Bangladesh. In this era of globalization characterized by fast growth of information and communication technology, citizens' growing demand for active participation in the affairs of the government that affect their lives is a worldwide reality. The most popular and widely adopted strategy for achieving the goal of popular participation came to be identified as decentralization. In fact, decentralization has long been identified as a means of achieving good governance ensuring development and thereby promoting 'participation' of the people. Decentralization is also seen as an instrument to ensure "improved access (for people) to service-delivery systems" (Rahman, 1995:132). Bardhan and Mookherjee (2006), studying eight developing countries, emphasize that improving public service delivery and reducing poverty depend on the political and economic context as well as on how decentralization is designed and implemented. In fact, it has come to be regarded not only as a "remedy of the bottlenecks of centralized administration but also as a pre-requisite for a democratic society and participatory development" (Siddiquee, 1995:149).

Ever since the initiation of the concept, the issue of decentralization began to receive widespread attention from scholars, development practitioners, donors and governments alike. Development practitioners as well as donors (World Bank, UNDP) started emphasizing on decentralization of decision making and development planning and integration of people particularly the poor and the marginalized through participatory approaches. Strengthening the local government institutions came to be regarded as a common means of achieving decentralization. Over the years, increasing donor pressure led many developing countries to adopt the policy of decentralization and initiate local government reform. Though the goals are unclear, governments in many countries pursued decentralization conditioned by their contexts. As a result, decentralization has taken various forms. The most popular forms in which decentralization has occurred are:

devolution, deregulation, deconcentration, delegation, privatization, and *denationalization.*

Decentralization has many variants, each with its distinct process and outcomes. Deconcentration refers to the mere shifting of workload from central government to local offices. The process involves institutional changes involving shifting of authority to make certain types of decisions from central government (ministries or departments in the capital) to offices located outside the center. Delegation refers to transfers of authority to public corporations or special authorities outside the regular bureaucratic structure. Powers and authority delegated to local-level offices or organizations can be taken back any time. The process of privatization involves transfer of responsibility, which used to be public functions, to voluntary organizations or private enterprises. Denationalization denotes selling or giving away of government-owned enterprises to the public or the workers. Deregulation involves the dismantling of various controls, quotas or other barriers with a view to allowing the market forces to have greater play in economic affairs. However, the most extensive form of decentralization is devolution, which involves creating or strengthening independent levels and units of government through the direct assignment of decision-making responsibility. Devolution is generally guarded by statutes of law and hence permanent in nature. It involves increasing empowerment of local organizations or local government institutions with no direct government affiliation. In fine, decentralization is about transfer of authority and responsibility to local level offices or organizations or local government institutions for planning, management and allocation of resources. It is about building institutional capacity at lower levels of governance. Because of decentralization efforts local level organizations achieve the ability to set goals, anticipate needs, make informed decisions, and attract and manage resources in order to meet the goals. As decentralization shifts decision making from the center to the periphery, it creates opportunities for local people to participate in the decision-making process.

One of the major objectives of decentralization as a policy model in development debates is inclusion of people from all walks of life in the development as well as decision-

making process. Local government (LG[1]) institutions have long come to be recognized as instruments of achieving decentralized administration, participatory planning and development as well as means of institutionalizing democratic norms and practices. In order to ensure people's participation in decision-making process as well as in development planning, the policy makers, ever since the country's independence, have identified the LG system as a remedy. But, in Bangladesh, LG "has been more an area of policy experimentation than one of stable institutional development" (Rahman and Islam, 2002: 154). Successive governments have experimented with the LG system with a view to achieving their own political goals, but, unfortunately, no government showed the political intent and commitment to strengthen local governance to accelerate the pace of national development. As a result, local government bodies "have not been able to emerge as 'self-governing' units, but remained under the control of an all powerful national government" (Khan, 2000:109). What at best has occurred is deconcentraion only, not devolution in terms of institutionalization of representative, autonomous and participatory LG institutions.

Viewed from the perspective of a fully autonomous local government system, LG in Bangladesh still seems in a nascent stage. On the one hand, the LG institutions have not fully grown as autonomous bodies; and, on the other hand, integration of all levels of people in decision-making as well as development process has not been adequate. Despite many criticisms and limitations, the policy makers of the country seem to have responded to the rising demands for an autonomous local government system. The recent reintroduction of Upazila Parishad (UPZ), through the election held in January 2009, is another attempt to decentralize the national central government and thereby enhance citizens' participation in governance. The study endeavors to measure meticulously the status of people's participation in local development administration as well as explore the role of LG institutions in this regard.

1.1 Objectives of the Study:

Decentralization efforts have not been new in Bangladesh. In fact, decentralization has a long and varied history in Bangladesh. Decentralization initiatives during the British and

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[1] Hereinafter Local Government is referred as LG

Pakistan periods ostensibly allowed the people to participate in the management of local affairs, but in reality these were piecemeal, narrow and restrictive in nature. After the independence of the country in 1971, successive governments have pursued decentralization as an important policy measure. Major reforms have also taken place. But, it is alleged that decentralization initiatives have failed to realize the avowed objectives of people's participation in development process (Khan 2000, Khan 2009 and Rahman, 1995). Questions are frequently being asked as to whether decentralization in the country has promoted democracy and participation, whether the local government institutions have institutionalized democratic practices or whether all walks of people have been incorporated in the development planning at the local level. The present study is an attempt to address these frequently raised questions. The objectives of the study are as follows:

❖ To measure the level of participation of the local people in the decision making process in the development process. To be specific, to measure the level of participation of citizens in the development planning through LG institutions (whether local people have been involved in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the development projects in the selected Upazila).

❖ To explore people's perspective about LG system and explore the level of their knowledge about development administration at the local level.

❖ To identify the major issues and causes for non-participation of people in governance at local level

1.2 Rationale of the Study:

Bangladesh, traditionally identified as a Third World developing country, has made little progress in promoting good governance through people's participation in governance process. Though a democracy, historically its politics has been the preserve of a very small, relatively homogeneous elite that shares a common education, culture, and ethos; interacts socially; and intermarries (Kochanek 2000:547). But, because of socio-economic changes over the last few years social consciousness has been growing and the demands for better governance are getting stronger day by day. Today, the demand is not

only for local government but for local *governance* (Rahman and Islam: 2002: 154). Participatory governance at local level has been an increasing concern for policymakers as well as development practitioners. Donors' pressure is another aspect of the whole issue. Hence, study on the subject exploring different dimensions of it is important not only for the development practitioners but also for the policymakers. The study, through its findings and detailed analysis, will help to portray the latest scenario of development governance at the grassroots level. It would come up with significant policy guidelines emanating from the findings of the study for the policymakers. It may further help the policymakers identify the loopholes, if any, in the present system and thereby assist them to formulate proper policies for the coming days.

1.3 Scope of the Study:
Participatory governance or participatory development planning has been at the center of academic interest for quite some time. Policymakers as well as development practitioners emphasize on decentralization through improved local government system not only to strengthen the foundations of democracy but also to ensure participatory governance. Studies have been conducted to explore the level of participation in the development process in Bangladesh. The present study focuses on the level of local people's participation at the grassroots level through LG institutions. Geographically the study is limited to one Upazila namely Belabo under Narsingdi district. The study explores the nature of people's participation in development planning in the aforementioned Upazila in the financial years of 2007-08, and 2008-09. Besides measuring the level of people's participation in the development process, the study also takes into account the political participation of the local people. The study also explores the factors impeding local people's participation in development process.

1.4 Methodology:
The study seeks to explore and measure the level of mass people's participation in decision making process as well as in development planning at the local level. In this case, both qualitative and quantitative methods are important.

1.4.1 Data Collection:

Both primary and secondary data have been used in the study. Secondary data was collected from available sources like Govt. agencies, NGOs and previous research publications. In order to collect the primary data one Upazila was purposively selected. Of the selected Upazila four unions were randomly selected for the study. Two questionnaires, one for interviewing the local people and another to interview the representatives of the Union Parishad (UP), were developed. Questionnaire 'Ka" (Appendix-A) has been used to interview hundred randomly selected village level respondents, of which seventy were male and the rest thirty were female. Questionnaire 'Kha' (Appendix-B) has been used to interview twenty UP members, both male and female. In addition, locally elected people's representatives including Upazila Chairman, Vice-chairmen, UP chairmen and government officials like the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) and the concerned engineer of the Upazila were also interviewed. A variety of data collection tools were applied that included unstructured interview schedules and informal discussions. Seven randomly selected development projects of the study area have also been studied extensively. The committees of the said projects have been scrutinized; some members of the committees were also interviewed in order to explore their socio-economic status and their participation in the project implementation. Primary beneficiaries of the projects were identified and interviewed informally with a view to examining their position in the project planning and implementation.

1.4.2 Data Analysis and Presentation:

The collected data were accumulated, categorized and analyzed keeping in mind the objectives of the study. The collected data were processed and analyzed with the use of statistical tools like Statistical Package for Social Survey (SPSS), MS Excel and other available methods of data analysis. In some cases, charts and tablature presentation have also been used to present the findings of the data in a graphic manner. The report that follows presents the level of people's participation at the grassroots development planning and implementation along with some recommendations for further improvement of the situation.

1.5 Limitations of the Study:

The study is based on empirical data collected from four unions of an Upazila. But, collecting primary data from any rural area in Bangladesh is not an easy task. While conducting the study the researcher felt the following limitations:

⇒ Time and resources constraints; limited time and resources have been allotted for the completion of the study. Because of limited time and resources a small Upazila not very far from the capital was chosen for convenience.

⇒ small sample size (only a few samples were studied);

⇒ Access to rural women has always been difficult in Bangladesh. Collecting data from the rural women, vast majority of which is uneducated, proved to be very difficult for the researcher. Many denied to give any interview and those who were not reluctant were found shaky in their responses.

1.6 Chapter Outlines:

Five chapters, each focusing on a distinctive aspect of the thesis, make up the present study. Chapter One introduces the topic of the thesis. Other areas that the chapter also covers are rationale of the study, scope of the study, limitations of the study and the methodology used in the study and chapter outline of the thesis. The Second Chapter furnishes the conceptual framework for the study. It discusses the prevailing concepts of 'participation' and provides the framework, which has been used for the study. In addition, the chapter gives a brief overview on participatory governance practices around the world. The Third Chapter briefly captures the history of local government in Bangladesh; it also explores, through analyzing available literature, the scenario of participatory governance as well as participatory development planning at the grassroots level in the country. The Fourth Chapter is the most important one of the paper. It looks at the Upazila under study and contains the findings and subsequent analysis of the study. The Fifth Chapter contains recommendations followed by a conclusion of the thesis.

1.7 Conclusion:

People's participation in governance is not only the foundation of democracy but also the basis for good governance. Decentralization has long come to be regarded as a great means of achieving people's participation in decision-making as well as development process. To this end, LG institutions are excellent instruments of realizing participatory governance. In Bangladesh, though successive governments have tried with local government system, the institutions are yet to emerge as fully grown autonomous bodies. The level of people's participation is also historically low. But, efforts continue to put participatory development approaches in practice. The present study endeavors to assess the level of people's participation in development process in an Upazila of the country through decentralized LG institutions as well as identify the factors for non-participation.

Chapter-2
The Conceptual Issues and Framework

2.0 Introduction:

In this complex world, only change is constant. With the passage of time, the world has been experiencing not only the growth of unprecedented economic activities, awesome development in the fields of science and technology, but also rise of new and newer concepts in the field of governance and administration. The days of traditional system of administration characterized by rigidity, top-down approach, and centripetal government are long over. The paradigm shift is towards bottom-up approach, integrating the mass people whose lives are affected in the governance process. The global trend is towards people-oriented development administration – an administration which puts people at the center. Ever since its initiation in development program by Y. C. Yen, founder of the Rural Reconstruction Movement in China in the first quarter of the twentieth century, the concept of participatory development approach has gathered impetus. However, with the rising popularity of the concept in public administration and development literature, its extent and scope of meaning have undergone changes. While participation ostensibly means sharing, in development literature it connotes a process of involving actively everyone in the decision-making process.

Local level people's participation in the development process is the fundamental issue that the research endeavours to address in this study. Hence, the concept of participation or people's participation is central to the study. A clear understanding of the concept is of vital importance for the present study. The first part of the chapter, after throwing some lights on the connection between participation and local government, goes on to capture the changing meaning of participation. Participation is a multi-dimensional concept. On the one hand, it signifies a process of involving key stakeholders in decision-making process; on the other hand, it is synonymous with empowerment – a move from passivity towards activity. Viewed from people's perspective it implies a dramatic change from passive recipients to active actors exerting control over resources and decision-making process. However, when participation can have various forms, meaningful

participation integrates everyone in all stages of decision-making. Fruitful participation is difficult to achieve as it is conditioned by many factors. This part also throws light on the participatory practices around the world. The second part of the chapter discusses the factors affecting and conditioning participation of people in development process. Not only the geographical context but also socio-economic, social and cultural backgrounds of the participants play significant roles in determining the pattern as well as nature of participation. Political environment and structure of institutions are also of vital importance in this regard. Integrating all these issues, the chapter furnishes a framework for analyzing local people's participation in development projects. Participatory governance, deemed as one of the preconditions for sustained development, has been closely intertwined with local government system. As participatory approaches lead to better management of public resources, local government institutions turn into effective and efficient organizations addressing citizens' needs and priorities in better ways.

2.1 Participation and Local Government:

LG had been in existence for centuries. But, because of the paradigm shift in the concept of governance with its focus on decentralization, the second half of the 20th century saw the rise of local government institutions in various parts of the world. In many countries, in a bid to ensure people's participation in the development process, local government has been promoted and subsequently strengthened. The idea is to establish democratic governance, which includes people from all walks of life in the governance. There emerged the concept of democratic local governance (DLG) (Blair: 2000), the cornerstones of which are participation and accountability. Participation came to be viewed as the very catalyst for effective and democratic local governance. Fung and Wright's (2001) idea of Empowered Deliberate Democracy (EDD) heavily relies on participation and capacities of ordinary people. They provide examples how participatory approaches have not only led to citizens' empowerment but also strengthening of LG. The participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil has allowed the citizens to have full control over public resources to utilize them in the creation of public values. The Panchayat reforms in West Bengal and Kerala, India have established village governance allowing the poor and the marginalized, particularly women and lower caste people, to be

included in the development process. Public resources are now better spent in effectively fulfilling local needs and interests.

Participation leads to better governance and better utilization of public resources. It turns local government into effective institutions and helps install mechanisms of accountability. As a result, local government institutions turn into effective and efficient organizations, which serve the citizens' needs and priorities better than ever.

2.2 Participation: What It Means

Participation as a concept is not new. Since ancient times it has been present in different disciplines in diverse forms, objectives and functions. The presence of the concept in different disciplines such as economics, political science, sociology, and lately in public administration and public policy analysis, has rendered it a complex and confusing picture. In recent times, it has emerged an umbrella term for a new approach in development intervention.

There is no one definition of participation. It has been variously defined from different angles. With the passage of time the concept has also undergone changes. However, there are disagreements as to what participation as a concept actually connotes. In ancient Greece, participation was viewed as a matter of voting, holding offices, attending public meetings, paying taxes and defending the state (Samad, 2002: 49). But, in modern times, participation became synonymous of 'sharing' (Kaler, 1999: 125). Participation came to be regarded as the process of involving of both internal as well as external stakeholders in planning, implementation and evaluation of programs.

Y. C. Yen, founder of the Rural Reconstruction Movement in China, introduced the concept of people's participation in development programs (Samad, 2002: 51). Korten (1981) captures the basic principles of the concept in the following credo:

> "Go to the people
> Live among the people
> Learn from the people
> Plan with the people
> Work with the people
> Start with what the people know
> Build on what the people have

Teach by showing; learn by doing
Not a showcase but a pattern
Not odds and ends but a system
Not piecemeal but integrated approach
Not to conform but to transform
Not relief but release (cited in Samad, 2002: 51-52).

