People's Participation for Good Governance: A Study of Rural Development Programs in Bangladesh

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DECLARATION

I, Waheduzzaman, declare that the PhD thesis entitled 'People's Participation for Good Governance: A Study of Rural Development Programs in Bangladesh' is no more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Any previously published material that has been used in this thesis, to the best of my knowledge, has been duly acknowledged. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is indeed my own work.

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(WAHEDUZZAMAN)

ABSTRACT

International development agencies and developed countries are demanding participatory good governance in local government bodies in developing countries to maximise outcomes from development plan implementations. To comply with this demand, the Government of Bangladesh introduced decentralisation, reforms and deregulation measures to use local government bodies to implement most development programs in rural areas with the engagement of local people. However, many researchers argue that there is little scope for the people to be effectively engaged in the affairs of Bangladesh local government. One of the major reasons for this ineffectiveness is the barrier caused by government bureaucrats and politicians. Unfortunately, none of the research studies to date have revealed precisely how these localised political and bureaucratic arrangements create barriers to participation.

Considering these circumstances, this study has been designed to investigate the specific circumstances at the local level and the barriers to the process of people's participation in local government bodies. The research also seeks to find possible ways to increase people's participation in development programs which can contribute to good governance. The nature of the research is, therefore, to track both the subjective (attitude of government and elected local government officials and local people), and objective factors (administrative and legal systems for people's participation), which are causing barriers to participation. Considering such a big research area, this research study has adopted a qualitative approach to obtain insightful answers to all research questions. The people related to the local development programs that were selected for this research were interviewed with semi-structured questionnaires. To further substantiate the findings, documents related to selected projects were collected, and the present state of those projects and the uses of their outcomes were physically observed.

The findings have revealed that there are manifold problems contributing to the ineffectiveness of people's participation. Firstly, none of the actors – such as government officials, elected representatives or local people – are aware of the value of people's participation. Secondly, the mechanisms of direct people's participation through different management committees are faulty. Thirdly, there is no robust legal system to ensure that people's participation is legitimate at the rural level. Fourthly, administrative decentralisation is incomplete, which has empowered government officials over elected representatives in relation to financial matters. Fifthly, the assessment systems in relation to people's involvement, and their satisfaction over the outcomes of the development programs, are inoperative. Finally, lack of social capital, mainly trust of local people in their elected leaders, is hindering true people's participation through their elected leaders. This indicates that there are doubts whether or not the western democratic type of

participatory local governance demanded by development agencies is relevant to local systems of social organisation, and if it would be achievable in Bangladesh.

Based on these findings this research has recommended a new model to overcome the uncovered barriers to effective people's participation in aid-assisted local development programs. The new model suggests the inclusion of a 'People's School' (like a Citizens' Committee) elected by Non-Government-Organisations (NGOs) within local government areas. On the one hand, this People's School will be involved in all local projects and will inform development agencies about any imperfection via the NGOs, which will ensure the accountability of government and elected officials for delivering services. On the other hand, it will work as a civil society group, networking with other civil society groups i.e. NGO-groups at the rural levels, which will also help to develop social capital. Above all, promulgation of laws and rules are sought to provide legal bindings for the new people's participation system, and to develop trust among different actors by clarifying their roles in the system. Thus the new model is equipped to overcome localised bureaucratic and political barriers, and to contribute to the effective use of aid by international development agencies and developed nations.

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ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADP	Annual Development Programs
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
DFID	Department for International Development, UK
DPE	Directorate of Primary Education
EFA	Education For All
GB	Grameen Bank
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GG	Good Governance
GO	Government Organisation
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
HBMC	Hat-Bazaar Management Committee
IAP2	International Association for Public Participation
IDA	International Development Agencies
IMED	Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LGED	Local Government Engineering Department
LGI	Local Government Institutions
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MLGRD&C	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperative
MPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
MMC	Market Management Committee
MP	Member of Parliament
MPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NPM	New Public Management
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PARC	Public Administration Reforms Commission
PCT	Public Choice Theory
PEDP	Primary Education Development Project
PIC	Project Implementation Committee
PP	People's Participation
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategies Paper
PVM	Public Value Management
PVT	Public Value Theory
RDP	Rural Development Project
RTI	Right To Information
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programs
SMC	School Management Committee
TQM	Total Quality Management
UDCC	Upazila Development Coordination Committee
UEdC	Upazila Education Committee
UHBMC	Upazila Hat-Bazaar (Market) Management Committee
UNDP	United Nations Development Programs
UNESCAP	UN Economic & Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
UP	Union Parishad
UPZ	Upazila
USAID	US Agency for International Development
WB	The World Bank
ZP	Zila Parishad (District Council)

CHAPTER 1.
OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

'The governance challenges in Bangladesh are so great that this element of the investment climate merits special attention. Strengthening government institutions and the rule of law will do much to improve the climate for productivity, jobs, and growth. And it will be vital to the delivery of basic services to the poor...' Nicholas H. Sern, World Bank Chief Economist and Senior Vice President, (World Bank 2002a)

1.1   Introduction

The objective of this research is to explore the performance of local government bodies in the inclusion of local people in their development programs. To foster people's participation, reforms in local government bodies and governing systems have been going on for more than two decades in Bangladesh. However, till now, the people's participation process has not been effective, and the governing system has not been rated as a good one by concerned parties (Morshed 2007; Sarker 2006b; UNDP 2002; World Bank 1996; Zafarullah & Huque 2001).

Specifically, this study aims to investigate the barriers to engaging people in implementations of rural development programs. As people's participation underpins the quality of governance by influencing other causal factors such as transparency, accountability and predictability, development agencies demand participatory local governance for effective development (ADB 2004b; JICA 1995). Almost everywhere, rural development programs mainly have been implemented through the local government bodies. Therefore, this study attempts to investigate the strengths and weaknesses of present local governing systems in Bangladesh with respect to participation. The study also attempts to explore how the meaning and mechanisms of the notion of people's participation that has been imported from the developed democratic economies through international aid agencies are perceived and understood in a developing country such as Bangladesh.

This chapter discusses the background, rationale and significance of the research, the research objectives and the research questions. It defines the key concepts used in this thesis, and provides a brief overview of the research approach, the limitations of the research and the organisation of the thesis.

1.2   Context of the Research

The establishment of good governance has now become central in the discourse among development workers, social researchers, international development agencies and scholars.

However, initiatives for achieving good governance have not been equally initiated all around the world. In developed countries, adjusting public management in line with good governance has happened in the last two decades of the last century (Hughes 2003; Saxena 2005), while installation of these programs is only recently being attempted in developing countries (Khwaja 2004; Santiso 2001; Shah 2006b). Though the end goal of good governance is economic development, it finds different meanings in different countries. At one end, developed nations see 'good governance' as 'less government', that is, mainly focused on less intervention of governments into private businesses and promoting economic growth without many bureaucratic barriers (Gaventa 2004a; Kenny 2007; Rhodes 2000). At the other end, developing nations see good governance as decentralised, legitimised, and participatory government: that is, mainly focused on pursuing development through empowering people, eradicating corruption, ensuring legally binding and accountable administrations to achieve pro-people developments, which ultimately boost economic growth through the highest use of development by the people (Andrews & Shah 2003; Shah 2006a). Thus good governance has appeared in developing countries as an instrument of reducing the poverty of the mass people (Grindle 2004). But the question is: how does good governance work to attain pro-people developments?

Good governance, when established in a society that ensures the accountability of the governing authority, develops transparency in its workings and binds the authorities to follow local laws (ADB 2000; Blair 2000; Brett 2003; Sirker & Cosic 2007). Thus, because of accountability mechanisms, people can hold controlling power over authorities to provide better services and developments (Hope Sr. 2009; Sirker & Cosic 2007). Similarly, transparent systems make work processes clear and evident to the users; and conformity to local laws makes a development possible to implement legally (Manowong & Ogunlana 2006). Hence people can take satisfaction in using that type of development and have ownership over the development, from which economic benefit can flow on to the national economy (Sobhan 2002). Again a question could arise: how can accountability, transparency and legitimacy be ensured through good governance?

Researchers are divided in expressing their answers the above question. Some authors support establishment of good governance first to promote people's participation (Hope Sr. 2009; Hye 2000; Sobhan 2000). To them, when good governance is established in a society people get opportunity to be involved in local affairs. Some researchers, at the other end, support ensuring people's participation for achieving good governance (Brett 2003; Gibson, Lacy & Dougherty 2005). To them, through regular involvement in local affairs, people become empowered, form civil society organisations and help in achieving good governance (Arko-cobbah 2006; Stivers 2009). This research study supports the latter view, that is, ensure people's participation in order

to achieve good governance (see Section 2.4 for details). It is found that the participation of people in the governing process makes local authority accountable to the local people for delivering services and development (Blair 2000; Sirker & Cosic 2007). At the same time, the jobs of the authorities become transparent to the local people, as the people are engaged in all of their functions (Manowong & Ogunlana 2006; World Bank 2002b). Similarly, a program becomes predictable and legitimate to people because they force the authority, with their involvement, to follow the local laws and regulations. Therefore, an authority that engages people in its affairs supposedly ensures good governance. Observing this nexus between good governance and people's participation, international development agencies and other scholars have envisaged that good governance should include four major elements: accountability, transparency, predictability and participation (ADB 2000; Besancon 2003; World Bank 2006). Some researchers identified these four major characteristics of good governance as four pillars of a building (ADB 2004a; Aminuzzaman 2006). However, people's participation is considered to be the central element of good governance, as it directly influences the other elements (Azmat, Alam & Coghill 2009; Siroros 2002). Thus, because of the direct impact of people's participation on good governance, researchers now call it participatory governance (Putnam 1993), democratic governance (Barten et al. 2002), community governance (Sullivan 2001) or direct governance (Blakeley & Evans 2008).

In general, the mass of the people live close to the local government institutions (Barten et al. 2002; Morphet 2008), particularly in developing countries. For instance, in Bangladesh eighty percent of people live in the rural areas and thus close to the rural local government institutions (Sen, Mujeri & Shahabuddin 2004). In this way, 'people' means local people, who are deemed important to participate in the local government affairs that affect them. In this context, another question arises: how much people's participation is enough for ensuring good governance?

Some researchers have argued that people should participate in different stages: for example sometimes for informing or consulting, sometimes for more empowering, depending on the characteristics of the development program (Bishop & Davis 2002; OECD 2000; Parker & Serrano 2000; Paul 1987). They have also argued that participation should be different for different stages of development activities, such as for selecting, budgeting, monitoring or evaluating stages of a development program. In contrast, some researchers have claimed people should participate from the start to the end of the development processes (Brett 2003; Momen, Hossain & Begum 2005; Pateman 1970; Shand & Arnberg 1996; Thomas 1993; Wilcox 1994). They have also argued that, through this continuous participation, people obtain power to control the development activities and make decisions according to their choice, which consequently makes development outcomes work in their favour (Arnstein 1971; Momen,

Hossain & Begum 2005; Shand & Arnberg 1996). When people participate only in the selection or initial stage, the quality of the work may not be ensured by the authority. Similarly when people participate only in the evaluation stage, project selection may not happen according to the people's choice. So, though a good quality of development may be ensured through participatory evaluation, the development may not be used by the people if they are not satisfied with the project initially selected by the authority unilaterally. This suggests that only continuous involvement of people with local development programs can ensure favourable outcomes.

For a long time, people have been seen as recipients of local development, particularly in developing countries, so involving people directly with development programs needs a substantial change in all related actors and systems (ESCAP 2008). On the one hand, the government itself, including the local government authority, and local elected representatives – who have been representing local people in government works for a long time – need to be aligned with the new approach. On the other hand, local people, including private sector participants who are major sources of funds and ultimate users of development activities, also need to adjust their mindset to join in development works that affect them, rather than just silently accepting the works.

Considering these requisites for good governance through people's participation in developing countries, international development agencies (IDA) and aid giving governments are asking for reforms in recipient governments and governing systems (Sarker 2003; Zafarullah & Khan 2005). For every aid assisted program, the IDAs now put the condition of involving people and ensuring good governance (Khwaja 2004; Santiso 2001). The objective is that developing nations will work for the implementation of good governance and will achieve pro-people development which will then find its highest use among the local people and help to reduce the poverty of those local people (Grindle 2004). To comply with this condition, the Government of Bangladesh has also introduced several reforms in government, mainly local government systems to foster people's participation to ensure good governance (Sarker 2006b). Therefore, now it is seen as important to assess how much this western idea of achieving good governance has accomplished, and whether it is able to be implemented through the current approach that is being practised by developing countries like Bangladesh.

1.3 Justification of the Research

In this time of globalisation, the rich governments and international development agencies (IDAs) are trying to lift poor and developing economies by alleviating poverty through effective

development (Grindle 2004; Rajan & Subramanian 2007). In this milieu, IDAs, particularly the World Bank and International Monitory Fund (IMF), started Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) during the 1970s and 1980s in aid-receiving countries (Gondwe 1992; Mwabu & Thorbecke 2004). The main objective of structural adjustment programs was to change the governing processes through changing different regulations and policies (Azmat 2007). However, in 1989 the World Bank found that structural adjustment programs were not serving the purpose of aid assistance in developing countries. Reasons for the failure of the programs were identified as misreading the local socio-economic values and imposing western models of macroeconomic management and market liberalisation in the developing countries (Gondwe 1992; Mwabu & Thorbecke 2004; Squire 1991). However, the main reason for failure in the Bank's view, was the absence of good governance in the recipient developing countries, which hindered the highest use of aid by the recipient governments (Azmat & Coghill 2005; Azmat & Samaratunga 2007; Santiso 2001). So in 1989 the World Bank suggested that without good governance the development outcomes would not be effective (Santiso 2001; World Bank 2006). In other words, without participation, local people would not accept and harness a development output that can yield economic contribution. Since then, development agencies and developed governments – development partners – put the condition of ensuring good governance in making developments effective and pro-people.

To comply with these conditions, the Government of Bangladesh has been trying to reform its governing process vis-à-vis local government institutions (Sarker 2006b). Among these initiatives, the Government of Bangladesh has created local government institutions close to the rural people, to use these bodies to implement most development programs to the rural areas with the involvement of local people (Morshed 2007). Amongst other changes, the major ones are: organisational structure, source of income, ways to increase revenue earning, autonomy, relations with local members of parliament, empowerment of rural women, and management systems of the local government institutions (Khan 2000). Whatever the changes that occurred, for a long time these local institutions have been governed by representatives directly elected by the local people (Siddiqui 2005). Moreover, the government also introduced new guidelines to encourage local people to participate in local development programs through elected management committees.

Since the 1990s, the local people of Bangladesh have been electing their representatives through direct vote and also representing themselves in management committees related to development programs. In fact, historically, people of rural Bangladesh have been participating through their representatives in local government affairs, which indicates that there is, ostensibly, no constraint on participation within these bodies (Rahman 2000; Waheduzzaman 2008b). But,

despite a long practice of participation, local people have failed to achieve local good governance and thus pro-people development (Zafarullah & Khan 2005). Several researchers also support the point that good governance in developing countries is impeded by lack of opportunity for people's participation in government policy formulation and decision-making (UNDP 2006b; World Bank 2002b). Nonetheless, many international and national development agencies and researchers argue that there is little scope for the people to be effectively engaged in the affairs of Bangladesh local government (Siddiqui 2005; World Bank 1996; Zafarullah & Huque 2001). The United Nations Development Program pointed out that public participation in development activities is far from being an efficient tool of governance in Bangladesh (UNDP 2002). Similarly, other researchers also argued that the ongoing system of people's participation in development programs has been shown to be very ineffective in Bangladesh local government (ADB 2006b; Morshed 2007; Siddiqui 2005).

Because of this failure to engage people in development programs, poverty in rural Bangladesh is not being alleviated at the expected pace (Islam 2007). Researchers have found the existence of many barriers to effective people's participation in local government affairs. They argue that most of these barriers are created by government bureaucrats and politicians (Morshed 1997; Siddiqui 2005; Zafarullah & Khan 2005). Unfortunately, none of the research studies have revealed precisely how these localised bureaucratic and political arrangements create barriers to participation. However, one research study found that some structural factors: such as poverty, unequal power and social hierarchy, fear of unjust use of power, unawareness of participation values, sense of inferiority, politically exclusion /deprivation, and lack of knowledge about the citizenry rights of the people, have inhibited local people in joining in local development activities (Mahmud 2002, 2004). While this study was more in-depth, Mahmud (2004) only sees the problem from the bottom side, that is, from the people's perspective.

However, people's participation is not a matter of single actor activity in rural Bangladesh; it also includes elected public representatives, local government officials, and the existing system and legal frameworks as well (Aminuzzaman & Sharmin 2006; Zafarullah & Khan 2005). So, further research is needed to see the problem through a holistic approach: including all actors responsible for effective participation in rural Bangladesh.

To overcome these political, structural and bureaucratic barriers, some authors have suggested increasing 'political and administrative autonomy' for local government institutions, effectively organising common people around economic and social enterprises and scheduling a 'realistic program' for the local level (Zafarullah & Khan 2005, p. 194). However, they have not spelled out clearly how these people would be organised, and how people should participate in

articulating realistic programs. Conversely, some other researchers have suggested properly decentralising the governing authority to the local representatives, and the introduction of new public management (NPM) to change the attitude of the governing authority (Khan 2000; Sarker 2006a). However, these researchers have not outlined how these local representatives would incorporate direct people's participation and how NPM could ensure the participation of the rural poor. Nevertheless, looking into citizen participation in the rural health sector in Bangladesh, one research study identified formal schooling and mobilisation of the poor as necessary to enhance their capability for participation (Mahmud 2004). These suggestions are very limited, because they overlook the whole process of people's participation in rural development programs in Bangladesh.

