

Chapter-v: Problems of Rural Women Leadership

154---188

1. Systematical default of union parishad

- A) Structural and environmental anomalies
- B) Improper women representation
- C) Lack of formulated guideline and implementation of those exist
- D) Lack of cordial environment

2. The socio-structural phenomenon

- A) Social
- B) Economical
- C) Political
- D) Others

After voted to power at union parishad, women representatives are considered as a local leader. They are to carry out different activities and also remain liable for development at their concerned areas even that also are professed by them before election. People always come to them for various purposes including of solving problems and the leaders are to cast a patient hearing to the people and try to solve their problems. On the other hand, as local authority, the union parishad has also a number of scheduled works. The women leaders are to take part in the works as part of the system. Ishrat Shamim stated it as unique experience in the world democracy; wherein women at grassroots level of Bangladesh, irrespective of educational, occupational and socio-economic background, have been found suitable enough to occupy political position, participate in decision-making and rural development through local government.¹

But the reality is something different. During discharge the works, the women leaders are to face various troubles. Some of them are very common related to the social structure of the country, while others are due to defects of the system. All these hinder smooth attendance of the leaders to works. Even in some cases, the women leaders often get obstacle to discharge their scheduled works. It is true that problems into the body mean that problems of those who run it. Under the research talk had been held with the women leaders about different issues and identified number of problems that was virtually trouble creator in the process of working of the elected women leaders.

We would like to discuss the matter in two ways : (1) Systematical default of union parishad and (2) the socio-structural phenomenon of the country.

1. 1. Systematical default of Union Parishad :

The honest aim of establishment such institution was to lead the development activities at local level. The prospect of booming leadership through earning experience by handling various activities was another side of the institution

But the successive experience was not so. The quite expected success was not seen in boosting the rural development, while development of leadership was also a deemed matter. If the step of 1870 is supposed to be experimental, the next course was not significantly better to be so. There was no effective step to make it a local basic unit and also a part of the entire administration and development process of the country. Moreover, a tendency to muddle through vitiated the spirit of the body. ²

We believe that it was not hard to build up the union parishad as a competent local institution where a long and socially adopted rural based 'informal' administrative system was already working at rural Bangladesh since the ancient civilization.³ Besides, the prospect of building up leadership at local level through this system was also not a far off matter. Because, the people had the option for choice to determine who would be their leaders and the leaders had chance to develop their skill through handling development activities.

At the same time, union parishad is also an important social organisation, which holds an institutional base under 'formal and stable statute'. So, step to ensure and strengthen the stable institutional base of the union parishad was very necessary. Because no organisation can achieve desired goal without accurate institutional base.⁴ Organisation is an institutional means to fulfill the social demand and necessity. ⁵ But it seems that the union parishad, which developed in this subcontinent, was very unsteady in nature. It had to suffer random changes. But all changes were not significantly adopted by the system. Some of them were comparatively meaningless, while others were carried out without fruitful reason. At least nine such changes took place in its long time-----British and Pakistan rule, while at least 25 changes took part in Bangladesh regime, which have not yet ceased.

In Bangladesh, the changes occurred very randomly, which did not follow any continuation. The rulers did it when they desired and most of the changes were influenced by particular interest. It is said that all but every government

changed the structure or introduced new model of local government. ⁶ But as a matter of fact, no single change could be stable; because it had changed again when the regime changed. Even, changes sometimes made records. A record shows that union parishad has been proposed to be annihilated only in four minutes. ⁷

Structural and environmental anomalies

Aziz ⁸ in his work has pointed out that the local government in general and the UP in particular in Bangladesh flourished within federal structure of government during the British and Pakistan periods. It was then a state subject. The original provisions of the constitution (Articles 59 and 60) of independent Bangladesh, a unitary state gave a framework in respect of structure and authority of local government. But the provisions were omitted in 1977 and instead, in article 9 a single sentence was added which states ⁹

“The state shall encourage local government institution composed of representatives of the areas concerned and in such institutions special representation shall be given, as far as possible, to peasants, workers and women.”

The obviously is a mere statement of state policy and provides no specific indication of a local government. This has created a scope for successive government to twist the structural and functional arrangement of theses to suit political expediency. ¹⁰

i) Absence of actual institutionalization, structural continuation is must for an institution to achieve proper institutional shape. This is called institutionalization. If we notice the foreign culture of local self-government like France, America, England, or India, we will observe that the system has been running for nearly six hundred years or more, which had been amended several times, but not suffered root and branch change.¹¹ But the situation was very miserable in this subcontinent. At least 30 Acts and Amendments have been

enacted from the beginning changing the structure of the system randomly. As a result union parishad could never attain structural stability and due to this structural discontinuation, the body can not be balanced with its aim.

ii) Unbalanced Functions, The body has to suffer from an unbalanced function-structure. It is impossible for an institution to reach its goal without well-arranged function. To avoid any operational confusion the act should specify the functions. In England, the function of the local bodies has been allocated by specific acts. The act of Parish, District and Borough had been distributed in 1933, while County Borough in 1945. In France, the functions of its Department and Commune were specified by act of parliament in 1884 and which are on run till today without major change.¹²

But, in this sub-continent, there is no continuity in the function of the body. The British period ended with the mode of experiment, the era of Pakistan went with vested purpose, while in Bangladesh random changes have made the body futile. The changes are like an endless search for a 'stable' system.¹³ But in fact that a proper frame of function for the body is still not fixed. The union parishad have been assigned 4 broader areas of compulsory nature and 37 specified (with a separate schedule) functions 54 more judicial and 21 village police functions. No doubt, a huge number of functions have been given to the body without thinking whether the body is able to carry it or not. Another problem is that different departments of the government are responsible for the same function at a time. As a result absence of coordination among the works always hampers the entire process of union parishad.

Table-5.1

Opinion of the leaders about financial condition of union parishad

Is union parishad able to carry out all functions ?

	Yes	No	Total
Leaders in 1997 election	6 (16.67%)	30 (83.33%)	36 (100%)
Leaders in 2003 election	2 (5.56%)	34 (94.44%)	36 (100%)

In Table-1, opinion carried out significant differentiation between the leaders in both elections. Most of the leaders (83.33 % in 1997 election and 94.44% in 2003 election) considered the existing structure of union parishad is not able to carry out all functions of the body.

The study found that some of the women were elected twice (in both 1997 and 2003). They shared that the scheduled functions of the body is so many that they have no ability to touch all the works even in one or two fiscal years. They said majorities of the works of the body are remained unaddressed even never addressed.

iii) Financial sickness, the Union Parishad has multifaceted role in respect of overall development of the rural areas. So it needs a good financial health so that it can deal with the issue properly. But this local body is suffering from lack of sufficient finance. It has no sufficient source of income. Moreover, there exist no clear budgetary formulas for allocation of resources for it. It mainly depends on the sanction of central government. But this sanction is not sufficient to deal with the body's day to day functions. Moreover, prevailing financial transaction between local body and central government is not healthy too. It stands on a very weak system. On the other hand, central government always controls the body in the name of giving funds. This has kept the body far from obtaining autonomous status.