During the 1960s and 1970s participatory development emerged as a paradigm shift in development thinking. Since then the concept has been described and defined in a variety of ways. Social scientists, development practitioners and development agencies have tried to conceptualize the term. There emerged two keys or principles of describing participatory development: the actor and the meaning of participation (Campbell and Vainio-Mattila, 2003: 419). In terms of "actor", participatory development came to be defined as "people's participation" by McCall (1987), "community participation" by Midgeley *et al.* (1986), "people's own development" by Swantz (1986), "community development" by Gow and Vansart (1983), and "self-help" by Verhagen (1987) (cited in Campbell and Vainio-Mattila, 2003: 420). From the perspective of "meaning" participatory development refers to "the positioning of participatory initiatives on the continuum from manipulating participation for the achievement of externally identified project goals to the empowerment of the actors to define such goals themselves, as well as the actions required to achieve them" (Campbell and Vainio-Mattila, 2003: 420). Viewed from people's perspective, the paradigm shift is a move from 'a passive voice' to 'an active voice' (Campbell and Vainio-Mattila, 2003: 420). Participation is not only a means of including the excluded, but also both an instrument and a tool: an instrument for achieving policy ends and a tool for influencing public outcomes (Uhlaner, 1986: 553).

The emergence of the concept of participatory development changed the very notion of governance and decision-making. It views people as actors in development process starting from the planning to the final sharing of benefits. Scholars like Brewer and DeLeon, (1983), DeLeon (1992), Dryzek (1990), Fishkin (1991), Hayward (1995), Kann (1986), Pateman (1970) view the process as active citizen participation in the process of governance (cited in Gupte, 2004: 366). Richardson (1983) labels participation as the integration of a new set of people in the decision-making process. It is an active process by which interests groups influence the decisions which affect their well-being (Paul,

1990). Rowe and Frewer (2004) define public participation as the practice of involving the people in the agenda-setting, decision-making and policy-forming activities. The United Nations' (1975) definition of participation entails three interrelated but distinct processes namely the involvement of the people in decision-making, the eliciting of their contribution to development programs and their participation in sharing the benefits from the development process (cited in Samad, 2002: 55). Participation is the way of generating popular control of issue-agenda, decision-making and implementation (Wolfe. 1985: 371).

Participation is closely linked with the concept of empowerment. Without empowerment participation may be meaningless. Participation has transformative quality and strengthens the very capacity of the participants (Wolfe. 1985: 371). Arnstein argues that true participation involves high level of empowerment of the public and a direct input into the decision process (cited in Rowe and Frewer, 2004: 515). Participation truly means empowering the marginalized and the excluded. It is the process of integrating those who had so long been outside the territory of decision process. Gran (1993), Oakley and Marsden (1984) and Oakley (1987) put forward that people's participation is the process of empowerment of the deprived and the excluded (cited in Samad, 2002: 58). It also means putting the last first. The people who had so long been passive recipients of decisions taken by others, have become, through participation, actors influencing the decision outcomes.

Participation is also partnership (Cornwall, 2002: 36). The concept of partnership comes very close to the concept of empowerment. It is the process by which people take an active part in shaping decisions that affect their lives. It is also the process by which passive beneficiaries, through empowerment, become active actors (Cornwall, 2002: 36). In a 1994 OECD document, Promoting Participatory Development Through Local Institutions, participatory development has been defined as:

> Participatory development stands for a partnership which is built upon the basis of a dialogue among the various actors (stakeholders), during which the "agenda" is set jointly, and local views and indigenous knowledge are deliberately sought and respected. This implies negotiation rather than the dominance of an externally set project agenda. Thus people become actors instead of being simply beneficiaries (cited in Cornwall, 2002: 36).

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Participation has been variously defined and its scope and meaning are still open to debate. Khan (1998) summarizes the definitions of participation to date and prepares a list of those. Participation is

(a) an organized effort to increase control over resources and regulative institutions;

(b) people's involvement in decision-making, implementation, benefit-sharing and in evaluation of programs;

(c) people's capacity to take initiative in development, to become "subjects" rather than "objects" of their own destiny; this can only be achieved through a de-professionalization in all domains of life in order to make "ordinary people" responsible for their own well-being;

(d) Participation involves a reversal of role playing: people should be the primary actors and government agencies and outsiders should "participate" in people's activities (25-26).

Participation is directly concerned with control of resources and decision-making. There are various modes or types of participation. Hollnsteiner (1977) describes people's participation with six modes, namely (i) unofficial or indirect representation of people; (ii) cooption of local leaders into planning and administration; (iii) choosing the final plan from the given options; (iv) ongoing consultation with the community; (v) representation of people's spokesman on official decision-making bodies; and (vi) community control over expenditure of funds (cited in Samad, 2002: 54). Farrington and Bebbington (1993) categorize participation as 'deep' and 'narrow'. Whereas 'deep' participation involves participants in all stages of decision-making, from problem identification to decision-making, 'narrow' participation involves only a handful of people or particular interest groups. However, participation can be 'wide' engaging all walks of people of a society and 'shallow' when the stakeholders are only informed or consulted (cited in Cornwall, 2002: 54-55)

Thus, participation can take various forms; but all types of participation are not real or genuine. Participation can be guided or manoeuvred. Table 2.1 enumerates different types of participation and shows basic characteristics of each type.

Table 2.1
Different Types of Participation

Typology	Characteristics of Each Type
1. Manipulative Participation	Participation is simply a pretense, with "people's" representatives on official committees, but who are unelected and have no power.
2. Passive/Pseudo Participation	People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. It involves unilateral announcements by an administration or project management without listening to people's responses. The information being shared belongs only to external managers/ professionals.
3. Participation by Consultation	People participate by being consulted or by answering questions. External agents define problems and information gathering processes, and so control analysis. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision-making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views.
4. Participation for Material Incentives	People participate by contributing resources, for example, labor, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. Farmers may provide land and labor, but are involved in neither experimentation nor the process of learning. It is very common to see this called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging technologies or practices when the incentives end.
5. Functional Participation	Participation seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project. Such involvement may be interactive and involve shared decision-making, but tends to arise only after major decisions have already been made by external agents. At worst, local people may still be co-opted to serve external goals.
6. Authentic/ Interactive Participation	People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local institutions. Participation is seen as a right, not just as the means to achieve project goals. The process involves interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systematic and structured learning processes. As groups take control over local decisions and determine how available resources are used, they have a stake in sustaining the structures / practices.
7. Spontaneous Participation / Self-mobilization	People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change the system. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Self-mobilization can spread if governments and NGOs provide an enabling framework of support. Such self-initiated mobilization may or may not challenge the existing distribution of wealth and power.

Source: Adapted from J.N. Pretty, 'Participatory Learning for Sustainable Agriculture', *World Development*, 23(8), 1995 (cited in Khan, 1998:30).

2.3 Decentralization for People's participation: Practices around the World

Decentralization emerged as a major policy shift in public administration and governance initiatives. Since 1970s people's participation through decentralized local government has been a major policy initiative in many countries of the world. In 1990s, development

practitioners and donors came up with the agenda of establishing democratic local governance (DLG) through popular participation on both decision-making process and management of resources. In both developed and developing countries, the paradigm shift is towards participatory approaches in governance. In a study, Blair (2000) identifies the potential of DLG, which includes people from all walks of life in community decision-making, in six developing countries – Bolivia, Honduras, India, Mali, the Philippines and Ukraine. DLG nurtures the practices of participation and accountability. In these countries, measures have been taken to incorporate people like women, ethnic minorities, marginal farmers, urban poor and the like in the local governance process. Though results or benefits are yet to be assessed, DLG offers opportunities for promoting more universalistic local development activities that will benefit the weak and vulnerable along with everyone else.

Fung and Wright (2001) cite examples of EDD, which nurtures the values of participation through local government institutions. As mentioned earlier, participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre city of Brazil has led to efficient allocation of public resources according to public needs and priorities. The system has allowed public control over public fund transforming 'the clientelistic, vote-for-money budgeting reality into a fully accountable, bottom-up, deliberate system driven by the needs of city residents'. Another example of EDD is the Panchayat system in West Bengal and Kerala of India. The system has allowed the poor and the marginalized, particularly women and lower caste members, to be included in the decision-making process as well as development process. The dominance of traditional socially and economically elites has been replaced by a more democratic structure which allows everyone participate in decision-making and development process.

Agrawal et al (1999) mention that in Nepal, under the Participatory District Development Program (PDDP) the process of participatory planning and monitoring has received significant attention. Development planning has been shifted from the center to the periphery. Under the program, villagers prioritize their development needs, plan projects and monitor implementation of the same. Villagers form community organizations, articulate their needs. The local-level planning is primarily based on the needs identified

by the villagers. Under the program villagers experience decentralized governance and are able to extend their control over public resources like forests and irrigation. In Nepal, participatory development approaches have led to social mobilization and paved the way for human resources development.

2.4 Factors Conditioning Participation: Framework for Analysis

Public participation is the way to improve on traditional ways of making decisions, setting agendas, and devising policy (Rowe and Frewer, 2004: 513). But, participation is not easy to achieve. It is being conditioned by society, state machineries and other political as well as social institutions. There are socio-economic and political factors as well as forces that shape the pattern of participation. Gupte (2004) shows that social, economic as well as cultural factors play significant role in shaping both participation and participatory outcomes. Age-old traditions like gender stratification in the society may seriously inhibit the process of participation. Social exclusionary practices like gender inequality, religious as well as cultural factors may undermine participation of certain groups particularly the women in decision-making (Gupte, 2004: 366). Cornwall (2002) also examines that social, political and economic contexts are crucial in participatory approaches. Samad (2002) shows that socio-economic background of the people has been influential factor in shaping the participation outcomes. Socio-economic as well as political backgrounds of stakeholders is important. Powerful stakeholders, who are politically, socially and/ or economically dominant, for their own interests may thwart the participation of their counterparts. In 1995, the British Overseas Development Administration (ODA, now DFID) notes that:

> Decisions about the extent and type of participation are not only technical but also political...stakeholders have varying degrees of power to influence outcomes – and also to decide which other stakeholders may be invited to participate and to what extent... Participation of all or some of those affected may not be in the political interests of other stakeholders...stakeholders forming a politically "dominant" culture may ignore the values and knowledge of other stakeholders and effectively prevent them from participating in decision-making (cited in Cornwall, 2002: 37-38).

Decisions or public policies in any polis are always complex matters. Maximum total welfare, the basic principle of rational decision-making, is not always the determining factor. In fact, in most of the cases, interests of the political elites and administrators, who

run the regime, penetrate the arena and shape the outcomes. It would be extremely naïve to believe that the state, represented by the ruling elites and administrators, would easily agree to share its power with the common mass and readily agree on devolution of power and authority. Midgley presents four possible types of state responses to participation: (a) the anti-participatory mode, in which people's participatory initiatives are viewed by regimes as threats and are therefore suppressed; (b) the manipulative mode, in which state-directed or pseudo-participation is used by regimes for some ulterior motive; (c) the incremental mode, in which regimes support participation but incrementally implement participatory practices; and (d) the participatory mode, in which regimes create environment for effective participation of the common people in governance and decision-making (cited in Khan, 1998: 28).

Participation is not only affected by the context or the environment in which participatory practices take place but also conditioned by the socio-economic as well as political backgrounds of the participants or non-participants. Attempts have been made to analyze participation or participatory approaches from different perspectives. Cohen and Uphoff (1980) have provided a comprehensive framework for analyzing participation. The framework incorporates three basic and fundamental dimensions of participation: what kind of participation takes place, who participates and how the process of participation takes place (cited in Ahmed, 1987: 16). The framework addresses issues like whether participation is voluntary or directed, whether it is manipulative or whether people are really empowered or not. The framework also includes historical, natural and social factors that shape the nature and extent of participation. The self-explanatory framework of participation has been presented in Figure: 2.1 (Basic framework for describing and analyzing participation).

Figure: 2.1
Basic Framework for Describing and Analyzing Participation

Dimensions

Contexts

What Kind

- Decision-
  - Initial
  - Ongoing
  - Operational Decisions
- Implementation
  - Resource Contributions
  - Administration & Cooperation
  - Enlistment
- Benefits or consequence
  - Materia
  - Social
  - Persona
- Evaluation

Who

- Local Residents
- Local Leaders
- Govt. Officials
- Foreign Personnel
  - Characteristics
  - Age, Sex
  - Family Status
  - Education
  - Social Divisions
  - Income
  - Length of Land tenure status

How

- Basis of Participation
  - Impetus
  - Incentive
- Forms of Participation
  - Organizatio
  - Direct/ Indirect
- Extent of Participation
  - Time
  - Range of
- Effect of Participation
  - Empowerment
  - Interaction

Project Characteristics

- Technological Complexity
- Resource requirements
  - Entry Effects
- Tangibility
- Probability
- Immediacy
  - Benefit Effects
- Program linkages
- Program flexibility
- Administrative accessibility
- Administrative coverage
  - Design Effects

Task environment

- Experiences
- Perceptions
  - Historical factors
- Geographic
- Biological
  - Physical and natural factors
- Cultural
- Social
- Political
- Economic
  - Social factors

Source: Cohen and Uphoff (1980) (cited in Ahmed, 1987: 17)

The framework developed by Cohen and Uphoff is comprehensive as it includes all dynamics of participation; but it is too complex to be properly applied in analyzing rural people's participation in Bangladesh. In this country, where democracy is still at a nascent stage, participatory approach in development administration has not been institutionalized. Hence, the researcher feels it necessary to develop a simpler framework. Taking Cohen and Uphoff's framework as base a simpler framework is developed for analyzing people's participation in development projects, which is shown in Figure: 2.2. (Framework for Analyzing Participation of Local People in Bangladesh)

Figure: 2.2
Framework for Analyzing Participation of Local People in Bangladesh

Govt. rule and regulations

Structure of institutions

Patron-client relations

Economic Condition

Rent-seeking of elected representatives

State and Institutional Factors

Socio-Cultural Factors

Participation of Local People

Polito-Economic Factors

Forms of Participation

Gender

Family Status

Education

Cultural and Religious Issues

Consultation

Discussion

Open Meetings

Committees

Source: Adapted from Cohen and Uphoff

The framework is uncomplicated and self-explanatory. It shows that there are four major factors namely state and institutional factors, socio-cultural factors, polito-economic factors and forms of participation, which affect and shape participation in rural Bangladesh. Bangladesh is a developing country which had been under colonial sway for more than two centuries. The country still retains the legacy of colonial rule. The colonial tendency of heaving power in the center is a common feature in developing countries like Bangladesh. In fact, a few instruments of central control of colonial days still persist in Bangladesh (Muhith 2000:30). The bureaucratic tendency of establishing control is still very much perceptible in the administrative system of the country. The government institutions including the LG institutions have not opened themselves up with a view to promoting participation and enhancing accountability. However, successive governments have identified decentralization as a possible remedy. In this regard, some new rule and regulations have also been promulgated. A dichotomy occurs as the very structure of government institutions, on the one hand, impedes participation, and, on the other hand, a few government rules and regulations create the opportunity for local people to participate.

The socio-cultural context of the country characterized by low literary rate, strong religious impact affects participation. The society is predominantly patriarchal in which female participation in development activities is traditionally looked down upon. The common religious sentiment is also against women's spontaneous participation in development administration. However, people with strong family background enjoy privileges at all levels. In fact, without the support of the traditionally strong families implementation of any program is very difficult.

The political context of a country is of paramount importance as far participation is concerned. Whereas a congenial political culture enshrines participation, an adverse political culture may seriously avert participation. In Bangladesh, historically politics has been the preserve of a very small, relatively homogeneous elite that shares a common education, culture, and ethos; interacts socially; and intermarries (Kochanek, 2000:547). Despite restoration of democracy in the early 1990s, the political arena is dominated by informal networks of patron-client relations (Kochanek, 2000:547). The networks of

patron-client relations extend to the very extent of the countryside. These networks of patron-client relations coupled with complex bureaucratic structure of the country make participation difficult. Moreover, corruption is rampant in government institutions. There is strong allegation that the people's representatives are mostly self-seeking individuals. Rent-seeking behavior is very common among them. The tendency to benefit from public resources is a common phenomenon. The self-seeking representatives often exploit development programs as instruments for political as well as economic gains. The self-seeking representatives often deliberately block the path of participation in order to maximize their gains. In addition, economic condition of the people is a big factor in determining participation. Economically strong people often make alliances with the elected representatives and exploit their positions to ensure mutual gains. Rural people, who are mostly poor, remain outside the domain of administration. Even their access to government institutions is very limited let alone participation.

