

---

## Strengthening the Local Government and Effective Role of Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh

**Raqiba Yasmin (Ph.D)**

Professor, Department of Public Administration  
Islamic University, Kushtia  
Bangladesh

**Md. Emdad Hasnayan (Ph.D)**

Director, Kobadak Human Development Research Center  
Kushtia, Bangladesh  
dr.hasnayan@gmail.com

**Mst. Saria Sultana**

Ph.D. Researcher, Department of Government and Politics  
Jahangirnagar University, Savar  
Bangladesh  
sariasultana\_kst@yahoo.com

---

### **Abstract**

*The Upazilas are the focal point of rural administration in Bangladesh today. The Upazila administration is now within the easy reach and approach of the rural people. It is meant to give to the opportunity to shape their own destiny through a democratic process. The bureaucracy has to submit to the democratically elected leader and the leader has to share his authority with all. The Upazila replaced the oldest institution in Bangladesh called Thana which was introduced by Warren Hastings on April 9, 1774. It earned for itself an unworthy reputation. It came into effect to detect and prevent crime and to bring the atrocious criminals to justice. But it did not produce the desired result. But this institution could not completely free itself from this deep rooted blemish even in its last days. The administrators can now provide the counseling services to the people, administer, justice and maintain law and order in the area. The Upazila Parishad is now the pivot of the Upazila administration and is well equipped with all the necessary powers to do immense good to the rural people. Today the Upazila Headquarters is a place where every day there sizable congregation of people belonging to all walks of life. The Upazila is an ideal unit of development for achieving the national objectives. Upazila is a local Government body, autonomous but dependent on grants from the national Government, aiming to achieve economic self-reliance. Introduction of the Upazilla Parishad system with elected government is likely to substantially improve the responsiveness and accountability of Parishad to its people. Local government as a political institution to ensure public participation in development activities is yet to talk proper shape in Bangladesh.*

---

**Keyword:** Local Government, Evolution, Strengthening, Effective role, Upazila Parishad

---

### **Introduction**

Upazila is an important tier of field administration in Bangladesh. From administrative point of view Bangladesh has been divided into seven divisions. Under each division there are some districts and in each district there are some Upazilas. In the Upazila there are some unions. There are about 17 nation building departments in the Upazila. These departments are

implementing the policies/ programs/projects of the central government. An officer of BCS administration cadre with the rank of senior assistant secretary is posted as Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO). As a representative of national government the UNO is entrusted to coordinate with the development activities of the nation building departments in the Upazila. In the context of Upazila Development Coordination Committee the UNO acted as member secretary of the Upazila whereas the UP chairman acted as chair in the coordination meeting according to alphabetical order of their names. In the existing Upazila Parishad the Upazila chairman acted as the chair in the Parishad meeting and the UNO served as secretary of the Parishad. Upazila parishad was established through the Local Government (Upazila Parishad and Upazila Administration reorganization) (Second Amendment) Ordinance 1983. Upazila parishad was made representative body consisting of chairman of union parishad, one elected chairman and women members and official members without any voting right. The other departmental officers are placed under the administrative control of the Chairman. But they are also accountable to their respective district level officers as they worked as technical reporting officers. It means that the operational control is vested in the Chairman whereas technical control lies with their departmental officers at the district level. However, the present study deals with Upazila as field administration unit under the framework of Upazila Development Coordination Committee not in the context of existing Upazila parishad.<sup>1</sup> The Upazila comes from the outcome of gradual transformation of Thana which dates back to the Bengal Regulation of 1792. After Upazila election, Upazila parishad acts as coordinating body for all activities at the Upazila level. The Upazila Chairman was empowered to coordinate all the development activities of the Upazila parishad. Under this framework the UNO acted as the secretary of the Parishad and assisted the Chairman in executing the policies of the government. The UNO was responsible to the Upazila parishad and assisted him in executing of policies and decisions of the parishad. Again in 1991 the BNP government abolished Upazila parishad promulgating a new ordinance known as The Local Government (Upazila Parishad and Upazila administration Reorganization (Repeal) Ordinance 1991. The government formed a committee called Thana Development Coordination Committee (TDCC) in each Thana (GPRB, 1993). According to this circular Upazila Development Coordination Committee includes three categories of members: all UP chairmen within the jurisdiction of the Thana, (now Upazila) three women UP members nominated by the government and Upazila level officers meaning department heads of the Upazila. The UNO serves as the member secretary of the committee and the concerned MP acts as the advisor to the committee. The committee was empowered with the task of coordinating all the developmental functions in the Upazila.<sup>2</sup> The present system of Upazila Parishad follows the Upazila Parishad Act 1998 (Amended by Act 27 of 2009) where the Upazila Parishad is bound to abide by the suggestions of the advisers.<sup>3</sup>

### **Evolution of Upazila Parishad**

Bangladesh has 491 upazilas (as of 9 January 2017, Bangladesh Portal). The upazilas are the second lowest tier of regional administration in Bangladesh. The administrative structure consists in fact in Divisions (8), Districts (64), Upazila/Thana and Union Parishads (UPs). This system of devolution was introduced by the former military ruler and President of Bangladesh, Lieutenant General Hossain Mohammad Ershad, in an attempt to strengthen

<sup>1</sup> Sarker, Parimal. (2011). The role of the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) in coordination process at Upazila administration in Bangladesh, Master in Public Policy and Governance Program, Department of General and Continuing Education, North South University, Bangladesh, pp. 43-44

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp. 46-47.

<sup>3</sup> Tamanna, Meheri and Afroz, Farhana. (November 1, 2015). Local Government in Bangladesh: The Quest for Legal Reforms, Covering Policy Issues from South Asia, Retrieve from: <http://southasiajournal.net/local-government-in-bangladesh-the-quest-for-legal-reforms/>

local government.<sup>4</sup> Upazila 'sub-district' pronounced: upojela), formerly called thana is a geographical region in Bangladesh used for administrative or other purposes. They function as sub-units of districts. Their functionality can be seen to be analogous to that of a county or a borough of Western countries. Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO, or Upazila Executive Officer; Bengali is an non-elected Administrator in Upazila. UNOs are Senior Assistant Secretary of Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS). They act as executive officer of the upazila under the elected posts. Each Upazila Parishad (or council) has a chairman, a vice chairman and a woman vice chairman. All three are elected through direct popular election. Union Parishad chairmen within the upazila are considered as the members of the parishad. The post of a woman vice chairman was created to ensure at least one-third woman representation in the all elected posts of the local government. On 22 January 2010 the first election in 18 years of Upazila Parishad was held. The Upazilla replaced the oldest institution in Bangladesh called the Thana. It was a nation-wide reform. The significant change in the rural government was the insertion of the term "Upazilla" replaced the word "Thana". Generally, an Upazilla corresponds to a "Thana", although in some places two Thanas have been united as one Upazilla. Literally, Upazilla means Sub-District.<sup>5</sup>