Inadequacy of fund turns the local body into a subservient institution instead of an autonomous one.¹⁴ No local government system can successfully run without sufficient financial solvency. In England, law conducts the financial matter of

local institutions since 1933, where large amounts of sanction come from central government.¹⁵ The American local government enjoys full autonomy, while specified law by provincial government maintains financial matter of rural institutions in India.¹⁶ But in Bangladesh, the local bodies get very small amount of fund from central government, by which the bodies can not conduct their business expectedly. Though the union parishad had been given power to collect taxes on several matters for creating its own fund, it could not realize those properly. It is due to lack of actual machinery to collect and fear of losing support base of rural people.

Table-5.2

Opinion of the leaders about financial condition of union parishad

Has union parishad enough financial ability ?

	Yes	No	Total
Leaders in 1997 election	-----	36 (100%)	36 (100%)
Leaders in 2003 election	-----	36 (100%)	36 (100%)

Table-2 depicts a real picture as asserted in above description. None of the leader was found to support existing financial dealing of the body. They bitterly criticised the financial channel, process of sanction, amount as well as the process of using the money. They said the granted money is too poor to carry out the scheduled functions. They said the union has large number of works but no fund to carry out those. They told that large portion of scheduled tasks is remained untouched due to lack of fund.

iv) Local bureaucratic machineries, another problem on the way of independent development of this rural institution is bureaucratic phenomenon. The union parishad is unique where it is formed by elected representatives and it has no bureaucratic part in function as it is in other local government institution---upazila, municipality, Zila parishad. But the institution is to suffer bureaucratic control. No doubt there will always be some relationship between elected local government

functionaries and bureaucrats working at the local level and a congenial relationship is essential for both democratic decentralisation as well as local level development.¹⁷ But here the representatives of union parishad clearly experienced subordinate relationship vis-à-vis the bureaucrats during the whole of both British and Pakistan colonial periods when, central/provincial government bureaucrats at the local level were designated as “prescribing”/ “controlling” authorities.

In fact, the institutions are now totally at the mercy of the central bureaucracy. Three section of the law can be cited as example of bureaucracy’s subordination of UPs.

Sections 12 and 65 of 1983 law provide the removal and suspension of UP chairman (also sometimes members) by the government officers in certain circumstances. Some of the grounds for removal and suspension are quite flimsy, such as the absence from three consecutive meetings of the UP bodies and the initiating of criminal proceedings against them. Although there are requirements for investigation, the government enjoys wide latitude in these decisions. This legal provision, in spite of some procedural precautions, unequivocally put the government officials in position of authority capable of removing the elected representative from office. The very possibility of such removal makes them superior authority to UP chairman and members. Unfortunately these authorities have been misused in a rampant manner over the years.¹⁸

Second, in addition to the removal and suspension, sections 60, 61 and 62 of the law give the government power to directly supervise, control and give direction to union parishads. This makes these bodies rather extensions of the executive branch, although the constitution expected them to be parallel entities. The grip of the bureaucracy is further consolidated by the declaration of the UP chairmen and members as *public servants* like other UP employees (Section 81), although they are elected as public representatives. These controls have become more blatant over the years. For example, Up representatives are now even denied,

through administrative circulars, the fundamental rights of freedom of movement, violating article 36 of the constitution.

Third, the budget making is a very fundamental instrument for setting priorities and expressing autonomy. Article 60 of the constitution recognizes the right of local bodies to prepare their own budgets. However, the 1983 law denies this autonomy to the UPs. In fact, section, 47 of the law makes UP bodies directly subservient to Deputy Commissioner (DC) by designating the latter the final authority to approve UP budgets. ¹⁹

The union now employs one secretary, nine *Chowkidars* and one *Dafadar*. The DC controls their appointments, postings and transfers. Although, preliminary selection of *Chowkidars* and *Dafadars* is the responsibility of the UP chairman, but it needs the final approval of the UNO.

After the dissolution of upazila parishad, the government officials clearly got upper hand over the elected functionaries. UNO was virtually the controlling authority of the union parishad. Now the upazila system has further activated through election in 2008. And union parishads representatives are member of upazila body. But bureaucratic control like suspension of UP representative is still in the hand of Deputy Commissioner.

Table-5.3

Opinion of the leaders about bureaucratic machineries

Does bureaucracy always well behave to them ?

	Yes	No	Total
Leaders in 1997 election	11 (30.56%)	25 (69.44%)	36 (100%)
Leaders in 2003 election	12 (33.33%)	24 (66.67%)	36 (100%)

According table-3, 30.56% leaders in 1997 election and 33.33% from 2003 election replied positive on behaviour of local bureaucrats that includes all government officials working in the upazila level. Most of the leaders meant

Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) as chief local bureaucrat who is their most powerful controlling authority. The leaders are to go to the bureaucrats for various purposes. In initial data, most of the leaders; (69.44%) from 1997 and (66.67%) from 2003 election opined that the bureaucrats does not show due respect or good behaviour with them during dealings on issues related to their works. Number of women representatives alleged that the UNO and other government officials at the upazila level often asked them to come with chairman when they go to them for various purposes.

The trend however, got a little slash in 2003 than 1997. The researcher observed that the tendency of ignoring mentality of local bureaucrats on women leaders is being declined.

v) Role of lawmakers, In addition to bureaucratic control, not only the union parishad, the entire local governance system has faced another serious challenge that threatened their 'very existence' as meaningful entities. The challenge has come from the induction of the Members of Parliament (MPs) in local affairs.²⁰ The issue got a numerous of criticism and tug-of-war.

After cancellation of the upazila system in 1991, the government through administrative circulars gradually and steadily inducted the MPs in local bodies as advisors on the pretext of allowing them to participate in local development. The circulars were later legalized by the enactment of the upazila parishad act 1998. The law designated the MPs as advisors to the union parishad and required that the parishad would accept their advice. The provision was suspended during the tenure of non-partisan Caretaker government in 2008. But after coming to power, the present government further introduced the earlier role of lawmakers. Now although advisor in the designation, the lawmakers soon have become the final authority in the selection of about all decision specially on development projects. Over the years, their authorities become so ubiquitous that they now have the final say in all development matters in their constituencies.

Self serving argument has brought in this regard that the MPs want to participate in local development. Apparently it seems to be fine, but however, the experience shows that the MPs are interested only in infrastructure projects, if they are really interested in local development, they do not have to directly get involved in the selection and implementation of projects or use their party activists to implement such projects.

As a result of induction of MPs in local affairs, the country now have a MP government along with the central and local government bodies in many parts of Bangladesh. ²¹ The MP government is comprised of his/ her party functionaries who usually implement many scheme even though the UP chairmen and members continue to be legally liable as chairpersons of the implementation committees. This not only has created serious question on the authority of local government, but also encourage corruption and social tensions. This has now also a constitutional issue. Article 65 of the constitution assigns only “legislative powers-involving the enactment of laws and the exercise of parliament oversight— to the MPs.

However, the development work is an executive function. Thus the interference of MPs in local affairs violates the “principle of separation of powers, which is a fundamental pillar of our constitution. Besides, the involvement of the MPs in the implementation of development schemes compromises their oversight role, cutting into the very roots of our parliamentary democracy.