Thus it can be concluded that, despite grave concern about people's participation in local governance bodies, very little in-depth study has yet been done which totally identifies the underlying reasons for the ineffective participation of people in local government affairs. There is, moreover, some doubt as to whether the western democratic type of participatory local governance demanded by development agencies is relevant to local systems of social organisation and, therefore, achievable in Bangladesh. In these contexts, this study has been designed to investigate the specific circumstances at the local level and the barriers to the process of people's participation in local government bodies. The research seeks to figure out possible ways to confirm people's participation in development programs which can ensure good governance in a developing country like Bangladesh. This study seeks to fill this gap by identifying, first, the current limitations in people's participation and second, suggesting ways to enhance people's participation in local bodies in Bangladesh.

1.4   Significance of the Research

This study will be the first of its kind to provide a wider picture of the present working system in Bangladesh of the development and implementation of good governance strategies relating to rural development programs. The research will also be the first detailed study to identify barriers to people's effective participation in development programs in rural Bangladesh. Donors and international development agencies, and also the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) will be given a clear picture of the present position of governance in Bangladesh local government. The results of the research will offer a different model and a way to reach the target people for aid assistance. The study will illustrate how localised indigenous knowledge and forms of social organisation within civil society can be mobilised to provide more efficacious forms of assistance and governance. This suggests some implications for management at the community level. Particularly, this management includes a systematic

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engagement of local people with the local government bodies to implement development programs.

This research will also contribute to the analytical, academic and empirical knowledge related to the topic.

Analytical knowledge: This research will provide analytical knowledge of the role of people's participation in good governance in developing socio-economic countries such as Bangladesh. The impact of socio-cultural issues, such as social capital and civil society, in enhancing people's participation for achieving good governance also will be assessed through this study.

Academic knowledge: The study will provide a new classification of good governance on the basis of people's participation levels in government works. Engaging people in development works is not a 'one size fits all' procedure in different cultures and socio-economic conditions (OECD 2000). People's participation has to be understood and implemented with regard to the local context (Manowong & Ogunlana 2006). This research will provide insights into the details of people's participation in the context of the developing socio-economic conditions where civil society is underdeveloped.

Empirical knowledge: The study will increase the practical knowledge about making people's participation effective in implementing development programs, specifically in developing countries. The present scenario of good governance and people's participation in development programs in developing countries will also be illustrated by this study.

1.5   Research Objectives and Questions

As already mentioned, a number of research studies have asserted that, although rural people in Bangladesh are participating in development programs through their elected representatives, this participation has not been effective (Morshed 2007; Sarker 2003; Zafarullah & Huque 2001). These studies while useful remain limited insofar as they have not examined in any depth the barriers to participation. Moreover, the meaning and mechanism of the notion of people's participation that has been imported from the developed democratic countries through international aid agencies might remain somewhat unclear and ambiguous in a country such as Bangladesh. Considering this background, the basic research aim is to provide a wider understanding of people's participation that is relevant and effective within development programs implemented by local government bodies in the developing socio-economic context of Bangladesh. The research will thus explore the present practice of engaging people in development programs and identify the gap between this practice and the theories of participation. Hence, a broad research aim has been set to answer the question:

How could theories of people's participation be understood and adapted to support effective implementation of development programs through good governance in developing societies?

To address this question, the study has specific objectives to:

- investigate how people's participation varies within different socio-economic contexts looking at the differences between developed and developing societies;
- explore how people's participation adds value to good governance and maximises outcomes of development works, particularly to explore the meaning of people's participation for good governance in the Bangladesh context;
- evaluate the effectiveness of people's participation in terms of theories of people's participation and good governance specifically to discover the barriers to people's participation in local government programs in developing countries;
- identify a possible model for attaining an effective level of people's participation in the implementation of development programs in a developing economy such as Bangladesh.

The overarching research question of the study is to define concepts of people's participation that contribute to good governance for maximising the outcomes of development programs.

Research Question 1 –How is people's participation valued by different actors responsible for good governance in Bangladesh?

The answer to this question will be derived from a review of the extant official documents and Acts related to project implementation in Bangladesh local government. Feedback from interviews of local people and other actors also will be considered to explore how these stakeholders have perceived the value of people's participation in achieving good governance.

Research Question 2 – What are the strengths and weaknesses of Bangladesh local governance concerning people's participation to ensure good governance?

This question will be investigated through blending and integrating a variety of data collected through semi-structured questionnaires. Material will be further discussed through the physical observation of the finished projects. Data collected from interviews of key players and reports of the concerned development agencies also will be considered to assess projects' effectiveness.

Research Question 3- Is there any gap between theory and practice in ensuring good governance through people's participation in Bangladesh? If so, how can this be bridged?

Suggestions and expectations of the community, leaders, elites and bureaucrats will be critically examined and interpreted to answer this question. Moreover, the findings and propositions of development agencies, NGOs and other civil society actors in Bangladesh also will be incorporated to establish a broad base of acceptance for the expected model/system of people's participation.

1.6 Definition of Key Concepts

The key concepts that have been used in this research study are good governance, people's participation, Bangladesh local government institutions and local development programs.

1.6.1 Good Governance

Good governance or simply governance (World Bank 2007a) has been considered as an enormous concept (Barten et al. 2002), derived from the word government (Geddes 2005). Though some studies have defined governance and good governance differently (UNESCAP 2008), most authors mention them as synonymous (see Chapter 2). Whatever the debate over understanding of concepts, governance and good governance are seen as 'partnership and social inclusion' in politics and policies of concerned governments (Geddes 2005, p. 23).

Literally good governance means, what is not bad governance (Morshed 2007) or what is good enough governance (Grindle 2004), or that the level of goodness is high in governing processes (Besancon 2003). In this way it is suggested that good governance should be characterised as reduced corruption, improved accountability, adequately decentralised, well managed public resources, introduced proper laws and equality, restructured civil services and so on (Grindle 2004). Similarly the World Bank researchers mentioned six indicators that define a government as good or bad (Kaufmann, Kraay & Lobaton 1999). Hout (2002, p. 516) mentioned these indicators as follows:

Voice and accountability: the extent to which citizens of a country are able to participate in the selection of governments;

Political stability/lack of violence: the likelihood that the government in power will be destabilized or overthrown by possibly unconstitutional and/or violent means;

Government effectiveness: the quality of public service provision, the quality of the bureaucracy, the competence of civil servants, the independence of the civil service from political pressures and the credibility of the government's commitment to policies;

Regulatory burden: the incidence of market-unfriendly policies such as price controls or inadequate bank supervision, and the burdens imposed by excessive regulation in areas such as foreign trade and business development;

Rule of law: the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society;

Graft: the extent to which public power is used for private gain (corruption).

Researchers also assert that a one standard deviation increase of any of these governance criteria is associated with a 2½ fold increase in per capita income, a 4 fold decrease in infant mortality and a 15 to 25 percent increase in literacy (Azmat 2007; Kaufmann, Kraay & Lobaton 1999).

In contrast, to the above criteria, international development agencies (IDAs) such as the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programs (UNDP), and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have identified a number of basic components for good governance. Amongst these components four are common and universally recognised: accountability, participation, predictability, and transparency. By accountability it is understood that the governing authority would be answerable for its delivering of services. By participation the understanding is that local people and private sectors would be engaged with decision making processes. By predictability it is understood that, governing authority would make a decision implementable by following local laws and regulations. And finally, by transparency the understanding is that all the information that affects people should be available to the people (ADB 2000; Gurung 2000). This thesis also will use these four elements to define good governance (see Chapter 2).

As well as setting the criteria for good governance, development agencies also make the establishment of good governance a condition of aid and development assistance for the recipient country (Khwaja 2004; Rajan & Subramanian 2007; Santiso 2001). This approach was started in 1989 after the World Bank first recognized the crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa as a crisis of governance, and identified good public management as one of the major preconditions of the development assistance strategies for developing countries (Kaufmann, Kraay & Mastruzzi 2003). From then, international development agencies (IDAs) have also been helping, in various ways, the potential recipient countries to improve their governance condition. Participatory budgeting, that is, making local plans with the deliberations with local stakeholders, is one of the promising programs, which is led by the World Bank in different developing countries. Similarly, UNDP is helping different poor governments to achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, some researchers have argued that good governance is acceptable as a condition, but IDAs should not look into the quality of governance when selecting a country for receiving aid (Hout 2002; Pronk 2001). This research study, however, is not going to resolve this debate. Rather, it argues that this condition placed by the IDAs is a positive initiative for pro-people development in developing economies.

1.6.2 People's Participation

Participation has a wide range of definitions. On the one side, some researchers take participation to mean simply engaging with any particular activity (Bishop & Davis 2002; Paul 1987); on the other side, researchers define participation as a process through which people influence and share control over development initiatives (Arnstein 1971; Shand & Arnberg 1996; World Bank 1996). Supporters of the latter view have recommended different stages of people's participation process in local development programs. A metaphoric eight rung ladder of the participation process has been developed by Arnstein (1971), which is: 1) Manipulation, 2) Therapy, 3) Informing, 4) Consultation, 5) Placation, 6) Partnership, 7) Delegated power and 8) Citizen control. In contrast, Wilcox (1994) and the International Association for Public Participation (2003) proposed five stages of people's participation, which are: 1) Inform: one way communication; 2) Consult: two-way communication; 3) Involve: Deciding together; 4) Collaborate: Acting together; and 5) Empower: Supporting independent community interests. A detailed description about people's participation and its relation with good governance can be seen in Chapter 2.

This research will adopt the participation process described by Wilcox (1994) and the International Association of Public Participation (2003), but will consider four stages of participation instead of five. The stages 'involve' and 'collaboration' are symbiotic, together covering people's participation as working jointly, so this study merges them, and identifies the four stages as: 1) Informing, 2) Consulting, 3) Involving and 4) Empowering.

Stage-1: Informing- it is a one-way process, where people are the mere recipients and the agency is the supplier. At this stage, the governing-agency tells people about their decision before or during implementation of development programs.

Stage- 2: Consulting- it is two-way communication, where the governing agency comes to the people with their proposal and consults over the matter in order to make the decision of implementation. But the engagement of people is usually limited within the duration of the decision making process of the program. Moreover, people are being heard by the project implementation body without having confirmation that their opinion will be taken into account for the final decision. Further, the people have no scope to be involved in all of the phases of the project implementation. The governing body usually informs people, so as to get token feedback, and after that makes a decision and implements a program unilaterally.

Stage- 3: Involving- at this stage the governing agency involves people in decision-making, engages people with the budget distribution, and implements the whole program together. But, at this level the community/stakeholders, as a whole, are not given the scope to be engaged. This is because of the factional involvement of people that can occur in this kind of process. In

practice, at this stage, the authority tends to consult only with a selected group of people and only lets that group be involved in the program instead of including the whole community.

Stage-4: Empowering- at this stage the governing agency creates the scope for developing the capacity of people to come forward with their decisions and resources to implement development programs jointly. In reality, people control the governance and the agency plays the role of facilitator for development implementation at this stage.

Participation of people in development programs can develop the accountability of the authority, make the program transparent and force the authority to follow the local laws. Thus, most critics describe it as essential to the sustainability of development programs (Carley 2006; Siroros 2002). However, all participation might not confirm the sustainability of development programs, unless the participation is an effective one. Here, the word 'effective' refers to instances when people's participation makes a difference within the decision making processes or policy outcomes of government (Cole & Caputo 1984). The participation process is a social transformation mechanism, where the power of the implementing agency is transformed by civil society (Brett 2003). In this way 'effective participation' is evident when people's empowerment reaches a position that enables cooperative and collective actions to be performed with the implementing agency, resulting in enhanced influence over decision-making, monitoring and evaluation processes (Brett 2003; Cooper, Bryer & Meek 2006).

However, some researchers have opposed the idea of people's participation, not always seeing it as good for controlling a program towards an effective outcome. To them, participation sometimes causes delays in decision-making (Innes & Booher 2004) or increases cost (Olson 1965) or brings conflict (Bureekul 2000). Hence, some international organisations contend that participation would vary with the variations of culture and socio-economic conditions of a particular society; different countries with varying socio-economic circumstances might well benefit from different models of people's participation (OECD 2000). Hence this research study will try to craft a suitable model of people's participation in the context of Bangladesh.

1.6.3 Local Governance and Local Development Projects

When the word 'people' is mentioned for establishing good governance, this word refers to the mass of the people, the local populace (Morphet 2008). However, in developing countries like Bangladesh, the mass of the people live in the rural areas and close to the local government institutions. As such, this research study selected rural local government institution's functions, and concerned people to understand the barriers to participating in local government programs by the local people.

As in many other developing countries, the Constitution of Bangladesh provides for the formation of local bodies to foster the direct participation of local people in development programs implementation. To implement this, various reform initiatives have been undertaken and several local bodies have been formed over the last thirty years (Sarker 2006b). The formation of local bodies at the sub-district (*Upazila*) level is one of the major steps that has already been taken, and people's participation has been confirmed in these local bodies by legislation (Siddiqui 2005).

The Government of Bangladesh introduced Local Governance Regulation in 1982 and established *Upazila Parishad* (Sub-district council) and *Union Parishad* (Sub-sub-district council) so as to use these bodies to implement most development programs for the rural areas with the engagement of local people (Morshed 1989). At the beginning, the *Upazila Parishad* comprised an elected chairman, elected representatives and public officials. However, when this field research was conducted (2008) it was running without an elected chairman, as there has been no election at *Upazila* level since 1991 (Sarker 2006b). Instead of *Upazila Parishad*, the 'Upazila Development and Coordination Committee (UDCC)' was performing the coordination functions of the *Upazila*, and was entrusted with the responsibility of planning and implementation of development activities in four areas: roads and communications, irrigation and agriculture, education and physical infrastructure (Solaiman 1997). A Parliament Member (MP) of the respective constituency was assigned to join the committee meeting in the capacity of an advisor. In that provisional system, one of the *Union Parishad* chairmen presided over the committee meetings by rotation. Even after that structural change, elected local representatives were still leading persons of the decision making body for implementing development programs, which upholds the participation of local people. A detailed description of local governance in Bangladesh and its activities is presented in Chapter 3.

1.7   The Research Approach

Previous research studies in this area have used either normative or non-normative approaches, but not a combination of both. Studies using non-normative approaches have found that government bureaucrats and political representatives are creating barriers to effective people's participation, which is consequently hindering the establishment of good governance in Bangladesh (Sobhan 2000; Sarker 2006b; ADB 2006b; World Bank 2003). To remove these barriers, researchers have provided a range of suggestions. Some researchers (Khan 2000; Zafarullah & Khan 2005) consider that people's participation would be effective if Bangladesh can build more effective local government systems. They have suggested giving more autonomy for local government institutions. Others (Sarker 2006b; Sobhan 2000) have suggested

delegating more power and funds from central to local levels to build effective local governance. On the other hand some researchers (Aminuzzaman & Sharmin 2006; Siddiqui 2005) have asked for capacity building of local institutions and creating suitable environment for effective engagement. However, these studies have limitations. They did not include consideration of the possible contributions of public representatives, local people or government officials in finding ways to overcome alleged barriers. Moreover, none of these studies considered local politics, social hierarchy, norms, trust and networks to examine the effectiveness of people's participation in local government affairs. These studies thus can be termed as 'technocratic policy analysis' (Fischer 2007, p. 223) which excluded normative values. A different, more normative, approach has been suggested by researchers such as Fischer (2007) and Stivers (2000); who have suggested focussing on 'participatory policy analysis', that is, including related stakeholders to find out the full picture of the public functions (see Section 2.7 for details).

In this thesis, the research approach has designed to include all related stakeholders, such as government bureaucrats, public representatives and local beneficiaries, so as to find out the full range of barriers to people's participation. This participatory analysis will consider local politics, power-balance, empowerment, social norms and networks in Bangladesh local governance that might have an impact on people's participation. These normative elements will initially frame the research questions for this study, and more structural non-normative barriers will be included to the extent that the field research shows them to be important.

As such, this research will focus on both agency variables (focusing on human subjectivity), and structural variables (social context, power, politics, wealth etc) (Waters 1994). Thus, this research will investigate the agency issues, that is, that the barrier of ineffective participation may be a factor of human subjectivity, and also will investigate the structural issues that may exist within the system. As both the agency and structural components will be investigated in this research, this study has selected a qualitative methodology as particularly suitable to explore this vast problematic area (Cho & Trent 2006; Merriam 1991) and to obtain a detailed understanding of the problem. A large range of qualitative data from two different types of development programs from three socio-economically varied locations of Bangladesh will be collected to interpret data for each of the research questions.

Two development programs that are selected for this research are: growth-centre (rural market) and government primary school. Local businessmen vis-à-vis local student guardians[1] who are the expected beneficiaries and users of those developments were interviewed for the focus groups. Similarly group interviews were conducted with local School Management Committee (SMC) members. As no full-bodied management committees were found to exist for the growth-centres, local Union Parishad Chairmen –who would have been the presidents of such management committees – were interviewed face-to-face. Further face-to-face interviews were conducted with local government officials (Upazila Executive Officer-UNO, Engineer, and Education Officer), and also with high officials from ministries and project headquarters related to those development programs. Cross interviews – bringing government and elected officials face-to-face with users for question and answer sessions – were conducted, one for each development program. Semi-structured questionnaires were used for all face-to-face and group interviews.