Thana had to be renamed, particularly when it was vested with a different and a much wider range of responsibilities. The process began during the time of Field Marshal Ayub Khan when the Thanas were vested, for the first time, with the development role and came to be called as Development Circles. These Development Circles have now become the Upazilas. A lot of hopes, a lot of trust and confidence, a lot emotion and sentiment have been pinned on this new name, new idea and new experience. Upazila is now the most talked about topic in today's Bangladesh.<sup>6</sup> The historical antecedents of Upazila Parishad (UZP) resulted from the recommendations of the Committee for Administrative Reform, and Reorganization (CARR) constituted by the military government of General Ershad of 1982-90. In point of fact it was a lineal document of Thana Development and Coordination Council (TDCC) set up under the Basic Democracies Order, 1959 which resulted from the Comilla Experiment on Rural Development conceptualized and advocated by late Akhter Hameed Khan, the founder-director of Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) located in the district of Comilla. The concept and practice of TDCC was incorporated into the law by the military government of Field Marshall Ayub Khan. Basic to the original concept was to put in place a public-private partnership consisting of government functionaries at Thana level and the locally elected chairmen of Union Councils now called the Union Parishad.<sup>7</sup> The major difference between Upazila Parishad and the erstwhile TDCC were mainly two. First, the chairman of TDCC used to be the then Sub divisional Officers (SDO) in their respective jurisdictions as chairmen and the Circle Officers (Development) as vice-chairmen with membership from the thana level officers and the chairmen of union councils falling within the respective jurisdictions of a thana. Thus was it that the military ruler, the army chief, sought to stay in power. The mainstream opposition parties like the Awami League and other democratically oriented parties stiffly opposed the system of Electoral College structure. The

<sup>4</sup> Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Upazilas of Bangladesh, Retrieve from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upazilas\\_of\\_Bangladesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upazilas_of_Bangladesh)

<sup>5</sup> Upazilla System As A Local Government Body, Law Teacher, Constitutional Law, Retrieve from: <http://www.lawteacher.net/free-law-essays/constitutional-law/upazilla-system-as-a-local-government-body-constitutional-law-essay.php>

<sup>6</sup> Hyder, Yusuf. (1989). Development the Upazila Way, published by Abdur Rahim Azad Anik, 171, Bara Maghbazar, Dhaka-1217, p. 11

<sup>7</sup> Ali, AMM Shawkat. (May 5, 2014). Upazila Parishad, Banglapedia, National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh, Retrieve from: [http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Upazila\\_Parishad&oldid=6391](http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Upazila_Parishad&oldid=6391)

movement for restoration of democracy in the then Pakistan consisting of political parties in both the wings of Pakistan finally led to its abolition in 1969.

These recommendations of the ASRC received approval of the government in 1982 and the process of implementation was completed in phases by 1984 through 1986. The Upazila Parishad law known as the Local Government (Thana Parishad and Thana Reorganization) Ordinance 1982 as amended in 1983 renaming Thana Parishad as Upazila Parishad that followed provided for a directly elected chairman based on one man one vote principle. The local level government functionaries were made non-voting members while the elected union parishad chairmen became members with voting rights. First election forming Upazila Parishad by electing a chairman was held in 1985 and after the expiry of five years term of the Upazila Parishad second election was held in 1990 for reconstituting Upazila Parishad by electing the chairman. In popular and administrative parlance, the term upgraded districts and upgraded thanas came to be used. Consequent upon the movement of 1989-90 for the resignation of the government of General Ershad, the Upazila system was abolished following the installation of an elected government with BNP in power in 1991 by the Local Government (Upazila Parishad and Upazila Administration Reorganization) (Repeal) Ordinance 1991. After challenge the vires of the Ordinance was upheld by the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh in Qudrat-E-Elahi Pani's Case (44, DLR (AD) 319). Even before the abolition, controversies arose on the issue of role of members of Jatiya Sangsad in Upazila Parishad and the functional relationship between the Upazila Nirbahi Officers and the elected chairmen centering on the process of administrative decision-making. Subsequently Awami League Government enacted Upazila Parishad Act 1998 by repealing the 1991 Ordinance for constituting Upazila Parishad but no election was held under that Act.

The Committee for strengthening local government bodies and making them more dynamic constituted by the Non-Party Caretaker Government (NCG) in 2007, recommended that (a) Members of Jatiya Sangsad be excluded from any role in Upazila Parishads which was not in line with the recommendations of two successive Local Government Commissions constituted by BNP after 1991 and that recommended by the AL after 1996. In pursuance of such recommendation the Local Government (Upazila Parishad) Ordinance 2008 was promulgated. The above committee (2007) also recommended the establishment of a permanent Local Government Commission with independent legal powers for oversight functions over all tiers of local government. The law eventually led to the formation of a Local Government Commission which, however, was later annulled by the elected government of 2009.

Thus it was that the issue of elected Upazila Parishad remained out of the ambit of local government structure only to be revived by the NCG on which there were some differences between it and the major political parties. Ultimately, Upazila Parishad law was changed by the subsequent elected government led by AL making the Members of Jatiya Sangsad advisers with some executive powers by enacting the Upazila Parishad (Reintroduction of the Repealed Act and Amendment) Act 2008. This Act repealed earlier Ordinance of 2008 and reintroduced 1998 Act with certain amendments. This resulted in stiff opposition from the elected chairmen of upazilas. This also brought into the surface the conflict between chairmen and the Sangsad members. The latest reports of the media indicate that the government is seriously considering steps to resolve the issue. The experiment, however, was short lived (1985-1991), and ended with the fall of the military-turned-civilian regime headed

by General Ershad. However, in 1998, the Sheikh Hasina-led government enacted a legislation to reintroduce the upazila system where the MPs were given an advisory role.<sup>8</sup>

In 2008, the military-backed caretaker government of Bangladesh promulgated the Upazila Parishad Ordinance 2008. Through this ordinance, the MPs were removed from the advisory role and two new elected positions of vice-chairpersons were created (one of them being a woman). Although an election was held in January 2009 under the new ordinance, the newly elected government subsequently decided to revoke the Upazila Parishad Ordinance 2008. It reintroduced the repealed Upazila Parishad Act of 1998 with provisions of having MPs as advisers. Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) becomes the Upazila Parishad Secretary and he/she does secretarial duties. An officer with the rank of senior assistant secretary from the Bangladesh Civil Service administration cadre is posted as the UNO. The Member of Parliament (MP) becomes the advisor. After taking advice from the MP the Upazila Parishad can try to communicate with the government. It has been made mandatory. Analyzing the present Act, Circular and Office order issued by the Government of Bangladesh some questions may lead to the discussion on who plays the key role in the UZP. The inconsistencies and features of the Upazila Parishad Ordinances/Acts regarding the role of elected representatives and bureaucrats: There are two ordinances and two Acts for the Upazila Parishad. In these, from 1982 to 1991 the Members of Parliament were not allowed to have any influential role. But in 1998, the new advisory role of the Members of Parliament in the Upazila Parishad changed the situation. Though the provision of keeping an advisory role for the MPs was abolished by the Upazila Parishad Ordinance 2008, but later it was included. The old issue of power sharing between local MPs, bureaucrats and Upazila Chairmen once again surfaced.<sup>9</sup>

### **Composition and Functions of Upazila Parishad**

As per the law, the Parishad will be composed of both elected representatives and government officials working at Upazila level.<sup>10</sup>