Participation is often shaped by its form. There are various ways of integrating local people in decision-making process. Participation can be formal or informal. People living in rural areas may be informally consulted. Discussions and open meetings, which are both formal and informal, can also be used to ensure participation. Formation of committees for development programs is another formal way of ensuring participation. However, level of participation depends significantly on its form. An open meeting can ensure greater participation than a committee, which is selected.

2.5 Conclusion:

Since its introduction the concept of participation has gained popularity in the arena of public administration. Participation leads to empowerment as people, who used to be passive recipients or objects, turn into actors or subjects. Participatory approaches create opportunities for people, belonging to all walks of life, to establish their control over public resources and decision-making process. However, participation is not easy to achieve. There are many social, cultural, political, economic factors that inhibit participation. Even the state itself in its anti-participatory mode inhibits participation, but promotes participation when it is in participatory mode. Thus, participation is a complex affair, which is required to make balances among many conflicting factors. In a

developing country like Bangladesh, participation is conditioned by factors like complex bureaucratic structures of government institutions, networks of patron-client relations, socio-economic backgrounds of people, rent-seeking behavior of elected representatives, traditional cultural issues and so on. The present study explores the level of participation of the local people in the decision making process in the development administration by examining the factors that affect it.

For the purpose of the present study, the concept of people's participation which entails active involvement of the local people in the development initiatives – involvement of key stakeholders in development projects – in planning, selection, implementation and evaluation has been used as participation. To be more precise, only those activities or involvements on the part of the local people, which have influenced the decision-making at any stage of development projects, have been considered as participation in this study. Any other activities, which have the show of participation, have deliberately been kept out of consideration. In addition, the framework of participation, developed by the author based on Cohen and Uphoff's basic framework for describing and analyzing participation, will be used to analyze the nature and extent of participatory practices in local level development administration.

Chapter – 3

Decentralization and People's Participation: Past and Present

3.0 Introduction

In public administration and development literature, decentralization has, for quite some time, emerged as a widely used concept. Because as a policy model decentralization offers opportunities for the local people to interact with government institutions and be integrated in the governance process, it has come to be regarded as a key to effective public administration and good governance as well as a facilitator to sustainable development. Throughout the world there has been a growing interest in decentralization and since 1970s decentralization efforts have been a common phenomenon in various parts of the world. In Bangladesh, in 1980s the policy of decentralization was emphasized and subsequently undertaken to promote balanced development, to increase the quantum of popular participation at the grassroots level and to optimally utilize local resources. The efforts of decentralization in the country led to the creation of Upazilas and establishment of administrative setup at levels lower than the district. This chapter also throws light on the decentralization history in Bangladesh to unearth the status of people's participation hitherto.

3.1 Decentralization for People's Participation in Bangladesh: A Historical Overview

Decentralization aiming at participation of local people in managing local affairs in Bangladesh has a long and varied history. The first initiative of decentralization in the land dates back to the year 1882 when Ripon Resolution was enacted. Towards the end of the nineteenth century LG system was also introduced by the-then British rulers. Since then a considerable number of decentralization initiatives have been taken by different governments in various forms. The stated objectives of those reform initiatives had been building as well as strengthening the capacity of local level organization particularly of LG institutions and in the process to create scopes and opportunities for local level citizens participate in the management of local affairs. But, since the ultimate objective of the colonial regimes was to consolidate the colonial power, the decentralization efforts taken and implemented during the British colonial rule and Pakistan period had been

piecemeal, narrow and restrictive in nature (Siddiquee: 1995: 150). As a result the stated objectives of decentralization could not be achieved. Hardly any major changes occurred in the pattern of local people's participation in the decision-making as well as development administration. During the colonial period mass people's participation in the development process had always remained a distant reality.

During the Pakistan period under the Basic Democracies Order of 1959 LG bodies were set up at four tiers: Union Council at Union level, Thana Council at Thana level, District Council at District level and Divisional Council at Divisional level. During the Pakistan period, union councils played important political role. Participation had been limited to local political elites only.

After the independence of the country in 1971 decentralization has been an important policy matter for the successive governments. Since independence almost every government explicitly committed itself to decentralization and made efforts towards this end. During the Mujib period under the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution in 1975, major changes in the Constitution were made and the provisions relating to the local bodies were scrapped. Provisions were made for the formation of certain types of local bodies, mostly non-elective. The regime planned for District Governorship Scheme (1975). But, after the assassination of President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the fall of Awami League government (August 1975) the development process relating to LG suffered a temporary setback.

In 1976, the Local Government Ordinance promulgated by the government of General Ziaur Rahman provided Union Parishad for a union, Thana Parishad for a thana and Zila Parishad for a district. Zia experimented with a new system of local government at a level lower than the union with the introduction of *Swanirvar Gram Sarkar* (self-reliant village government) in each of the 68000 villages in 1980. Headed by a *Gram Pradhan* (village head) the *Gram Sarkar* was composed of elected members representing farmers, landless laborers, artisans, freedom fighters, women and youths.

Following the path shown by his predecessors, the military regime of General Ershad that seized power in 1982 abolished the *Gram Sarkar*. Ershad's LG consisted of three tiers, the Union Parishad, the Upazila Parishad (the upgraded thana) and the District or Zila Parishad. Five new acts were passed to install his 'decentralized' LG system. Erstwhile thanas were upgraded and renamed as Upazilas and these were made the focal point of all administrative activities. UPZs were established through the Local Government (Upazila Parishad and Upazila Administration Reorganization) (Second Amendment) Ordinance, 1983. With the introduction of Upazila system in 1985 for the first time a directly elected post of chairman was provided in a LG unit higher than the union. The Upazila represented a major departure from the traditional administrative system in that it replaced the Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO), a government official, by a popularly elected chairman. The major change that occurred was that for the first time all development functions were given to the locally elected council and the councils were supported by devolution of financial powers to enable it to plan and implement projects of local importance through popular participation. In the newly introduced system, a significant 'shift in control of local decision-making from the bureaucracy to democratically elected groupings' occurred (Siddiquee, 1995). The local level officials were divested of voting rights and they were placed under the control and authority of the elected chairman. The elected chairman of the council was also given the authority to plan and implement development projects without seeking approval from higher authorities. The Chairman of the Committee for Administrative Reform/Reorganization (CARR), which suggested the reform, stated that the rationale and objectives for decentralization were:

- ◆ Improvement of socio-economic condition of the people;
- ◆ Involvement of the people in the constructive decision-making process;
- ◆ Creation of opportunities for cooperation and coordination among the decision-makers, persons involved in implementation and local people, with a view to ensuring a dynamic development process;
- ◆ Making the government officials accountable to the people's representatives and effectively distributing various administrative responsibilities among the local level authorities;

- Preparation and implementation of projects in accordance with the needs of the local people;
- Making the judicial process easy; and
- Bridging the gap between the people and the administration (cited in Alam *et. al*, 1994: 17).

Introduction of the Upazila system was an 'attempt at bringing administration closer to the people with the objective of promoting their participation in administration and development process' (Siddiquee: 1995: 152). Ensuring popular participation in the decision-making process was the stated objective of Ershad's decentralization. The-then President General Ershad declared that the reform was an "epoch-making step in the history of democracy in the world" and that "the process and system of future democratization of the country would be built through the direct participation of the people" (cited in Alam *et. al*, 1994: 16). Planning Commission (1983) in one of the important government documents says that:

> The main objective (of decentralization) is to induce faster and appropriate development at the local level through direct participation of the local people. This will help in identification, planning and implementation of development projects which will benefit the local people most, more easily than before (cited in Siddiquee: 1995: 152).

However, the system was in operation for a short period only. Towards the end of the 1990 Ershad's government was overthrown through mass uprising. In the 1991 elections, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) won and formed government under the leadership of Begum Khaleda Zia. The new democratically elected government quickly promulgated the Local Government (*Upazila* Parishad and *Upazila* Administration Reorganization) (Repeal) Ordinance in November 1991 to abolish the Upazila system. The government replaced the Upazila Parishad by thana administration. Since then no significant changes have taken place in the structure of the LG in Bangladesh. Though several Commissions were formed, their recommendations for 'major changes' in the structure, composition, functions and finances of rural LG bodies have not been implemented. The Non-party Caretaker Government, after coming to power in 2007, chose to re-establish Upazila system and accordingly promulgated Ordinance. The Upazila election has been

conducted in January 2009. The newly elected Awami League government has recently enacted The Upazila Parishad (Reintroduction of the Repealed Act and Amendment) Act, 2009 detailing the functions and duties of the UPZ. The law has created widespread controversy among the civil society members and caused discontentment amongst the newly elected representatives of UPZs. The role of local Member of the Parliament (MP) as stipulated in the law has been termed by many as a bottleneck of development administration as well as participatory local governance.

3.2 Unearthing Reality of Decentralization for People's Participation: Bangladesh Perspective

One of the avowed objectives of decentralization as well as devolution of powers to the LG institutions is to secure participation of the local people living in rural areas. But, studies show that despite the rise of LG institutions due to factors like expansion of economic activities, rising social as well as political consciousness, historically there has always been a tendency of heaving power and authority at the center. The country had been under colonial sway for more than two centuries. The colonial rulers exploited every means to establish their control and authority over the length and breadth of the country. The colonial tendency of controlling the LG institutions by the central government has been one of the salient features of total governance scenario of the country. Before its independence the country had hardly experienced any decentralization proper. Even after the independence of the country, when decentralization efforts have been taken, these are characterized by concentration of power and authority in the traditionally stronger groups such as landlords, businessmen, political leaders or people with sound socio-economic background. The poor and the marginalized sections such as women, peasants characterized by economic, social and political backwardness have not been involved in the decision-making process. These backward sections of the society, traditionally identified as the excluded, have had limited accesses to benefits of public resources and little integration in the governance process which affect their lives.

There is plethora of literature on LG in Bangladesh, but there is paucity of literature exclusively focusing on people's participation in development process at local level. The few literature that are available presents a disappointing picture. Historically people's

participation in the development process had been very limited in this land. Siddiqui (1994) observes that during the Pakistan period popular participation at the grassroots level was extremely limited. Only people with strong socio-economic and political background had some opportunity to assert their positions in development administration. The bulk majority of the people, the poor and the disadvantaged, enjoyed little or no scope for participation except in electing their representatives.

The situation has hardly improved after the independence of the country. Mass people's participation in the decision-making process remained a distant reality. Afsar (1999) shows that poor people's participation in governance is very limited; community participation in the decision-making process has been very minimal. Because of the over-class bias and widespread corruption there has been severe neglect of the poor and the disadvantaged in the decision-making process.

However, successive governments undertook decentralization efforts with a view to strengthening the LG organizations. Major reforms initiatives were also taken. Ershad's introduction of Upazial system has been labeled 'epoch-making' by many in the history of LG of Bangladesh. But, the pervasive feeling is that decentralization efforts have not been able to fulfil the declared objectives of the policy-makers. The avowed primary goals of decentralization efforts during the Ershad period were improving local people's access and promoting their participation. But, Mohammad Mohabbat Khan (2009) finds that the declared objectives of decentralization – promoting participatory development and ensuring people's access – have never been achieved. In fact, during the Ershad period decentralization has been used as a device to establish 'privileged access' of a powerful and influential few into the state resources. Because reforming LG system in the name of decentralization was a 'political mobilization process' aiming at consolidating power, the efforts in this regard were counterproductive contributing to further polarization between the rich and the poor. Ershad's decentralization efforts contradicted with the pronounced objectives and the regime "exploited every possible opportunity to weaken the democratic force in the system and strengthen the old masters of the society – the bureaucrats" (Khan, 2009: 53-54).

Decentralization changes the opportunity structures for participation, and makes available to citizens multiple channels through which they can access and shape governance and involve themselves in the exercise of power. But, it is a political process, which also opens up possibilities for achieving goals other than governance issues. Power and politics play a big role in the policy of decentralization. Decentralization can be used to gain political goals though the steps of decentralization can be taken in the name of public welfare and ensuring people's participation in the governance process. Mawhood (1983), Mutizwa-Mangiza (1990, 1991), and Rakodi (1986), put forward the idea that decentralization is a means of achieving greater legitimacy by the central governments (cited in Agrawal *et al.* 1999: 28).

Ershad's 'epoch-making step' of decentralization, though taken with the stated objectives to improve government performance and to facilitate the implementation of development programs through popular participation, was in reality to achieve political goals. Rahman (1984) has argued that:

> ...the reform was intended by Ershad as a means to build a support base for his government in the rural areas, and undercut the primarily urban base of the opposition political parties (cited in Agrawal *et al.* 1999:34).

Ershad was highly successful in this regard. The newly elected chairmen of the UPZs were naturally loyal to the regime. His administrative reforms brought about other advantages for his government. Through the newly elected group Ershad also established his party control over the resource delivery systems throughout the country. McCarthy (1993) points out that the new reforms:

> ...facilitated a "party based control over resource delivery systems (that were) once the sole domain and source of power of the civilian bureaucracy" (cited in Agrawal *et al.* 1999:34).

Despite serious limitations and political objectives of the military regime Ershad's decentralization efforts created opportunities at least for the local leaders and the socially advantaged group to formally participate in development administration. The abolition of Upazila system by the succeeding government limited the opportunity. Hossain and Sarkar (1994) examine that introduction of the Upazila system by the military government of Ershad provided the local leaders the opportunity to participate in

development affairs, but the abolition of the system re-established the position of the administrative apparatus at the local level. The depoliticization of the Upazila system by the BNP-led government reinstated the previous bureaucracy-dominated thana administration:

> ...the abolition of the Upazila Parishad was seen as a victory of the bureaucrats...Ironically, the democratically elected government of Khaleda Zia indulged in an anti-democratic practice as regards to decentralization and access (Khan, 2009: 54).

In Bangladesh, most decentralization initiatives have been taken by undemocratic governments. Though ostensibly the reforms aimed at strengthening LG institution the hidden agenda was to consolidate political base at the local level. As a result, participation had been limited to local elites only and the mass population remained outside the boundary of decision-making:

> Decentralization contributes towards creating a politically motivated interest class and serves at a local level to protect the interest of the central political and military regimes. In countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh, where military rule was prolonged for decades, the military-bureaucratic oligarchies have adopted decentralization as a policy measure to satisfy the urban and rural notables with whom they have an interdependent relationship. The access of this privileged class into state resources and services is entrusted by the bureaucratic means. In return, the local elites work as the 'vote banks' in the process of 'legitimizing' and 'civilianizing' the dictatorial rule of the regimes (Rahman, 1995: 137).

Rahman (1991) in his study identified that significant constraints like (i) personal and partisan interest of the influential, (ii) lack of knowledge and skill of the local officials, (iii) absence of institutional arrangement and (iv) disharmonious relationship between local representative members and officials of the UPZ were responsible for limited participation of all categories of people in the development process (cited in Samad, 2002: 93). Hossain *et al.* (1978) examines that participation of the common people in development activities has been dissatisfactory.

Siddiquee (1995) observes that decentralization efforts in Bangladesh have widened the gap between the local people and local administration. His study reveals that people's participation in planning and implementation of development projects has been very limited. Poor people are hardly included in the project committees. Committees are mostly dominated by people with strong socio-economic or political background. In

addition, project committees have largely been used as mechanisms of patronage distribution. Development projects have been a means for the local representatives to build a future for themselves. He also observes that local people's political participation in the form of voting has been significant though a significant segment of the rural poor have not been able to exercise their voting rights independently due to their inability to overcome the influence of local power-holders. He further identifies that prevailing socio-economic and political contexts act as important deterrents to grassroots participation in the development process.