Besides, violation of a Supreme Court judgment announced in 1992 has also become as an evidence. The court defined the local government as entities meant for management of local affairs by locally elected persons and stated that “if the government’s officers or their henchmen are brought to run local bodies, there is no sense in retaining them as local government bodies. The MPs are locally elected, but meant for exercising legislative powers, not executive powers. Thus “the present UP’s, with MPs essentially as their bosses, cannot be viewed as local government entities consistent with Article 59 of the constitution. ²²

Table-5.4

Opinion of the leaders about lawmaker's role on union parishad

Do they support the lawmaker's
Intervention ?

	Yes	No	Total
Leaders in 1997 election	2 (5.56%)	34 (94.44%)	36 (100%)
Leaders in 2003 election	---	36 (100%)	36 (100%)

It is now a pressing issue in Bangladesh. Debate is on about the 'role' or 'rule' of the lawmakers on local government. Majorities of the leaders---94.44% in 1997 and 100% in 2003 election depicts in Table-4 bitterly criticised terming it 'intention of control' to local government by central. Some of the leaders had experience in 1997 election and further elected in 2003 termed the provision as 'rule' of lawmakers. According to the leaders, it is a regular phenomenon running for long. Every ruling party used this tool just in a bid to control the local body. The leaders observed that local government institutions should be independent what the constitution in the republic mandates.

vi) **Central Control**, the central government traditionally enjoys the controlling of local governmental machineries. In fact, the central control is a natural way of government and it has the right to do so but autonomous status of these bodies is not avoidable. But historically, central government practiced massive controlling on these units. No successive government was willing to give power to it. As a result, the bodies never got shape of autonomous. Later in Bangladesh chapter, this controlling became harder, which is still going on. Despite constitutional approval, this system can not carry out what the constitution has suggested. No act or ordinance had been enacted following the constitutional obligations. The central government tabled the acts or ordinances and passed what had been chosen better or particular intention may serve to kick down, which is unabated. This trend has damaged the whole system.

Table-5.5

Opinion of the leaders about central control of union parishad

What about central control
On union parishad ?

	Extensive	Not extensive	Total
Leaders in 1997 election	30 (83.33%)	6 (16.67%)	36 (100%)
Leaders in 2003 election	32 (88.89%)	4 (11.11%)	36 (100%)

Table-5 shows that majorities of the leaders in both elections termed the present central control on union parishad is extensive and the percentage of their opinion is growing. It was 83.33% in 1997 election and increased into 88.89% in 2003 election. Their opinion was on the basis of their experience. They observed that they have little chance to work independently. They are to work as per the directives of central government.

vii) Limited scope of people's participation, though there is provision to ensure popular participation in local level planning and implementation of development activities, but existing functionalism of system i.e. union parishad seriously curtails the scope.²³ The people's participation has been ensured through formatting different Standing Committees. Every union has such 14 committees. But no significant steps have been ensured to make the committees working. Causes are behind it. People in rural Bangladesh are not much conscious. They are not well aware about how to participate in the process local institutions. They mostly are willing to depend on the elected components for their every need. Besides, 'unwillingness' tendency of the elected leaders (mostly chairman and male members) of the body has become the most important cause of declined people's participation. Elected leaders are always intended to hide the things of the union parishad. Predominance of the rich people at leadership position of the union parishad is instant cause behind this. Mostly poor, illiterate, unconscious and unorganised people basically failed to challenge the 'pro-rich power structure'

at rural level. Besides, the elected components have ill motives to 'embezzlement' of sanctioned fund. In a study at Mirzapur union parishad, Ahmad observed that the dictatorial behaviour of the chairman denied people's participation. ²⁴ Lack government's initiative to make working the people's standing committee is another cause.

Table-5.6

Opinion of the leaders about people's participation of union parishad

Do the people's participation to UP necessary ?

	Necessary	Not necessary	Total
Leaders in 1997 election	25 (69.44%)	11 (30.57%)	36 (100%)
Leaders in 2003 election	30 (83.33%)	6 (16.67%)	36 (100%)

The research observed that majorities of the women leaders were in favour of people's participation. At the same time, they alleged that chairman and male members of the body are not willing to provide access of general people. The table-5 shows that 69.44% women leaders in 1997 election gave their opinion in favour of people's participation. It was increased into 83.33% in later election. The women leaders blamed that the chairman and male members are always in a tendency to 'hide' especially the different allocations of fund and other sanctions from the government and development projects in an intention to capture those.

viii) Non-coordination with other rural institutions and staffers, there are several government institutions works at rural level such as ---BRDB (Bangladesh Rural development Board), KSS (Krishok Samobay Somity—Farmers Cooperative Society), MSS (Mahila Samobay Somity—Women Cooperative Society), BMS (Bangladesh Mahila Sangstha), Rural health and family planning, block offices of Agricultural department and staffers of some other organisations. Besides, a number of NGO's are also working at rural level. All their works are actually for rural advancement and its people. But they have no little relations with union parishad. All are working with their own policy. This

non-coordination is seriously hampering the over all development activities in rural areas.

Table-5.7

Opinion of the leaders about coordination with other organisations

Is coordination necessary ?

	Necessary	Not necessary	Total
Leaders in 1997 election	33 (91.67%)	3 (8.33%)	36 (100%)
Leaders in 2003 election	36 (100%)	----	36 (100%)

The women leaders stressed the need of coordination among the institutions and staffs working at local level to implement different government's policy. 91.67% of the leaders in 1997 election felt the necessity of coordination among the institutions and staffs. The interview of the leaders in 2003 election shows the picture fully in favour of the issue. They opined that coordination will make the whole development efforts more fruitful.

ix) Anomalies on national planning, as a federal mode of government, Bangladesh follow top-down process to planning for national development where plan for development of whole nation is prepared by the planning commission. The plan also implemented by different levels of government offices and also union parishad. Union parishad is responsible for development of concerned local area. It is sometimes that the national plan goes not based on need of the locality. The local government organisations usually get the sanctions as per the national schedule of plans. As a result the local government organisations many times can not carry out the works what actually necessary for the rural people.

Table-5.8

Opinion of the leaders about development plan

What process of plan they choice
tickle down or down top ?

	Tickle down	Down top	Total
Leaders in 1997 election	5 (13.88%)	31 (86.11%)	36 (100%)
Leaders in 2003 election	3 (8.33%)	33 (91.67%)	36 (100%)

In table-5.7, 86.11% leaders in 1997 election gave their opinion in favour of down top plan. The percentage was increased in later 2003 election—91.67%.