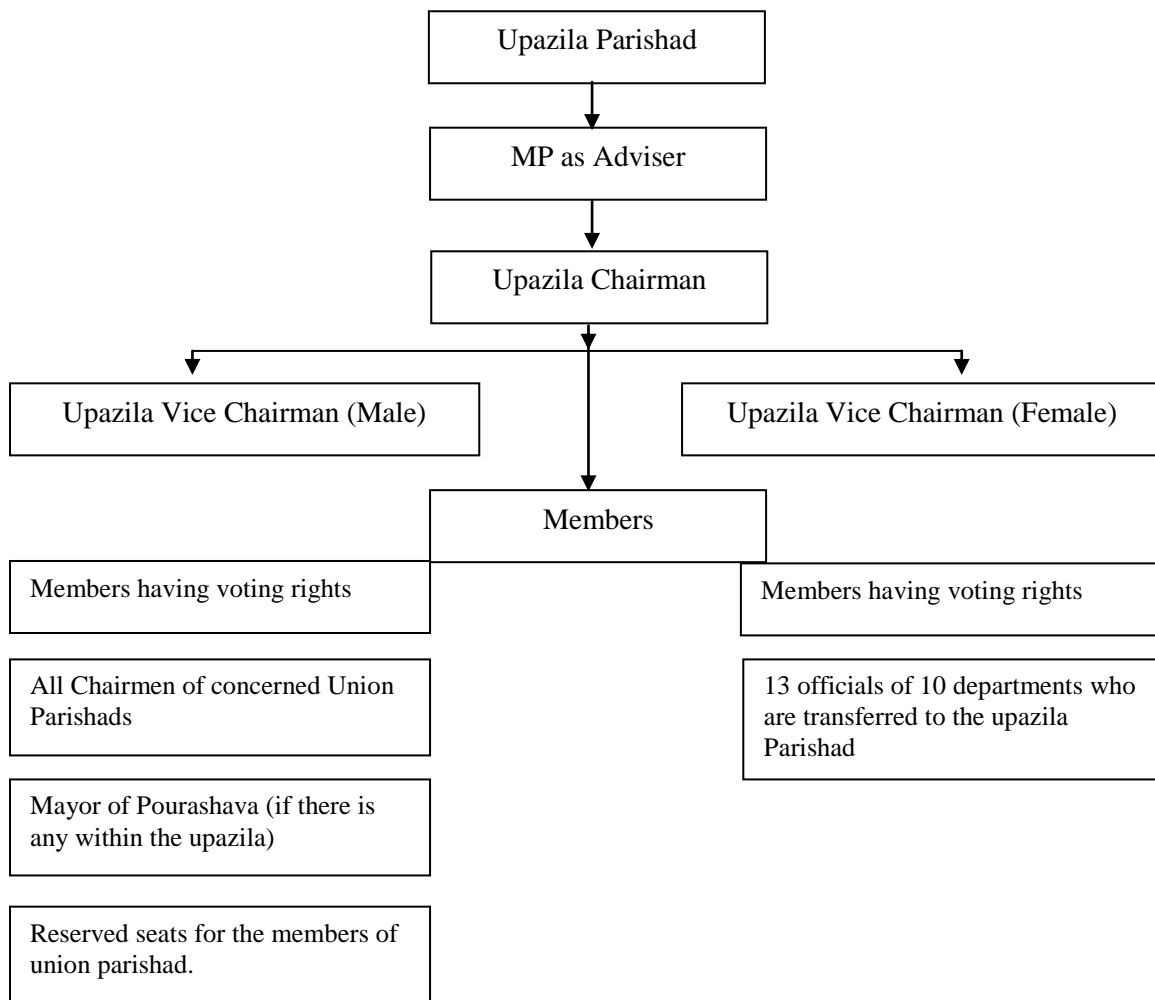
---

<sup>8</sup> Tamanna, Meheri and Afroz, Farhana. (November 1, 2015). Local Government in Bangladesh: The Quest for Legal Reforms, Covering Policy Issues from South Asia, Retrieve from: <http://southasiajournal.net/local-government-in-bangladesh-the-quest-for-legal-reforms/>

<sup>9</sup> Rahman, M. Sayadur. (December 11, 2012). Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh: Roles and Functions of Elected Representatives and Bureaucrats, Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance, p. 101  
Retrieve from: <http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/ojs/index.php/cjlg>

<sup>10</sup> Upazila Parishad Manuel, Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, Peoples Republic of Bangladesh (July, 2013), Section: 4, Law No. 27 of 2009. Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, Peoples Republic of Bangladesh (February 15, 2010) Bangladesh Gazette, Upazila Parishad (works implementation) Rules 2010

The composition of the Upazila Parishad is as follows:



The Upazila Chairman and the two vice chairmen are directly elected by the adult franchise of the Upazila. The other elected representatives are elected for different units as well as purposes. These locally elected representatives have the voting rights in any decisions of the Upazila Parishad.

#### **Officials of Transferred Departments (Members of UZP)**

While as per the 3rd Schedule of the Upazila Parishad Act 1998 (revised in 2009) 13 officials of 10 ministries working at the Upazila level have been transferred to the Upazila Parishad (UZP Act, 2009).

<b>Ministry/Departments</b>	<b>Officials</b>
Ministry of Establishment	UNO
Ministry of Disaster Management & Relief	PIO
Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives	Upazila Engineer (LGED) Deputy Asst. Engineer (DPHE)
Ministry of Agriculture	Upazila Agriculture Officer Upazila Fisheries Officer
Ministry of Local Women and Children Affairs	Upazila Women Affairs Officer
Ministry of Education	Upazila Education Officer

Ministry of Youth and Sports	Upazila Youth Development Officer
Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock	Upazila Animal Resources Officer
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare	Upazila Family Planning Officer
	Health and Family Planning Officer
Ministry of Social Welfare	Upazila Social Welfare Officer

These officials are also the members of the Parishad but they do not have voting rights in making decision of the Parishad.

### **Functions of Upazila Parishad**

The Upazila Parishad Act 2009 vests a wide range of functions of the Parishad. The 2nd Schedule of the Upazila Parishad Act 2009 states the functions of the Parishad (UZP Act, 2009).

1. All development activities at Upazila level; formulation of Upazila level development plan and programmes and implementation, monitoring and evaluation thereof.
2. Preparation of Upazila Development plans on the basis of Union Development Plans.
3. Giving assistance and encouragement to Union Parishads in their activities.
4. Promotion of Health, Family Planning and Family Welfare.
5. Provision for management of environment.
6. Training of chairmen, members and secretaries of Union Parishads.
7. Implementation of Government policies and Programmes within Upazila.
8. Supervision, control and co-ordination of functions of officers serving in the Upazila except Munsifs, Trying Magistrates and Officers engaged in regulatory functions.
9. Promotion of socio-cultural activities.
10. Promotion and encouragement of employment generating activities.
11. Such other functions as may be specified by the government from time to time.
12. Promotion and extension of co-operative movement in Upazila.
13. Assistance to Zilla Parishad in development activities.
14. Planning and execution of all rural level public works programmes.
15. Promotion of agricultural activities for maximizing production.
16. Promotion of educational and vocational activities
17. Promotion of livestock, fishers and forest.