In addition to interviews, the researcher also visited all development programs physically, and collected documents related to those development programs. All these data were collected between February and June in 2008.

1.8 Limitations of the Research

The major limitation of this research was the absence of an elected Upazila Parishad (Sub-district council) during the field study. Since 1991 there has been no elected Parishad (council) in the Upazilas; an interim body, named Upazila Development Coordination Committee (UDCC), was carrying on the duties of Parishad. However, UDCC was also chaired by the Union Parishad (UP – every Upazila is divided into several Unions, see figure 3.4) with chairmen by rotation, and as such Upazila Parishad was also controlled by the public elected representatives. Nonetheless, for both the UDCC and the Upazila Parishad, local government officials are non-voting members, so their position theoretically was identical. However, some researchers have argued that government officials are allegedly dominating over the local development programs during UDCC system (Sarker 2006b; Zafarullah & Huque 2001). Thus in the presence of an elected Parishad, the collected interview data could be different.

Among other limitations, unavailability of relevant official documents was found significant as all official documents were not available in the related offices. The relevant government officials were found to be very unwilling to provide official documents, and also were unwilling

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[1] 'student guardian' means parents of the students; and this phrase will be used throughout the thesis

to spend time searching for those documents. To overcome this situation, officials were invited by the researcher to sit face-to-face with the users of development projects, but they were very reluctant to do so. Even in the two cases when these interviews were possible, officials were in a hurry to bring them to a close. These situations could be effectively overcome if a single project could be observed from start to end, that is, an ethnographic research could successfully collect all required data; however, it was not possible in this research because of time constraints.

Researchers have argued that involvement of non government organisations (NGOs) in local development programs in Bangladesh can bring better outcomes (Hossain & Sengupta 2009; Lewis 2004; Sultana & Abeyasekera 2008). Nonetheless, NGOs in Bangladesh have been highly regarded as organisers and mobilisers of rural people in terms of empowerment and developing awareness for participation in group activities (Hossain & Matin 2007; Lewis 2004; Shigetomi 2002). But this research did not collect any data from local NGOs about their jobs in local development programs. This is because no NGO was directly involved in the two programs which were selected for this research. This research tried to include all stakeholders for interviews who were directly related and involved with those selected local development programs. However, it did attempt to assess the contribution of NGOs in local development programs by interviewing local stakeholders.

Another limitation is that this research study only has considered the positive side of people's participation. Though participation has some negative impacts (Bureekul 2000; Innes & Booher 2004; Olson 1965), this study did not investigate those. As the constitution of Bangladesh asked to ensure people's participation (GOB 1972) and as it is a mandatory condition to fulfil in receiving aid from the rich countries and development agencies (Andrews & Shah 2003; Gunter 2008; Pronk 2001; Santiso 2001), the question of negative impact drew little importance in this research.

1.9 The Thesis Structure

This thesis is organised into nine chapters as illustrated in figure 1.1. Outlines of each of these chapters are as follows:

Chapter 1 provides the overview of the thesis including the context, justification and significance of the research. Moreover, the key terms for this research study including research approach and limitations are also briefly illustrated.

Chapter 2 contextualises good governance, and presents the theories that underpin and support the concept of good governance. This chapter also conceptualises the idea of people's

participation for good governance and the relation between these two concepts, particularly the importance of people's participation in developing countries. Different tools for engaging people with local government affairs are also listed here.

Chapter 3 gives an overview of the local governance position and people's participation context in rural Bangladesh. The dynamics of the development of local government institutions in Bangladesh and time to time reforms in its structures and functions are discussed in detail. This chapter also discusses the people's participation mechanisms in local government affairs, particularly with rural local government institutions.

Figure 1.1 Flow Diagram of Research Sequence

Focus of research	Chapters
Overview of the thesis	→ One
People's participation and good governance	→ Two
Bangladesh: Local governance	→ Three
The theoretical and conceptual framework	→ Four
Research methodology	→ Five
Empirical evidence / Analysis of qualitative data — Good governance perception	→ Six
Empirical evidence / Analysis of qualitative data — Strengths and weaknesses of people's participation	→ Seven
Empirical evidence / Analysis of qualitative data — Good governance position	→ Eight
Conclusion	→ Nine

Source: The Author

Chapter 4 critically reviews the triangular relation between people's participation, good governance and effective development. This chapter mainly focuses on analysing existing theories on good governance through people's participation in achieving pro-people development, and develops a conceptual framework. In an instrumental way, continuous people's participation helps local people to be empowered. In a normative way, higher states of people's participation develop the quality of governance which consequently helps in obtaining effective development. This conceptual framework for this research thus includes both the instrumental and normative value of people's participation for good governance.

Chapter 5 outlines details about research methodology. The nature, purpose and justification of the research, including data collection procedures and ethical considerations, are discussed in this chapter. The chapter also discusses the strengths and limitations of the methodology used for this research study.

Chapter 6, 7 and 8 provide the empirical evidence by analysing qualitative data. Extracts from recorded interviews, observation data, and related documents are triangulated to answer all research questions. Chapter 6 examines the value of people's participation in the Bangladesh context. The strengths and weaknesses of local government institutions in rural Bangladesh in terms of participating people in their affairs are depicted in Chapter 7. Chapter 8, in the same way, focuses on exploring the state of good governance in rural Bangladesh according to the major elements of good governance.

The concluding chapter, Chapter 9, aligns all findings according to each of the three research questions. The conceptual framework that is tested in this research has been realigned according to the findings. The new system recommended in this chapter is compared and contrasted with the present system of engaging people in local development programs. Finally, this chapter discusses the methodological issues and outlines the implications of this research and scope for future research.

This thesis, however, does not include a chapter called literature review as such. As Chapters 2 and 3 are basically designed to develop the ground for the conceptual framework in Chapter 4, relevant literature related to this research is reviewed in these two chapters.

1.10 Conclusion

Without the participation of people, good governance can not be achieved and thus there are not effective outcomes from development projects. Because of this, international development

agencies and developed nations put in place the condition of ensuring good governance through people's participation in aid recipient countries. To comply with these conditions and to cope with globalisation, the Government of Bangladesh has been trying to foster local people's participation in local government activities. Despite the importance of the issue and initiatives taken in this regard, people's participation, as pointed out in different research studies, has not been sufficient to ensure good governance and pro-people development. This research thus investigates people's participation process in local government programs, including the context and systems which support the total environment for ensuring good governance and effective development.

This first chapter has presented the context, justification and contribution of the research. It also presents the research questions, provides the key concepts used in the thesis, and outlines the research method used. Limitations of this research study are identified, and the structure of this thesis is presented with a flow diagram.

The next chapter conceptualises the central idea of good governance through people's participation. Introduction of good governance in developing countries, including the theories that underpin the concept, are also discussed in detail. The chapter then contextualises people's participation, and underlines the relation between good governance and people's participation.

CHAPTER 2.
GOOD GOVERNANCE & PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

'Participation does not refer simply to voting … [but] requires that individuals have a voice in the decisions that affect them' – Joseph Stiglitz, former Chief Economist of the World Bank and Nobel laureate (Pruitt & Thomas 2007, p. 13).

2.1   Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to conceptualise people's participation for good governance, especially in developing countries. More particularly, this chapter is intended to review and examine the backgrounds, theories and imperatives that underpin people's participation to foster qualities of governance, and consequently bring better outcomes for programs implemented by local governing bodies.

Based on the above objective, this chapter has three sections. It starts with the imperatives and quest of good governance for effective development, especially in developing countries like Bangladesh. It highlights the background in which the good governance issues take priority over structural reforms, in the case of aid supported development programs in developing countries. This is followed by a discussion of different elements of good governance, particularly as defined by the international development agencies. It is argued that different elements of good governance are interdependent, and mutually reinforcing through people's participation, which is considered as the crucial element. Theories that underpin and focus on good governance strategy in developing countries are also discussed briefly.

The second section discusses the theoretical perspectives about people's participation in terms of its importance to establish good governance. This discussion includes different stages of people's participation, and the use of different tools for the participation process in different societies. It is focused on the fact that the people's participation process is not a one off event; rather it has to be a continuous process to be sufficiently effective for influencing any decision. Different participation tools used in networking with people are also discussed in this section.

The final section develops a link between people's participation and good governance. This section also discusses the relationship of the participation tools used in different stages of people's participation with the empowerment level of local people as well as the quality of governance. It is worth mentioning that higher levels of people's participation increase the quality of governance, and thus indicates their mutual supportiveness.

2.2   Quest for Good Governance in Developing Countries

Attaching conditions to the disbursing of aid by the International Development Agencies (IDA), particularly by the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), is a long time practice in relation to developing countries (Santiso 2001; 2003). At the beginning of the 1980s, the development agencies significantly tightened their policy lines by imposing the condition of public sector reforms as a core element of its aid strategy. Pursuing these reforms, they started the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) across the developing countries to eradicate poverty through maximum outcomes from development assistance (Villanger, Pausewang & Jerve 2003). The main aim of the SAP was reforms, decentralization and deregulation of government policies and policy-making processes for maximising the usage of aid. However, after pursuing two decades of reforms, it is recognised, even by the World Bank, that SAP neither alleviates poverty nor even assures sustainable growth in developing countries (Sobhan 2002). In the period of SAP (1980-88) East Asia sustained annual growth in per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 7 percent while sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America respectively experienced a decline of 2.4 and 0.7 percent (Squire 1991). Assessing the failure of structural reform has been remarked as a milestone in public management, which shifted the target from good public policies and structures to good public management. Consequently, following the failure of structural adjustment programs, 'good governance' has become a popular word to the IDA's development discourses as they recognise good management is essential for good economic growth (Azmat, Alam & Coghill 2009).

From 1989, the international aid agencies and donor countries sought good governance through people's participation as an aid strategy for developing countries (Hope Sr. 2009; Kaufmann, Kraay & Mastruzzi 2003). Mr. Kofi Annan, the then Secretary General of the United Nations, declared that 'good governance is vital for the protection of the rights of citizens and the advancement of economic and social development' (Kim et al. 2005, p. 647). A study by the World Bank, revealed that where there is participatory governance, an additional one per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in aid translates into a one per cent decline in poverty and a similar decline in infant mortality (World Bank 1998). Nonetheless, countries with good governance are an attractive location for local and foreign investment, which consequently promotes national economic growth (Aguilera & Cuervo-Cazurra 2004).

Table 2.1 IDAs' Guidelines for Development Assistance During the 1980s and 1990s

1980s: SAPs	1990s: Good governance
Privatization	Establishment of a foundation of law
Tax reform	Maintenance of a non-distortion policy environment
Financial reform	Investment in basic social services and infrastructure
Trade liberalization	Protection of the vulnerable and public value
Devaluation of the exchange rate	Protection of the environment
Proper decision for the people	Decision with the people
Reduction of the fiscal deficit	
Deregulation of markets and agricultural price reform	

Source: Adopted from Ciborra and Navarra (2005)

To comply with the demand of the international development agencies (IDA), governments of the developing countries are trying to develop participatory local government to support overall good governance (Romeo 2003). Thus, aiming to achieve good governance, IDAs encourage greater people's participation in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes of development programs (ADB 1999). During 1996-2001 the World Bank started over 600 governance related programs and initiatives in 95 countries and was involved in supporting programs of governance in 50 countries (Santiso 2001). Among these programs the majority relate to anti-corruption, free press and media, reformation of the judiciary, formation of local government bodies, public expenditure and financial accountability, and participatory decision making (see Table 2.1). Regarding the participatory decision making process, the World Bank has introduced 'participatory-budgeting' in different developing countries (Rahman 2005). The IMF has introduced a Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) approach for poverty reduction with greater participation of people in developing countries (Dijkstra 2005). The UNDP, another major IDA, is running the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) program throughout the developing countries to improve governance to eradicate poverty from those countries (UNDP 2007). Different governments of developing countries are also endeavouring individually to strengthen good governance to improve the effectiveness of aid. In particular the Government of Bangladesh has introduced the PRSP, participatory budgeting, and running community health, education, and sanitation programs to alleviate poverty in the country.

2.2.1 Contextualising Good Governance

Before contextualising good governance, we need to conceptualise the notion of governance. Some researchers use good governance as the outcome of governance (Barten et al. 2002; Carley 2006; UNESCAP 2008), whereas others use it as a synonym for governance (Habitat

2000; World Bank 2007a). Moreover, in the time of proliferation of jargon (Cho & Trent 2006), the term good governance is referred to by different names, like: better governance (Kaufmann, Kraay & Lobaton 1999), direct governance (Blakeley & Evans 2008), democratic governance (Barten et al. 2002), human governance (Aminuzzaman 2006), network governance (Sorensen & Torfing 2006), welfare governance (Newman 2007), and community governance (Sullivan, 2001).

2.2.1.1   Shift from government to governance and good governance

Governance has been considered as an umbrella concept as the content of the concept varies enormously between one theory and the other (Barten et al. 2002; Brown 2007). Primarily the notion of governance has been conceptualised in two different ways. In the classical way governance has been viewed as an instrumental concept. Supporters of this view defined it as an instrument or process of implementation of government decisions. UNESCAP (2008, p. 1) defined governance as 'the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented)'. Similarly Shelly (2000) defined governance as a process that is dedicated to achieve three great objectives through an effective and people-oriented mechanism of bureaucracy: alleviation of poverty, creation of productive employment and social integration. Accordingly, Langlands (2004) defined governance as good management, which underpins good performance, good stewardship of public money, good public engagement and, ultimately, good outcomes. In this sense, governance means an effective process of decision making for implementing government programs and services.

On the other hand, in more current terms governance has been viewed as a normative concept. Supporters of this view defined it as reform (Minogue 1997), outcome (Barten et al. 2002) or a shift (Geddes 2005) of government. Hirst considered that the word 'governance has come to be seen as an alternative to government' (2000, p. 14). Where in government a political actor is the only role player for service delivery, in governance this responsibility is shared between the state, people and private sectors (Pierre 2000; Roelofs 2009; Sarker 2006b). Rhodes (2000, p. 55) contemplated the word governance 'can be used as a blanket term to signify a change in the meaning of government'. In connection with defining the word, he showed seven separate uses of the word 'governance'. However within all these seven uses the basic and common elements are: participation of all stakeholders, accountability, transparency, minimising state authority, and vertical networking (Rhodes 2000). Thus governance means a significant change in the meaning of government, entails a new way of governing with less intervention of state and more engagement of people in the system of public service delivery. In addition he described 'governance as the result of interactive social-political forms of governing' (Rhodes 2000, p. 58). He mentioned people and or private sector participation (steering) as a synonym for

governance; public sector should be run with 'less government' and 'more governance' (Rhodes 2000, p. 56). A similar, but straight forward definition suggested by Barten *et al* (2002, p. 134) 'governance could be considered the result of the participatory approach to development'. Hence this study is accepting the normative value of the governance to conceptualise good governance.

Given definitions of governance recognise that the central meaning of it is the participation of people within the government process. 'Governance could be considered the result of the participatory approach to development' (Barten et al. 2002, p. 131). In fact the people's participation activities within the government changed the term government to governance (Carley 2006). Nonetheless, among all these terminologies good governance has achieved popularity because of its worldwide distribution by the international development agencies. Moreover, in my opinion, the word 'good' is also very significant, having a psychological value that stimulates and represents something desirable (good) instead of something bad (bad governance), which is also easily comparable with bad governance.

Thus it could be said that governance is the shadow term of good governance, as the central element in both terms is the same: that is, people's participation. Nowadays, much literature uses good governance instead of governance, as the terms are seen to be complementary to each other (Minogue, Polidano & Hume 1998); or uses simply governance instead of good governance (Bovaird & Löffler 2002; Grindle 2004).

Different scholars and international agencies have defined the term good governance in different ways. Some social scientists define good governance in a very simple way, as the level of goodness (Besancon 2003) or quality (Hye 2000; Tombs 2002) of governance. Likewise, Santiso (2001) broadly illustrated good governance, as a 'quality' of governance that focused on the further requirements of the process of decision-making and public policy formulation. Conversely, Minogue (1997, p. 21) pointed the term as a 'reform strategy' of governance, where that strategy was particularly used to 'strengthen the institutions of local society with the objective of making government more accountable, more open, transparent and more democratic'. Simply, good governance means executing a coherent governing plan for the nation based on the interests and priorities of people. The belief that every citizen is entitled to an equal say in the conduct of public affairs is the heart of good governance (Narayan 2000).

Thus, while 'governance' appears as more close to government in relation to its service delivery process, 'good governance' appears as a broader concept. Good governance has come to be seen as more close to people and practice of all democratic norms for the welfare of people. Hence,

this study selects good governance instead of governance to see the people's participation in the governing processes in a developing country like Bangladesh.

2.2.1.2 Good governance today and international development agencies

For the last couple of decades the notion of good governance has been a popular discourse among the intellectuals, politicians, aid agents, development workers, and administrators. This is not only because of the increasing demand for the economic development, but more so because of the extensive expansion of the role and responsibilities of the government to the people (Brown 2007; Momen, Hossain & Begum 2005). Today, governments of the developing countries recognise the significant impact of participatory good governance over aid effectiveness (Shah & Shah 2006).

International development agencies such as the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and others use a functional approach to describe good governance, focusing on management factors to promote economic issues. The JICA regarded good governance as good functions of government machinery that help to achieve sustainable and self-reliant development and social justice (JICA 1995).