The researcher explains to the leaders' what about the process of plans are taken by the government. The leaders preferred the down top process. That means, the leaders went on in favour of more independent process of working by the body local level.

x) Lack of skilled staffers and poor remuneration structure, it is interesting that the union parishad has been running for about 150 years with same structure of manpower. No step regarding this has been seen. To address the issue an Act styled '*Local Government service Structure*' initiated in 1998 is still pending. The present manpower is not enough. Only one employee namely, *Secretary* who is half-paid by government working at each union parishad. He holds Tk. 3500 salary--- half by the government and the half by Union Parishad. There are Chowkidars and Dafadars, the other staffers of the union parishad are very unskilled. They are termed as 'forces' of union parishad responsible to ensure law and order at the areas concerned. But they are totally unarmed and untrained. They are even a half-paid employees group. This half is even very poor. Huge dissatisfaction has been running over the payment of the system for long. All including the elected machineries holds low salary. It is evidence that all are unhappy over the paying structure. ²⁵ Chairman holds Tk. 1500 as honourium in monthly and members gets Tk. 750. Another study found that inadequate payment of salary and honorarium to the union parishad functionaries may be attributed as one of the cause of incompetence and corruption in the system. ²⁶

Table-5.9

Opinion of the leaders about present remuneration structure

Is present remuneration satisfactory ?

	Yes	No	Total
Leaders in 1997 election	--	36 (100%)	36 (100%)
Leaders in 2003 election	--	36 (100%)	36 (100%)

The leaders strongly opposed the running remuneration structure. None was found to support it. They termed the 'honourium they are given undignified. They said they are to serve fulltime for the purpose of the local people and to implement the government policy at local the areas. How they can manage their family by such lower income !. They all tuned to change the remuneration structure.

Table-5.10

Opinion of the leaders about present staffer's structure

Is present staffers enough satisfactory ?

	Yes	No	Total
Leaders in 1997 election	--	36 (100 %)	36 (100%)
Leaders in 2003 election	--	36 (100 %)	36 (100%)

The researcher further asked them about present manpower structure of the body. The leaders replied negative. They were very much worried about the shortage of sufficient staffers in the body. Only one secretary and nobody are there to maintain day to day's secretariat works in absence of him. The leaders stressed the need of employing more staffs for the body.

xi) Law and order management, once the main objective of setting up union level local body was to maintain law and order at local level. But irony is that the body never provided or allowed to exercise the issue. It has never given it sole control over the village police, a group of 'unarmed police' under union parishad that is key tools of maintenance law and order. Now the village police means, a group of untrained, unarmed irregular and poor salary holder people. Appointed by Deputy Commissioner, they officially goes under the control of union parishad but it is always controlled by local police station where they are to report twice/thrice in month. The village police is paid half by the government and the rest half by union parishad. But most of the time, union can not pay them

timely. A study asserted that the village police is one of the unsuccessful tools of union parishad. The system was always reluctant to perform its duties. ²⁷

Table-5.11

Opinion of the leaders about law and order maintenance

Is union parishad able to control law and order by existing structure ?

	Yes	No	Total
Leaders in 1997 election	--	36 (100%)	36 (100%)
Leaders in 2003 election	--	36 (100%)	36 (100%)

All the leaders (100%) in both elections opined that maintenance of law and order is totally beyond their capacity. The leaders when talked termed the issue as matter of government and police. They said sometimes they help to police providing information about harmful persons or presage of any untoward situation. But they have no more roles in the issue.

xii) Judicial orientation, the purpose of introducing judicial activities through the system was to solve pretty dispute just to restore peace and order at local level. But the orientation is uneven. The ground of exercising of judicial power is unplayable. The system is still following the structural process what was run during the British period that is not able to meet the present situation in the country. No meaningful steps to update the ground have been taken in the long way. The system has no enough power to execute even the verdict what come out through arbitrary. Moreover, exercise of judicial power requires at least a brief knowledge on legal framework of the country. But the judicial members led by chairmen/members of the body are 'usually not conversant with the law'.(*) Moreover, a fatal injury is also seen in the system of mitigating conflict that is 'erosion of impartiality' of the judicial members of the system.

* This researcher during interview with the chairman/members found such lacuna among them.

The chairman/members mostly are divided or influenced by political, social, cultural or any other petty matters. In most of the cases they are biased or influenced. Ahmed in his study found that sometimes members of parliament or even ministers try to influence the justice to get favour for their supporters.²⁸ In another study shows that in most of the cases, the judicial officers can not go against the influential in locally due to fear of losing votes in next election.²⁹ Solaiman in a case study found that 22% of cases in such court are remained unsettled because the plaintiffs or defenders does not appear in trial and the union parishad has not enough power to force them be appeared.³⁰

Table-5.12

Opinion of the leaders about judicial function

Is union parishad enough able to run judicial activities impartially or properly by existing structure ?

	Yes	No	Not aware	Total
Leaders in 1997 election	12 (33.33%)	20 (55.56%)	4 (11.11%)	36 (100%)
Leaders in 2003 election	8 (22.23%)	25 (69.44%)	3 (8.33%)	36 (100%)

The researcher found a mixed answer about the judicial process of the system. Though majorities of the leaders went on that the existing structure is not able to conduct judicial functions properly (55.56% in 1997 election and 69.44% in 2003 election), a number of leaders (33.33% in 1997 election and 22.23%) replied in positive that the union parishad is able to do it.

Besides, a number of leaders (11.11% in 1997 election and 8.33% in later election) were not aware about the entire process.

But however, the matter, all the leaders emphasised that local small disputes should be arbitrated here. The leaders were found a unique concert of agreement that the judicial process can ensure peace at local level by arbitrating chaos among the rural people.

xiii) Political jeopardy on union parishad, though non-political in character, an unhealthy political intervention to use the system for narrow political ends is active since the beginning. Ahmed observed that one of the serious handicaps faced by the institution of the local government especially at the union level in the past was that these were not fully used for the development of local people. These were used by the political authorities as the institutions for the achievement of their goals.³¹ It has been a common practice for last 139 years. The field of the system has turned the field of ‘political experiments’ and the experiment reversed with the change of the government. It has been a great bearing on the smooth and independent functioning of the system. Over a long cry, the non-partisan caretaker government introduced an Independent Commission for Local Government in the country in 2008. But the present government has virtually erected the functions of the commission and established its absolute authority on entire local government system.³² The commission is now a dysfunctional institution under the new government.³³

Table-5.13

Opinion of the leaders about political intervention

Do they think the successive government’s intervention hampers independent LG system ?

	Yes	No	Not aware	Total
Leaders in 1997 election	30 (83.34%)	3 (8.33%)	3 (8.33%)	36 (100%)
Leaders in 2003 election	33 (91.66%)	1 (2.78%)	2 (5.56%)	36 (100%)

Table-5.13 depicts majorities of the leaders in both elections seem that all successive governments had intervened the system and that meaning was of change the system and use it as their will. 83.33% leaders in 1997 election opined that the government’s intervention was hampered the independent process of the body. The percentage of the opinion was increased into 91.66% in later election.

Another little number (8.33% in 1997 and 2.78% in 2003 election) seems that government's intervention did not hamper the process. These numbers of leaders mostly were involved in different political parties. Besides, 8.33% leaders in 1997 election and 2.56% in 2003 election were not aware about matter.

xiv) Frequent empowerment of influential, the union parishad is always a frequent ground of local influential-----rich, elites or musclemen. Of them, the former duos are the traditional picture of rural Bangladesh where rich and their urban allies constitute the strong interest group, the power structure is dominated by them, while the later is comparatively new. A Planning Commission report says that size of land holding governs not only income but also power in rural society.³⁴ In another research carried out by Amanur Rahman on Kushtia district found that musclemen always factor in the electoral process in southwestern region of Bangladesh. They either climbed up on power showing their strength or emerged as leader or help influential to capture power of local institutions through manipulate or rigging vote.³⁵

Table-5.14

Opinion of the leaders about the issue

Is riches, elites or musclemen
always factors on rural power structure ?