### **Operational Rule**

#### **Meetings**

1st meeting of the council will be called upon by the UNO consulting with the UZC [section 3 (1) of Upazila Parishad (works implementation) Rules 2010] within thirty days after oath taking [Section 18 of the of the Upazila Parishad Act 2009]

The Parishad can determine its working procedure of its meetings within the jurisdiction of the Act [section 3 (2-ka) of Upazila Parishad (works implementation) Rules 2010]

All meetings will be held in the Office of the Parishad. Other than this the time, date and venue will be determined by the UZC [section 3 (2- kha) of Upazila Parishad (works implementation) Rules 2010]

General meeting will be at least once in a month. But the Parishad can call upon emergency meetings within 24 hours notice [*section 3 (2-Ga) of Upazila Parishad (works implementation) Rules 2010*]

For general meetings notice should be served seven days before the meeting [*section 3 (2-Gha) of Upazila Parishad (works implementation) Rules 2010*]

The UNO will mention time date and place of meeting in the notice summoned for meeting. Copies of this notice will be sent to the MP and the DC [*section 3 (2-Uma) of the Upazila Parishad (works implementation) Rules 2010*]

Except the emergency meetings the members of the Parishad should be sent the necessary papers for meetings before 72 hours of the meeting. [*Section 3 (2-Ca) of Upazila Parishad (works implementation) Rules 2010*]

The UZC will preside over all the meetings and in his absence one UZVC will preside over as a panel chairman [*section 4 (1) of Upazila Parishad (works implementation) Rules 2010*]

No matter will be accepted for discussion without the working paper [*section 4 (2) of Upazila Parishad (works implementation) Rules 2010*]

Attendance register should be maintained [*section 4 (3) of Upazila Parishad (works implementation) Rules 2010*]

No member will not remain present if there is matter related to the interest of his/her relatives, friends or familiar persons [*section 4 (4) of Upazila Parishad (works implementation) Rules 2010*]

Without violating the rules financial, developmental operational, co-ordination and miscellaneous issues will be placed in the meetings for decisions [*section 5 of Upazila Parishad (works implementation) Rules 2010*]

### **Decision-making**

If necessary the issues can be given for voting for decisions. After the issue is placed before and accepted the Parishad, the President of the meeting will give the issue for voting [*section 6 (1) of Upazila Parishad (works implementation) Rules 2010*]

As much as possible, all decisions will be taken in consensus. Any dispute will be settled by majority decisions. [*Section 6 (4) of Upazila Parishad (works implementation) Rules 2010*]

The decisions of the meetings should be circulated for necessary actions [*section 8 (1) of Upazila Parishad (works implementation) Rules 2010*]

The UNO will take necessary measures to implement the decisions taken by the Parishad [*section 5 of Upazila Parishad (works implementation) Rules 2010*]

### **Budgeting and Financial Pattern** [*Section 38 (1) of the Upazila Parishad Act 2009*]

Sixty days prior to the fiscal year, the Parishad will prepare its budget containing income and expenditure of that year [*Section 38 (1) of the Upazila Parishad Act 2009*]



The UZP usually receive funds from the central government into four categories:

- Grants from the governments' revenue budget for payment of salary and allowances of deputed staff.
- Grant for the development budget for financing UZP development projects.
- Grants for the divisible components of centrally-administered development projects.
- Functional contingencies.

### **Planning and implementation of projects**

The Parishad will prepare five-year and other development plan *[No. 1 of 1st Schedule (as cited in Section 15.1) of the Upazila Parishad Act 2009 & also mentioned in Section 42 of the Upazila Parishad Act 2009]*

### **Standing committees of UZP**

For the convenience of the UZP functions the Parishad can form required number of committees consisting of its members or any other persons. The condition is, the UZC will not be President of any such committee *[Section 29 (1) of the Upazila Parishad Act 2009]*

Each of the following subjects the Parishad will form a Standing Committee *[Section 29 (2) of the Upazila Parishad Act 2009]*

- Ka) Law & Order
- Kha) Communication and Physical Infrastructure
- Ga) Agriculture & Irrigation
- Gha) Education
- Uma) Health & Family Planning
- Ca) Youth & Sports
- Cha) Women & Child Development
- Ja) Social Welfare
- Jha) Land
- Yan) Fisheries & Livestock
- Ta) Rural Development & Cooperatives
- Tha) Information & Culture
- Da) Forest & Environment
- Dha) Market price observation, Monitoring, Controlling

### **Departmental committees**

Nothing is directed regarding committees of transferred or retained departments in the UZP statutes or circulars.

### **Working of transferred departments**

13 officials of 10 Ministries have been transferred to the Upazila Parishad *[3rd Schedule of Upazila Parishad Act 2009]*

### **Movement of Files**

All the papers and files those are required approval of the UZC should be placed before him through UNO *[Circular of Local Government Division dated 15-02-2010]*

### **Inter-organisational relations**

Because of the composition of the Parishad [*Section 6 of the Upazila Parishad Act 2009*] the Parishad is linked with the unions, Pourashava within the Upazila.

The UZP's relation with the UP is also indicated in *clause 3 and 14 of the 2nd Schedule of the Upazila Parishad Act 2009*.

As the function of the Parishad, clause 3 reads "construction, repair and maintenance of inter-union linked roads". While clause 14 states the function of the Parishad is "to co-ordinate, examine and render needful assistance to the development works of union parishad.

The Upazila Parishad also has working relation with the transferred departments as clause 2 of the *2nd Schedule of the Upazila Parishad Act 2009* states the function of the Parishad is "to implement, supervise and co-ordinate the programmes of transferred departments".

### **Interpersonal relations**

As per law [*Section 6 of the Upazila Parishad Act 2009*] the UZP has had relationship with the following persons

- Chairmen of all the Unions of the Upazila
- Mayor of the Pourashava within the Upazila
- Those elected female members of the Unions who are nominated/elected as member of the UZP
- The MP as Advisor of the Parishad [*Section 25 of the Upazila Parishad Act 2009*]
- The UNO as secretary of the Parishad [*Section 33 of the Upazila Parishad Act 2009*]
- The office heads/officers of transferred departments [*3rd Schedule of the Upazila Parishad Act 2009*]
- The officers of transferred departments or any other officers having linked with UZP works [*Section 28 of the Upazila Parishad Act 2009*]<sup>11</sup>

### **Effective role of Upazila Parishad**

The chairman of the upazila parishad will enforce executive power to implement the decisions taken by the parishad. An upazila parishad chairman's duties include chairing and conducting parishad meetings, monitoring and controlling all officers and employees, meeting financial expenditure of certain limits fixed by the government and commission. The chairman will also prepare the annual confidential reports of all officers and employees of the parishad. The chairman will supervise all accounts of the parishad with the join signature of the upazila nirbahi officer (UNO).<sup>12</sup> The functions of upazila parishad include dealing with administrative and establishment issues, ensuring law and order and services related to peoples' welfare, and formulation and implementation of local economic and social development planning. Preparing development planning for five-year terms or so, construction, repair and maintenance of linking road under the upazila, initiating and implementing small irrigation projects, creation of jobs and initiating programmes to reduce poverty are major duties of the parishad. Besides, the parishad will regularly send report on the upazila's law and order to the district committees on law and order and other high authorities. The parishad will also publish citizens' charter accommodating the description, conditions and duration of the service it would render to the people. Every parishad will prepare its budget two months before the start of a fiscal year and hang its copy for at least 15

<sup>11</sup> Selim, Mohammad & Ahmed, Saifuddin. (2013). The Functioning of Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh: A case Study, Journal of Politics & Administration, Department of Politics & Public Administration, Islamic University, Kushtia 7003, Bangladesh, Vol. 4, Nos. 1 & 2, pp. 108-115

<sup>12</sup> Habib, Wasim Bin. (January 22, 2009). All about upazila parishad, The Daily Star, Retrieve from: <http://www.thedailystar.net/news-detail-72392>

days to inform people about it and receive suggestion and comments from the people. After considering their suggestion, the parishad will approve the budget 30 days before the start of a fiscal year and send a copy to the deputy commissioner (DC). If a parishad fails to approve its budget in time, the DC will prepare a list of income and expenditure, which will be approved as the budget of that upazila for the year. The accounts of the parishad will be examined by an appointed auditor in a specific process. Upon suggestion of the commission the government will formulate the audit related rules for inconsistency or irregularities of accounts, damage or waste of assets and other aspects. All members will be bound to give information to the auditor, who will inform the DC if anybody defies. A UNO will serve as the chief executive officer of the upazila and the government will appoint one secretary to the parishad. The government can employ its officer or employee to the parishad for executing general or special duties on specific condition.