Accordingly UNDP identified three bases of good governance: Economic, participatory and administrative (UNDP 1997a). Economic governance deals with sound decision-making processes within a country's economic arena, which particularly focus on poverty reduction and equity promotion. Political governance deals with good processes for formulation of policies for the people of the country. Administrative governance deals with the participatory process of policy implementation. Encompassing all three bases, good governance constructs the processes and structures that 'guide political and socioeconomic relationships' (Barten et al. 2002, p. 133).

The United Nations Development Programs (UNDP) highlighted good governance as the good exercise of a nation's affairs at all levels. It prescribed that governance is good when it subscribes to nine characteristics, which are: Participation, Strategic Vision, Rule of Law, Transparency, Consensus Orientation, Equity Building, Effectiveness & Efficiency and Accountability (UNDP 1997b). The UNESCAP identifies eight values of good governance. These are: Accountable, Participatory, Transparent, Consensus oriented, Responsive, Follows the rule of law, Effective and efficient, and Equitable and inclusive (UNESCAP 2008). Likewise, UK's Overseas Development Administration (ODA, presently DFID) identified four main elements that ensure quality of government services (see Table 2.2). The World Bank (WB) defines good governance as good management of a country's economic and social resources for development. The organisation identified six criteria (see following Table) that

underpin the concept of good governance (Turner & Hulme 1997). Likewise, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) identified four basic components of governance that help a government to operate most effectively and efficiently. All these elements of good governance have been presented in the following table:

Table 2.2 Elements of Good Governance

UNDP	ESCAP	WB	ODA/ DFID	ADB
Accountability	Accountable	Accountability	Accountability	Accountability
Participation	Participatory	Participation	Participation	Participation
Rule of Law	Follows the rule of law	Rule of law and control of corruption	Legitimacy	Predictability
Transparency	Transparent	Government effectiveness	Transparency	Transparency
Consensus Orientation	Consensus oriented	Regulatory quality		
Equity Building	Equitable and inclusive	Political stability and absence of violence		
Effectiveness	Effective and efficient			
Efficiency	Responsive			
Strategic Vision				

Sources: Turner and Hulme (1997), Waheduzzaman (2007).

Though these agencies have identified a number of basic components for good governance, four are common and universally recognised amongst these components. These are: accountability, participation, predictability, and transparency. **Accountability** refers to the imperative to make public officials answerable for government behaviour as well as responsive to the entity from which they derive their authority. The principle of **participation** derives from the acceptance that people are at the heart of development. People need to have access to the institutions that promote it. **Predictability** refers to (i) the existence of laws, regulations, and policies to regulate society and (ii) their fair and consistent application. **Transparency** refers to the availability of information to the general public and clarity about government rules, regulations and decisions (Gurung 2000). Indeed, participation, legitimacy, accountability and transparency are considered major factors to ensure good governance (Aminuzzaman 2006; Arko-cobbah 2006; ODA 1993). These four elements of good governance are considered as 'four pillars of governance' by the ADB, which are universally applicable regardless of the economic orientation, strategic priorities on policy choices of the government (Aminuzzaman 2006, p.

14). This thesis uses these four elements to measure the levels of good governance in rural Bangladesh.

Considering the above four elements the figure of good governance is drawn, which is a diamond shaped figure pointing four elements in four corner to represent the area for good governance (Figure 2.1). That means, when the area is bigger, quality or level of good governance is high.

Figure 2.1 A Diagram of Good Governance
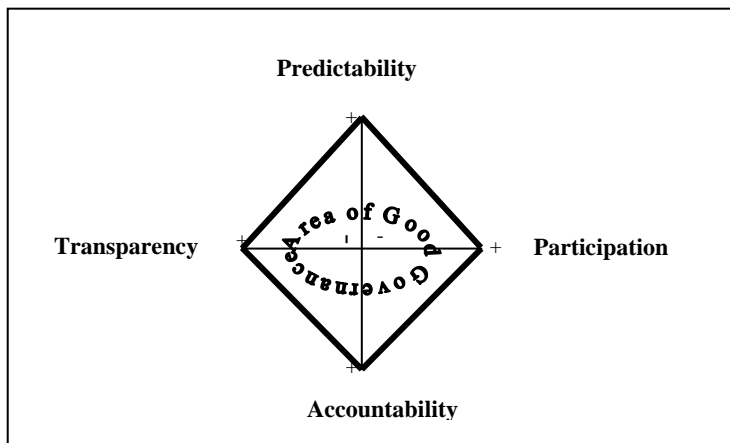
Source: The Author

This diamond shape represents not only four major elements of good governance, but also shows a precious object that is desired by almost all people.

2.3   Theories of Public Management Related to Good Governance

A number of theoretical aspects with management and economics have been suggested as paradigms underpinning good governance centring on people's participation. The most important theories driving people's participatory good governance are: New Public Management (NPM), Total Quality Management, and Public Value Theory. Liou (2001) also pointed out Principal-Agent Theory, Public Choice Theory, and Transaction-Cost Theory, which created foundation for the New Zealand model of good public governance. All these theories, historically or recently, have had a great impact on the introduction and implementation of good governance strategies. However, because of word limitation all the above mentioned theories are not going to discuss in details in this thesis. The following section looks some of these theories briefly and attempts their application in the context of the development of the good governance strategies.

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2.3.1 Theory of New Public Management (NPM)

In the late 1970s and in the early 1980s, NPM emerged as a key issue on the reform agenda in many developed countries mainly in OECD countries (Hood 1991; Parker & Gould 1999). The initial focus of NPM theory was on increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of public sector institutions. The philosophical foundations of NPM with their emphasis on local's participation, through private sectors, have led to new organisational economics and managerialism (Navarra & Cornford 2005; Pollitt 1995), sponsoring professional management and self-motivation in the centre to improved institutional performance (Martin 2003). This is symbolized as a paradigm shift when the rules-driven and highly processed old management style is replaced by a new strategy 'which attempts to combine modern management practices with the logic of economics, while retaining the core public values' (OECD 1998, p. 5). Researchers recognized eight main elements of NPM, which are: cost effectiveness; greater transparency in service delivery resource allocation; decentralisation of traditional bureaucratic institutions; management efficiency within public agencies; disaggregating public service functions from their purchase; introducing stakeholder approaches; performance based management; contractual services, performance based appraisal; and increasing emphasis on service quality, standard setting and public responsiveness (McCourt 2002; Pollitt 1995). All these elements of NPM, thus, have transformed the traditional role of local government management into a more active, independent and economical pattern (Dollery 2003, p. 82). Similarly, Hughes asserted that NPM 'has effectively supplanted the traditional model of public administration, and that the public sector in the future will inevitably be managerial, in both theory and practice' (1998, p. 53).

These aspects of NPM drive public management to the door of the local stakeholders and use local knowledge to make more effective and sustainable development. While in traditional bureaucracy people were considered as *clients* (Hughes 2003), NPM has changed this view by considering them as *customers*, and use local knowledge to foster sustainable development (Navarra & Cornford 2005). Here, client means a passive recipient, who obtained services without any exchange (Innes & Booher 2004; Sarker 2008); on the other hand, customer is understood as active recipient, who obtained services with the exchange of local knowledge (Denhardt et al. 2009; Schedler & Felix 2000). Customer poses more rights than clients. Thus NPM creates an environment that is more transparent, accountable and predictable, which consequently leads to promote good governance at the local levels. Hence, researchers argue the importance of establishing democratic political governance frameworks (Schick 1998), bottom-up accountability (Sinclair 1995), and local stakeholders' acceptable performance (Day & Klein 1987) as essential foundations for NPM in practice. Today, public value is the principle of NPM which remain at the forefront of various developed countries' political agendas (O'Flynn 2007;

Shirley 1999). However, some researchers argued that the NPM poses a threat to participatory works, and obstructs the achievement of good governance (Geddes 2005; Stoker 2006). 'This is because the emphasis in NPM on hierarchical forms of accountability, regulation, inspection and performance management demand from public bodies a silo mentality which militates against networking and partnership' (Geddes 2005, p. 24). On the other hand, some others argued NPM helps in ensuring good governance (Bovaird & Löffler 2002; Minogue, Polidano & Hume 1998).

In the developing countries, the international development agencies (IDAs) included NPM reforms as one of the vital pre-conditions for much-needed foreign assistance (Samaratunge, Alam & Teicher 2008). IDAs have argued that NPM based reforms increase accountability and efficiency in the public service delivery in order to reap the maximum benefits of aid assistance (ADB 2004b; World Bank 2002b). Several theorists also argued that traditional bureaucratic approaches should be replaced by people oriented new public management to make these reforms effective (Hood 1995; Luke, Kearins & Verreynne 2008). Minogue (1997) viewed good governance and the NMP as mutually supportive since both of them are reinforcing each other with enhanced accountability and improved efficiency in public institutions. Moreover, for establishing good governance, the mentality and attitude of government officials and representatives need to be changed, as 'governance encompasses the interdependencies between political leadership, public administration and the community' (Lawson & Gleeson 2005, p. 82; Sobol 2008). New public management (NPM) in this milieu can help government officials to change their management style to foster good governance (Bovaird & Löffler 2002; Zafarullah & Huque 2001).

However, many researchers indicated that the scope of application of the NPM paradigm in developing countries is less promising because of unsuitable economic, technical and socio-political institutions (Samaratunge, Alam & Teicher 2008; Schick 1998; Turner 2002) while the ideas underlying NPM have certainly influenced many programmes of reform in western governments (Hodge 1996; Navarra & Cornford 2005). Navarra & Cornford (2005) identified that the reforms in governing bodies which came about by practising NPM can be summed up under four major headings: marketisation, accountability, decentralisation and efficiency. By contrasting the main features of these areas with the elements of good governance a shared dimension between NPM and good governance can be drawn as follows:

Figure 2.2 Shared Dimension between NPM and Good Governance

	Decentralisation - reallocation of responsibilities from central to local authorities - being local - devolution - sharing views with local stakeholders	
Marketisation - competitive and best practice - contracting local partners - participatory monitoring - risk sharing - local market based decision	**Shared dimension with Good governance** - performance based management - sharing local knowledge - re-inventing government - enhancing accountability - customer focus management	**Efficiency** - managerialism - Business Process Reengineering - local based strategy - locally sustainable programmes
	Accountability & Transparency - performance management - program budgeting - local business focused	

Source: Adopted from Navarra & Cornford (2005)

Nonetheless, researchers have argued that, for sustainable development managers need the training necessary to effectively survey and engage local people, collect data and translate findings into meaningful statements to support informed deliberation, which is possible by introducing NPM (Holzer & Kloby 2005). Similarly, for good governance, government and elected officials should be transformed into the 'change agent' (World Bank 1996). The World Bank viewed public managers as 'agents of development' (Minogue, Polidano & Hume 1998, p. 4). Thus they must be resourced and equipped for that role (Morshed 2007). As governments move beyond the New Public Management, multiple knowledge frames, significantly involving community and local knowledge, are entering public administration, with implications for changes in the skills required of public administrators (Hess & Adams 2005, p. 242). Rhodes asserted that 'in short, good governance marries the new public management to the advocacy of liberal democracy' (2000, p. 57). In fact, through the above analysis, it is clear that NPM envisages rule *for* the people while good governance instructs to rule *with* the people. While NPM helps bring officers to open their door, good governance empowers local communities to open the doors of officials. In other words, NPM teaches officials to open the door to invite people in (as customers – mostly involved in local businesses); in contrast, good governance is for empowering people (as citizens – part of civil society) to force the managers to open the door. Hence, we need both at the same time for a congenial and non-conflicting situation for establishing good governance

Whatever the level of contribution of NPM in establishing good governance, there is no doubt that NPM has potential for changing the traditional governing process. Through NPM, the governing process becomes multi-factorial, as opposed to the traditional uni-factorial state that runs services to the people. This new managerialism (Pollitt 1995) may open a new avenue to the local people to see the governing process at the local levels.

2.3.2 Total Quality Management (TQM)

The basic philosophy of Total Quality Management (TQM) is to maintain perfection and professionalism in all management activities within an institution. This theory gained increased attention among practitioners and scholars during the 1990s (Svensson & Wood 2005). Since then this theory is reached as a well established system for improving both the performance of institutions and the satisfaction of customers (Lagrosen 2001; Schedler & Felix 2000). Svensson and Wood (2005) stated that the TQM has an internal focus on an institution's business management, and additionally, it has an external focus. The TQM researchers have identified a set of core values in describing the theory, which are: customer focus, management commitment, process focus, local-based decision and continuous improvement in delivering services (Hellsten & Klefsjo 2000; Lagrosen 2002) .

Though TQM is developed and mostly exercised within the enterprises arena, it can be used in public sector as well. However, TQM experts suggested knowing the local people first for improving quality of services in public sector (Munro-Faure & Munro-Faure 1994). Management activities related to delivering public services should be improved according to the requirements of the external customers (Drechsler 2005; Munro-Faure & Munro-Faure 1994). Today, the aim of a good public management is to redesign services in ways that make sense to citizens, businesses and international clients (Drechsler 2005).

However, TQM is also focused on customer affairs by improving internal management. As both employees and customers are central to today's governance phenomena, any strategy needs to read the society and local places for the best performance. Therefore, TQM is also focused on internal employees, as it believes that customers receive quality service if an organisation improves the quality of its employees. TQM researchers suggest that improving the performance of employees helps to improve the performance of its service delivery. Hence, TQM has emphasised the 'soft' elements of the organisations in achieving best services (Svensson & Wood 2005).

Thus the common element of TQM and good governance are to recognise local people for any institutional development. In more detail these elements are: (1) restructure administrative

functions and processes; (2) overcome barriers in networking external customers i.e. local people; (3) monitor officials' performance, especially making officials accountable to the beneficiaries; and (4) improve the relationship between institution and the beneficiaries (Ciborra & Navarra 2005; Schedler & Felix 2000). Similarly some researchers have supported that though TQM is for office environments, the changing governance area is embedded in the broader (external) institutional environment (Aguilera & Cuervo-Cazurra 2004; Aoki 2001). Thus the ideas that underline TQM theory somehow influence good governance.

2.3.3 Public Choice Theory

The Public Choice Theory (PCT) evolved within the economics arena, which basically focused on people's choice in selecting public services (Lamothe & Lamothe 2009). The theory conceptualises market-like competition in public service delivery where the public are considered as the buyer of the best product (Lamothe & Lamothe 2009). Public choice theorists argue that both public and private monopolistic production of goods and services inherently lead to inefficiency in service delivery management (Ostrom & Ostrom 1971; Savas 2002). The application of strategies outlined in PCT induces public institutions to provide cost effective, innovative and locally sustainable products. To pursue this instrumental strategy, public service institutions have undergone more decentralisation and outsourcing of service delivery processes (Savas 2000). Greene affirms the notion by reviewing that, generally, 'the evidence suggests that better efficiency comes from competition rather than from the privateness or publicness of organizations' (2002, p. 49). Implementation of this theory, thus give advantage to the expected beneficiaries and local people over the officials in public service functions /programs (Dollery 2003). Nonetheless, PCT has also induced participatory implementation and monitoring in local public services, as it facilitate publics' choice (Dollery 2003, p. 86). Therefore, the central element of public participation in PCT matches with the core concept of good governance.

The above discussion shows that some basic elements of good governance fall within the PCT philosophy as they have demonstrated one or more of the following characteristics:

- Use of local knowledge and resources to get best alternative choices and cost effective services deliberation.
- Reduce the role of the central government in public service delivery and influenced local people to make best innovative local institution.
- Decentralise management functions to the local levels and share it with other local stakeholders to provide services according to local people's choice.
- Increase involvement of civil, private and NGO to make the service delivery more efficient and locally sustainable.

- Reengineer traditional management to make it people focused.

However, in many service areas, especially at the state and local levels, the concept of competitive markets appears to be more rhetoric than reality (Van-Slyke 2003).

2.3.4 Public Value Theory (PVT)

The fundamental assumption of public value theory is to provide services according to the public interest (Bozeman 2002). Public interest is defined as what people would 'choose if they saw clearly, thought rationally, and acted disinterestedly and benevolently' (Bozeman 2002, p. 148; Lippman 1955). Thus this theory entails desired outcomes of public programs and participation of expected beneficiaries (to see the outcome clearly) for the services when delivered by the government bodies. Bozeman argued that 'Public value theory tends to operate at the highest levels, such as philosophical treatises about the public interest, or at the operational level, focusing on specific desired program outcomes' (2002, p. 146). This theory induces public institutions to recognise public value of resources, goods, and services and to think the arrangement under what 'is the public best served' (Bozeman 2002, p. 145).

Even a few decades ago, public interest was viewed as too vague, too value loaded, too ambitious and too conflicting with the policies of group accommodation; today most of the public programs and policies, even in the developing countries, are levelled as 'for the public interest' (Staples & Dalrymple 2008; Stoker 2006). This trend of embracing people and their interests forces the governments to introduce good governance, which is transparent and foreseeable by the people especially when a program is sponsored by the development agencies. Recently researchers also suggested looking beyond NPM's framework towards new and alternative paradigms such as Public Value Management – 'a way of thinking which is both post-bureaucratic and post-competitive' (O'Flynn 2007, p. 353; Staples & Dalrymple 2008; Stoker 2006).

Moore's (1995) 'Theory of Public Value' states that the public sector can stay alive by creating public value through the successful practice of public management to increase the public value produced by public sector organisations. O'Flynn (2007) states the public value paradigm turned the old bureaucratic practice of public service delivery towards a new way of thinking, incorporating people's interest and choice for the services provided. Public value expresses a more proactive and political role for public sector managers rather than only staying with traditional reactive and process oriented mindsets in delivering services (Moore 1995). Researchers asserted that the role of the public manager includes both managing up to an authorising level and managing out to a citizen level (Moore 1995; O'Flynn 2007; Stoker 2006).