Political context, as already pointed out in the second chapter, along with state structure significantly influences participation. Khan (2009) identifies bureaucratic domination in the local councils, lack of knowledge, and lack of expertise in technical matters as root causes for non-participation. Local elites form connivance with local administration for their own interests and bypass the needs of the mass (Khan, 1991:8). Khan and Zafarullah (1988) find that the scanty participation that exists is limited only to the rich and participation of the rural poor is minimum (cited in Khan, 2009: 85). The state of the society also significantly inhibits participation. Social fragmentation, patron-client traditions, and personalized charismatic leadership have given rise to an unstable system of governance, which is highly centralized and authoritarian (Khair, 2004: 54). Political power is mostly limited to a handful powerful few; the state and its bureaucracy are powerful actors in determining the allocation of resources. The poor and the marginalized generally remain outside the domain of decision-making, development planning and implementation.

The above review of literature cannot be claimed to be a complete account of studies hitherto conducted on people's participation in relation to development administration at the local level. But the foregoing review furnishes that only a few attempts have so far been made to exclusively examine people's participation in decision-making process at the local level. In recent development interventions, high emphasis, both from donors and policymakers, has been given on participatory approaches to development initiatives. Because people's meaningful participation has come to be recognized as the way to achieve sustainable development, attention must be given to explore factors shaping the

nature of participation as well as reasons causing success and failure of participation, and to assess the extent of participation of the local people in development programs. The present study is an endeavour in this regard. It attempts to measure the level of people's participation in development projects in Belabo Upazila and to identify the factors limiting and inhibiting the process of participation in decision-making.

3.3 Conclusion:

In the twentieth century, the concept of decentralization has caused policy shift in governance process in many parts of the world. In many countries of the world, LG has been strengthened with a view to ensuring people's participation in the governance process. Participatory approaches have been common phenomenon and these have led to better use of resources. LG institutions have also emerged as more effective and efficient than ever. In Bangladesh too, decentralization efforts have been made to ensure people's participation in the development process. But, as the state is politically authoritarian and highly centralized, participation of people from all walks of life has always been low. In addition, political motives of decentralization have been unclear. The authoritarian state structure mingled with political rent-seeking inhibited people's participation in decision-making and development process. The present study is an endeavour to measure the status of people's participation in Belabo Upazila and explore the factors limiting and inhibiting the process of participation in decision-making. This is dealt in the next chapter.

Chapter – 4

Participation of Local People in Development Projects of Belabo Upazila

4.0 Introduction:

In rural Bangladesh, development projects are planned and subsequently implemented by UPs. Historically, grassroots people's participation in different phases of projects is very low. In this study, an Upazila has been selected for assessing the level of grassroots people's participation in development process through decentralized LG institutions in Bangladesh. The study explores the status of people's participation in four randomly selected unions of Belabo Upazila in Narsingdi District. With a view to assessing the level of popular participation in development projects both local residents and elected members of the UPs were interviewed. The chapter systematically furnishes the findings of the study.

In analyzing the status of participation of the local people in the development project, this chapter initially provides some background information about the development projects taken in the financial years 2007-2008 and 2008-2009. This is followed by a general discussion on a few selected projects, studied separately during the survey. This section of the chapter dwells on the issues of local people's participation in these selected development projects. It explores the dynamics of project selection, selection of members for project implementation committee and their level of participation in implementation of those projects. In the final section of the chapter, a detailed discussion is undertaken to present the results of the study. It addresses issues like local people's knowledge of the functions of UPZ, people's level of political participation, their level of participation in planning, implementation and evaluation of development projects in the study area.

4.1 The Study Upazila: A Brief Overview

It has already been mentioned in the introductory chapter that only one Upazila was selected for the present study. Belabo, upgraded into an Upazila in 1982, is the smallest under Narsingdi district. The Upazila consists of eight UPs. Of the eight unions four, namely Baznabo, Belabo, Narayanpur and Binnabayad, were randomly selected for studying the level of people's participation in planning, implementation and evaluation of

development projects. Only eighty kilometers away from the capital city of Bangladesh Belabo Upazila is inhabited by a population most of whom are poor and illiterate. Male literacy is slightly greater than that of female. Majority of the people (almost 74% of the total population) directly or indirectly depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. Industry, commerce and services are sources of livelihood for only a small portion of its total population. The Upazila is famous for its archaeological heritage. Many archaeological relics of pre historic and Maurya period have been discovered at Wari and Bateshwari villages of the Upazila. However, because most of the people are poor and illiterate, local politics are dominated by people with strong socio-economic backgrounds.

4.2 Socio-Economic Profile of the Respondents:

As has already been mentioned in chapter one that only hundred randomly selected people were interviewed for the purpose of the study. In order to examine whether there is any correlation between socio-economic status of the respondents and their participation in development projects, relevant information on age, gender, occupation, educational level and income level of the respondents have been gathered. Of the hundred randomly selected respondents 70 percent were male while the rest 30 percent were female. Most of the respondents (61% of the total respondents) are aged between twenty-one and forty years. Almost half of the respondents (43% of the total respondents) are either illiterate or have only attended primary school. Most of the respondents (46% of the total respondents) are poor with less than four thousand taka as their monthly income. The details of the socio-economic profiles of the respondents have been presented in Appendix – C. In addition, twenty UP members were also interviewed for the purpose of the study. However, majority of them were found with relatively strong socio-economic or political backgrounds. Most of them were from well-to-do families and socially as well as politically powerful in their respective areas.

4.3. Approval and Implementation Process of Development Projects:

During the study it was found that the UPZ did not follow Annual Development Plan (ADP). It was found that planning beforehand often was very difficult because of uncertainly regarding the amount of funds, which would ultimately be made available. It

was further found that the Parishad followed a democratic pattern of distributing the development funds allocated to it by the national government. The steps that are being followed in planning and implementation of development projects are as follows:

- ❖ Receipt of development funds from the national government by the UPZ;
- ❖ Distribution of the allocated funds to the UPs on the basis of size and population of the unions by the Upazila engineer, which is subsequently approved by the Parishad;
- ❖ Informing the UPs about funds made available to them and invitation of development projects from the union parishads and government departments at the Upazila level;
- ❖ Submission of project proposals by UPs and government departments;
- ❖ Scrutiny by the technical committee headed by UNO;
- ❖ Approval of the development projects by Upazila Development Coordination Committee (UDCC) now headed by the Upazila Chairman;
- ❖ Implementation of the projects by respective unions and government offices through formation of committees, which include representations from local people.

4.4 Development Projects in the Years 2007-2008 and 2008-2009:

During the field work of the present study attempts were made to collect data on as many projects as possible. Because of limited time and resources only recently implemented development projects were extensively studied. The following table shows the number of projects undertaken in Belabo Upazila in two financial years.

Table: 4.1
Number of Development Projects Undertaken in the Study Area

Sector \ Year	Infrastructure	Social welfare and Entertainment	Agriculture	Transport and communication	Public health and sanitation	Education and Training
2007-2008	06	03	02	26	31	08
2008-2009	06	00	00	16	07	02

Source: Upazila Engineer's Office, Belabo

A total number of seventy-six projects were implemented during the year 2007-2008. But, the number is drastically reduced to thirty-one in the next year (2008-2009). This is due to a drastic decrease in the funds as in the year 2007-2008 the Upazila received a

total amount of 22,89,656/- taka; but in the following year the amount was reduced to 13,84,000/- taka, out of which 4,00,000/- taka was spent in repairing and refurbishing the office of the newly elected Upazila chairman. This ultimately resulted in fewer number of development projects in the year 2008-2009. The table above shows that there is a propensity to take on projects on infrastructure, transport and communication, public health and sanitation. In the year 2007-2008, almost 83 percent of the total projects undertaken belonged to these three categories and in the following year the figure rose to 93 percent. In the year 2008-2009, no projects were taken in agriculture and social-welfare sectors. It indicates that the elected representatives are more interested in undertaking projects on infrastructure, transport and communication, public health and sanitation maybe because they show immediate results.

4.5 Case studies of Different Projects:

A total of seven different development projects undertaken in the study area were selected for extensive study. In selecting the projects, attention was given to cover a diverse range of sectors. The details of projects studied have been listed in the table below:

Table: 4.2
Sample Development Projects

Name of the Project	Sector	Money allocated for the project (In taka)	Year of Implementation	Geographical local
Belabo Upazila Inter-union Football Tournament	Social welfare and Entertainment	40,000/-	2007-2008	Belabo Upazila
Vaccination of poultry and livestock	Agriculture	5,000/-	2007-2008	Belabo Upazila
Supply of sanitary latrines to different families	Public health and sanitation	30,000/-	2007-2008	Belabo Union
Construction of RCC pipes in different locations	Transport and communication	15,000/-	2007-2008	Baznabo Union
Supply of furniture to Kashimnagar High School	Education and Training	47,000/-	2008-2009	Binnabayad Union
Repairing a village kacha road	Transport and communication	34,332/-	2007-2008	Naraynapur Union
Construction of Eco-latrine in Mr. Jainal's homestead	Infrastructure	12,000/-	2008-2009	Naraynapur Union

Source: Upazila Engineer's Office, Belabo

4.5.1 Belabo Upazila Inter-union Football Tournament:

The idea of the project was originally conceived by a government official and subsequently communicated to the UPZ. The demand for organizing a football tournament came from the commander-in-charge of joint forces in Narsingdi district during the last Caretaker government. The study reveals that there was pressure from high officials of the district to take up and implement the project on an urgent basis. The proposal of the project for a football tournament was raised in the Upazila Development Coordination Committee (UDCC) meeting and after discussion it was approved by the committee. When asked, the members of the committee informed that there was pressure from high officials to take the project. Subsequently, an eleven member committee headed by the UNO of the Upazila was formed to implement the project and the members of the committee included UP chairmen, Upazila level govt. officials, school teachers and local businessmen. During the study it was found that participation of the local people in organizing the tournament was spontaneous even though it had no connection with the development needs of the area. However, decisions regarding the implementation of the project were taken by the implementation committee.

4.5.2 Vaccination of Poultry and Livestock:

The initiative of the project came from the Upazila Livestock Officer (ULO). At the request of the local people, the proposal for a project for vaccination for poultry and livestock in the Upazila was submitted by the ULO. Interviewing a few beneficiaries of the project it was found that they had requested the ULO to arrange vaccination for poultry and livestock. The proposal was raised in the UDCC meeting and after discussions was duly approved by the committee. A project implementation committee was then formed headed by the ULO. Other members of the committee included elected representatives of UPs, an Upazila level govt. official, a school teacher, a local businessman, a village doctor and a local woman. Before the implementation of the project, measures were taken to inform the potential beneficiaries about the vaccination program.

4.5.3 Supply of Sanitary Latrines to Different Families in Belabo Union:

The demand for supplying sanitary latrines to different families of the union came from a local NGO named *PAPRI*, which works on the area of health care and sanitation. On receiving the list of the families in need of sanitary latrines from the NGO, the UP, through the members of concerned wards, verified it. The chairman and the members of the union consulted local people in finalizing the list of families to be brought under the project coverage. The study reveals that the beneficiaries of the projects were asked about the need and they were happy to get sanitary latrines. Then a ten member implementation committee, headed by the UP chairman and comprising of three UP members, one female member, a schoolteacher, an NGO representative, an Ansar and VDP member, an *imam* of a local mosque and a local woman laborer, was formed. The committee met only once before the implementation of the project; however, the members of the committee mentioned that their opinions were entertained by the president of the committee.

4.5.4 Construction of RCC Pipes at Different Locations of Baznabo Union:

People living in the low areas of the union had been suffering from water-logging problem for the last few years during the rainy season. They had repeatedly asked the concerned members of their locality and the chairman of the UP to install some reinforced concrete cast (RCC) pipes in some selected areas. The issue was raised in the UP monthly meeting and a unanimous decision was taken to send a project proposal to the UPZ. The project was subsequently approved by the UDCC. A seven member project implementation committee headed by the chairman of the UP was then formed. The members of the committee are either local representatives to UP or local elites. However, during the study it was found that only the UP members were well-informed of the project, while the rest of the committee members actually came to know about their inclusion in the project committee after its implementation. On request from the UP chairman they had put down their signatures on some papers. Under the project, five RCC pipes were installed in different locations. Beneficiaries informed the researcher that the project has immensely benefited them. The water-logging problem was no longer there and as rain water now flows smoothly to lower areas, they are now free from the water logging problem.

4.5.5 Supply of Furniture to Kashimnagar High School in Binnabayad Union:

Kashimnagar High School is one of the prominent schools of Belabo Upazila. Over the years the number of students of the school has significantly increased. But, as the school was running short of funds, it could not buy materials like benches, tables and chairs for the additional students. The School Managing Committee called a meeting and decided to formally request the Binnabayad UP to assist them. On receiving the request the issue was raised in the monthly meeting and a decision was taken to send a project proposal to the UPZ. After getting unanimous nod from the UDCC, the project was implemented. A seven member committee headed by the chairman of the UP was in charge of the project implementation and the members of the committee included one UP member, the headmaster of the school, two school teachers and two school managing committee members. During the study it was found that the president of the project only consulted the headmaster of the school regarding the implementation of the project. However, the project has immensely benefited the school as the dearth of essential furniture for students has been significantly reduced as a good number of benches and tables have been supplied to the school under the project.

4.5.6 Repairing a Village *Kacha* Road in Narayanpur Union:

Most of people of Vaterchar village under Narayanpur union are framers who mostly grow vegetables in their lands. Because there were no well-constructed road in the area these vegetable-growers had been facing problems in carrying their products to nearby markets. They brought the issue into the notice of the local elected member of the UP who later raised it in the UP meeting. The Parishad took a decision to send a project proposal for repairing the *kacha* road in Vaterchar village. After approval by UDCC the project was implemented in time. A project implementation committee headed by the locally elected member was formed. The committee members included one local businessman, a primary school teacher, two farmers, one rickshaw puller and a local woman. The study revealed that none of the committee members were consulted during the implementation of the project. The members also even did not know beforehand of the amount of money allocated for the project. However, on request from the UP members, the members had put their signatures on some related papers. The project has

greatly benefited the local vegetable-growers. They can now take their agricultural products to nearby markets easily by rickshaws or vans.

4.5.7 Construction of Eco-latrine in Mr. Jainal's Homestead:

Mr. Jainal is a rich farmer of Char Laxmipur village under Narayanpur union. As he has good relations with the elected UP member of the village, he requested to the elected member to construct an eco-latrine in his homestead. Afterward, a project proposal was sent to UPZ for approval. Following the approval by the UDCC the project was implemented. The implementation committee for the project was headed by the UP member of the locality and included one female member of UP, one school teacher, one local farmer and the owner of the house as members. During the study it was found that only the female member of the UP and the owner of the house were consulted during the implementation of the project. The other two members even did not know about the inclusion of their names in the committee. However, on repeated requests from the UP member they put down signatures on some papers. The project has only benefited the owner of the house and not his neighbours.

4.6 Findings: What the Case Studies Reveal

All the projects studied were duly approved by the UDCC. In each case, there was discussion on the proposed projects and it was found that all the projects were unanimously approved. From the study it was found, mostly initiatives for different projects were taken in response to public demands. As the elected representatives of the UPs stay in the locality, they are well conversant of the demands of the local people. The UPs generally planned the development projects and then submitted those to UPZ for approval. However, government institutions like Upazila Livestock Office also played significant roles in placing project proposals. The Upazila level govt. officials also came up with project proposals.

Project planning generally occurs at the union level. During the study it was found that all the elected members including the female members of UPs take active part in planning and decision-making in this regard. Elected members of UPs generally come up with project proposals, which then pass through a formal process of approval in a meeting.