The Parishad has considerable potential to be responsive and accountable to the people. It has substantially reduced the administrative decision making layer. The new system has engendered two significant changes creating an opportunity to achieve better responsiveness and accountability. First, it is a shift from bureaucracy to democracy in the local government as the chief executive and other officers of the sub-district are brought under the control of elected representative. Second, the Parishad is accorded the status of executive agency and has been made responsible for most of the development functions. The main objective of the upazilla system, as enunciated in governmental documents, is the devolution of authority to local bodies, supposedly in order to induce Faster development at the local level with the participation of the people. The Parishad has considerable authority to plan and implement projects of local importance and interests, and to ensure accountability of local officials. Decentralization is consider more efficient way of meeting local needs, cutting red tape and making government and administration more flexible, accountable and responsive by brining government closer to the people. For obvious reason, local government attracts significant attention from various governments and their development partners as a means of participatory, accountable and responsive development tool.<sup>13</sup> The UNO is a member of the elite bureaucratic cadre, Bangladesh Civil Service (Administration) and works under strict control and supervision of the Deputy Commissioner. Along with the UNO there are about 20 officers working at the upazilla level belonging to the various cadre services who also face dual control, from the Parishad Chairman as well as from their respective line authorities. Moreover, these officers are trained and served initially under the central government structure. As a result their mental makeup conforms more to the culture and structure of the central Government. There are posted to the Parishad and their promotion and future postings are controlled by the central government bodies. Their loyalty to the Parishad is, Therefore, not absolute and they often consider their deputation to the local government as a temporary banishment.

After the dissolution of the Upazila Parishad, the government officials clearly got the upper hand over the elected functionaries. This is contrary to the basic principle of democratic decentralisation.<sup>14</sup> Administrative reform was a long felt need in Bangladesh.<sup>15</sup> A London Daily “The Guardian”, quoting President Ershad said that the effective handling of the flood

---

<sup>13</sup> Upazilla System as a Local Government Body, Law Teacher, Constitutional Law, Retrieve from: <http://www.lawteacher.net/free-law-essays/constitutional-law/upazilla-system-as-a-local-government-body-constitutional-law-essay.php>

<sup>14</sup> Siddiqui, Kamal. (2000). Local Governance in Bangladesh, Leading issues and major challenges, The University Press Limited, Red Creacent Building, 114 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka, pp. 27-28

<sup>15</sup> Hyder, Yusuf. (1989). Development the Upazila Way, published by Abdur Rahim Azad Anik, 171, Bara Maghbazar, Dhaka-1217, p. 17

situation in 1984 was one of the successes of the Upazila system. While many agencies forecast the probability of famine and starvation during and immediately after the floods it did not happen (Bangladesh Observer, May 21, 1985). The success of the Upazila scheme largely depends on how best the local leadership, the Government officials and the people inter-act in an environment of cooperation and partnership. If this trinity exists, Upazila exists; where it fails, complications will arise. Development oriented rural administration is not a new idea in Asian context. Saemaul Undoing in South Korea, Back to Village Campaign in Nepal, Samahang Nayong in the Philippines, Rural Reconstruction Movement in Thailand, Small Farms Development in India and Integrated Rural Development in Bangladesh had flourished against their own cultural backgrounds.

The Upazila movement has a Bangladeshi flavour. It is a departure from the concept of Integrated Rural Development. It embraces the whole country instead of a village or a cluster of villages. It uses local terms and techniques. No other movement in Bangladesh has mobilised so much political, administrative and popular support as the Upazila movement has. It is time that the movement is given theory, a philosophy; guidelines and training updated on evaluation of performance of the last three years of its operation. The Chairman and the Nirbahi Officer are two most important functionaries of the Upazila. It is important that these two enjoy a lot of mutual understanding, one holding the other in mutual respect, relationship that prevails between a minister and his secretary. Once this happens good relationship will prevail between the officials and non-officials. To ensure mutual understanding in the Upazila administration, we must know the likely areas of conflict that may embitter the relationship. Like any Government, local Government is also a powerful organization. In Upazila the most powerful man is the Chairman. His power and the power of the Parishad should be shared by all the members of the Upazila administration according to the clear cut demarcation of duties and responsibilities assigned to each and per code of conduct approved by the Government. Otherwise power vested in the Chairman may lead to conflict.<sup>16</sup> Upazila administration has to work under these special conditions. Here the Government officials have a big role to play. With their highly developed sense of responsibility, integrity, experience and maturity, they can maintain an impartial stand. As cadre officers they have a responsibility to see that the Parishad activities are in conformity to the rules and regulations of the Government. The Upazila Parishads are midway between local and central government, and are a very important tier of political-administrative nexus. More importantly, to carry out the government programmes, Upazila provide a bridge between local and national government. Recently Upazila administration has been brought under democratic control headed by directly elected representatives (Ahmed *et al* 2011). Elected representatives and bureaucrats are an integral part of the governance and policy process of the Upazila administration. So, the effective function of Upazila depends on the mode of interaction between the sets of actors, elected politicians and bureaucrats. Three core governing actors (MP, UPC and UNO) are directly and indirectly involved in the Upazila Parishad. The roles and functions of these actors in Upazila Parishad is a hot topic of discussion. A clear understanding of roles and functions of the core actors can be considered as a first major step towards initiating proper operation of the Upazila Parishad.<sup>17</sup>

The role of local government functionaries and lawmakers has never been clearly demarcated in Bangladesh, and the distinction of roles between the elected local government

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 36

<sup>17</sup> Rahman, M. Sayadur. (December 11, 2012). Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh: Roles and Functions of Elected Representatives and Bureaucrats, Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance, p. 102, Retrieve from: <http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/ojs/index.php/cjlg>

functionaries and members of parliament has blurred. Currently, lawmakers are advisers to district and Upazila councils, the two crucial tiers of the country's three-tier local government system. According to relevant laws, legislators are supposed to advise but in reality they dictate the affairs of local government bodies and directly engage in executive functions at the grassroots<sup>18</sup>. Lastly, the issue of strengthening local governments emerged strongly during the two-year long caretaker government (CG) from 2007-2009, and the caretaker government revived the Upazila system in 2008 through an Ordinance which established the Upazila Parishad as a truly free and independent local government body directly elected by the people, but gave no powers to MPs as advisers. Later, it repealed the Upazila Parishad Act as a whole and made a new one, the Local Government (Upazila Parishad) Ordinance 2008. An executive officer told reporters that MPs are dictating the district Parishads' activities "In fact, the Upazila executive officers, who are secretaries to the Parishads, are running the Upazila Parishads on the advice of MPs," When the Upazila Parishad gets an allocation of annual development programmes, MPs send a list of projects to implement in their constituencies, he said. "We have nothing to do but implement the projects prescribed by MPs," the Chief Executive Officer said<sup>19</sup>.

Local government is based on community governance, and focused on citizen-centered local governance. It is the primary agent for the citizens and leader and gatekeeper for shared rule, is responsive and accountable to local voters. The UNO has to maintain horizontal as well as vertical coordination. As regards to horizontal coordination he/she is to coordinate with other Upazila officers of different departments, visit their programs, oversee the progress of the development programs and report to the higher authority through deputy commissioner to the concerned line ministries. The UNO maintains vertical coordination through Deputy Commissioner and Divisional Commissioner to the concerned line ministries. Proper coordination between the UNO and other Upazila level officers is essential for efficient implementation of development programs and projects of different departments in the Upazila.<sup>20</sup> As coordinator of the Upazila administration the UNO has to harmonize relationship with the officers of the nation building departments. There has been a dispute between the generalists and specialist officers at the Upazila level. The specialist officers working at the Upazila level were placed under the administrative control of the UNO. The UNO was not merely the first among the equals but also was given full administrative control over all other functionaries.<sup>21</sup> Solaiman et al (1997) studied the situation of Thana (now Upazila) administration in respect of planning, coordination and management of development activities. It focused on five areas: inter-departmental relationship, planning and implementation of development activities, resource mobilization, performance of training activities, role in supply and services and performance of decision making process of local government at the Thana level.