Therefore, the public value theory articulated that public officials and representatives should include people in making decisions for service delivery, and thus the theory pursues the implementation of good governance with people as the central element of both the approaches.

This above synopsis of theories related to public management shows a relation with good governance. This relation may be weak or strong, but in strengthening good governance these theories have been transferring to the developing countries from the developed countries by the development agencies. How much these theories are working in underpinning good governance in Bangladesh will be answered after the completion of the empirical research.

2.4   Contextualising People's Participation

In democracy, traditionally, people use their right to elect their representatives, who then hold the bureaucrats accountable for implementing any decisions that affect the local people (Mollah 2008). This is actually the common practice in representative democracy or representative local governance, where people elect their representatives and are ruled by them (Bardhan 2002). That means people should participate in the governing process through their representatives to get services from the government. However, this scenario is changing as researchers argued that people no longer want to be considered as clients in the representative form of democracy (Kabeer 2002; Leighninger 2005; Sarker 2008). Today, most of the citizens, mainly in developed societies, want to put forward their opinion regarding any decision that has any future effect over them (Holzer & Kloby 2005).

Though some researcher believe that direct participation is against or undermines the norms of democracy (Barten et al. 2002; John 2001, p. 155), it is found that representative democracy is not working as expected to meet the people's aspiration through their representation in many countries (Gibson, Lacy & Dougherty 2005; Hickey & Mohan 2004; Hope Sr. 2009; Mahmud 2004; Tosun 2000). A research study has revealed that direct public deliberation is useful in reducing a school budget and crafting state education policy in the USA (Holzer & Kloby 2005). Similarly, a national survey study on several chief executive officers, of cities with populations greater than 50,000 within the USA, revealed that collaboration between elected officials, public managers and citizens is associated with meeting public needs, building consensus, and improving public trust in government (Wang 2001). Thus several researchers are now arguing for direct democracy, where people will be directly consulted to identify and implement their desired programs (Bovaird & Löffler 2002; Denhardt et al. 2009; Gaventa 2004a). This direct democracy is actually instrumental in terms of good governance, which

supports the view that 'involved citizens become more informed and eager to dedicate their intellectual energy in pursuit of a solution' (Holzer & Kloby 2005, p. 523).

Today many academics, politicians, donor agencies and civil societies are seeking direct participation of people in the governing process. Their belief is that people are entitled to participate in all public affairs that have an effect on their lives, and that this participation will remain at the heart of today's governance (Blair 2000; Hope Sr. 2009). Presently, the increasing trend of awareness by people of public matters has also forced the government to share their authority with people. The best outcome of sharing this authority has finally forced all concerned institutions to place people at the centre of governance (Azmat, Alam & Coghill 2009; Geddes 2005). Thus the term governance has been defined as not only working with people but also as being accountable to people, transparent to people, and following the laws of local people (Minogue, Polidano & Hume 1998).

On the other hand, the attributes of good governance, those pointed out by the international development agencies, indicate a growing emphasis on economic development through an effective people oriented government process, that is, governance. The governance indicators like accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, participation, need to meet the public expectation of good governance (Minogue 1997). Conceptually, the four major elements of good governance tend to be mutually supportive (Azmat, Alam & Coghill 2009), but people's participation is the central element among these (Geddes 2005; Rahman 2005). More clearly, a people-participatory government ensures more transparency, accountability and predictability governance to its people. Underpinning this perception, the concept of good governance is seen as: 'it has to be not just pro-people or people-centred; it has to be owned by people' (2006, p. 345). More straightforwardly, good governance as described by Minogue, 'is a government for the people, accountable to the people, transparent to the people, abide by the rule of people, for the betterment of the people' (1997, p. 53). This definition is almost similar to the Gettysburg address by Abraham Lincoln in 1863 where he termed democratic government as *government of the people, by the people, for the people*. That means people are the heart of the true democracy; a democracy needs to find the best valued services by ensuring the participation of its citizens not only in central level but also in local levels.

In December 1989, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) released a 'Policy Statement on Development Cooperation in the 1990s', which cited participatory development as the most important issue on the development aid agenda for the 1990s (OECD 1998). Addressing the significance of participatory development, some aid agencies stated that stimulating the productive energies of people, encouraging greater

participation of all people in productive processes, and a fair sharing of their benefits, must become more central elements in development strategies (JICA 1995; UNESCAP 2008). Since 'governance' means a plurality in the governing process of decision-making, it focuses on the involvement of multiple actors e.g. state, corporate, private sector and civil society together (Sobol 2008). Thus, in governance the government (state) is one of the actors; other actors involved in governance are mostly civil society, which is, people –the beneficiaries of the decisions (Azmat, Alam & Coghill 2009; ESCAP 1998). In this sense, in governance, people become an inseparable part of decision making and the implementation of decided programs.

However, some researchers have argued that people's participation will be ensured if the government can ensure good governance first. To them if a government can maintain good management, ensure accountability and transparency that will open way for people to be involved in local affairs (Hope Sr. 2009; Hye 2000; Kaufmann, Kraay & Lobaton 1999; Shah & Shah 2006). Conversely, some researchers have argued that people should participate in all local decision-making processes which consequently will empower people to hold service providers accountable to them (Arko-cobbah 2006; Brett 2003; DFID 2007; Tosun 2000). Stivers mentioned it as a process of making active citizens, which in return hold accountability and transparency of the government works (Stivers 1990, 2009). This is a kind of egg or chicken debate (Brown 2007). On the one hand, the supporters of former view asked for developing government institutions capacity, decentralise administrative authorities, increase officials capability, introducing anticorruption measures, and reform regulations related to media to make government accountable, transparent and legitimate; that is, to take government closer to the people by ensuring pro-people reforms (Hye 2000; Shah & Schacter 2004). And thus good governance will enhance responsibility, accountability and participation (Hope Sr. 2009).

On the other hand, the supporters of latter view asked for empowering local people and civil society groups so that local people will hold accountability of service providers, make the decisions transparent with their presence and legitimise actions by forcing authority to follow local laws (Arko-cobbah 2006; Brett 2003). And thus the involvement of people and civil society groups will ensure good governance in the society. With the given views, it can be concluded that through effective policies and regulations government can open the door to invite people to undertake decisions that have an effect on them. But that does not mean that, in response to that invitation, people always will come forward and take control to make pro-people decisions. People need to be empowered enough to be united and active to come forward to take control over decisions (Arko-cobbah 2006; Brett 2003; DFID 2007; Tosun 2000). When people are sufficiently empowered they might force the authority to open the door even if they are not invited by the government. The empowered people usually come forward to protest

against any anti-people decisions. Hence, it seems logical to empower people first with their regular involvements in local government affairs. Particularly in developing societies where people are mostly illiterate, not united and not aware about their citizen rights are needed to be more empowered with more participation (Denhardt et al. 2009; Jabbra & Dwivedi 2004). In fact, good governance in developing countries would not be attained unless people's participation is ensured in local developments (Dibie 2003; Fung & Wright 2001; Jabbra & Dwivedi 2004; Zafarullah & Huque 2001). To empower people first, Kingsbury argued that 'development is meant to be about improving the lives of people so it is logical that development should start with people' (Kingsbury 2004, p. 221). Participation not only empowers people but also empower local government officials to develop ways by which effective participation may occur (Koenig 2005). Thus this research supports the view of people's participation first in achieving good governance.

Participation as the World Bank (1996) defines it, is a process through which people influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them. Likewise, Robert has defined people's participation as 'the process by which members of a society… share power with public officials in making substantive decisions and in taking actions related to the community' (2004, p. 320). Though participation sometimes causes delays in the decision-making (Innes & Booher 2004) or increases cost (Olson 1965) or brings conflict (Bureekul 2000), most critics describe it as essential to the sustainability of development programs (Carley 2006; Siroros 2002). Many social scientists have argued about the participation process as a social transformation mechanism, where the power of the implementing agency is transferred to civil society (Brett 2003; Cooper, Bryer & Meek 2006; Hope Sr. 2009). They further argued that people's participation is effective when people's empowerment reaches a position that enables cooperative and collective actions to be performed with the implementing agency, resulting in enhanced influence over decision-making, monitoring and evaluation processes (Brett 2003; Cooper, Bryer & Meek 2006).

The mechanism and practice of people's participation in any program is a subject matter that has been debated in the management arena for a long time. Some researchers (Lawrence & Deagen 2001; Vroom & Yetton 1973) consider the participation process as a one off event – like people are ready to get involved in making a decision even if they just informed. Similarly, some researchers argued that people should participate discontinuously (Bishop & Davis 2002), that is, in various degrees in various types of tasks (Brett 2003; Esman & Uphoff 1984). For example, a World Bank report described four categories of people's participation for different kinds of programs while serving public services by the local government authority (Paul 1987). These four categories are follows:

(1) Information sharing: Service providers like project designers and managers inform local beneficiaries in order to facilitate collective or individual action. Information equips local people to understand and perform their tasks better. In family planning or nutrition programs, such information sharing works well.

(2) Consultation. At this process local people are consulted on key issues at some or all stages in a project cycle. There is an opportunity here for local beneficiaries to interact and provide feedback to the service providers which the latter could take into account in the design and implementation stages. If farmers are consulted on extension practices and arrangements, project outcomes are likely to be better than if they were merely informed.

(3) Decision making. This phenomenon occurs when beneficiaries have a decision making role in matters of program design and implementation. Decisions may be made jointly with service providers on specific issues or aspects relating to a project. Thus slum dwellers may decide jointly with project staff on the design for upgrading their housing. Similarly, farmers may design a program for the distribution of water for irrigation.

(4) Initiating action. This is a different category of participation when beneficiaries are able to take the initiative in terms of actions/decisions pertaining to a project. Initiative implies a proactive capacity and the confidence to get services on one's own. When beneficiary groups engaged in a health project they identify a new need and decide to respond to it on their own; they are taking the initiative for their development.

However, most other researchers (Arnstein 1969; IAP2 2003; Wilcox 1994) argue that people's participation is a continuous process, and it passes through a few stages. According to the view of the latter researchers, people first are informed and then reach the control position of the decision through a continuous participation process or stages. People should participate from or before beginning a project and take control over the project for the sustainable use of the outcomes.

Different researchers have described different stages of people's participation process in local development programs. Three of these models are now discussed, and summarised in the Table 2.3. A metaphoric eight rung ladder of participation process has been developed by Arnstein (1971), which is: 1) Manipulation, 2) Therapy, 3) Informing, 4) Consultation, 5) Placation, 6) Partnership, 7) Delegated power and 8) Citizen control. In contrast, Wilcox (1994) and the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2 2003) proposed five stages of people's participation, which are: 1) Inform: one way communication, 2) Consult: two-way communication, 3) Involve: Deciding together, 4) Collaborate: Acting together, and 5) Empower: Supporting independent community interests.

Table 2.3 Stages of People's Participation

International Association for Public Participation (2003)	Wilcox (1994)	Arnstein (1971)
		Manipulation
		Therapy
Inform- one way communication	Informing	Informing
Consult- two way communication	Consulting	Consultation
Involve- participatory processes	Deciding together	Placation
Collaborate- partnership	Acting together	Partnership
Empower- implementing what public decides	Supporting independent community interests	Delegated power
		Citizen control

The stages 'involve' and 'collaboration' are symbiotic, together covering people's participation as working jointly, so this study merges them, and identifies the four stages of participation as: 1) Inform, 2) Consult, 3) Involve and 4) Empower.

2.5   Use of Tools for People's Participation

For different levels of engagement, governing bodies use different types of instruments to develop awareness of local community. Here 'instrument' means institutional devices used by the organisations to organise and sustain people's participation (Ngowi & Mselle 1998; Paul 1987). The use of these instruments varies in their complexity in terms of management and design of the program, and their relevance to different stages of people's participation. The following table shows some of these instruments used at different stages of people's participation:

Table 2.4 Relations of Participation Stages with Participating Instruments

Stages of Participation	Participating Instruments with Sources		
	Robinson, 2002	Local Government Association, 2007	Bishop and Davis, 2002
Informing	Letterboxing, Information night, Awareness campaign	Newsletter, Direct mail out, local press column, displays	Surveys, Focus groups, Public information campaign
Consulting	Survey, Seminar, Exhibition and comments	Public meetings, Surveys, Discussions,	Key contacts, interest group meetings, public meetings, discussion papers, public hearings

Involving/ partnership	Community advisory committee, Stakeholder Consultative workshops	Word forum, Focus group	Advisory boards, Citizens advisory committees, policy community forum, public inquiries
Empowering/ Control	Deliberative forum, Citizen jury, Referendum	Advisory groups, Precinct committee, Steering committees	Referendum, Community parliaments, Electronic voting

Sources: Robinson (2002); Local Government Association (2007); Bishop and Davis (2002)

In a World Bank report Samuel Paul (1987) described three instruments use for people's participation:

1. Staff of the governing agency: A local governing body may use its field workers to mobilise and interact with local peoples or expected beneficiaries. This contract may happen only for information sharing or consultation within a group or individual basis. That means this instrument is used only at the initial stages, informing or consulting, of people's participation. For example, in agricultural and irrigation projects, field workers are often used to organise and interact with farmers to promote and sustain participation.

2. Community groups or workers: Community workers or volunteer groups from local people may be involved with a governing agency to act as community-mobilisers. The community or expected beneficiaries may have had a say in selecting a volunteer group. This type of involvement enables local people to identify their problem and solve it in their own way. Where the expected beneficiary is in large numbers, this type of group intervention is effective to truly represent a community's interest. For example volunteer groups suitably work in primary health care programs.

3. Target or user groups: Where all beneficiaries are engaged with development programs by any means. The expected beneficiaries, in this case, initiate and design programs on their own. This situation happens when local people reach the highest level of empowerment through continuous participation in community programs.

2.6 Relationship between People's Participation and Good Governance

This argument thus recognizes that the level of good governance increases through people's heightened participation in development programs. Japan International Cooperation Agencies (JICA 1995) reported that good governance is the foundation of participatory development inasmuch as it provides the government roles needed to encourage participation and create the environment in which people can participate effectively. Effective people's participation enhances the transparency of the development works, the accountability of the implementing authority, and compliance with the local laws, which consequently establish good governance.

The above discussion thus indicates people's participation and good governance are inseparable from each other.

Japan International Cooperation Agencies (JICA 1995) developed a diagram showing participatory developments promote good governance and thus democracy in a country. The figure is presented below:

Figure 2.3 Link between Participatory Developments and Good Governance
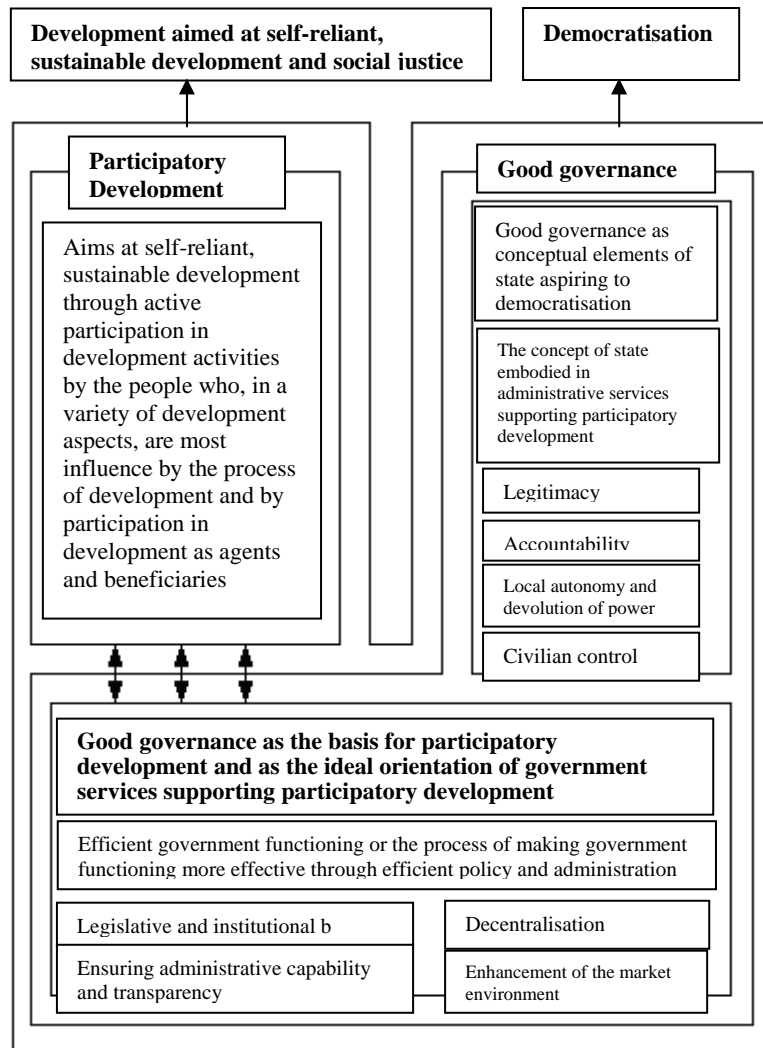
Source: Japan International Cooperation Agency (1995, p. 75)

Chadwick and May (2003) stated that the citizen-state relation i.e. the quality of governance (here e-democracy) varies with the variation of people's empowerment levels that developed through the delivery of government information. They reconfigured three models of governance which were initially developed by Laudon (1977) on the basis of interaction between citizen and government. These three models are: firstly, Managerial Model: In this model people are seen as passive recipients of information. Governing bodies deliver messages unilaterally to the people;

secondly, Consultative Model: This is a direct contrast with the managerial model. Here a governing body uses information systems to inform people, which system consequently facilitates communication between people and government. Chadwick and May (2003) described this as a 'pull' model as it reduces the gap between citizens and their government. And finally, Participatory Model: In this model people are provided with sufficient information which facilitates their involvement in the government programs. As there are no practical barriers for people's involvement, information power helps people to form civil society. All people, or at least the maximum number, participate in the decision making process. The spirit of synergy and mutual assistance helps to achieve the goal. In addition to these three, Navarra and Cornford (2005) developed the 'Disciplinary Model' of governance. In this model people may initiate collective social programs when they are fully empowered with information. In fact this model enforces local governing bodies provide for better policy to people, which was not possible in the last three models.