During the preparation of project proposals generally local people are not engaged. Of the four unions studied, except in one union, no measures were taken to inform the local people beforehand about the amount of money allocated for the union for development projects. The chairman of Belabo union along with the elected members held meetings and discussion with local people with a view to assessing the needs of the area. The union has already introduced participatory budgeting system. For the last three years the union has been declaring its budget in an open place in presence of local people. Hundreds of people attend the budget meeting and put forward their opinions. However, only 10 percent of the total budget is left to the common people to decide according to their choices. In the process, the union informs its residents about the amount to be spent in development projects in the coming year. It is very difficult to say whether the system has been institutionalized. It appeared that the participatory approaches in the union were due to personal initiatives of the chairman.

The study revealed that govt. rules and regulations are important in initiating participatory approaches in development projects in the study Upazila. Instructions from the central government compel the local level institutions to include a few people in the implementation of projects. As there is no instruction from the government to plan in a participatory way, low participation has been observed in the planning phase of the projects. UP chairmen as well as members freely admitted that government instruction has forced them to involve people in the implementation phase of development projects, but not at the formulation stage. However, the participation is very limited and often manipulated by the elected representatives who often seek to politically benefit as well as economically from the projects.

There is a government instruction for forming a project implementation committee comprising of local people for each project approved by the UPZ. The purpose of the committee is to ensure participation of local people in the implementation phase of the projects. But, the study reveals that these committees are mostly dominated by persons with strong social and economic background. The committee members are not selected on a participatory basis and selection of the members of the project implementation committee largely depends on the president of the committee, who is generally an elected

member of the ward in which the project is being implemented. During the study when the members of the UPs were interviewed they mentioned that they select committee members in a way so that implementation of the project becomes smooth and easier. The members of the project implementation committees are mostly influential persons of the locality. The rationale behind including the socially influential persons in the committee, as mentioned by the respondents, is smooth implementation of the projects. The elected members admitted that they select those people as members for committee with whom they have good relations. It was found that most of the members of the committee are not informed of the amount of money allocated for the projects. Some of them even did not know beforehand that they had been included in the project implementation committee. Decisions regarding the project implementation are mostly taken by the president of the committee. With the exception of Belabo union, no meeting was called to discuss the details about implementation. However, the members put their signatures on papers without even examining the status of project implementation. In Belabo union, before the implementation of the project the committee sat in a meeting to discuss the details of implementation. Following the implementation of the project the union communicated the matter to *PAPRI*, the local NGO which put forward the demand for sanitary latrines for local households.

There is provision for including at least one female member in each project implementation committee and examination of the implementation committees of the studied projects showed that customarily a woman is included in those committees. But, they were neither adequately consulted nor properly informed of the implementation status of the projects. Even though their opinions were hardly sought by the presidents of the committees, they were, however, required to put down their signatures on some papers, of which they had little idea.

The study of the project did not indicate any marked improvement in ensuring local people's participation in the decision-making process. Though projects were taken in response to the needs of local people, they hardly played any part in the planning and preparation of the projects. However, there was very limited and 'managed' participation

in the implementation of the projects. Project evaluation is hardly made. It was generally taken for granted that the projects have met the objectives; therefore the need for evaluation was hardly felt. The representatives of the UPs were found more interested in implementing projects than evaluating them. In fact, the members of UPs have little idea of formally evaluating a project.

Project implementation committees are formed because there are government instructions regarding this. From the study of the seven projects it appeared that these committees are, in most cases, mere formalities. Rather than taking it as a participatory approach of involving the stakeholders in the development process, most representatives of the UPs view it as a mere formality to be maintained. Hence, the whole objective behind the formation of such committees is missing.

A democratic procedure is maintained in allocating the money received for development projects. The study reveals that all the elected members are very keen to get projects in their respective wards. In order to avoid tussle, the chairmen follow a democratic practice which normally put them in the safe side. Though formal meetings are held but the money is distributed among the wards on the basis of size and population of the wards. This has become an established practice with all the four unions covered under the study. When asked about this system the chairmen as well as members of the UPs admitted that development projects for them are means of gaining political support. Hence, they have initiated the system of redistributing the fund on the basis of size and population of wards, which leaves nobody deprived. The elected members also admitted that development projects for them are also means of recovering election expenditures. This is why they are very keen on becoming the presidents of project implementation committees.

4.7 Findings of the Survey:

The survey was conducted in Belabo Upazila in order to find out the level of grassroots level people's participation in development project planning, implementation and evaluation. A total of hundred randomly selected people were interviewed. In addition, twenty UP members were also interviewed. As already mentioned in the opening chapter,

two separate questionnaires were used to interview the respondents of the study. The respondents were asked questions on various aspects of development projects. The objective was to find out rural people's participation in planning and implementation of projects by UPs.

4.7.1 Political Participation of Respondents:

97.14 percent of the male respondents said that they did caste vote in the last Upazila election while 70 percent of the female respondents mentioned that they exercised their franchise in the same election.

Fig 4.1 : Political Participation of respondents (n=100)
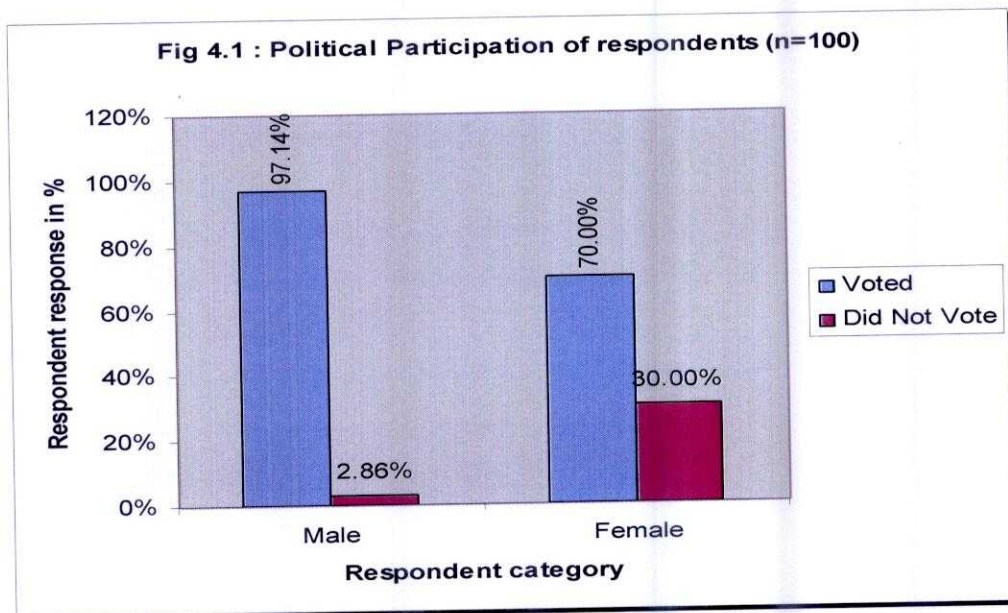
100 percent of the respondents who exercised their voting rights in the last Upazila election mentioned that they voted freely according to their own choices and will. None mentioned of any sort of influence on them in this regard. The respondents replied that the exercise of their voting rights was not affected by money, political party, socially important persons or by any other means.

Fig 4.2:Nature of Exercise of Voting Rights (n=89)
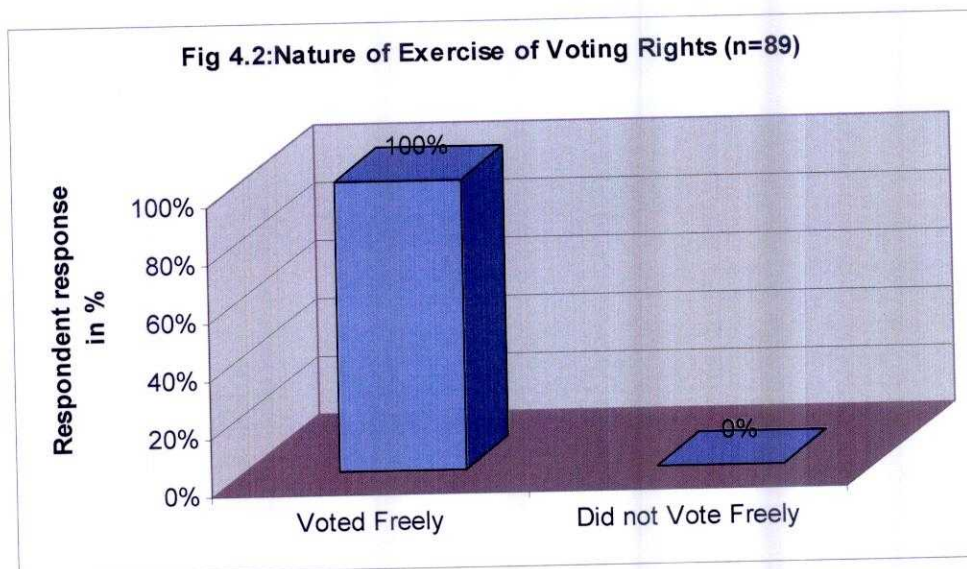
4.7.2 Frequency of Respondents' Visit to Upazila Parishad:

Only 37 percent of the respondents said that they visited UPZ while the rest (63 percent) mentioned that they have never visited UPZ in their lifetime.

Fig 4.3: Respondents' Visit to Upazila Parishad (n=100)
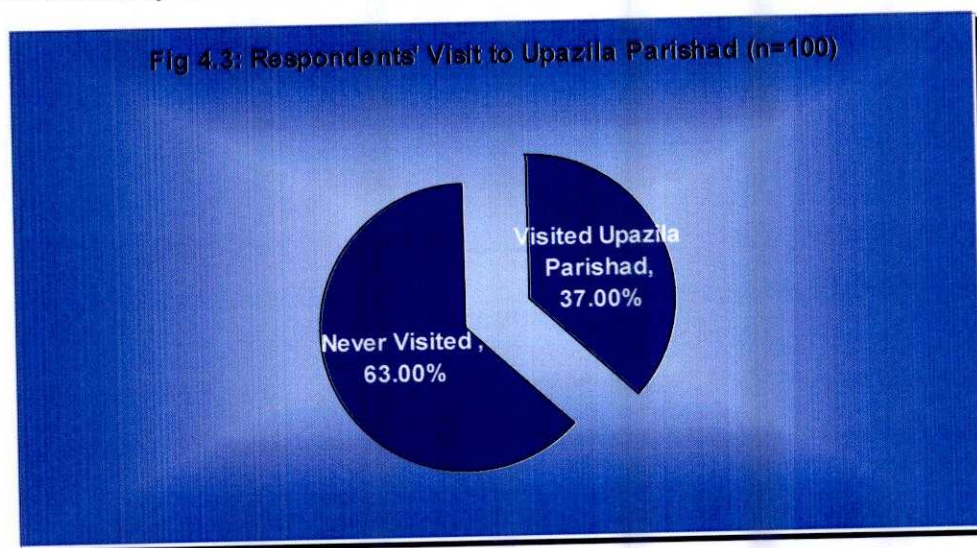
Of those who have visited UPZ, 43.24 percent said that they visited 1-5 times, 35.13 percent visited 6-10 time, while the rest (21.63 percent) visited more than 10 times.

Figure 4.4:Frequency of Respondents' Visit to UPZ (n=37)

Respondent response in %

- 43.24% — 1-5 Times
- 35.13% — 6-10 Times
- 21.63% — More than 10 Times

Frequency of visit
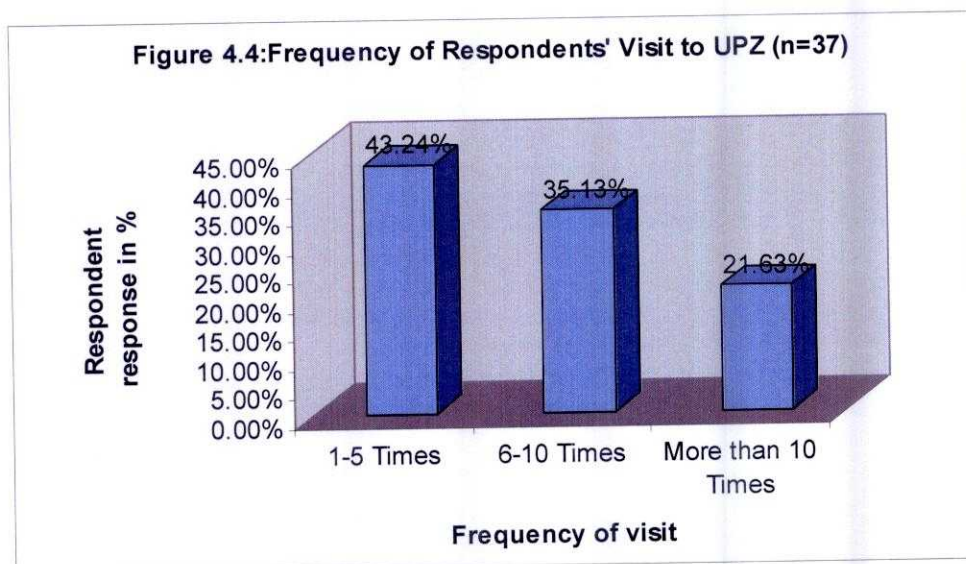
4.7.3 Knowledge about Functions of Upazila Parishad:

Only 20 percent of the total respondents mentioned that they know of the functions of UPZ. 25.71 percent of the male respondents said that they are knowledgeable of the functions of UPZ while only 6.66 percent of the female respondents mentioned that they know the functions of UPZ.

Figure 4.5:Respondents' Knowledge of UPZ Functions (n=100)

Respondent response in %

- Male: Know 25.71%, Do Not Know 74.29%
- Female: Know 6.66%, Do Not Know 93.33%

Respondent category
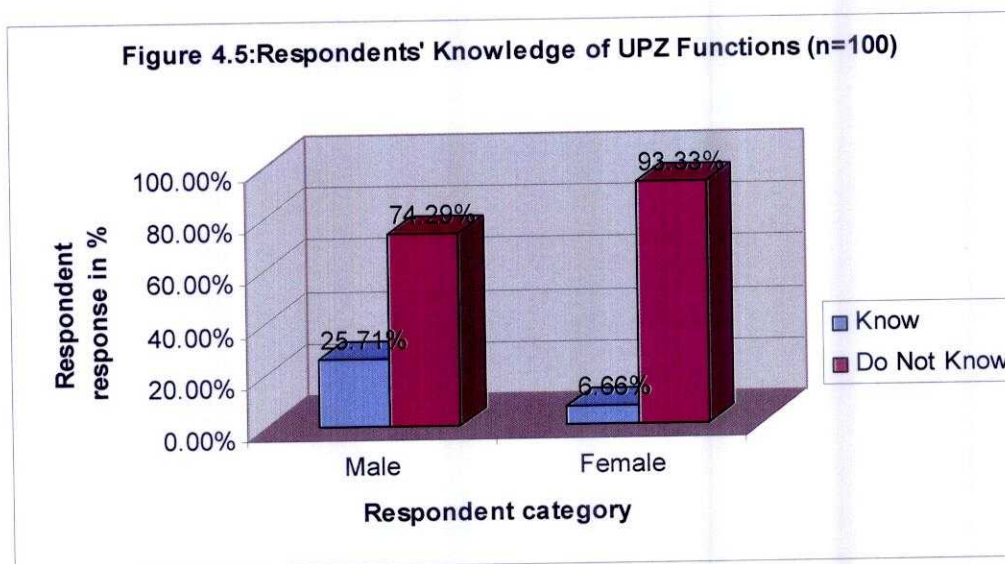
□ Know
■ Do Not Know

4.7.4 Knowledge about UPZ Coordination Committee:

Only 8 percent of the total respondents mentioned that they have heard about UPZ Coordination Committee. Of the male respondents 10 percent said that they know about UDCC while only 3.33 percent of the female respondents mentioned that they heard about UPZ Coordination Committee.