As chairman of the Upazila Law and Order committee the UNO also plays a significant role in maintaining law and order and peace in the Upazila. He/she has to provide lawful instructions to the officers in charge of the police station as well as the Union parishad chairmen. The UNO is also responsible for conducting public examinations, national, local

---

<sup>18</sup> The Daily New Age, November 14, 2007

<sup>19</sup> The Daily Star, October 3, 2010

<sup>20</sup> Sarker, Parimal. (2011). The role of the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) in coordination process at Upazila administration in Bangladesh, Master in Public Policy and Governance Program, Department of General and Continuing Education, North South University, Bangladesh, p. 3

<sup>21</sup> Ali, Shawkat, A.M.M., 1986. Politics, development and Upazila. Dhaka: NILG & Sarker, Parimal. (2011). The role of the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) in coordination process at Upazila administration in Bangladesh, Master in Public Policy and Governance Program, Department of General and Continuing Education, North South University, Bangladesh, p. 5

government elections, to conduct mobile courts etc. Success of the above mentioned tasks need effective coordination between the UNO and other Upazila based officers including law enforcing agency i.e. police. Law and Order Committee is entrusted in maintaining law and order at Upazila level. He/she has to work as a crisis manager in managing disaster and natural calamities. On the whole the UNO has to coordinate all the development initiatives/programs of all the departments in the Upazila.<sup>22</sup> It can maintain checks and balance and avoid conflicts and bickering. It creates an environment where the officers can develop more interactive relationship which facilitates voluntary coordination. It can facilitate UNO's role as coordinator by adequately strengthening him/her as an effective leader in the Upazila level. Committees comprise a small number of members who can effectively participate in the decision making process. The officers feel confident in sharing valuable opinions in a small forum like committee and they become more participative and cooperative when their opinions are valued in the meetings. It has been argued that committee system as an important mechanism of coordination secures inter-departmental cooperation (Ahmad 1991, p.34). The Divisional Commissioner is instructed to inspect an Upazila bimonthly.<sup>23</sup>

To strengthen the Upazila and Union Parishad system in Bangladesh the World Bank suggested basic reforms to the legal framework for local governance to clarify powers and functions and to organize an effective system to supervise the performance of the Upazila along with some other recommendations (World Bank 2007). At present there are five different units and institutions of local government for urban and rural areas. Rural local government consists of three tiers—Zila Parishad, Upazila Parishad (UZP) and Union Parishad. The second tier is considered as the most important of all.<sup>24</sup> Related to<sup>25</sup> specific projects funded by the World Bank and other donors, there are various World Bank reports analyzing how local governance can be strengthened in Bangladesh, specifically World Bank (2006) and World Bank (2012). Also undertaken for the World Bank, Robles (2011) reports on piloting conditional cash transfers through local governments in Bangladesh. Chowdhury and Al-Hossienie (2012) and Uddin (2013) examine what lessons Bangladesh can learn from the Japanese local government system. The role of the MP in upazila parishad should be in a manner that does not contradict with the duties and responsibilities of the chairman. To make local government institutions dynamic, accountable and effective there should be a free, permanent and neutral local government commission. It will distribute central allocation for each local institution and supervise, monitor financial and administrative functions, investigate complaints and contribute recommendations, policy formulation and research. Since 13 sections/subjects from 10 ministries/departments of Bangladesh government have been transferred to the upazila parishad, it has to be made effective. According to the UZP Act and rules 14 permanent committees in the parishad must be effective in all UZPs. Towards decentralized UZP, in the true sense, a change in attitudes among all elected representatives and government officials related with the local government is essential. The government and other development partners and international organizations may design

<sup>22</sup> Sarker, Parimal. (2011). The role of the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) in coordination process at Upazila administration in Bangladesh, Master in Public Policy and Governance Program, Department of General and Continuing Education, North South University, Bangladesh, pp. 52-53

<sup>23</sup> Cabinet Division, mapabe, je: pro-2/5(52)96-97/11(70), February 12, 2002

<sup>24</sup> Tamanna, Meheri and Afroz, Farhana. (November 1, 2015). Local Government in Bangladesh: The Quest for Legal Reforms, Covering Policy Issues from South Asia, Retrieve from: <http://southasiajournal.net/local-government-in-bangladesh-the-quest-for-legal-reforms/>

<sup>25</sup> Hossain, Md. Anwar. (January 2015). Ensuring Accountability and Transparency at Local Level Finance: A Study from Sylhet Sadar Upazila, The Bangladesh Development Research Working Paper Series (BDRWPS) is a peer reviewed working paper series of the Bangladesh Development Research Center (BDRC) & Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST), p. 1, Retrieve from: [http://www.bangladeshstudies.org/files/WPS\\_no25.pdf](http://www.bangladeshstudies.org/files/WPS_no25.pdf)

training programs and participative dialogue sessions to reduce power seeking tendencies and make them local people and service oriented.

### **Problems of Upazila Parishad**

The recently implemented mandatory advisory role for the members of the parliament (MPs) has complicated the role of the local government and the interference by MPs in local government affairs has weakened the independence of local government.<sup>26</sup> Bangladesh has a relatively a long experience and familiarity with local government and administration, but an appropriate structure of local government is yet to be established. Various attempts have been made to restructure the local government before independence, but local government in Bangladesh is typically dominated by central bureaucrats and politicians those who lead from the centre. The issue of strengthening local governments was a priority during the two-year long Caretaker Government (CG) of Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed from 2007 to 2009, and under pressure from the civil society the Local Government (Upazila Parishad) Ordinance was passed in 2008 setting up the Upazila Parishad as a free and independent local government organization directly elected by the people. The role of Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) was supposed to be limited to secretarial functions of the Upazila Parishad, supported by the new posts of Upazila Chairman, and Vice Chairman (the latter reserved for women, to ensure women's participations in the Upazila Parishad, although their powers are limited). There are also various conflicts between politicians and bureaucrats in different local government agencies over policy implementation, and resources. Relations between public representatives and officials at the Upazila level are strained because of an unclear allocation of authority, and people suffer as a result poor public services.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, recently the government approved a proposal for an Upazila Parishad Bill to make the UNO the Parishad's principal executive officer vested with financial powers.<sup>28</sup> Now, even three years after being elected, the Upazila Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen are unclear of their roles in relation to UNOs and local MPs.<sup>29</sup>

The Upazila Chairmen have been protesting against the Act since it was passed. According to the new law, recommended by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Local Government, elected Chairmen will be mainly in charge of planning and monitoring development programmes, which is likely to reduce the role of MPs in local government, The views and perceptions of local citizens are important in this regard. The core issue is whether local government will merely implement national programmes at the local level, or will be a self-ruled local administration, as defined in the amended Constitution, under Articles 9, 59, and 60 (Siddiqui, 2005). In this present pro-democracy climate, it is argued there that local government should be strengthened. Now the questions are; what is the present condition of Upazila? What should be the role of elected representatives in the local government and what are the views and perceptions of local people about the role of their elected representatives? This study aims to find out the answer of these questions, with an empirical perspective of local government especially in the case of Upazila administration as a significant tier of local government in Bangladesh. Alternatively, the MPs may constitute Divisional Development Councils on the understanding that they will play no role in the Union and Upazila

---

<sup>26</sup> Rahman, M. Sayadur. (December 11, 2012). Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh: Roles and Functions of Elected Representatives and Bureaucrats, *Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance*, p. 100, Retrieve from: <http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/ojs/index.php/cjlg>

<sup>27</sup> The Daily Star, April 24, 2010

<sup>28</sup> The Daily Star, April 20, 2010

<sup>29</sup> Rahman, M. Sayadur. (December 11, 2012). Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh: Roles and Functions of Elected Representatives and Bureaucrats, *Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance*, p. 101 Retrieve from: <http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/ojs/index.php/cjlg>

Parishads.<sup>30</sup> Third, the Local Government Ministry should help strengthen associations of local government elected functionaries at all levels in order to increase their lobbying power, facilitate local government training and solve intra-local government problems.