Newman (2007) developed four models of governance on the basis of mode of relationships between service providers and their clients. These are: 1) Hierarchical governance: the mode of relationship is rule based, where providers impose standardised templates of policies and local community receive that service. Here the service providing process is bounded with legal frames, monitoring audits and evaluation. 2) Managerial governance: the mode of relationship is motivational, where both service providers and receivers are likely to act instrumentally. Service receivers contract individually and participate to achieve goals jointly, encouraged with incentives. 3) Network governance: the mode of relationship is relational, where reciprocal communication develops trust in each other. Here collaboration /networking between service providers and receivers evolve into a friendly environment of program implementation. 4) Self governance: the mode of relationship is normative, where service providers uphold strong values and norms to facilitate receivers to govern themselves. The developed organisational culture empowers local community to activate their own programs.

Similarly, on the basis of the people's engagement, four models have been developed by researchers to describe qualities of governance. These are: 1) Managerial model –top down approach of implementation with marginal scope for people's participation; 2) Legislative model –decision making process initiated from the top to develop a common agenda through consulting the people; 3) Limited community participation model –engage community to open up the decision making process that finally generates harmony within the governing body and/ or within the community; and 4) Community empowerment model –bottom up approach that happens because of extensive community participation (Gibson, Lacy & Dougherty 2005). As a

working proposition, there seems to be a good correlation between the stage of participation and the model of governance that can be depicted along the following lines:

Table 2.5 Correlation between Stages of Participation and Governance

Stage of Participation	Model of Governance
Stage-1: Inform- a one-way process, when the governing agency tells people about their decision before or during implementation of development programs.	**Authoritarian Model:** in this model a decision comes from the top and is implemented mostly by bureaucrats. Total process of program is not transparent, accountable and predictable.
Stage- 2: Consult- a two-way communication, but engagement of people is limited within the decision making of the program. Governing agency is used to inform people to get feedback but makes decisions and implements them unilaterally.	**Bureaucratic Model:** in this model people's participation is not enough to ensure the transfer of power. The process of program is less transparent and less predictable, and the agency remains accountable to the top not to the people.
Stage- 3: Involve- at this stage governing agency not only listens to people to make decision, but also engages people for budget distribution and implements the program together. Usually the whole community does not get the scope to be engaged in this process.	**Political Model:** in this model people's participation is enough, but people are engaged in the development programs in different segments, which may evolve conflicts between different interest groups. Governing agency is transparent and accountable to a group of people but not to the whole community.
Stage-4: Empower- at this stage the governing agency allows developing the capacity of people to come with their decisions and resources to implement development programs jointly. Agency works as a facilitator.	**Democratic Model:** this model allows developing partnerships with people, delegates authority to make decisions and implements program with a sharing of local knowledge. Total process of the program is highly transparent, accountable and predictable.

Source: The Author

The above Table illustrates that good governance can be achieved through continuous endeavour to empower the people. This Table can be used as a tool to identify the position of governance at a certain stage of participation, which will provide a clear indication about the next step to achieve good governance.

2.6.1 Models of Good Governance on the Basis of Participation Levels

Reviewing all above statements and models, an outline and diagram of models of governance on the basis of people's participation can be drawn up, which is shown along with the following lines.

Authoritarian Model: This model evolves when people's participation remains at stage 1, that is, at the information level. In this situation, decisions and resources come from the top and projects are implemented mostly by the bureaucrats of the local agency, following rigidly prescribed processes, where people are treated as passive recipients. Authorities usually use local representatives or a display board or snail mail to inform people about the program. The total process of the program is not transparent, accountable or predictable. A diagram of Authoritarian model of governance has been depicted in the Figure-2.4, where the area of good governance is showing as much shrunken because of low accountability, participation, predictability and transparency.

Figure 2.4 Diagram of Authoritarian Model
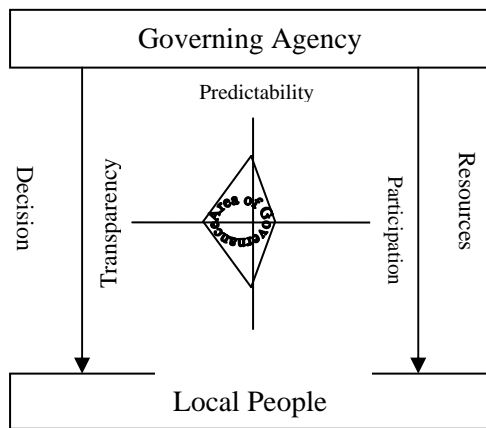
Source: The Author

Bureaucratic Model: This model develops when people's participation level remains at Stage 2 or the consultation stage. Governing agencies, in this model, consult with the people and use the resources of the people, but do not share power with them, to make decisions and/or policy. The participation is not enough to allow the people to know all about the resources, and that leaves scope for corruption in this model. A public meeting is usually conducted for consultation. People are treated as customers or clients by the authority as they do not share the whole process of development implementation. The process of the program, in this model, is less transparent and less predictable, despite the governing agency remaining accountable to the

Figure 2.5 Diagram of Bureaucratic Model

Source: The Author

45
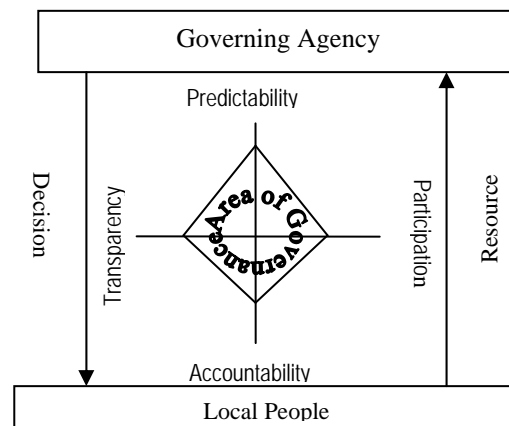
top authority though not to the people. Thus, the area of good governance in this model (see Figure-2.5) is still small.

Political Model: This model evolves when the participation level reaches the stage of involvement. In this model, the governing agency shares the knowledge, resources and authority

Figure 2.6 Diagram of Political Model
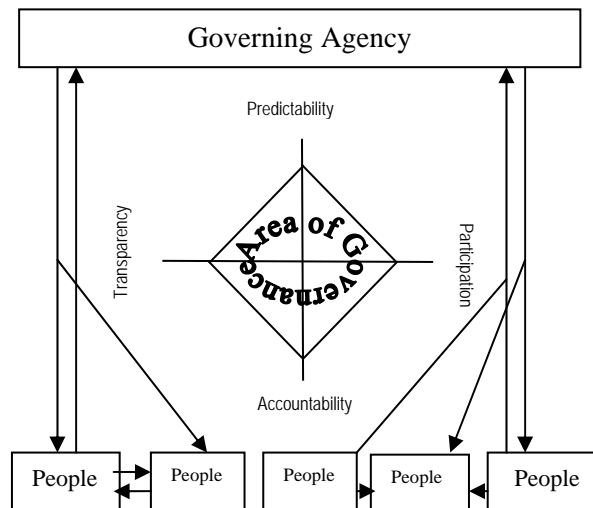
Source: The Author

with the local people in order to make decisions to implement the project. Moreover, in this model, people and agency jointly form a kind of coalition where both sides share histories, rituals, values and other common interests, and establish a more cooperative network to develop any program. But, people can be engaged with the development programs fractionally, and that can bring about conflicts. People are treated as partners, players or as contingent in this model, but the building of trust between the agency and the local people may remain weak because of the segmented network that has evolved. Predictability, transparency, and accountability are high in this model, as far as some people are conceived, but not for the community as a whole. To show this segmented scenario a figure (Figure-2.6) has been drawn, which represents a better area of good governance.

Democratic Model: This model emerges gradually as people's participation attains the stage of empowerment. This model allows developing a partnership with people, delegating authority to make decisions and implementing programs with the sharing of local knowledge, resources and values. This model allows participatory planning and strategic decision making, which facilitate the development of a common vision,

Figure 2.7 Diagram of Democratic Model

Source: The Author

46
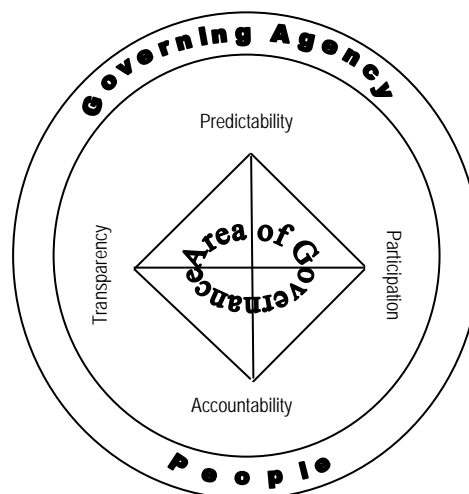
articulation of needs, effective, efficient and transparent management that facilitate a joint working environment. Transparency, accountability and predictability are fairly high in this model (see Figure-2.7). Finally, this is the most rational model when people are considered as stewards or navigators. But, authorities need to be flexible and open to encourage the development of this model.

The above diagrams thus illustrate that good governance cannot be achieved only improving systems or capacities of the governing agencies. Democratic good governance can be achieved through proper cooperation between governing agencies and local people. On the one end, governing agencies need to come close to the local people by extending and smoothing pro-people systems and approaches. On the other end, local people need to be empowered enough to make joint decisions that may have an effect on them. Only through these reciprocal activities people's participation may be effective towards achieving good governance.

2.7   Effective Participation for Good Governance

'Effective participation' is, as the World Bank (1996) defines it, a process through which people influence and share control over development initiatives. In other words 'effective' refers to instances when people's participation makes a difference within the decision making processes or policy outcomes of government (Cole & Caputo 1984). Thus it means more empowerment of the local people. More empowerment of people means more accountable, transparent and predictable government, and this is what makes people's participation with local development programs effective (Brett 2003, Cooper, Bryer & Meek 2006). However, literature reviewed throughout this Chapter has revealed that just empowering local people is not enough to achieve good governance. Governing agencies, that is, officials that are working in local governing institutions, also need to change their attitudes to welcome people to the decision making tables (Lawson & Gleeson 2005; Sobol 2008). As good governance means making a bridge between government and the governed (Barten *et al* 2002), both officials in local government bodies and local people need to uphold the value of direct people's participation. On the one hand, a sound and robust participatory system and complementary laws are required to build the capacity of local governing agencies. On the other hand, strong civil society groups and high social capital is required to empower local people. Effective networks between governing bodies and people thus depend on the fulfilment of some normative elements in the society, such as power-balance, equity, empowerment and social capital.

Social norms and trust are two major aspects of social capital which help people in networking with each other (Graddy & Wang 2009). With the help of these networks, people share values and concerns, which consequently transform into group energy (Stivers 2009). This group energy then helps to hold accountability, transparency and legitimacy of the local authority in delivering services and developments. In this way, good governance can be achieved by exploiting social capital (Putnam 1993). Governing agencies and local people need to act mutually to develop trust and norms, that is, social capital. Effective participation is not possible by bypassing the normative values of that particular society. Local stakeholders, who are in networks to build social capital, therefore have to be included in consultations for developing local government policies that ensure effective people's participation.

For a long time governments in different countries have been following 'technocratic policy analysis' for making public systems effective (Fischer 2007). That means government agencies do not include local people, or do not use local people's knowledge, for making decision that might have an effect on local people. In contrast to this traditional approach, some researchers have suggested that local knowledge and normative elements have to consider making a public system sustainable (Eyden 2003; Stivers 2000). 'Participatory policy analysis' helps to find out actual problems and how to overcome them (Fischer 2007, p.225). Therefore, local knowledge and normative elements should be considered when planning how to make local government sustainable by ensuring effective people's participation.

Given that, to find out all the barriers that are hindering effective participation, this research will include all stakeholders who may be contribute to making peoples participation effective in rural Bangladesh,. These stakeholders also will be interviewed face-to-face or in groups to assess how they perceive the value of direct people's participation. Local expected beneficiaries (businessmen and student's guardians) will also join with the researcher for jointly assessing the use of development works. As well, local government officials, public representatives and local people will be interviewed and observed to examine local power-balance, social hierarchy, empowerment and social capital in rural Bangladesh.

2.8   Conclusion

This chapter has conceptualised good governance, its values especially as identified by the international development agencies (IDAs), and the theories that underpin the good governance concept. Through this discussion we conceptualised the emergence of good governance in developing countries. Since the transformation of management, which started in 1989 when the World Bank discovered that the traditional approach of structural change in public management

was no longer capable of shifting the poverty line into the target line, simultaneously and silently a revolutionary change happened in the governance area of all developing countries. And this is good governance. In Bangladesh, international development agencies (IDAs) have been working for more than a decade to establish good governance in the country. Amongst these initiatives, preparation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, achieving Millennium Development Goals, and participatory budgeting at the local levels are most important. Through these initiatives the IDAs are trying to introduce more transparent and accountable government with greater people's participation in development programs.

This chapter has also conceptualised people's participation, its importance for good governance, and the instruments used for the participation process. People's participation is not a one off event. It is a continuous process through which participants are empowered gradually. The use of instruments for people's participation also varies with the variation of the participation stages. The following Chapter aims to discuss the participatory approaches available in Bangladesh local government institutions.

Finally this chapter establishes a relationship between good governance and people's participation. Four stages of people's participation are framed out of four models of governance accordingly.

The next chapter provides the local governance system and position of Bangladesh fostering good governance at rural levels.

CHAPTER 3.
BANGLADESH LOCAL GOVERNANCE SYSTEM AND PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

'Local government may sound small but it is often one of the largest employers and most diverse organisations within any particular area. Encouraging innovation and setting access to its potential benefits is a real and complex problem within these organisations.' - Audit Commission, (Orange et al. 2007, p. 243)

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the local governance position and people's participation context in rural Bangladesh. Formerly East Pakistan, Bangladesh emerged as an independent country in 1971. The country is branded as a developing one with per capita income of US $480 (World Bank 2007b) and an 'economy which remains heavily dependent on foreign aid and is predominantly rural in character' (Lewis 2004, p. 305). The majority of the population are Muslim while almost 15 percent are made up of Hindu, Christian, Buddhist and animist minorities. According to United Nations, the Human Development Index of the country is ranked as 140th (World Bank 2007b), and almost 40 percent of its populace are living below the poverty line (BBS 2007).

The last two decades of the 20th century saw major changes in the local government system worldwide (Bovaird & Löffler 2002). Bangladesh was no exception. From medieval times to the present, the country has experienced several changes and effected decentralisations in the local government systems to make it effective and efficient (Sarker 2006b). The government and international development partners have also put emphasis on pro-rural development by strengthening the local government system in the country. In attempt to achieve strong local governance, the government has introduced several reforms and decentralisation programs to bring the government close to the people.

To explore the local governance position of rural Bangladesh in the global context, this chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides an overview of people's participation approach in the local government system. The second section is an overview of the people's participation mechanisms maintained by local government institutions in rural Bangladesh. This includes the dynamics of the local government system in the country, and the structure, financing and function of local government bodies, and the local civil societies that strengthen participation in local development programs. The third section provides the reforms initiatives by the government in attempt to achieve local good governance in the country.

3.2 Conceptualising Local Government and Local Governance

For a long time local government has been conceptualised as the training ground for participation in national political institutions (John 2001). According to John Stewart Mill (1861) local governments are formed to channel the essence of democracy from central to the remote areas. In the light of this view, John defined local government as a 'democratically elected authority that exercises political choices within denoted boundaries' (2001, p. 34). The philosophy is that locally elected authority should be in charge of local matters that affect them. More specifically, local government refers to 'specific institutions or entities … to deliver a range of specified services to a relatively small geographically delineated area' (Shah & Shah 2006, p. 1). According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 'local government units are institutional units whose fiscal, legislative and executive authority extends over the smallest geographical areas distinguished for administrative and political purposes' (2007, p. 452). Thus we can define local government as the governing body that looks after public affairs at local levels.