Figure 4.6: Respondents' Knowledge of UPZ Coordination Committee (n=100)
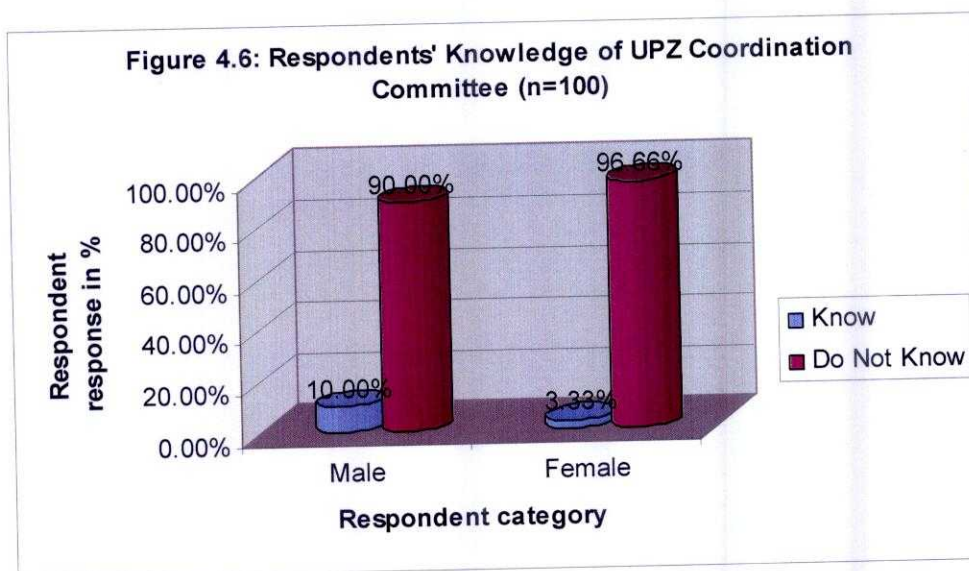
50 percent of the respondents who know about UDCC mentioned that they also know the terms of reference of the committee. However, no of the respondents ever attended the committee meeting.

4.7.5 Participation in Development Project Planning:

95 percent of the respondents reported that they never participated in the planning phase of any development projects undertaken by the UPs. Hence, the participation of grassroots people in development project planning is 5 percent. All the respondents who mentioned of participation in project planning belong to Belabo union.

Fig 4.7: Participation of respondents in the development planning process (n=100)
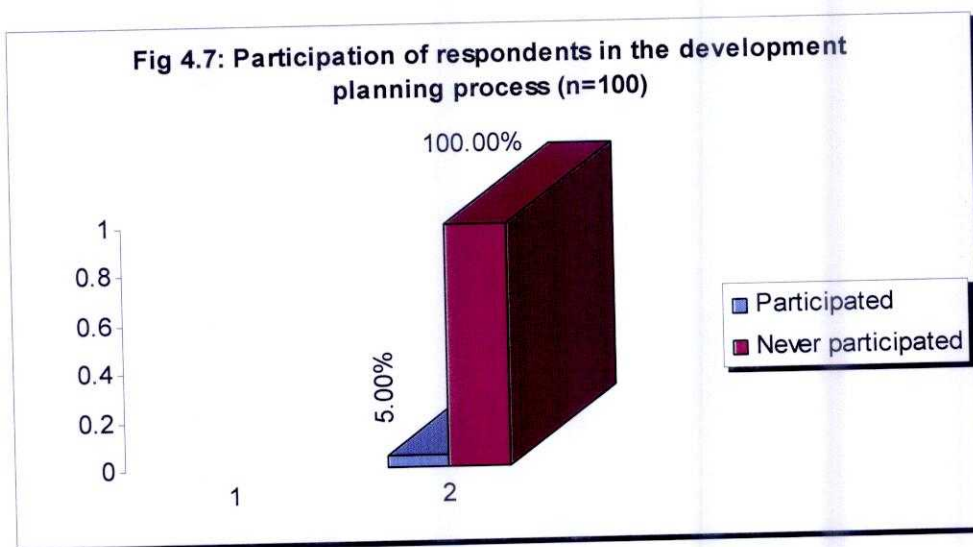
percent female respondents mentioned of their participation in the development project implementation.

Figure 4.8: Respondent Participation in Development Project Implementation (n=100)
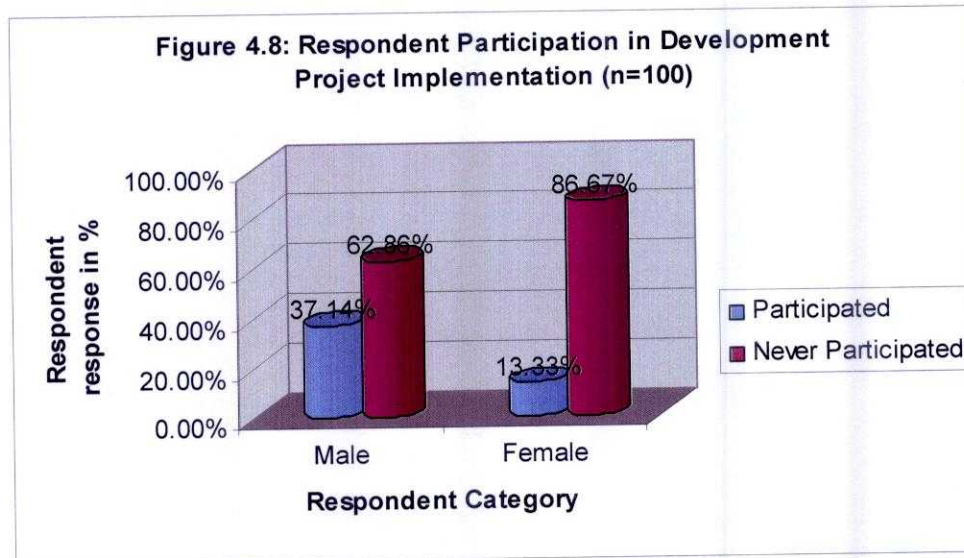
However, 70 percent of the respondents who participated in project implementation reported that their opinion on different issues were properly entertained and considered by the UPs during implementation while 30 percent have the perception that their opinion were neither properly sought nor considered properly.

Fig 4.9: Respondents' perception about their opinion in Project Implementation (n=30)

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respondents do not think that there is participation of their own people in the project...

Fig 4.10: Respondents' Perception about Overall Participation in Development Projects (n=100)

Respondents perception in %

- Participation: 9%
- Non-participation: 91%

Respondents' response
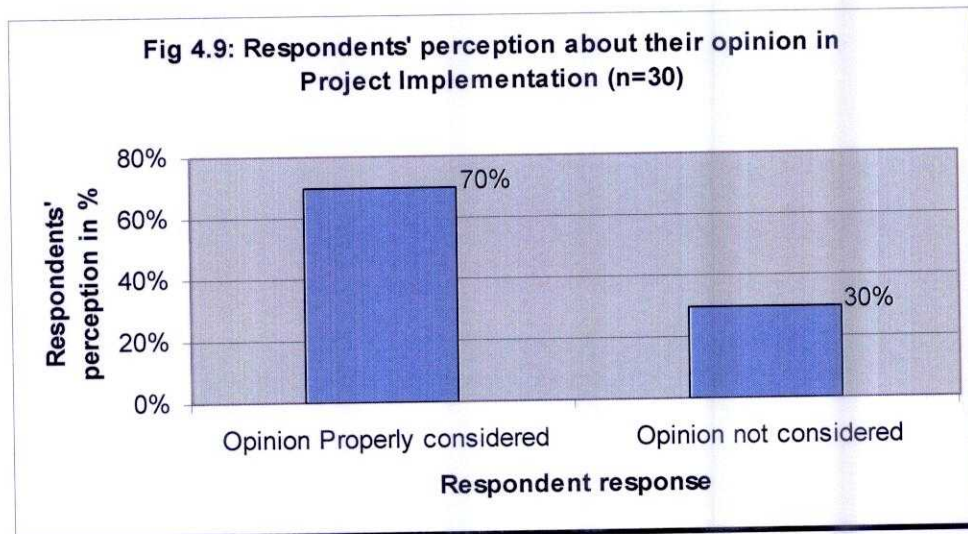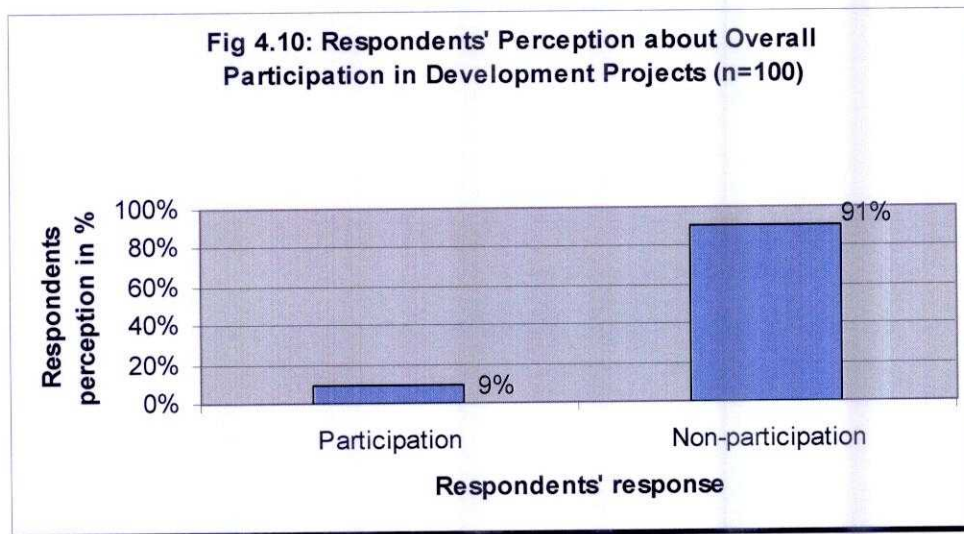
4.7.8 Discussion with UP Chairman on Development Projects:

15 percent of the respondents (male-18.57% and female-6.67%) said that they had discussion with UP chairmen on different aspects of development projects implemented in their localities.

Fig 4.11: Discussion with UP Chairman on Development Projects (n=100)

Respondents' response in %

- Discussion: 15%
- No Discussion: 85%

Response category
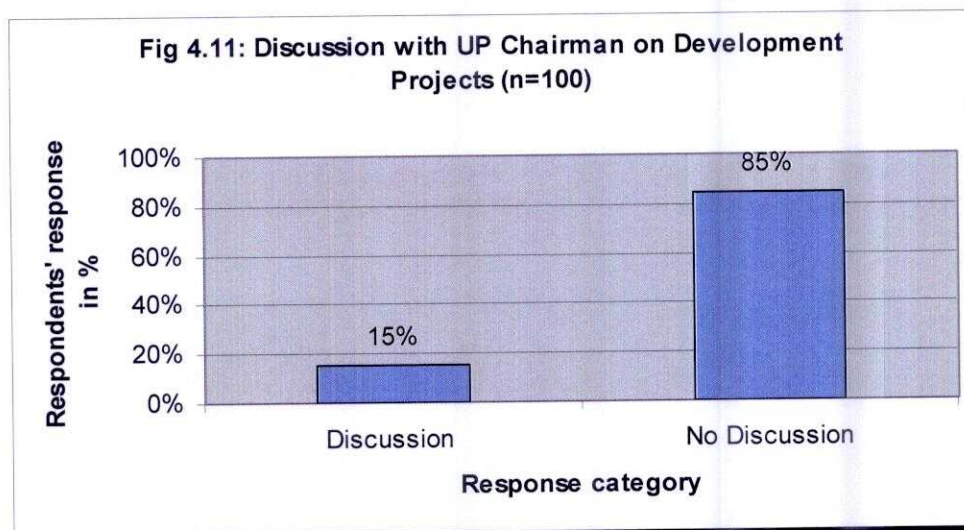
When asked most of them replied that the basis of the discussions had been good relations with the UP chairmen, their superior social position and political involvement.

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4.8 UP Members' Response on Participation in Development Projects:

As part of the survey, twenty (12 male and 8 female) UP members were interviewed on different aspects of development projects during the study. 100 percent of the respondents were found knowledgeable of the number of projects undertaken in their respective unions. All the respondents mentioned that development projects are discussed in the UP meetings before these are sent to UPZ for approval. Only the respondents of Belabo union claimed that local people are engaged in both planning and implementation phases of projects. The respondents (15) of other three unions mentioned that people are not engaged in planning but in the implementation stage local people participate. In Belabo union, local people are consulted by the respective member before a project is sent to UPZ for approval. Sometimes, meetings are also called by the UP chairman and needs and priorities of the local people are identified. In all four unions studied, committees comprising of local people are formed for implementing the approved projects. However, most of the respondents (90%) said that selection of the committee members depends mainly on the discretion of the chairman of the committee, who happen to be a UP member. 100 percent of the respondents, both male and female, mentioned that they had been members of project implementation committees and their opinion were generally entertained and considered properly. None of the respondents mentioned of any influence of political parties or organizations in selection and implementation of projects. The respondents mentioned that allotted budget to each union is distributed among the wards based on population size and area. However, priorities of projects are generally fixed in UP meetings and these meetings are generally attended by UP members only.

These respondents feel that UPs as LG institutions need to open up in order to increase common people's participation in decision-making and development process. They suggest that UPs should follow the practices of Local Government Support Project (LGSP) to engage people in development projects. Under LGSP, local people are widely consulted before any project is taken by any UP. The members of the UP arrange social

extensively involved. The respondents feel that regular open meetings should be held and local people should always be informed about allocated budget, preparation and selection of projects as well as their implementation.

4.9 Major Findings:

The major findings of the survey are as follows:

♦ Political participation among the respondents is quite high. Most of the respondents freely exercised their voting rights in the last UPZ election. The respondents did not mention of any undue pressure or illegal practices in this regard.

♦ The study reveals that most of the respondents (80% of the total respondents) are ignorant of the functions of UPZ. Most of them (92% of the total respondents) did not even hear about the UDCC let alone attending the meeting of the committee. The level of ignorance is higher in case of female respondents.

♦ Participation in project planning is very low (5% only). Of the four unions studied only 20 percent of the respondents of Belabo union mentioned of participation in the planning phase of projects. In the other three unions, no respondents reported of their participation in project planning.

♦ Participation of the respondents in project implementation is also low, but is not as low as that of in project planning. Only 30 percent of the respondents said that they have participated in one or more project implementation. In this case too, female participation (13.33%) is lower than male participation (37.14%). The respondents who had taken part in participation were mostly from strong socio-economic background. In most cases, the opinions of these participants were entertained and considered by the concerned UPs.

♦ Most of the respondents (91% of the total respondents) feel that project planning and implementation are not done with participation from all levels of people.

with stronger socio-economic backgrounds compared with the majority of the people in the locality.

♦ It appears from the study that the elected members of the UPs – both male and female – equally participate in preparation and implementation of projects. Moreover, a mutually democratic pattern is maintained in selecting the presidents of the project implementation committees and the selection appears to be done on a participatory style.

4.10 Analysis of Major Study Findings:

A careful analysis of the aforementioned study findings provide with the following crucial directives:

❖ Level of participation of the common people in deciding priorities, preparing projects and in subsequent implementation of the projects is very low in the study area. Of the four unions studied, only Belabo Union appears to indicate some positive signs towards achieving participatory practices in decision-making with regard to development projects undertaken by the union. During the study it appeared that the chairman of Belabo Union, known locally as a very dynamic person, is eager to establish participatory practices. The chairman, of his own accord, has started participatory budgeting in the union. The elected members of the union admitted that the chairman every now and then asks them to conduct meetings with their local people before taking up any development projects. However, participatory practices are still in nascent stage in the union and needs to be institutionalized.

❖ The study reveals rather insignificant participation of local people in development planning. Only 5 percent of the respondents claimed of participation in development project planning. All of these respondents belong to Belabo union. Thus, the present structure of LG hardly shows and promotes any participation in development planning at the local level.

backgrounds of the participants. Mostly comparatively rich respondents claimed that there had been extensive involvement of the people in the development process. 73.33 percent of the respondents who claimed of participation in project implementation were found to be economically solvent (they each has at least 8,000/- taka monthly income). Following table (Table: 4.3) reveals a positive relation between respondents' monthly income and participation.