The road to local government has been uncertain even at the best of times. Barely a week ago there was talk of resuscitating the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998, and keeping the supreme power with the MP's. In the end better sense prevailed and just as people had given up hope the government surprised us. The power was handed back to the elected upazila parishad leaders, though with some constraints, with MP's acting as advisors, rather than rulers. Yet questions still remain as to how the MP's will behave as and there is no clear demarcation of their powers and activities. This week we look at the history of upazila parishads from their inception, to Supreme Court rulings the controversy over article 25, as we also analyse how the new local government system will work.<sup>31</sup> The system of upazila parishad elections can be traced back to the early 80's, when H.M. Ershad decided to make local government one of his main priorities. In 1985 the first elections took place and by the early 90's there was no real barometer to measure the success or failure of the system. With a return to democracy in 1991 BNP clearly spelled out their views on the topic by scrapping upazila parishads all together. Clearly the concept was not in line with what BNP envisioned local government to be. Interestingly this is when the real problems began to surface. Aside from the promulgation of an act in 1998, nothing had been done to develop local government and the upazila parishads in more than 15 years. That changed appreciably when the caretaker government came into power. While they started out as more reformist minded than they ended, it would be incorrect to say that they did not take the challenge of local government by the horns. They put together a Local Government Commission and the Upazila Parishad ordinance (2008), both which proved to be progressive and a step in the right direction. Most importantly under the caretaker government's rule a date was finally set for the upazila parishad elections. Around the country people were filled with hope that finally the local government system was being overhauled and that there would be both quantitative and qualitative change. With what seemed like a reasonably free and fair Election Commission a date was set for the upazila parishad elections after the general elections. The decision was criticised from some quarters but no one vehemently opposed it, finally the 22nd of January was set as the date local government would be reborn.<sup>32</sup> Soon after the Awami League won the elections, there was an overwhelming sense of hope that the upazila parishad elections would be held in the same free and fair manner as the general elections. The elections proved to be rocky, as there were claims of vote rigging, ballot stuffing and embarrassingly even polling stations being taken over. They next decided to drop Upazila Parishad Ordinance 2008, and disband the Local Government Commission. The move was not met with much fanfare. By dropping the Upazila Parishad Ordinance 2008, and claiming the Upazila Parishad Act 1998 could be amended, the Awami League hinted that they believed that MPs should have the final say in local government. This was the very reason the Ordinance was even created, it was made to supersede the Upazila Parishad Act of 1998 which gave the final say in local government to the local MPs. "The problem with giving the MPs power over the chairmen is that the MP never really spends much of his time in his constituency. That may be where he is elected from, but most if not all of his time is spent in Dhaka to attend the Shangsahd. His thoughts are more central, he will see how the power brokers in Dhaka can

<sup>30</sup> Siddiqui, Kamal. (2000). Local Governance in Bangladesh, Leading issues and major challenges, The University Press Limited, Red Crescent Building, 114 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka, p. 36

<sup>31</sup> Rahman, Nader. (2009). Cover Story, The Road to Local Government, however Unsatisfactory, Retrieve from: [thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net), <http://www.thedailystar.net/magazine/2009/02/04/cover.htm>

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.



help an upazila parishad within his constitution. The need for good, decent and honest local government is that they should be able to find the answers to their problems locally, that is where the chairmen and his skills comes into play. If the problem cannot be solved locally, only then is it time to make a call to an MP to ask for help. The whole point of local governance is that the people govern and help themselves, but if the MP has supreme power over Chairmen, then the concept of local people governing themselves is lost. The move turned out to be wiser than before, as it not only pleased the hundreds of newly elected Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen, but also showed that the Awami League was ready and willing to rise to the challenge of local government. Interestingly the bill kept the provision for MPs to be 'advisors' to Chairmen. It is not entirely clear as to why that provision was kept after the MP's power had been curtailed. Whether the move will foster a stronger relationship between MPs and Chairmen remains to be seen, as the role of the advisor is a grey area that needs to be defined clearly. But the concessions made by the lawmakers does give hope that after years of being on life support local government will may finally find a way out of the darkness into the light.

The Upazila could not perform its functions due to the lack of delegation of authority (autonomy), centrally controlled administration and planning, and direct interference of bureaucrats and lawmakers. In spite of this local government institutions are playing a crucial role in promoting decentralization and boosting rural development in Bangladesh. As an institution, the history of local government in Bangladesh is extensive but still it is struggling for the right structure to work on. The new legal framework of UZP in fact has increased the rift among UZP chairmen, UNO and MP, making it more difficult to work. In the context of Bangladesh some studies have been made to understand the existing role of bureaucrats and elected representatives at the upazila level which mainly focuses on the problems of coordination in upazila administration. Factors like functional area and generalist-specialist conflict, lack of proper orientation in bureaucratic rules and procedures, lack of mutual trust and excessive central control are identified as influential factors. However, the studies are not adequate enough to analyze the triangle of relationship of the UNO-MP-UZPC and no significant study on the legal framework which creates the anomalies and controversies in upazila parishad of the UNO in upazila administration has yet been conducted in Bangladesh. Therefore, this study can be of great use to fill the existing gaps in the literature of effective upazila parishad in Bangladesh especially on the legal issues which need to be addressed for strengthening the upazila parishad.

### **Recommendations**

On the basis of above discussion selected recommendations have been identified:

- Power and functions of the Adviser and other members of the Upazila Parishad should be classified and clearly defined by the rules.
- Law should be modified in such a way that both local MP and Upazila Parishad can work together for the welfare of the people.<sup>33</sup>
- Government Officials and Upazila Parishad activities should be clarified.
- Citizen Charter should be made for the Upazila Parishad.
- The function of the Vice chairmen should be clarified by the laws.
- Upazila Parishad chairman must not give any unlawful pressure to any government official.
- Upazila Parishad should be accountable for their works.