The above definitions thus imply that local government bodies form at local levels for the administrative or political purposes of the central or state government to provide services to the local people. Traditionally local people elect their representatives for these local government institutions to look after the matters that have an effect on the local community. However, finding many 'faults in the system of authority in representative government at local level' (John 2001, p. 154), *local government* is now transforming into *local governance* (Geddes 2005). 'Local governance is a broader concept and is defined as the formulation and execution of collective action at the local levels' (Shah & Shah 2006, p. 1). Collective action means any work that engages state, private sector and people together. Geddes (2005, p. 31) pointed out that the 'recent shift from local government to local governance' are pervasive as the local government bodies are particularly focusing on combating poverty and inequality at the local levels making networks with local people. Thus while in the 'local government' concept, government is the sole actor to provide decisions and services, in 'local governance', government is one of the actors, along with private sectors and citizens, to provide services. In local governance 'government engage[s] with citizens through decentralised and collaborative decision-making' (Lawson & Gleeson 2005, p. 83). The Commission on Global Governance identified local governance as a development paradigm, and defined local governance as: the sum of the many ways in which individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance; as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceived to be in their interest (Commission on Global Governance 1995). Similarly, Blair termed it as

democratic local governance, and defined this as making local government 'more responsive to citizen desires and more effective in service delivery' (Blair 2000). Bovaird and Loffer defined local governance as:

> The set of formal and informal rules, structures and processes which determine the ways in which individuals and organizations can exercise power over the decisions (by other stakeholders) which affect their welfare at local levels (2002, p. 16).

Thus, local governance means, on the one hand, when the state comes closer to the people, providing greater access to all sections of the community and empowering them to control the decision that affects them. On the other hand, local governance requires decentralisation of local government bodies to develop appropriate infrastructure to foster instruments to include people for implementation of sustainable local knowledge based development programs (Barten et al. 2002). Khan (2000) pointed out that decentralised local government institutions can: build political leadership, guarantee people's participation, create accountable administration and implement people oriented development programmes. In the light of these above definitions, local governance is considered as a transformed term of local government. When *local government* focuses on people's participation in its service delivery system then it is termed *local governance*.

The above discussion thus indicates a paradigm shift from representative democracy to participatory democracy; or in other words, solely representative-run local government to participatory local governance. While a representative local government body consists of three elements – structural, financial and functional (Datta 2007), for participatory local governance we need to add one more element to local government bodies: that is, the congregational element (see figure 3.1). This new element will focus on people's participation: how people will participate, when they will participate, what laws or tools will be used to participate. All these issues will be incorporated in this element including, above all, how local people will gradually reach the upper stages of participation to be empowered.

Figure 3.1 Shifting from Local Government to Local Governance
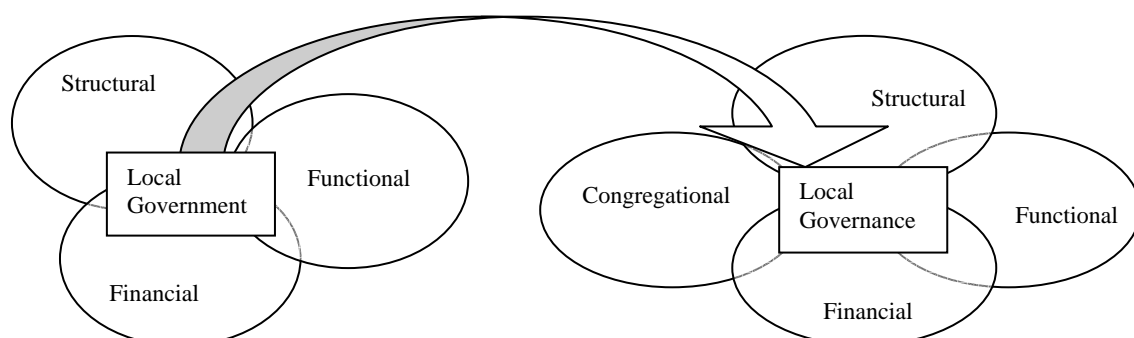
Source: The Author

Many researchers and social workers have been expressing further views about local governance. They have viewed local governance as an instrument for local development (Aminuzzaman 2006; Cornwall 2004b), and use terms like: 'good local governance' (Bovaird & Löffler 2002); or 'democratic local governance' (Barten et al. 2002). According to them, a good or democratic process of people's participation is essential in achieving highest returns from development implementations at local levels. Local governance is acknowledged as a highly viable vehicle which helps to establish democratic practices and processes and ensure participatory development (Khan 2000, p. 20).

3.3   Quest for People's Participation for Good Local Governance

Increasingly, people's participation in local governmental affairs is considered an indivisible part of the meaning of democracy at local levels (Cornwall 2004a; Lawson & Gleeson 2005). However, people's participation is not a new discovery. What is new is people's direct participation in decision making, which is increasingly considered an essential practice in governing agencies (Creighton 2005). Pimbert and Wakeford argue that it is a very defining characteristic of modern democracy, as, they state, 'democracy without citizen deliberation and participation is ultimately an empty and meaningless concept' (2001, p. 23).

People's participation is a legal requirement or prerequisite for local governmental decision making in most of the developed countries. Around thirty-five European countries are signatories to the 1998 Aarhus Convention, formally known as the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Convention on involving people in decision making in local environmental matters, which took effect in 2001 (Creighton 2005). Those signatory governments are committed to ensure people's participation and access to information in all environmental decision making at local levels.

However, the practice of people's participation is also transmitted to the developing countries through the developed countries and through international development agencies. Now people's participation is a prerequisite for development projects, which are funded by the World Bank and the various international aid agencies (Momen & Begum 2005). Most of the development agencies believe that the fight against poverty can not be won without good or good enough local governance in developing countries (DFID 2007; Shah 2006b; World Bank 2002b). People's participation establishes accountability in local government institutions that makes government at the local level more responsive to citizen desires and more effective in service delivery, which consequently alleviate poverty (Blair 2000). The understanding is that as government comes closer to the people, more people will participate in the governing process.

Through this participation, local people get empowered to raise their voices in government decisions that affect their lives (Holzer & Kloby 2005). Thus a participatory decision provides more appropriate outcomes and the highest use of any development program, which enhances economic growth. These economic improvements then reduce poverty and enhance equity among all community members (Barten et al. 2002). A World Bank discussion paper (Parker & Serrano 2000) has conceptualised how people's participation impact on local governance elements and sustainable local development. They drew a figure like the following:

Figure 3.2 Participatory Local Governance for Development
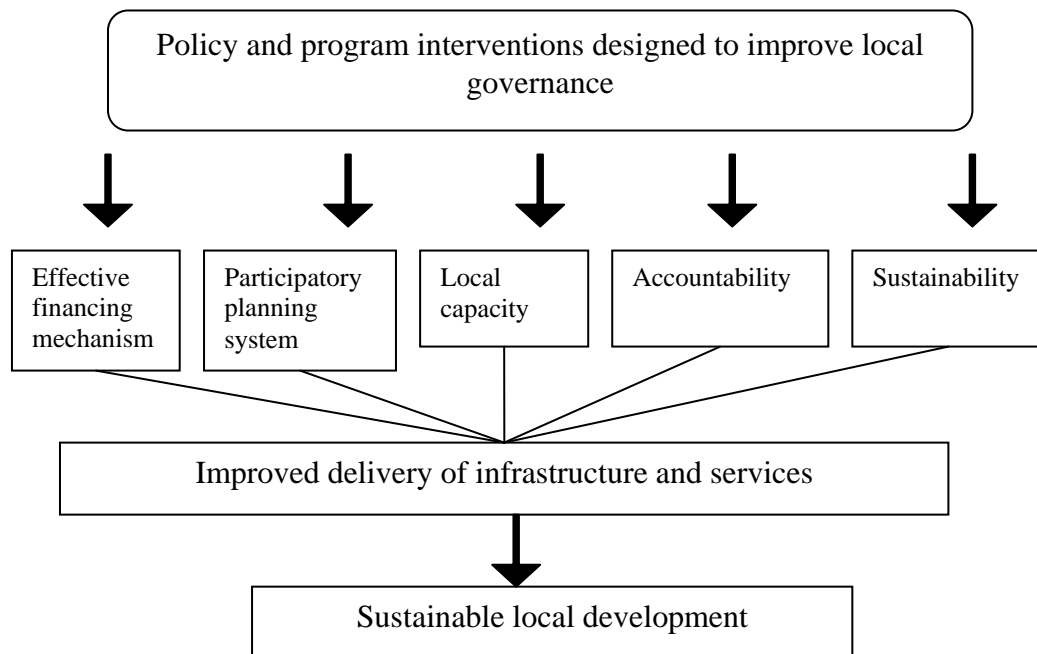
Source: World Bank Discussion Paper (Parker & Serrano 2000, p. 5)

Moreover, good local governance helps to develop relationships between social actors. These relationships prompt the local governing authority to provide services as per local people's choices, which consequently helps them in harnessing local development programs to alleviate poverty. Sobol pointed out that 'governance is the process of steering societies in such a way that it circumvents the dangers of problems related to collective action or inequitable social relationships and removes barriers to the enhancement of social welfare' (2008, p. 195). According to many international development agencies, good local governance is indispensable in all domestic efforts to eradicate poverty from developing countries (ADB 2004a; UNDP 2006b). So does, the Government of Bangladesh put emphasis on local governance to get rid of poverty.

3.4 Establishment of Local Government in Rural Bangladesh

Bangladesh, a South Asian country (see figure 3.3), presently has a population estimated at 140 million within an area of only 55, 813 square miles (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2007). Inherently, most of the populace of the country live in rural areas where half of the number is poverty stricken (Hossain, Rahman & Estudillo 2008).

Figure 3.3 Position of Bangladesh in South Asia

Source: Bangladesh online (Banglapedia 2008)

The Government of Bangladesh with the help of development agencies has been trying to eradicate poverty by providing adequate physical infrastructures at rural areas since independence. To implement these physical infrastructures and other service delivery, the government has emphasised the development of local government bodies and people's participation at all levels of administration. The approval of the constitution of the country, within a year of independence, categorically emphasised the need for establishing local government with a representative character at all levels of administration. The Article 59 and 60 (Chapter-III of the Part-IV) of the constitution (GOB 1972) of the country states that:

55

> *Article 59: Local Government … in every administrative unit of the Republic shall be entrusted to bodies, composed of persons elected in accordance with law. [Local governments]… may include functions relating to: Administration and the work of public officers; the maintenance of public order; the preparation and implementation of plans relating to public services and economic development.*
>
> *Article 60: Powers of local government bodies For the purpose of giving full effect to the provisions of article 59 Parliament shall, by law, confer powers on the local government bodies referred to in that article, including power to impose taxes for local purposes, to prepare their budgets and to maintain funds.*

Thus the constitution from the beginning directed the local government to grow as an inseparable part of the central democracy to administer development programs with the local people. People should participate directly in constituting the local body and in managing the affairs of such bodies. That means, as per the constitution, the local government in Bangladesh should be transformed into local governance.

However, the formation of a local government body and the spirit of people's participation within these bodies were not always adequately sustained in Bangladesh. To know the scope of people's participation in local government functions, the historical dynamics of the development of local government institutions in the region should be studied.

3.5   Participation in Bangladesh Local Government – Historical Context

Bangladesh has a long recorded history of several thousand years regarding local government institutions. The people's participation in local development works remains deeply rooted in the dynamics of the evolution of local government bodies in the region. Local government institutions and the mechanism of people's participation with those agencies have changed in tune with the changes of the socio-political situation in the Bengal region. Before its independence the country was a part of Pakistan and was known as East Pakistan (1947-1971). Before then, different parts of the present Bangladesh territory were under the British India (1765-1947), the Mughals (1526-1761), and before then under Buddhist and Hindu rulers (500-1525 AD).

3.5.1   *People's Participation in Local Government Bodies in Medieval Times*

The indigenous writings in this region, dating from approximately 1200 BC, mentioned some forms of village self-governance, which were termed 'village republics' by Sir Charles Metcalfe (Siddiqui 2005, p. 29). Though these institutions were autonomous and self sufficient in the mobilization of resources, there is not enough information on whether these village institutions acted like local government, and whether the common people had access to participation in the decision making process (Khanna 1977; Litvack, Ahmad & Bird 1998; Siddiqui 2005, p. 30).

3.5.2 People's Participation during Buddhist, Hindu and Mughal Kings

By contrast to the village-republic concept, Maity and Basham (1957) mentioned that the first local government bodies were formed by the Gupta ruler (roughly AD 320-550) by forming a committee (village Panchayet) of leading local citizens and by appointing a land recorder and a revenue collector in village areas. Local people could discuss their affairs with the central employees during this time, hence these village Panchayets are regarded as 'if not democratic, at least established in some degree the principle of government by discussion' (Maity & Basham 1957, p. 98). This form of Panchayet existed for a long time (500-1525 AD) till the Mughals (1526-1761) appointed Kotwal (CEO) and Kazi (Judicial officer) in every town in addition to previous two land and revenue officials. The Mughal, by strengthening their law and order and revenue administration in town areas through centrally appointed employees, gradually, thus, weakened the rural self-government system in the Bengal region (Siddiqui 2005, p. 37).

3.5.3 People's Participation in Local Government Bodies during British Rule

During almost two hundred years of British rule (1761-1947) over the Bengal region, a number of experiments were conducted with the local government institutions and their activities with local communities. The first attempt to involve local people in a local government body was through the Village Choukidery Act in 1870. Through this act five selected local people who were nominated by the District Magistrate formed a Village Panchayet to appoint Choukider (village police) for the maintenance of local law and order (Siddiqui 2005).

After then, a major attempt to ensure people's participation in local government bodies was initiated through the Bengal Local Self-Government Act of 1885. This Act provided a three-tiers system of local bodies including an elected Union Committee for each Union (cluster of villages) at the remote level. This Act initiated the election as a mode of choosing one's representative at the local level, though these representatives were subject to approval by the District Magistrate (a British). The other two centrally controlled tiers were District Board at every district and a Local Board in a subdivision of every district.

The Bengal Village Self-Government Act of 1919 was another major step in this area. A two tier system replaced the three tier local government system that existed, retaining the District Board and establishing a Union Board at the Union level. This system continued until India and Pakistan gained independence in 1947 (Sarker 2006b).

Though these Acts were called Self-government, these bodies were not self governed. These were controlled by the central government directly or by proxy (Sarker 2006b). Even the elected

members were also subject to the approval of the local government officials from central government. So these governing bodies did not allow any scope for the engagement of the local people; rather, people were treated as the customer. Through these processes the government created an elite class at the local level e.g. president, vice president of the Union Board, and used them to collect taxes, and realigned them towards government ruling policies (Siddiqui 2005). The real purpose behind the introduction of local bodies was seeking supports from the natives at the local level while denying their participation at the central level (Morshed 1989).

3.5.4 People's Participation in Local Government during Pakistan Period

During the Pakistan period (1947-1970), the Basic Democracy Order-1959 promulgated four tiers of local government system all over the country. In rural areas they formed the Union Council and the Thana (sub-district) Council. All Member of Union Councils and 50 percent of the members of the Thana Councils were people's representatives who were elected by the local people. But the controlling authority of these councils was under government bureaucrats as the elected local representatives could be removed from their position by the local government officials because of any misconduct in the discharge of their duties. So, rather than serving the people, these people's representatives served the government officials to continue their power exercise (Sarker 2006b).

3.5.5 People's Participation in Local Government Bodies after Independence

The constitution for newly independent Bangladesh in 1971 kept provisions for promulgated representative bodies at all levels of local government. In compliance with this constitutional provision, different governments introduced different types of local government bodies (see the Figure-3.4). These reforms started with the President's order number 7 of 1972. Through this order the name of Union Councils and Thana councils changed as Union Parishad and Thana Parishad respectively, but no significant change in the people's participation process happened.

With the change of the government in 1976, the then military ruler changed the local government system notably by promulgating the Local Government Ordinance of 1976. This Ordinance introduced three tiers of local government bodies: namely the Zila Parishad at District level, the Thana Parishad at Thana level, and the Union Parishad at Union level. One chairman and nine members were to be elected by the local people for the Union Parishad. Two nominated women and two peasant members who were also to be included in the committee were selected by the bureaucrats of the central government. However, the elected chairmen were found accountable to the local bureaucrat, as the dismissal power of the Chairman for any misconduct was under the control of the government. Moreover, local bureaucrats were

appointed as Chairmen of the Thana Parishad. So these people's representatives truly represented the government instead of representing local people.

In 1982, another military ruler reigned over the government and changed the local government system through another Ordinance. The Local Government (Thana Parishad and Thana Administration Reorganization) Ordinance, 1982 was a milestone in the local government system in the country. Through this Ordinance, Thanas (sub-districts) were upgraded to Upazilas and the Thana Parishad to Upazila Parishad. The most important change was that the Chairman of the Upazila Parishad was an elected person and local officials were transferred to the Parishad, and acted as non-voting (without voting rights) members of the Parishad. All development programs at Upazila level were also transferred to the Parishad.

A democratically elected government in 1991 restructured the local government bodies again. The Upazila Parishads were abolished by promulgating the Local Government (Upazila Parishad and Upazila Administration Reorganization) Ordinance. In 1992, the Local Government Structure Review Commission recommended two tiers of local government body, namely Union Parishad and Zila Parishad; dropping Upazila Parishad (Siddiqui 2005, p. 100). The Thana Development Coordination Committee (TDCC) replaced the Upazila Parishad, where Union Parishad (UP) chairmen of the Upazila jurisdiction held the Chairmanship by rotation. Moreover, the local Parliament Member was appointed as the Advisor of the TDCC.

In 1997, with the change of another democratically elected government, a Local Government Commission recommended establishing a four-tier local government institution at the village, Union, Upazila and Zila levels without mentioning any changes in people's participation. However, in 1998, Women Members of the Union Parishad were directly elected for the first time in the history of Bangladesh. In 2001, a review committee of the Local Government System also recommended a four-tier local government system, which consequently introduced the Gram Sarker Act-2003. Through this Act a non-elected body was introduced at village level to organise participatory planning and support the activities of the central government. However, in November 2007, on the basis of the recommendation of the committee on 'Accelerating and Strengthening Local Government Institutions', the government abolished Gram Sarker at village level and went back to the three tier local government bodies, each at District, Upazila and Union level. The Upazila Parishads were continued to running by the Upazila Development Co-ordination Committee (UDCC, formerly TDCC).