	Yes	No	Total
Leaders in 1997 election	25 (69.44%)	11 (30.56%)	36 (100%)
Leaders in 2003 election	27 (75%)	9 (25%)	36 (100%)

Majorities of the leaders observed that social moneyed men, elites and musclemen always factors in rural power structure. 69.44% leaders in 1997 election replied those as factors. This was increased in later election (75%). The leaders observed that the factors were mostly active in case of the post of chairman.

In the study area, it was also found that all the chairmen (12 in 1997 election and 12 in 2003 election) elected in both elections were moneyed or socially influential men. But in case of members, in both male and female, there good numbers were found to be elected from among the people comparatively not moneyed men.

B) Improper women representation, the women participation in union parishad was abysmally low and particularly infinitesimal.³⁶ Their number was remained minimal for a quite unexpected of long time. The fold of formal inclusion of women into the union parishad was opened after enactment of 1997 Act that provided the provision of direct election for the reserved seats instead of previous nomination system. Though the Act is considered as a milestone of bringing women into empowerment in Bangladesh but the Act could not remove discrimination of men-women ratio. The Act did not restrict the women to contest in general seats even in the post of chairman, but the number of elected women in general seats still did not bring into significant consideration. The ratio of male and female members virtually remained 3 : 1 where women are about half of the total population in the country.³⁷

Besides, the process of decision making of the union parishad is still another tool of hindrance on smooth participation of women members. According to relevant rules, the decision will be taken on the basis of majorities of supports. How women representatives will make effective role in any decision they desired where they are three times weaker than the male.

Table-5.15

Opinion of the leaders about the male female ratio

Do they think the present male female ratio enough or equal ?

	Yes	No	Total
Leaders in 1997 election	--	36 (100%)	36 (100%)
Leaders in 2003 election	--	36 (100%)	36 (100%)

The researcher found unanimous response among the respondents' women leaders in the issue. The leaders in their opinion demanded equal ratio in the system. They demanded that at least 6 (six) seats should be reserved in all nine wards in the union parishad instead of present three. They also opined for a vice-chairman post in the body, which will be nominated among the women elected in the reserved seats. They also urged their male counterparts to take them confidence in the process of working of the body.

C) Lack of formulated guideline and implementation of those exists, it is now a widely blamed matter on the issue that the women leaders are working in the body without proper guidelines. They have no role clarity. Besides, it has broad lacuna to effective of those roles are exist into the law. Firstly, they are supposed to be involved with all types of functions as other male members in the body. But this got gross problem due to male dominance. In very largely, the women representatives have no room to carry out the responsibilities as they are entitled so far. As per the rules, the women representatives were supposed be chairman of at least five special Standing Committees of the body i.e elderly allowance, widow allowance etc. They were supposed be provided chairmanship of 1/3 of eight annual projects of Tk. 25, 000 and 1/3 chairmanship of total Annual Development Budget (ADB). But it does not effective. Moreover, serious anomaly is blamed in this regard that sometimes the allowance cards are issued in the name of male representatives and distributed among them where women are chairman.³⁸ On the other hand, the women members represent three wards in the body. But the allocation of grant is equal to that of their male counterparts, representing only one ward.

Table-5.16

Opinion of the leaders about formulated guideline

Do they think of the need of Formulated guideline ?

	Yes	No	Total
Leaders in 1997 election	32 (88.89%)	4 (11.11%)	36 (100%)
Leaders in 2003 election	--	36 (100%)	36 (100%)

In table 5.15, 88.89% leaders in 1997 election feels the need of formulated guidelines on their works. Besides, all the leaders (100%) in 2003 election made their support on the same. It was found that the women leaders were much worried over the issue. Most of the leaders stressed the need of formulated guidelines on the observation of male domination of the body. They told that if they have role clarity, they will not be deprived of their lined tasks.

D) Lack of cordial environment cause to male counterparts, the ‘discriminatory attitude’ of male counterparts has been main stumbling blocks for proper representation of women leaders in union parishad. A research paper shows that many women blamed their male colleagues for not getting expected cooperation from them.³⁹ In another articles, Avra Saha shows that the women representatives are being denied of basic information relating to the body’s activities. They do not get any support in any form from their male colleagues while working with scheme implementation, VGD/VGF card distribution, construction and repair of roads/culverts/bridges. Rater they are always found to be creating problems. Even they threatened to incite the extortionists or hoodlums against the women members in carrying their activities. Even the male members get the works in the name of women and either forcibly realise the signature from the women or falsely forfeit it. They do not want to see the women work positively, successfully. They always try to prove the women are inefficient.⁴⁰

Table-5.17

Opinion of the leaders about attitude of male counterparts

Do their male counterparts show well behaviour or helping attitude ?

	Yes	No	Total
Leaders in 1997 election	6 (16.67%)	30 (83.33%)	36 (100%)
Leaders in 2003 election	5 (13.89%)	31 (86.11%)	36 (100%)

According to table 5.16, 83.33% leaders in 1997 election and 86.11% leaders in 2003 election told that the male leaders does not maintain good behaviour and shows help attitude in their working in the body. A little number 16.67% in 1997 election and 13.89% in 2003 however, observed that they get well behaviour and help from their counterparts. According to opinion of the women representatives, their male colleagues always carry out the attitudes what they are usually on the women in the society. They observed the male leaders forget that they also (women representatives) have come to the body by direct election. In many cases, the women leaders were more educated as well as socially popular.

The systematical weakness of the union parishad is a fundamental question and that the system has carrying since its inception dating back 139 years. As a result, the system can never be instrumental either for development at rural masses or for smooth discharge of scheduled tasks. Over the years, it has become an increasingly weak and almost an ornamental institution with a little role. Moreover, there no initiative was taken to remove the anomalies of the body and make it as a sustainable local level institution so that it can meet the people's desire.

2. The socio-structural phenomenon of the country.

The socio-structural environment of Bangladesh has deeply influenced the women position in the society. The male are predominantly holding leading position at all sectors in the society i.e. socio-economic, political and cultural. Relation between male and female are very discriminatory. Women are in lower position compare to male. A. Duaz narrated that women in Bangladesh have always been dependent on men and they have rarely had any opportunity to participate in social, political and economic decisions though they contributed heavily to he country's economy by their participation in agriculture, along with the household chores. The source of power for formal and informal-wire vested in

the male: society is dominated by men and women formed especially neglected and deprived group. The uncritical acceptance of male superiority and women's deprived.⁴¹ This is deeply rooted in the society. Low literacy, low living style, low earnings, low land ownership, high rate of unemployment, high morbidity form a vicious circle that created unfavorable environment to the development of women in Bangladesh for long. Their occupational choices are narrower and their earnings lower than men; and they must struggle to reconcile activities outside the home with their traditional roles,⁴² while, many of particularly poor, also find themselves disenfranchised, it is a far more common experience among women.⁴³ Factors however, were behind this.