---

<sup>33</sup> Alam, M. Kauser. (July 13, 2016). Upazila Parishad Bangladesh, Activities of Upazila Parishad of Bangladesh, Retrieve from: <http://upazilaparishad.blogspot.com/>

## Conclusion

According to the constitution and Upazila Parishad Act, the functions of the parishads include dealing with local administrative and establishment issues, ensuring law and order and services related to public welfare, and formulation and implementation of local economic and social development plans. Lawmakers, who were made advisers to the upazila parishads, have also been controlling many local development activities engaging their party people to ensure their stronghold in the areas. Almost all upazila parishads have yet to form a set of departmental standing committees to carry out their tasks properly as well, because of a lack of guidelines. This study reveals that a strong local government system (where strong coherence is present among various actors) can ensure good governance through transparency, accountability, effective participation and equal opportunities for all. Most importantly, this system can ensure development at the grassroots level, but local citizens lack awareness of this issue. Under the 2008 legislation, at least theoretically, the Upazila Parishad have lost the characteristics of local government bodies, since MPs are authorized to advise on the activities of these bodies. Ambiguity in role definition and conflicting Interests between bureaucrats and elected representatives render the local government especially Upazila Parishad dysfunctional. The objective of all, at least at the level of rhetoric, was to introduce participatory and accountable local governance through decentralization of functions and powers to local elected institution. All this governments also recognized the relevance of the roll of decentralized local institution in planning and implementing need based development projects for poverty alleviation and reduction of socio-economic inequality. The upazilla system of local government is one of efforts this process. There are some problems in Upazila Government. If every concerned of Upazilla Government do their duties and responsibilities it will help to develop the life of local people and full-fill the Government. The present government, in line with its commitment to decentralize administration, has declared upazila as the focal point of administration regenerating upazila parishad through participatory elections. The Government has been preparing and implementing various short, medium and long term plans and programs of development in all sectors of the country in order to realize the goals of Vision 2021.

## References

- Ali, AMM Shawkat. (May 5, 2014). Upazila Parishad, Banglapedia, National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh, Retrieve from: [http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Upazila\\_Parishad&oldid=6391](http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Upazila_Parishad&oldid=6391)
- Ali, Shawkat, A.M.M., 1986. Politics, development and Upazila. Dhaka: NILG & Sarker, Parimal. (2011). The role of the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) in coordination process at Upazila administration in Bangladesh, Master in Public Policy and Governance Program, Department of General and Continuing Education, North South University, Bangladesh, p. 5
- Alam, M. Kauser. (July 13, 2016). Upazila Parishad Bangladesh, Activities of Upazila Parishad of Bangladesh, Retrieve from: [http://upazilaparishad.blogspot.com/Cabinet\\_Division\\_mapabe\\_je\\_pro-2/5\(52\)96-97/11\(70\), February 12, 2002](http://upazilaparishad.blogspot.com/Cabinet_Division_mapabe_je_pro-2/5(52)96-97/11(70), February 12, 2002).
- Habib, Wasim Bin. (January 22, 2009). All about upazila parishad, The Daily Star, Retrieve from: <http://www.thedailystar.net/news-detail-72392>
- Hyder, Yusuf. (1989). Development the Upazila Way, published by Abdur Rahim Azad Anik, 171, Bara Maghbazar, Dhaka-1217, p. 11
- Hyder, Yusuf. (1989). Development the Upazila Way, published by Abdur Rahim Azad Anik, 171, Bara Maghbazar, Dhaka-1217, p. 17
- Hossain, Md. Anwar. (January 2015). Ensuring Accountability and Transparency at Local Level Finance: A Study from Sylhet Sadar Upazila, The Bangladesh Development

Research Working Paper Series (BDRWPS) is a peer reviewed working paper series of the Bangladesh Development Research Center (BDRC) & Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST), p. 1

Retrieve from: [http://www.bangladeshstudies.org/files/WPS\\_no25.pdf](http://www.bangladeshstudies.org/files/WPS_no25.pdf)

Ibid.

Ibid, p. 36

Ibid, pp. 46-47.

Rahman, M. Sayadur. (December 11, 2012). Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh: Roles and Functions of Elected Representatives and Bureaucrats, Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance, p. 101

Retrieve from: <http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/ojs/index.php/cjlg>

Rahman, M. Sayadur. (December 11, 2012). Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh: Roles and Functions of Elected Representatives and Bureaucrats, Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance, p. 102,

Retrieve from: <http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/ojs/index.php/cjlg>

Rahman, M. Sayadur. (December 11, 2012). Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh: Roles and Functions of Elected Representatives and Bureaucrats, Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance, p. 100, Retrieve from:

<http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/ojs/index.php/cjlg>

Rahman, M. Sayadur. (December 11, 2012). Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh: Roles and Functions of Elected Representatives and Bureaucrats, Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance, p. 101

Retrieve from: <http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/ojs/index.php/cjlg>Sarker, Parimal. (2011).

Rahman, Nader. (2009). Cover Story, The Road to Local Government, however Unsatisfactory, Retrieve from: [thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net),

<http://www.thedailystar.net/magazine/2009/02/04/cover.htm>

Siddiqui, Kamal. (2000). Local Governance in Bangladesh, Leading issues and major challenges, The University Press Limited, Red Creacent Building, 114 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka, p. 36.

Selim, Mohammad & Ahmed, Saifuddin. (2013). The Functioning of Upazila Parishad is Bangladesh: A case Study, Journal of Politics & Administration, Department of Politics & Public Administration, Islamic University, Kushtia 7003, Bangladesh, Vol. 4, Nos. 1 & 2, pp. 108-115

Sarker, Parimal. (2011). The role of the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) in coordination process at Upazila administration in Bangladesh, Master in Public Policy and Governance Program, Department of General and Continuing Education, North South University, Bangladesh, pp. 43-44.

Siddiqui, Kamal. (2000). Local Governance in Bangladesh, Leading issues and major challenges, The University Press Limited, Red Creacent Building, 114 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka, pp. 27-28.

Sarker, Parimal. (2011). The role of the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) in coordination process at Upazila administration in Bangladesh, Master in Public Policy and Governance Program, Department of General and Continuing Education, North South University, Bangladesh, pp. 52-53

Tamanna, Meheri and Afroz, Farhana. (November 1, 2015). Local Government in Bangladesh: The Quest for Legal Reforms, Covering Policy Issues from South Asia, Retrieve from: <http://southasiajournal.net/local-government-in-bangladesh-the-quest-for-legal-reforms/>

Tamanna, Meheri and Afroz, Farhana. (November 1, 2015). Local Government in Bangladesh: The Quest for Legal Reforms, Covering Policy Issues from South Asia,

Retrieve from: <http://southasiajournal.net/local-government-in-bangladesh-the-quest-for-legal-reforms/>

Tamanna, Meheri and Afroz, Farhana. (November 1, 2015). Local Government in Bangladesh: The Quest for Legal Reforms, Covering Policy Issues from South Asia, Retrieve from: <http://southasiajournal.net/local-government-in-bangladesh-the-quest-for-legal-reforms/>

The Daily New Age, November 14, 2007

The Daily Star, October 3, 2010

The Daily Star, April 24, 2010

The Daily Star, April 20, 2010

The role of the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) in coordination process at Upazila administration in Bangladesh, Master in Public Policy and Governance Program, Department of General and Continuing Education, North South University, Bangladesh, p. 3

Upazilla System as a Local Government Body, Law Teacher, Constitutional Law, Retrieve from: <http://www.lawteacher.net/free-law-essays/constitutional-law/upazilla-system-as-a-local-government-body-constitutional-law-essay.php>

Upazilla System As A Local Government Body, Law Teacher, Constitutional Law, Retrieve from: <http://www.lawteacher.net/free-law-essays/constitutional-law/upazilla-system-as-a-local-government-body-constitutional-law-essay.php>

Upazila Parishad Manuel, Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, Peoples Republic of Bangladesh (July, 2013), Section: 4, Law No. 27 of 2009. Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, Peoples Republic of Bangladesh (February 15, 2010) Bangladesh Gazette, Upazila Parishad (works implementation) Rules 2010

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Upazilas of Bangladesh, Retrieve from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upazilas\\_of\\_Bangladesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upazilas_of_Bangladesh)