Table: 4.3
Relation between Income Level and Participation

Income level (in taka)	Below 2000	2001-4000	4001-8000	8001-10000	Above 10000
No. of Respondents	19	27	22	18	14
No. of Respondents Claiming Participation	2	2	4	12	10

Almost all of the participants claiming participation in project implementation stage were retired government officials, established businessmen or school teachers. The study also reveals a relationship between respondents' educational status and participation in project implementation. The following Table (Table 4.4) shows that 66.66 percent of the respondents claiming participation in project implementation were found to have educational qualification of at least S.S.C. level.

Table: 4.4
Relation between Education Level and Participation:

Education level	Illiterate	Primary school	High school	S.S.C	H.S.C.	Degree and above
No. of Respondents	13	30	25	14	12	06
No. of Respondents Claiming Participation	03	02	05	07	08	05

implementation, while 68.75 percent of the respondents with better monthly income (more than 8000 taka) claimed of participation in project implementation. Moreover, only 14.70 percent of the respondents with lower education level (less then S.S.C.) claimed of participation in project implementation while 62.5 percent of the respondents with higher education level (at least S.S.C.) said that they participated in development project implementation. Again, 86.66 percent of the respondents, who said that they had discussion with UP chairman on development projects, were also found to be economically solvent (with at least 8,000/- taka monthly income). The foregoing analysis indicates that comparatively rich and educated people participate in such activities, while poor and less educated or illiterate people remain outside the boundary of participation. Thus, participation of the poor in implementation of development projects was found very low and insignificant.

- ❖ The elected representatives, who also happen to be socially, economically and politically powerful, seem to have developed a nexus with the rich section of the society as far as development planning and project implementation are concerned. Only socially and economically important respondents reported of informal participation. The rich and the elected representatives appeared as mutual benefactors. The poor, whose lives are mostly affected, seem to have remained largely outside the domain of development process.

- ❖ Institutions – LG bodies as well as field level government offices – do not promote participation. There are hardly any institutional arrangements which would encourage popular participation in the decision-making process. Though run by people's representatives, the institutions are still hierarchical in nature and thus the UPs seem to disregard the voices of the people, particularly the poor. Moreover, the UPs also lack in technical capacity to ensure effective participation of people.

means of gaining political as well as economic benefits. This tendency prevents them from sharing information with the common people. Popular participation in development process is looked down upon as a serious impediment towards achieving their political goals. Hence, there is lack of will among these popular representatives to promote meaningful participation as far as development projects are concerned.

❖ There are a number of factors that determine the nature of participation at the grassroots level. Apart from the very structure of the UPs as well as UPZ as LG institutions, socio-economic and cultural factors like gender, economic condition, education, social status and so on seem to be determining participation at the local level. In addition, government rules and regulations also are influential factors in ensuring participation of grassroots people in development process. During the study it has been observed that UPs as local institutions have not opened themselves up to the people that they ostensibly represent. In fact, with a very few exceptions, the elected representatives were found mostly reluctant to disclose information to the common people regarding development projects. There is strong absence of institutional mechanisms that would let the local people know about the details of development projects undertaken by UPs. Being compelled by some government rules and regulations, the elected representatives form project implementation committee comprising of local people for each project. But, here too participation is guided, managed and manoeuvred. Mostly socially influential people appear in these committees and they are also the primary beneficiaries of public resources. The socially influential persons and the elected representatives seem to have established a tacit agreement for maximizing mutual benefits. Nevertheless, there is some participation (which is in no way satisfactory) at the implementation stage, but, participation in development planning is almost absent. As there are no govternment rules and

guidelines from the central government, UPs at the local level have not grown as institutions fostering participation, transparency and accountability.

The study reveals that socio-cultural issues are major factors behind non-participation of common people in the development process. Traditionally, society in Bangladesh is male-chauvinistic and female are kept outside the domain of development interventions. The study reveals gender as a dominant factor for non-participation. Female participation is significantly lower than the male participation in the study area. Moreover, people with low economic condition and low family status are not generally invited by UPs to participate in implementation of development projects. In addition, illiterate people hardly understand the nitty-gritty of a project and thus their illiteracy is a great hindrance to their participation in development interventions at local level. Illiterate people are often looked down upon as problematic as they more often cannot articulate their demands and put forward their opinions in a systematic way. Hence, their illiteracy is leading them to non-participation. Thus, education is a prime factor for promoting participation. During the study, only educated respondents were found knowledgeable about the functions and responsibilities of UPZ. The backgrounds of people significantly determine participation.

Political issues are also important in hindering participation. Rent-seeking behavior of elected representatives makes them reluctant towards participation. The less participatory the projects are the more chances are there for them to maximize personal gains. As the elected representatives view development projects as means of recovering their election costs, they, with a view to maximizing their own profits, try their best to make development projects as less participatory as possible. Mostly they target to limit participation to a few selected ones only. Thus, whatever participation is observed it is mostly limited to those who are socially important – the rural elites or those who enjoy personal relations with the elected representatives. Patron-client relations are also in operation as far

successes in elections.

Despite serious limitations and drawbacks, it seems that some participation takes place in various forms. Some people are sometimes consulted; sometimes discussions also take place. In some rare cases, open meetings are also held. But, the initiatives are very few and do not have significant impact on the overall development process. In most cases, these initiatives are rather personal than institutional. However, day by day people are becoming more conscious as citizens and as a result voices are growing from the civil society organizations as well as citizens' groups for participatory governance at local level for better and sustainable management of public resources.

4.11 Conclusion:

The case studies and survey of this study furnish some significant findings. The level of popular participation in development projects in the study area is very low. Participation of the poor in local level development projects is very insignificant. Participation seems to be limited only to people with strong socio-economic backgrounds. The study reveals the elected representatives as rent-seeking individuals who are keen on maximizing their benefits from development projects. Interestingly, they have established a 'democratic pattern' in sharing benefits, in the sense that you pat my back I will do the same to you. The representatives also seem to have enduring ties with socially and economically strong people. The rich and people's representatives are mutually united in sharing mutual benefits. A tacit system has been in operation which keeps the poor and the marginalized outside the development process. Participation is manoeuvred towards achieving personal goals and objectives. However, one union shows some positive signs. But, it is hard to determine whether participatory practices of the union are outcomes of institutional arrangements or personal initiatives of the UP chairman. However, the general condition does not provide a soothing picture.

5.0 Introduction:

Local Government has a long and varied history in Bangladesh. But, local government institutions have not grown as self-governing units integrating all walks of people in the development process as well as in governance. Since the independence of the country, successive governments have made efforts for decentralization; but, these are yet to produce desired results. Despite these efforts, local government institutions have not developed participatory practices. Rather, the very structure of these local government institutions in rural Bangladesh greatly hinders participatory practices. In addition, socio-economic issues like gender, low literacy rate of rural people, shabby economic condition have kept the rural poor and the marginalized outside the realm of development interventions.

The present study on a selected Upazila was conducted to measure the level of popular participation in development interventions through local government institutions in rural Bangladesh and also to identify major issues behind non-participation of the local people in the development process. The findings of the study do not present any pleasing picture. Participation of rural people in development planning in the study area has been found to be significantly low. Though there is some participation in the implementation stage of development projects, it is mainly managed, guided and manoeuvred. Mostly, participation is limited to socially important persons, without whom the elected representatives cannot think of their political successes. The rural elites and the elected representatives seem to have established a tacit understanding among them in mutual benefit-sharing, which is consistent with prevailing patron-client relationship scenario. Thus, the study points out that the very structure of UPs as local government organizations, high rate of illiteracy among rural poor, rent-seeking behavior of elected representatives, patron-client relations and other socio-economic issues like gender, poverty are main reasons behind non-participation. However, there are some positive

5.1 Recommendations:

Ultimate objective of decentralization is to improve the quality of life of people by integrating them in the development as well as decision-making process. Several decades of development initiatives have shown that without meaningful participation of the local people in the development process as well as in the institutions that determine the development, sustainable improvement in the standard of living of the people cannot be achieved. In view of the findings of the study, we can put forward some recommendations to make the development process in this country more people-oriented:

❖ Traditionally the poor and the marginalized, characterized by economic, social and political backwardness, have not been involved in the decision-making process. Even any reservation policy or structural change in the form of reservation is unlikely to break the traditional patterns. No structural change is expected to bring awareness and power to the marginalized groups overnight. However, inclusion of other actors like NGOs, non-profit organizations, who are working with the marginalized sections in the rural areas and social groups as well as organizations could enhance the process and then gradually help to institutionalize the participation of the local people in the development process.

❖ Most of the elected representatives appear to be ignorant about the benefits of participatory development approach. They have misconceptions about participatory approaches in development. In this regard, their lack of knowledge contributes to their misunderstanding and misconception. Making them aware through training programs or workshops with a view to changing the mindset of the elected representatives regarding participatory practices could be undertaken. They need to be convinced of the benefits of participatory development practices.

❖ The study reveals that a democratic system is maintained in distributing the allocated funds among the UPs. The prime objective of this practice is to leave

possible with such small finds. This practice need to be changed. With a view to reaping greater benefits comprehensive development planning need to be adopted which will focus on the needs and priorities of the local people. Instead of planning separately, the UPs as a whole could plan and prepare projects and then prioritize them. Even development planning can also be done at the Upazila level. Through this splitting of funds among different UPs can be avoided. This will lead to better utilization of resources instead of dividing it into smaller units. With big fund big projects can be planned and implemented.

❖ Currently funds are allocated and disbursed in favor of UPZs in different phases in a financial year. This leaves the UPs with very limited time to plan and prepare development projects through participatory manner. The UPs often hurry in order to utilize the funds within time. Instead of phased allocation of funds, lump-sum resource allocation should be practiced. The UPZs and UPs should be informed about their funds at the beginning of each financial year so that they get enough time to plan and prepare projects. Transparency should also be brought in the whole process. The date and amount of disbursement should be made public through widely-circulated newspapers, television and radio so that local people can know about them.

❖ UPZ should adopt participatory budgeting with a view to integrating people from all walks of like in the development process. In this regard, representatives from different social groups should be trained so that they can articulate their demands properly and make meaningful contributions to local development planning.

❖ Evaluation of each project should be done on regular basis so that loopholes are identified and mistakes are not repeated. In evaluating the projects, opinions and perceptions of the key beneficiaries should be sought. In this regard, performance audits of UPZ as well as UPs can also be done.

must be ensured in order to make development projects sustainable and viable.

❖ UPs should be conferred with meaningful autonomy. Measures should be taken to build capacity of the UPs so that they can undertake and carry out local development activities independently. Interference from any quarter must be stopped and the UPs should be kept outside the complex bureaucratic procedure as far as possible.

❖ Third party monitoring can be introduced with a view to promoting as well as ensuring participatory development practices at the local level. A committee may be formed in each Upazila comprising of government officials, civil society members, local media, school teachers and socially acceptable persons, which would work as a watchdog and recommend measures to improve participation level. The committee would not directly interfere in the activities of UPs, but ensure that development projects are taken on participatory basis. The committee would make sure that key stakeholders have been consulted before taking up any projects and they have also been included in the implementation process.

5.2 Conclusion:

The decentralization efforts that have been taken in Bangladesh by different regimes have failed to produce desired results. In fact, the very intentions of regimes, who took initiatives to reform the local government system in the country, have been seriously questioned. It has been alleged that local government system has been exploited by different regimes to obtain narrow political gains. Despite the reform initiatives, local government institutions are still heavily dependent on the central government and under strict bureaucratic control. Consequently, the country is beset with an old, outdated, weak, ineffective and subservient local government system, which barely survives at the mercy of the all-powerful and omnipotent central government. The stated objective of achieving participatory local development still remains a mirage in the country.

sustainable development can be achieved. But, participation of the common people in the development process is still very low. Though the rich and the socially influential have been participating in development process to some extent, the poor and the marginalized are still outside the domain of governance. The low participation that exists is again managed, guided, directed and characterized by patron-client relations, mutual benefit-sharing and personal relations. Low family status, low rate of illiteracy, poor economic condition and gender issues seem to have been exerting considerable influence in shaping participation in rural Bangladesh. However, there are some positive signs which indicate a tendency towards participatory development in some areas, but, the achievements are far from satisfactory. There is still a along way to go. The local government institutions need to be revamped and made accountable to the citizens. In this regard, the mindset of both political as well as bureaucratic masters needs to be changed. The policymakers of the land must come up with comprehensive policy guidelines with a view to freeing the local government institutions from unnecessary political and bureaucratic controls and strengthening them by integrating people from all walks of life in the development as well as governance process. In order to achieve good governance and sustainable development, steps not only to strengthen existing local government system but also to establish local governance, must be taken, otherwise effective local governance will be difficult to achieve and may remain mere rhetoric.

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Appendices

স্থানীয় উন্নয়ন পারকল্পনায় জনগণের অংশগ্রহণঃ স্থানীয় সরকার সংস্থার ভূমিকা
প্রশ্নমালা – 'ক'
(স্থানীয় জনসাধারণের জন্য)

[প্রিয় উত্তরদাতা, এ প্রশ্নমালার ভিত্তিতে প্রাপ্ত উত্তরসমূহ একটি গবেষণার কাজে ব্যবহার করা হবে। এ গবেষণার উদ্দেশ্য হচ্ছে স্থানীয় উন্নয়ন পরিকল্পনায় সর্বস্তরের জনসাধারণের অংশগ্রহণে উপজেলা পরিষদ ব্যবস্থা কতটুকু কার্যকরী ভূমিকা পালন করে তা যাচাই করে দেখা। আপনার আন্তরিক সহযোগিতা এ গবেষণাটি সম্পন্ন করতে সহায়তা করবে। আপনার দেয়া উত্তরসমূহ শুধুই গবেষণার কাজে ব্যবহার করা হবে এবং আপনার নাম ও পরিচয় গোপন রাখা হবে। আপনার সহযোগিতার জন্য আন্তরিক ধন্যবাদ।]

১। নামঃ

পুরুষ	মহিলা

২। ঠিকানাঃ

গ্রামঃ   ইউনিয়নঃ

৩। বয়সঃ
- ☐ ২০ বছরের নীচে   ☐ ২১ - ৩০ বছর   ☐ ৩১ - ৪০ বছর
- ☐ ৪১ - ৫০ বছর   ☐ ৫০ বছরের উর্ধ্বে

৪। পেশাঃ
- ☐ কৃষি   ☐ ব্যবসা   ☐ চাকুরী
- ☐ শ্রমিক   ☐ শিক্ষকতা   ☐ অন্যান্য

৫। শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতাঃ
- ☐ নিরক্ষর   ☐ প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়   ☐ মাধ্যমিক বিদ্যালয়
- ☐ এস.এস.সি   ☐ এইচ.এস.সি.   ☐ ডিগ্রী বা তদূর্ধ্ব

৬। মাসিক আয়ঃ
- ☐ ২০০০ টাকার নীচে   ☐ ২০০১ - ৪০০০ টাকা   ☐ ৪০০১ - ৮০০০ টাকা
- ☐ ৮০০১ - ১০০০০ টাকা   ☐ ১০০০০ টাকার উর্ধ্বে

৭। আপনি কি প্রত্যক্ষ রাজনীতির সাথে জড়িত?
- ☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না

৮। আপনি কি গত উপজেলা পরিষদ নির্বাচনে ভোট দিয়েছেন?
- ☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না

[উত্তর 'না' হলে ১১নং প্রশ্নে চলে যান]

৯। আপনি কি আপনার ইচ্ছা এবং পছন্দ অনুযায়ী ভোটাধিকার প্রয়োগ করেছেন?
- ☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না

[উত্তর 'হ্যাঁ' হলে ১১নং প্রশ্নে চলে যান]

১০। উত্তর 'না' হলে, আপনি কি দ্বারা প্রভাবান্বিত হয়েছেন?
- ☐ টাকার বিনিময়ে   ☐ স্থানীয় কোন প্রভাবশালী ব্যক্তির প্রভাবে
- ☐ রাজনৈতিক দলের প্রভাবে   ☐ অন্য কোন কারণে

১১। আপনি কি কোন কাজে কখনো উপজেলা পরিষদে গিয়েছেন?
- ☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না

[উত্তর 'না' হলে ১৩নং প্রশ্নে চলে যান]

১৩। উপজেলা পরিষদের কার্যাবলী সম্পর্কে আপনি জানেন কি?

☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না

১৪। "উপজেলা উন্নয়ন সমন্বয় কমিটি" সম্পর্কে জানেন কি?

☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না

[উত্তর 'না' হলে ১৯নং প্রশ্নে চলে যান]

১৫। উক্ত কমিটির কার্যপরিধি সম্পর্কে আপনার কোন ধারণা আছে কি?

☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না

১৬। কখনো উক্ত কমিটির কোন সভায় অংশগ্রহণ করেছেন কি?

☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না

১৭। অংশগ্রহণ করে থাকলে সভায় আলোচ্য কোন বিষয়ের আলোচনায় অংশগ্রহণ করেছেন কি?

☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না

[উত্তর 'না' হলে ১৯নং প্রশ্নে চলে যান]

১৮। আলোচনায় অংশগ্রহণ করে থাকলে আপনার মতামত গুরুত্বসহকারে বিবেচনা করা হয়েছে কি?

☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না

১৯। আপনি কি কোন উন্নয়ন প্রকল্প পরিকল্পনায় কখনো অংশগ্রহণ করেছেন?

☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না

[উত্তর 'না' হলে ২২নং প্রশ্নে চলে যান]

২০। প্রকল্প পরিকল্পনায় আপনার অংশগ্রহণ কি স্বতঃস্ফূর্ত ছিল?

☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না

২১। আপনার মতামত গুরুত্বসহকারে বিবেচনা করা হয়েছে কি?

☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না

২২। আপনার এলাকায় উন্নয়ন প্রকল্প বাস্তবায়নের কোন কাজে কখনো অংশগ্রহণ করেছেন কি?

☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না

[উত্তর 'না' হলে ২৪নং প্রশ্নে চলে যান]

২৩। করে থাকলে আপনার মতামত গুরুত্বসহকারে বিবেচনা করা হয়েছে কি?

☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না

২৪। আপনি কি মনে করেন আপনার এলাকায় বাস্তবায়িত উন্নয়ন প্রকল্পসমূহ সকলের অংশগ্রহণের ভিত্তিতে হয়েছে?

☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না

২৫। কোন প্রকল্পের বিষয়ে ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের চেয়ারম্যানের সাথে আপনার আলোচনা হয়েছে কি?

☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না

২৬। আলোচনা হয়ে থাকলে আলোচনার ভিত্তি কি ছিল?

সহযোগিতার জন্য আপনাকে ধন্যবাদ

[Dear Respondents, answers given to the questions of this questionnaire will solely be used for the purpose of a research, which aims at assessing the status of people's participation in the local development process through LG institutions. Your sincere cooperation will help complete the research. It is guaranteed that answers provided by you will only be used for the purpose of aforementioned research and your name and identity will not be disclosed. You are thanked in advance for you kind cooperation.]

1. Name | | Male | | Female |

2. Address
   Village: Union:

3. Age:
   ☐ Below 20   ☐ 21 - 30 Year   ☐ 31 - 40 Year
   ☐ 41 - 50 Year ☐ Above 50

4. Occupation:
   ☐ Agriculture   ☐ Business   ☐ Service
   ☐ Labor   ☐ Teaching   ☐ Others

5. Educational Status:
   ☐ Illiterate   ☐ Primary School ☐ Secondary School
   ☐ S.S.C.   ☐ H.S.C.   ☐ Degree and Above

6. Income Level (in Taka):
   ☐ Below 2000 Taka ☐ 2001 - 4000 Take   ☐ 4001 - 8000 Taka
   ☐ 8001 - 10000 Taka ☐ Above 10000 Taka

7. Are you involved in direct politics?
   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

8. Did you vote in the last Upazila Election?
   ☐ Yes   ☐ No
           [If answer is 'No', please go to Question no.11]

9. Did you vote exercise you voting right freely?
   ☐ Yes   ☐ No
           [If answer is 'Yes', please go to Question no.11]

10. If the answer is 'No', what influenced exercising your voting right?
   ☐ Money   ☐ Locally influential persons
   ☐ Political parties ☐ Any other reason

11. Have you ever visited the Upazila Parishad?
   ☐ Yes   ☐ No
           [If answer is 'No', please go to Question no.13]

13. Do you know the functions of UPZ?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

14. Do you know anything about Upazila Development Coordination Committee?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
      [If answer is 'No', please go to Question no.19]

15. Do you have any idea about the terms of reference of the Committee?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

16. Did you ever participate in the Committee meeting?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

17. If the answer is 'Yes', did you participate in the discussion?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
      [If answer is 'No', please go to Question no.19]

18. If the answer is 'Yes', were your opinions considered properly?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

19. Did you participate in planning of any development project in your locality?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
      [If answer is 'No', please go to Question no.22]

20. If the answer is 'Yes', was your participation spontaneous?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

21. Were you opinions considered properly by the concerned persons?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

22. Did you participate in implementation of any development project in your locality?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
      [If answer is 'No', please go to Question no.24]

23. If the answer is 'Yes', were your opinions considered properly?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

24. Do you think that the development projects undertaken in your locality have been implemented through participation of all?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

25. Did you have any discussion with UP Chairman about any side of development projects?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

26. If the answer is 'Yes' what was the basis of that discussion?

Thank you once again for you kind cooperation

স্থানীয় উন্নয়ন পরিকল্পনায় জনগণের অংশগ্রহণঃ স্থানীয় সরকার সংস্থার ভূমিকা
প্রশ্নমালা – 'খ'
(ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের সদস্যদের জন্য)

[প্রিয় উত্তরদাতা, এ প্রশ্নমালার ভিত্তিতে প্রাপ্ত উত্তরসমূহ একটি গবেষণার কাজে ব্যবহার করা হবে। এ গবেষণার উদ্দেশ্য হচ্ছে স্থানীয় উন্নয়ন পরিকল্পনায় সর্বস্তরের জনসাধারণের অংশগ্রহণে স্থানীয় সরকার ব্যবস্থা কতটুকু কার্যকরী ভূমিকা পালন করে তা যাচাই করে দেখা। আপনার আন্তরিক সহযোগিতা এ গবেষণাটি সম্পন্ন করতে সহায়তা করবে। আপনার দেয়া উত্তরসমূহ শুধুই গবেষণার কাজে ব্যবহার করা হবে এবং আপনার নাম ও পরিচয় গোপন রাখা হবে। আপনার সহযোগিতার জন্য আন্তরিক ধন্যবাদ।]

পুরুষ	মহিলা

১। নামঃ

২। ঠিকানাঃ

গ্রামঃ   ইউনিয়নঃ

৩। বয়সঃ
- ☐ ২০ বছরের নীচে
- ☐ ২১ – ৩০ বছর
- ☐ ৩১ – ৪০ বছর
- ☐ ৪১ – ৫০ বছর
- ☐ ৫০ বছরের উর্ধ্বে

৪। পেশাঃ
- ☐ কৃষি
- ☐ ব্যবসা
- ☐ চাকুরী
- ☐ শ্রমিক
- ☐ শিক্ষকতা
- ☐ অন্যান্য

৫। শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতাঃ
- ☐ নিরক্ষর
- ☐ প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়
- ☐ মাধ্যমিক বিদ্যালয়
- ☐ এস.এস.সি
- ☐ এইচ.এস.সি.
- ☐ ডিগ্রী বা তদূর্ধ্ব

৬। মাসিক আয়ঃ
- ☐ ৩০০০ টাকার নীচে
- ☐ ৩০০১ – ৫০০০ টাকা
- ☐ ৫০০১ – ৮০০০ টাকা
- ☐ ৮০০১ – ১০০০০ টাকা
- ☐ ১০০০০ টাকার উর্ধ্বে

৭। আপনি কি প্রত্যক্ষ রাজনীতির সাথে জড়িত?
- ☐ হ্যাঁ
- ☐ না

৮। আপনার ইউনিয়নে ২০০৮-২০০৯ অর্থ বছরে কতগুলো উন্নয়ন প্রকল্প বাস্তবায়িত হয়েছে তা জানেন কি?
- ☐ হ্যাঁ
- ☐ না

৯। কোন প্রকল্প গ্রহণের পূর্বে তা ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের সভায় আলোচনা করা হয় কি?
- ☐ হ্যাঁ
- ☐ না

১১। উত্তর 'হ্যাঁ' হলে কিভাবে জনগণকে সম্পৃক্ত করা হয়?

১২। আপনি কি কোন প্রকল্প পরিকল্পনা বা বাস্তবায়ন কমিটির সদস্য?

☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না

১৩। উন্নয়ন প্রকল্প পরিকল্পনায় এবং বাস্তবায়নে আপনার মতামতকে গুরুত্বসহকারে বিবেচনা করা হয় কি?

☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না

১৪। প্রকল্প গ্রহণ এবং বাস্তবায়নে স্থানীয় রাজনৈতিক সংগঠনসমূহ কোন প্রভাব বিস্তার করে কি?

☐ হ্যাঁ   ☐ না

১৫। আপনার ইউনিয়নে উন্নয়ন প্রকল্পসমূহের অগ্রাধিকার নির্ধারণ করা হয় কিভাবে?

১৬। স্থানীয় উন্নয়ন পরিকল্পনায় সর্বস্তরের জনসাধারণের অংশগ্রহণ নিশ্চিত করতে আপনার পরামর্শ কি?

সহযোগিতার জন্য আপনাকে ধন্যবাদ

Participation of People in Development Process: Role of LG Institutions
Questionnaire – 'Kha'
(For the Elected Representatives of Union Parishads)

[Dear Respondents, answers given to the questions of this questionnaire will solely be used for the purpose of a research, which aims at assessing the status of people's participation in the local development process through LG institutions. Your sincere cooperation will help complete the research. It is guaranteed that answers provided by you will only be used for the purpose of aforementioned research and your name and identity will not be disclosed. You are thanked in advance for you kind cooperation.]

1. Name | Male | Female |

2. Address
   Village: Union:

3. Age:
   ☐ Below 20   ☐ 21 - 30 Year   ☐ 31 - 40 Year
   ☐ 41 - 50 Year   ☐ Above 50

4. Occupation:
   ☐ Agriculture   ☐ Business   ☐ Service
   ☐ Labor   ☐ Teaching   ☐ Others

5. Educational Status:
   ☐ Illiterate   ☐ Primary School   ☐ Secondary School
   ☐ S.S.C.   ☐ H.S.C.   ☐ Degree and Above

6. Income Level (in Taka):
   ☐ Below 3000 Taka ☐ 3001 - 5000 Take   ☐ 5001 - 8000 Taka
   ☐ 8001 - 10000 Taka ☐ Above 10000 Taka

7. Are you involved in direct politics?
   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

8. Do you know how many development projects have been undertaken in you union in the financial year 2008-2009?
   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

9. Does any discussion take place in the UP before taking any project?
   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

10. Are the local people involved in project planning and implementation?
   ☐ Yes   ☐ No
            [If the answer is 'No', please go to question no. 12]

12. Have you ever been the member of any project implementation committee?
☐ Yes ☐ No

13. Are your opinions considered properly in project planning as well implementation?
☐ Yes ☐ No

14. Do the local political institutions exert any influence in selecting as well as implementing development projects?
☐ Yes ☐ No

15. How do you determine the priorities of development projects in your union?

16. What are your suggestions to incorporate all walks of people in the development process?

Thank you once again for you kind cooperation

Because of limited time and resources only 100 randomly ... were interviewed for the purpose of the study. Among them seventy were male and the rest thirty were female. Following Figure shows the gender of the respondents: Figure A1 shows the ration of male and female respondents.

Fig A1:
Gender of Respondents
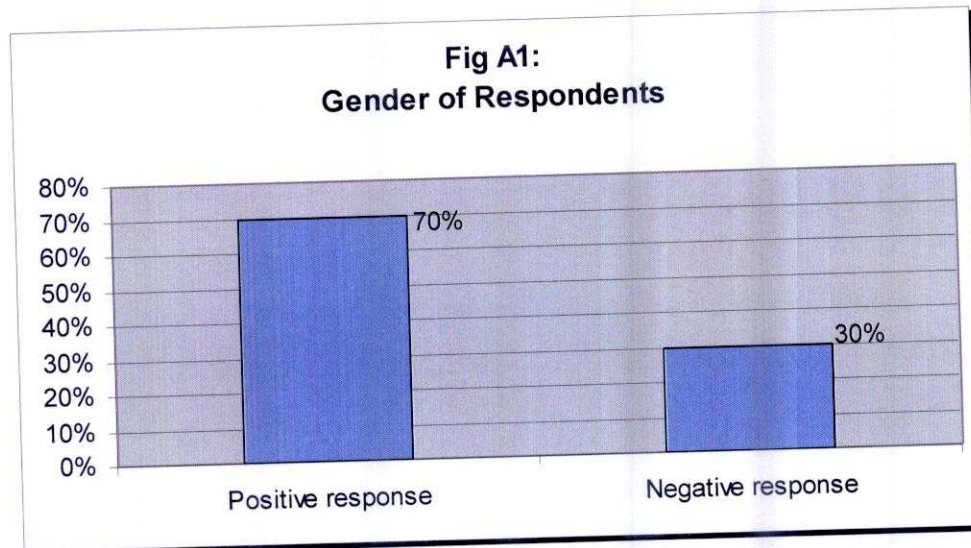
Source: Sample survey

Age of the Respondents:

Table-A1 shows that most of the respondents (34%) belong to the age group of 21-30 and then the age of 27% respondents varies in between 31 and 40 years. The rest belong to other age groups as shown in the table.

Table-A1:
Distribution of respondents as per age group in the study area

Age Group	Number of respondents				Total
	Belabo	Narayanpur	Binnabayad	Baznabo	
Below 20	3	2	4	4	13
21-30	10	7	8	9	34
31-40	7	8	5	7	27
41-50	4	6	5	1	16
Above 50	1	2	3	4	10
Total	25	25	25	25	100

Source: Sample survey

Table-A2:
Distribution of respondents by profession in the study area

Name of Union	Profession Category						Total
	Agriculture	Business	Service	Labor	Teaching	Others	
Belabo	5	6	2	3	4	5	25
Narayanpur	12	2	1	3	1	6	25
Binnabayad	8	3	1	4	3	6	25
Baznabo	6	1	3	4	3	8	25
Total	31	12	7	14	11	25	100

Source: Sample survey

Educational Status of the Respondents:

Only a moderate portion (13 %) of the total respondents, as shown in Table-A3, is illiterate, while the bulk of them (30 %) them have attended primary school followed by twenty-five percent of them attending secondary school. The rest thirty-two percent is at least S.S.C. pass.

Table-A3:
Distribution of respondents by education in the study area

Name of Union	No. of respondents						Total respondent
	Illiterate	Primary School	Secondary school	SSC Pass	HSC Pass	Graduation & above	
Belabo	3	6	9	2	4	1	25
Narayanpur	5	8	7	1	2	2	25
Binnabayad	3	9	6	3	3	1	25
Baznabo	2	7	3	8	3	2	25
Total	13	30	25	14	12	6	100

Source: Sample survey

Income Level of the Respondents:

Table-A4 shows that nineteen percent of the respondents are very poor with less than two thousand taka monthly income, while twenty-seven percent of them are poor with average monthly income falling in-between 2001 and 4000 taka. Twenty-two percent of

the respondents have moderate average monthly income, while the rest (32 %) are comparatively rich in the context of rural Bangladesh with at least eight thousand taka as their monthly income.

Table-A4:
Distribution of respondents by Income Level in the study area

Name of Union	Profession Category					Total
	Below 2000	2001-4000	4001-8000	8001-10000	Above 10000	
Belabo	3	8	3	6	5	25
Narayanpur	5	9	6	3	2	25
Binnabayad	7	5	5	5	3	25
Baznabo	4	5	8	4	4	25
Total	19	27	22	18	14	100