A) Social

The social structure of Bangladesh is patriarchal. This is an ideology, a trend and a practice. This has become so embedded in the society that often it is taken as natural. Women here are dependent on male for about their every walks and they suffer with lack of confidence. It is a general trend of patriarchal society, in which it enforce rules and laws in such ways that affect the self-confidence of women, limit their access in resources and information and thus keep them in lower status than men.⁴⁴ Bangladesh is carrying this saga for long over the history. It is started from their very early of life. The status of a woman is determined by the family (*in childhood it is by parents and then by husband*), which is led by a male. This is one of the causes of women lower position in the society.⁴⁵ The society always holds a negative attitude towards women this led them to a cyclical dependence and subjugation.⁴⁶ In Bangladesh, it is very hard for a woman to come out home and make her as independent entity in the society alone. They can rarely attend in social activities as men.

B) Economical

Economical backwardness is another cause of the lower status of women in the country. Though women in Bangladesh are involved in production, processing and household activities, which is also a productive works but they actually have no control on the productive values relating to income generation for their own economical solvency. They are to heavily dependent on male about the issue. ⁴⁷ Related studies in this regard reported that women's productive hours were even more than male. (Women: 10 to 14 hours and male: 9 to 12 hours) ⁴⁸ Another survey shows that women contributed 25% to 30% of the total income of the poor families. There are 55% to 77% women of the landless families engaged themselves as labourers and try to contribute their families. ⁴⁹ This scenario however, carries no significant contribution of eliminating disparity of economical status between male and female as their social values are not correctly perceived. Women in Bangladesh play a notable role in traditional income generating activities as part of their routine works like chicken and duck raising, cow and goat rearing, paddy husking, preparation of puffed and pressed rice, making pickles and sweets, vegetables cultivation in and outside of the home etc. But sections have tendency to downplay their contribution. Ahmad discovered two factors behind it ; the income generates the women are low level ; and absence of any reflection these at home in the census.⁵⁰ Another research on same issue reported that society consider it as 'social obligation of women'. ⁵¹

C) Political

Politics is another crucial factor for women in Bangladesh. Compare to the other limitations, access or participation for women in politics is much limited here.

Politics is very important variables of the society. In the modern world, politics and statecraft are more important areas of human activity. In way of life, politics touches every aspect of state, economy and society. But reality shows that

women's political participation is relatively limited in all societies ----developed or developing.⁵² McCormack mentioned three handicaps for women's non-participation in politics; i) different socialisation, ii) less education and iii) low self-esteem resulting from traditionalism prejudices. McCormack also feels more causes ----women are family-oriented, vote like their husbands, are drawn to authoritarian figures if politically motivated. They are best suited to family focused issues like child welfare.⁵³

In Bangladesh, most cases, women do not have frequent access into effective political participation. Their attendance in decision-making is also poor. Their position from local to national specially in structural politics is not broader, well organised or stable.⁵⁴ Politics and decision making of the political system always is controlled by men. Political socialisation also has gone in favour of men following the society's patriarchal character for long. Only in case of voting, women constitute half of the voters, come to the political scene.⁵⁵

A national-local feature of women participation in political decision-making process

Data shows that women participation in parliament was 4.8 % in first election held in 1973. It was 9.7% in 1979, 10.6% in 1986, 10.6% in 1991, 11.21% in 1996, 14.78% in 2001 and 18.9 in last 2008 election. *(Source: Parliamentary secretariat of Bangladesh, 2009) Involvement in decision making process through cabinet-----4% was in first government of the country since 1972-75, 5.94% was in 1976-82, 3% in 1982-91, 7.69% in 1991-96, 8.69% in 1996-2001, 5% in 2001-06 and 9.30% is in present government started from 2009 and ended 2014. *(Source: Parliamentary secretariat of Bangladesh, 2009)

Besides, women access at local government bodies is comparatively new. The system was launched in 1870, while inclusion of women took place after 102 years. In Bangladesh, women were elected in the body through direct election in 1973. A picture of women elected in the local level body is given below:

Election	Year	Women candidate		Elected account		Total Number of UP
		Chairman	Member	Chairman	Member	
First	1973	3	13	1	-----	4352*
2nd	1977	19	19	4	7	-----
3rd	1984	-----	-----	6	----	4401
4th	1988	79	863	1	---	4401
5 th	1992	115	1135	8	20	4401
6th	1997	102	43969/456**	20	12828/110**	4479
7th	2003	232	39419/617**	22	12684/79**	4479

*(Source: The concerned union parishad election)

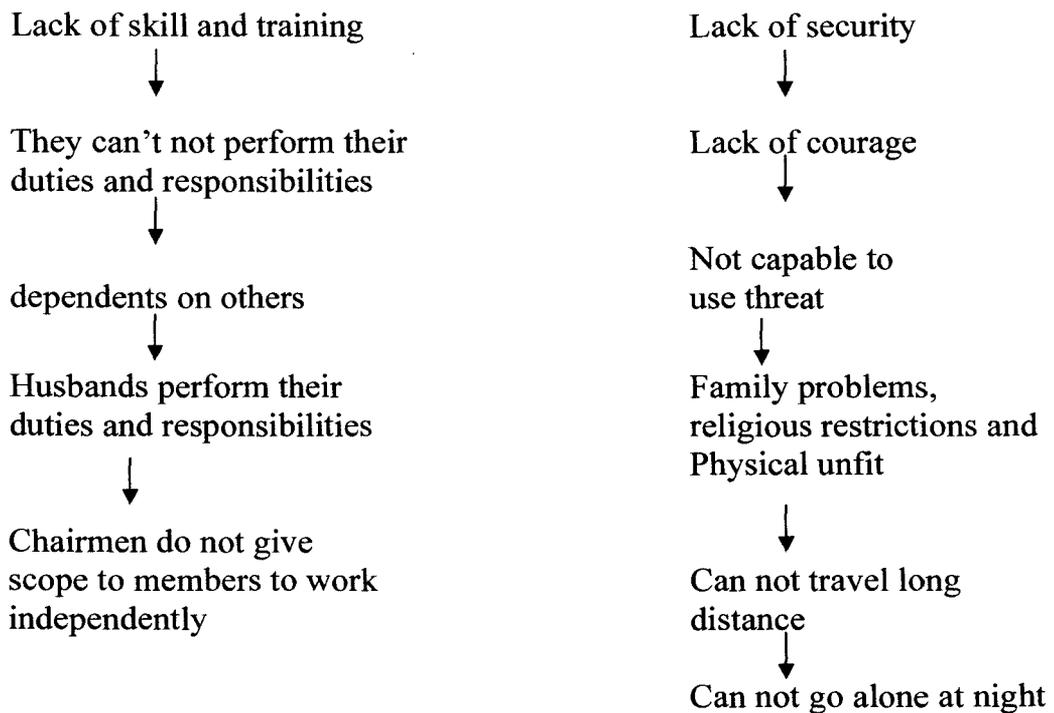
The picture shows that women participation in entire decision making process in Bangladesh is still a matter of thinking. The ratio is still remained in distance only 14% in national level.⁵⁶

Besides, hope of eliminating gender disparity by giving special opportunity of empowering women at local governance through the Act of 1997 are not fulfill as ushered. S.N Sweta Mishra stated participation of women in local level institutions has been considered as the most effective instrument to remove the inequity, instability and powerlessness of women.⁵⁷ And even though it is widely said that Bangladesh had been a pioneer in women emancipation and education, but women are politically exploited, socially oppressed, legally ignored and technologically deprived.⁵⁸

The Act of 1997 that broke the age old overall patriarchal power base in the society later got damage. The matter is now a jury-mast. The elected women cannot carry out their activities what the actual meaning of participation. Social structure, on going political trends, outlook flows among the male are the key causes behind it. Some other causes like illiteracy of women, sense of social

insecurity, lack consciousness and age old mentality are also sharply affecting the way of their meangfully participation. Shadequl stated that due to lower education and economic dependency, women are ill equipped to take such challenge.⁵⁹

Ishrat shamim and Mahbuba Nasreen in their research identified some of the constraints that are faced by women members at the local body and the male counterparts take opportunity of those to create discrimination.⁶⁰



Avra Saha pointed out that though the women leaders are enough academically qualified and even in sometimes than men but they have lack of leadership quality or ability to influence the union parishad. Most of the women are not aware about their many activities. They also are not much capable to implement projects. They even sometime seek help from their male colleagues.⁶¹

It is now evidence that the women members are seen in the union parishad but difficult to perceive what role they discharge regularly. Most of their parts remain ineffective. Sajeda Akter in her research shows that 75.56% women are not well aware about their nature of work and 91.11% women are neglected and

83.33% are non-cooperated by their male colleagues. She depicted that 82.22% women members alleged that they are not included proportionately in development activities as compared to male members. ⁶²

S.P Jain identified some factors are continuing making constraints for women into empowered at local level intuitions in south Asian countries ; ⁶³

1. Political set up
2. Socio-cultural practices
3. Strategies for empowerment of women and
4. Unavailability of data.

Some more factors are also behind the scene that hinders the entire attempt related to the socio-structural phenomenon. These are lack of social security, backwardness in education, religious and social restriction, lack of social experiences, lack of social acceptability, lack of confidence by the local elites, family restriction, lack of proper communication facilities, large territorial constituency, and lack of enough training.

According to a recent assessment carried out by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), more than 70% of women councilors interviewed in Bangladesh were not aware of their rights and responsibilities as representatives ; even a higher percentage—more than 80% expressed their lack of confidence in their ability to conduct meeting. ⁶⁴

The same report also pointed out that participation and role of women is also contingent on several factors ----gender norms, family, caste, class, religion etc.

Table-5.18

Opinion of the leaders about religion barrier during their work

Does the religious sentiments create problems during their work in out ?

	Yes	No	Total
Leaders in 1997 election	10 (27.78%)	26 (72.22%)	36 (100%)
Leaders in 2003 election	9 (25%)	27 (75%)	36 (100%)

The data presented in table 5.17 shows that majority of the leaders does not feel any difficulties from religion during their work in outside in the study area. Moreover, the trouble from the issue was declining day by day. 72.22% in 1997 election told that religion was no barrier in their working and the percentage was 75% in later election. 27.78% leaders from 1997 and 25% in 2003 election observed the religious obligations as the problems to work.

The study found that religion was not a barrier for working women leaders at the field. Moreover, the picture is actually dependent on the cultural, economical, social and educational development of the locality. The study area was culturally developed. The district is popularly known as ‘capital of culture’ of Bangladesh.

Table-5.19

Opinion of the leaders about social security during their work

Do they feel insecure during work?
In out of the home?

	Yes	No	Total
Leaders in 1997 election	18 (50%)	18 (50%)	36 (100%)
Leaders in 2003 election	15 (41.67%)	21 (58.33%)	36 (100%)

The figure 5.18 depicts that the same number of leaders----50% in 1997 election expressed their feeling of insecurity during the work in outside. The percentage however, declined in 2003 election where 58.33% leaders told that they did not fell any trouble of security. At the same time, 41.67% leaders observed the feeling of insecurity in the election.

The study found that in rural area, most of the women leaders went out of home with accompany----both their near and dear or relatives. They returned home before evening.

Some more factors are also active that hinders the process of development the way of working of the women representatives in the union parishad.

1) Lack of monitoring and evaluation, there is no institutional mechanism in the unions to monitor and evaluate the over all job performance of women representatives. We have to think first that the process of working of women is comparatively new in the system and that is still under unclassified position. So regular and organised monitor is needed in a bid to sustainable development of the process.

2) Politics of union members, the union parishad members are involved in or guided by the consideration of narrow politics. The institution is not politically affiliated in character. This involvement or guiding often hampers their independent or impartial role.

According to above discussion, union parishad itself is to suffer with manifold problems in structurally and functionally for long and it's is meant that inclusion of the women without necessary reformation made the problem broader. The 1997 Act forwarded the women leaders to better status and ushered a hope of change the 'locus standi' of women in the bodies. But the matter got mixed result that clearly reflected in the aforesaid discussion.

Two elections were held under the changed provision----1997 and 2003. The next election was due in 2008. The present government coming to power in January 2009 has passed the amended law of 2008 in October, 2009. The election may be scheduled to be hold in this year.

Notes and Reference

1. **Ishart Shamim**, “Strategies for Training and Capacity building for Women in Local Governance in Bangladesh,” (Seminar paper, at CDSA, Dhaka, 2006), p-4
2. **Dr. Tofail Ahmed**, “Local Government and Field Administration in the Twenty First Centuries- Some Reform Agenda, (IST edition, Rupantar, Khulna, April-2002), P-17.
3. Ibid, P-17.
4. See *American College Dictionary*.
5. **M. Hill Thomas, et al**; *Institution Building in India* (Boston: Harvard University, 1973), p-99.
6. **Kamal Siddique**, Op, Cit, p-28.
7. **Abul Fazal Haq**, *Constitution and Politics in Bangladesh (1972-1982), conflict, Change and Stability, 19885, p-50*. And Maudud Ahmed, *The era of Seikh Mujib* (Dhaka University press Ltd. 1987), p-40, 139,330.
8. **Mohammed Abdul Aziz**, “The union Parishad in Bangladesh : An Analysis of Problems and Directions of Reforms” (NILG, October, 1991, first edition), p-35.
9. Faizullah, Op,Cit, p-51
10. Aziz, Op, Cit, P- 36
11. **DR. Moksudur Rahman**, Op, Cit, p-523.
12. Ibid, P-523
13. **Mohammad Abdul Wahab**, “Bangladesh Local Government: Endless Search for Newer Structure,” *The Journal of Political Science Association* (Dhaka; Shaikat printer, 1988), pp-221-222.
14. **Mohammad Mohabbat Khan**, “Bureaucratic Self-preservation (Dhaka: City Press, 1980), p-128, and M.A. Choudhury; *An Examination of Criticism Against Bureaucracy* (Dacca: NIPA, 1965), p-27.
15. **Sir John Maud**, et. al; “*Local Government in England and Wales,*” (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1964), p-233.
16. **Kack GoldSmith**, et, al, “*Comparative Local Politics: A system of Functional Approach*” (Boston: HAnd Book Press INC., 1973), p-151.
17. **Kamal Siddique**, “*Local Governance in Bangladesh, Leading Issues and Major Challenges*”, op, cit, p-22.
18. **The daily star**, Dhaka, Sunday September 29, 2002.
19. **The Daily Star**, Ibid.
20. **The Daily star**, Ibid
21. **The Daily Star**, Ibid
22. **The Daily Star**, Ibid
23. **Mohammed Abdul Aziz**, Op, Cit-p-37
24. **M.U.Ahmad**, “*Local government in Action,*” (RDA, Bogra, 1988), p- 42
25. **M.M. Alam**, “*Financial Strength of Local government in Bangladesh,*” (BARD, Comilla, 1976), p-27.
26. **A. Ahmed**, “*Administration of Local-Self Government for Rural Areas in Bangladesh,*” (NILG, 1979), p-215
27. **M.U. Ahmad**, Op, Cit, p-106
28. **Ahmed Alam**, Op, Cit, p-174.
29. **M. A. Choudhury**, “*Rural government in East Pakistan,*” (Dhaka, 1963), p-137

30. **M. Solaiman**, "*The Village Court, A case study for Two Union Parishads*," Local government Quarterly, Vol. 10. No. 1, (NILG, Dhaka, 1981), p-31
31. **Ahmed Alam**, Op, Cit, p-232
32. **The Daily Star**, 3, May, 2009
33. **Hasanuzzaman Khan**, "*Dualism to mar upazila system : UZ leaders plan protest*," (April 8, 2009, **The New Nation**, Dhaka).
34. **Planning Commission** (Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh), "*Strategy for Rural Development Projects*," Paper presented at the 6th Annual Conference of the Bangladesh Economic Association (Dhaka, 28th to 31 October, 1983), p-1-2
35. **Amanur Rahman**, Op, Cit, p-95
36. **Md. Mustafizur Rahman and Fardaus Ara**, "*Women, Participation and Empowerment in Local Government : Bangladesh Union Parishad Perspective*", (**Asian Affairs**, Vol.29, No.1: 73-00, January—March, 2006), p-83
37. Ibid, p-83
38. **Rakhai Das Purokayastha**, "*Women Representation: Union Parishad structure Need Reformation*," (**The Daily Janakantha**, May, 2, 2004, Dhaka), p-11
38. **Ishrat shamim and Mahbuba Nasreen**, "*Gender and Local Governance: New Discourse in Development*," (Center for Women and children Studies, Dhaka, 2001.), p-7
40. **Avra Saha**, "*Women Members in Union Parishad*," (**The Daily Bangladesh Observer**, June 6, 2003, Dhaka)
41. **A. Duaz**, "*Women and Population Dynamics*," (California: Newbury Park, 1989).
42. **Rounaq Jahan**, "*Bangladesh politics : problems and issues*," (UPL, Dhaka), p-82
43. Ibid
44. **Md. Mustafizur Rahman and Fardaus Ara**, Op, Cit, p-85
45. **A Paper-Plan** on the "*Position of Women in Bangladesh and to Develop*," presented on Beijing NGO Forum Conference in 1995, p-5
46. **Jahanara Haq**, "*Status of Women as Related to Socio-Economic Development in Bangladesh*," a seminar paper presented in an international Seminar, (Dhaka, 1981).
47. **Nazmeen Noor Begum**, "*Income and Social position: Women in Nilgaj*," a Bangla version from "*Pay or Purdha: Women and Income Earning in Rural Bangladesh*," (**Nari Grantha Prabartana**, Dhaka, 1992), p-9
48. **Farouk and Ali**, "*The hardworking poor*," (Dhaka, Bureau of Economic Research, Dhaka University)
49. **Khaleda Salauddin**, "*Gramee Arthanitik Karmakande Mahila*" (Bangla) Manjusree Talukdar (comp.), *Nari Adhikar O Unnayan*, (Dhaka: Gana Unnayan Granthagar, 1991), p-21
50. **Ahmad**, et. Al. A. J. Mihaj Uddin, "*Pally Elakaya Maoumasi Palan karjakramer Upar shangkhipta mullayan*," (Bengali), (English---*Evaluation of Apiculture Programme in Rural Areas*), RDA, Bogra, 1990
51. **Sahid Hossain Talukder and Ferdousi Sultana Begum**, "*Appropriate Methodology for Training of Rural Women in Bangladesh with Special reference to Formal Leaders*," (eds) by **Ashrafuddin Ahmed and Tariq Ahmed**, "*Training for Rural Women in Development: Papers and Recommendations of an RDA-CIDA Workshop*" (Rural Development Academy, Bogra, 1994), p-159

52. **Aftabuddin Ahmed and Sayeda Rowsan Qadir**, “*Role and Functions of Women members of Union Parishad: problems and potentials*, (eds) by Ashrafuddin Ahmed and Tariq Ahmed, “*Training for Rural Women in Development: Papers and Recommendations of an RDA-CIDA Workshop*” (Rural Development Academy, Bogra, 1994), p-45
53. **Usha Bambanala**, “*Women and Politics: Sociology of Non-participation*”-a paper presented in a seminar WAO, impact of Urbanization on Women Welfare, (Netherlands Association of University Women, 1983).
54. **Najma Choudhury**, “*Women Participation in politics: Marginalisation and Related Issues*,” Najma Choudhury and et.al (eds) Women and politics, (Women for Women, Dhaka, 1994), p-16.
55. Syeda Rowsan Qadir, “*Participation of Women at the Local Level Politics*,”: Problems and Prospect” in Najma Chowdhury et.al (ed), Women and Politics, Dhaka: Women for Women, 1994, pp-1-2
56. **The Daily Jugantor**, June, 3, 2005.
57. **S.N. Sweta Mishra**, “*Women and Political process in India*,” (Kurukshetra, Vol.XL111, No.11, 1995), p-40
58. **Arun Kumar Goswami**, “*Empowerment of Women in Bangladesh*,” (*Empowerment, Women for Women, Dhaka, 1998, Vol.5*), p-45
59. **Sadequl**, op, Cit, p-115
60. **Ishrat shamim and Mahbuba Nasreen**, Op, Cit, p-6
61. **Avra Saha**, Op, Cit,
62. **Sajeda Akte**, “*Women empowerment In the Local government System In Bangladesh : A Study of Elected Women members of Some Selected Union Parishads*, (a research paper that awarded M. Phil degree by University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi, 2005), p-140.
63. **S.P Jain**, “*Empowerment of Rural Women Through Local Self-Government in Afro-Asian Countries*” (eds) “*Dynamics of Sustainable Rural Development*” by G. Raghava Redd and P. Subrahmayam, (New Delhi, 2003), p-405
64. **Asian Development Bank Report**, 2004