The committee on 'Accelerating and Strengthening Local Government Institutions' mainly focused on the organizational structure, source of revenue earning, autonomy of local

government, empowerment of women, setting criteria for candidate for election, etc (Local Government Division 2007). The committee also suggested forming an independent Local Government Commission to remove the local government bodies from the control of the central government (Local Government Division 2007). On the basis of the report a caretaker government in October 2008 forms a Commission, but this commission was abolished by the subsequently elected new government in February 2009. However, an election for Upazila Parishad held in January 2009, and a revised 'Upazila Parishad Act' passed by the new parliament in April 2009. In this new Upazila Parishad a woman Vice-president has been elected for the first time by direct vote of the rural people. The local MPs are also allowed to continue their role as advisor of the Upazila Parishads.

3.6 Local Government in Bangladesh: Contemporary Administrative Units

The Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (LGRD &C) looks after the local government institutions in Bangladesh. The rural local government system in Bangladesh is shown as in the following figure:

Figure 3.4 Structure of Local Government Bodies in Bangladesh
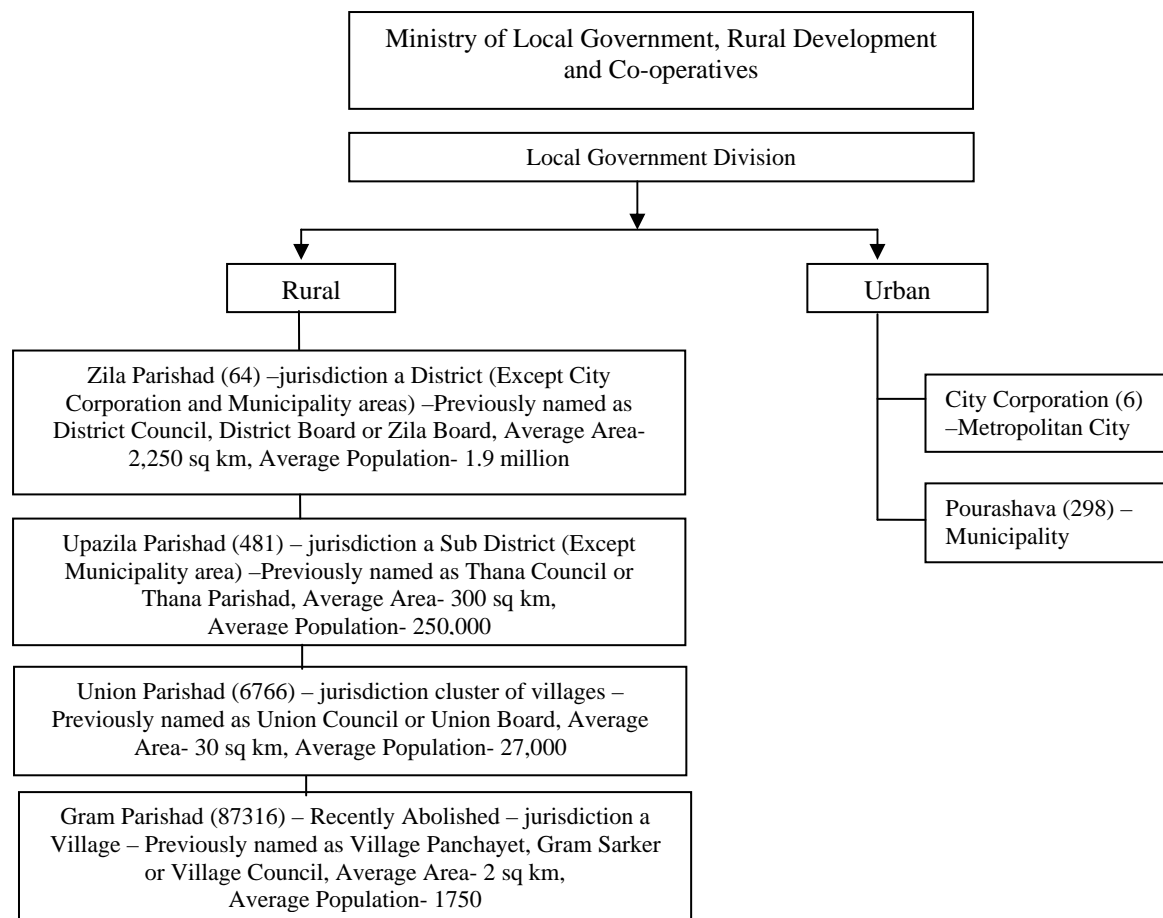
Sources: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2007). Commonwealth Local Government Forum (2007)

Among these institutions Union Parishad is oldest and sustainable one in terms of regular election, but functionally Upazila is most important. The Upazila has been designed to work as a focal point of all administrative and development activities in rural areas. In reality Upazila Parishad is the decision maker and the Union Parishad is the implementing unit (Siddiqui 2005). The Zila (District) is a vital unit of field administration, as it carries out most of the regulatory functions of the central government. Nonetheless, between Ministry and District (here Zila) another unit called Division stands to coordinate functions of the districts. There are six Divisions in the country headed by top level bureaucrats in Bangladesh.

Given that Upazila Parishad is the most vital rural local government body, this study has selected Upazila for detailed study. Datta (2007) pointed out the three major elements for a sustainable local government institution, which are: structural, financial and functional. The following discussion will cover these three elements of the Upazila Parishad.

3.6.1 Structure of Upazila Parishad

After a long journey of its experimentation, abolition and reintroduction from 1982, the Upazila Parishad system is still alive. After two terms election for Upazila Parishad in 1985 and 1990, the Upazila Parishads were abolished in 1991 by the parliament. At present there are 482 Upazilas in the country (see appendix 1 for the map of Upazila boundaries throughout the country).

Since 1991, the Upazila has been run by the Upazila Development Coordination Committee (UDCC). The UDCC was formed instead of Upazila Parishad to continue the function of the Parishad until the next election is held. In January 2009 an election for Upazila Parishads was held under the new government, which introduced a new structure. The previous structure of Upazila Parishad, UDCC and the new structure can be compared in the following table:

Table 3.1 Different Structures of Upazila Parishad

OLD SYSTEM (1982-1990)	INTERIM SYSTEM (1991-2008)	NEW SYSTEM (2009--
Upazila Parishad	**Upazila Development Coordination Committee**	**Upazila Parishad**
	Advisor Local MP	**Advisor** Local MP
President Upazila Chairman	**President** One Union Parishad (UP) chairman by rotation	**President** Upazila Chairman
		Vice President 1 Man & 1 Woman

Members	Members	Members
Union Parishad chairmen + one selected elite + Chairman of the Upazila Cooperative Association + Mayor of the municipality within Upazila area	Rest UP chairmen + 3 Women members selected from the elected Women Members of the Ups + One freedom fighter + Chairman of the Cooperative Association + Mayor of the municipality within Upazila area	All UP chairmen + 3 Women members selected from the elected Women Members of the Ups + One former freedom fighter + Chairman of the Cooperative Association + Mayor of the municipality within Upazila area
Non-voting Members Officials working in Upazila	**Non-voting Members** Officials working in Upazila	**Non-voting Members** Officials working in Upazila

Source: Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (GOB 2009)

The duration of elected representatives in the Upazila Parishad is for five years. Apart from elected representatives, the officials work in the Upazila Parishad on secondment, but belong to their respective line services. Their parent departments design their job and place them with the local government bodies for a specific period: usually for three years. These officials are officially barred from belonging to any political party or openly supporting any political ideology (Noor 1996).

Every Upazila is further divided into several Unions depending on its geographical area. The Union Parishad (UP) is the lowest tier and administrative unit of the government and its function is supervised by the Upazila. Every UP is divided into nine Wards – the remotest constituency for an elected representative. Three of these Wards comprise a Ward for women Members, which means, every UP divided into three Wards where a woman member gets elected. The structure of a Union Parishad is as follows:

Figure 3.5 Structure of a Union Parishad
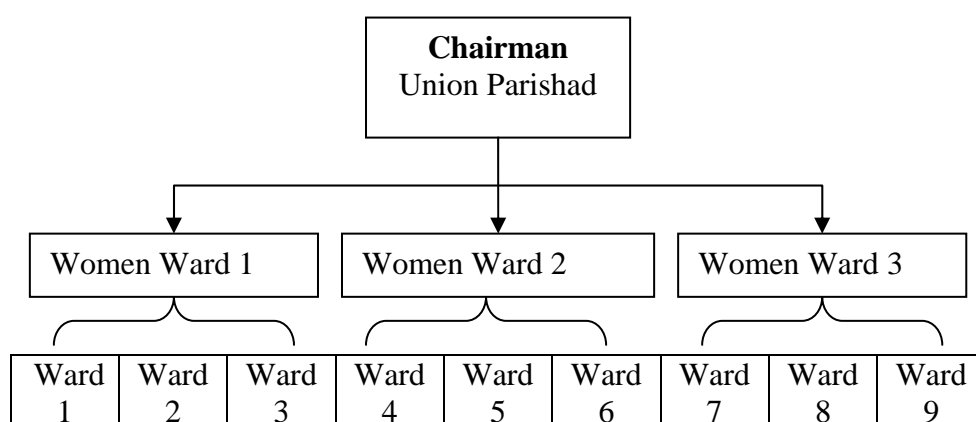
Source: Local Government Division, Ministry of LGRD&C (2004).

The Union Parishad chairman holds office for a term of five years. The secretary for the Parishad is recruited by the central government employees at the district levels. However, all other employees are recruited by the Parishad.

As the field study and data collection of this research (February- June 2008) have been conducted during the UDCC system, this thesis will follow and mostly describe the UDCC system.

3.6.2   Financial System in Upazila Parishad

Local government bodies in Bangladesh are in constant shortage of funds (Sarker 2006b). The sources of their income are generally taxes, rates, fees and charges levied by the local body as well as rents and profits accruing from properties of the local body and sums received through its services. Nowadays, foreign or international project funds also contribute a significant share of an Upazila's fund. Generally four categories of income sources are available at Upazila level. These are:

1) Block grants: A block grant allocated by the central government in every fiscal year to maintain the costs for development projects at Upazila levels. Commonly it is called the Annual Development Program Budget or ADP.

The amounts of allocated money and its rate of use to implement projects nationwide in the previous fiscal years are presented in the following table:

Table 3.2 ADP Allocation and its Rate of Use to Implement Projects

Fiscal year	Fund (billion Taka*)	Percent of implementation
2007-08	2,25	82%
2006-07	2,16	83%
2005-06	2,15	91%
2004-05	2,05	92%
2003-04	1,90	89%

  Source: The Daily Shamokal (Kawser 2008) *1 Taka=A$ 0.02

The UDCC decides on the allocation of this fund following the guidelines by the Ministry as follows: i) 5% for Maintenance and repairing of building situated at Upazila complex; ii) 10% for incentive to Union Parishad for their performance; iii) 1% for uncertain costs like natural disaster; and rest iv) 84% allocation for projects proposed by the Union Parishads (Local

Government Division 2004, pp. 7-8). A criterion like: 50% for People and 50% for Area is followed for distribution of this fund among Unions.

The central government retains audit function while Upazila Parishad is the final authority for planning, designing and executing programs undertaken with the block allocation. However, the Planning Commission of the central government in consultation with the Ministry of LGRD &C (Local Government) provides guidelines indicating the areas of investment, the sector emphasised and the broad objectives of schemes and programs that are to be considered during the block allocation (GOB 1983). Presently the guidelines are as follows:

Table 3.3 Guidelines for Allocation of ADP for Different Sectors

Sectors	Allocation	
	Minimum	Maximum
Agriculture and irrigation (crops, fisheries and livestock)	20%	32%
Rural physical Structures (roads, buildings, markets, and public health structures)	32%	47%
Socio-economic structures (Schools, health complexes, sports structures)	22%	45%
Miscellaneous (natural disasters, census)	2.5%	5%

Source: Bangladesh Local Government Division (2004, pp. 9-10)

2) <u>Local Resources</u>: Taxes, rates, tolls and fees which are levied by the Upazila Parishad, including pro-rata shares of some of central government revenues collected from within that Upazila are the main local resources. There are eight different sources of income mobilised through taxes, levies, fees, tolls and others. These are: i) annual tax on households within Upazila Parishad; ii) lease money on *Jalmahals* (inland natural fisheries), *haats* (primary markets) and bazaars, local *ghats* (boat and ferry landing sites), iii) tax on professionals, trades and callings and fees for licences and permits granted by the Upazila; iv) any donations from any person or institution; v) taxes on cinemas, dramatic and theatrical shows and fees for other entertainment events; vi) any return from invested money by the Parishad; vii) tolls on services and facilities maintained and viii) tax on the transfer of immovable properties.

3) <u>Food grants</u>: Food grains are supplied from the central government to implement local maintenance works. The central government gets this food from donor countries as an aid

4) <u>Specific allocation</u>: Specific allocations for individual projects, which stand for more than one Upazila or nationwide, are transferred from the central government to the Upazila Parishad. On the basis of recommendations of individual ministry, divisible components of nationally

planned and administered projects are transferred along with their allocations to the Upazilas for implementation by the Upazila Parishad.

This thesis focuses on services such as providing physical structures, for example, rural markets and primary schools. These schemes are organised into clearly divisible components between different tiers from Upazila to the central government. The allocations for such components along with delineation of the physical program of works are then handed down to Upazila Parishads for implementation (GOB 1983, p. 10). As most of these projects are implemented by foreign aid channelled through the central governments, the Upazila authorities remain responsible to the national government for those projects. The national level officials posted in the region or headquarters inspect the implementations of such projects. If possible, they also provide the needed technical supports (GOB 1983, p. 10). Direct participation of people is one of the important issues for an aid assisted project. Consulting firms are also appointed by the government following the guidelines of the development agencies to monitor and evaluate the project works (Planning Ministry 2005).

3.6.3 *Functions of Upazila Parishad*

Many important functions, which had been formerly performed by the central government, were transferred to the Upazila (Siddiqui 2005). This is in fact a remarkable shift from the previous situation, as the subjects transferred to the Upazila covered almost all development functions. These functions can be categorised under fourteen heads, and these are:

1. Formulation of Upazila development plans and programs on the basis of the Union Parishad plan and implementation
2. Giving assistance to the Union Parishad
3. Promotion of health and family planning
4. Management of environment
5. Promotion of socio-cultural activities
6. Primary education and child development programme
7. Livestock, fisheries and forestry
8. Agriculture including extension services, input supply services and irrigation
9. Small and cottage industries
10. Rural work programs including development local markets and drainage
11. Food for work programmes
12. Assistance to the Zila Parishad in development activities
13. Promotion of employment generation activities
14. Implementation of government policies and programs within the Upazila

Every year the Upazila Parishad collects the plans for annual development projects from the Union Parishads. A nine member 'Project Selection Committee' scrutinises those project plans before submitting them to the UDCC. The committee members are:

1. Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) – Convenor
2. Upazila Agricultural Officer – Member

3. Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer – Member
4. Upazila Livestock officer – Member
5. Upazila Public health Sub-assistant engineer – Member
6. Upazila Project Implementation Officer – Member
7. Upazila BRDB (rural development and cooperative) – Member
8. Upazila Engineer – Member Secretary

Most of the selected development projects, which cost less than seventy-five thousand taka (1 taka = A$ 0.02), are then implemented by a selected Project Implementation Committee (PIC) following the guidelines issued by the ministry. One elected representative such as Union Parishad Chairmen, women Members or Ward Members is authorised to be the president, and a public employee of the respective department is assigned to work as member-secretary of a PIC. The other 5 to 7 members of the PIC are selected by the president of the committee from social workers, elites, teachers or ordinary local people (Local Government Division 2004, p. 14). A full member PIC should then be approved by the UDCC before starting their function. At least five of these committees are to be headed by the woman Members to empower the women's sections in the rural society (Khan 2000). Above these implementation committees 13 Monitoring and Evaluation committees are to be formed in every Union Parishad. These committees are to be headed by the elected Union Chairmen or from women Ward Members. The main job of a monitoring committee is to monitor and evaluate one of all 13 projects undertaken by a Union Parishad in a year.

If a project costs over than 75,000 taka, or is part of a national project, it is to be implemented by a contractor selected through an open tender process locally. Five members of a 'Tender Committee' are responsible to select a contractor (Local Government Division 2004, p. 15). These members are:

1. Upazila Nirbahi (chief executive) Officer (UNO) – Convenor
2. Concerned UP chairman – Member
3. Concerned Women UP Member – Member
4. Related Departmental Head – Member
5. Upazila Engineer – Member Secretary

However, there are different management committees to administer, monitor and evaluate the contractors' works at the Upazila level. A local management committee at the Union levels also constantly monitors and evaluates the activities of contractors. The Upazila Engineer is responsible for overall supervision to implement a project (Local Government Division 2004). Almost six of these type of committees are headed by the UNO while concerned government officials are the member-secretaries of these committees (Mallick 2004, p. 71).

3.7   Other Institutions to Promote Good Local Governance in Bangladesh

There are three major institutions that promote good governance. These are: 'the state, the private sector and civil society' (Agere 2000, p. 10). In the above paragraphs we only discussed rural state institutions. Now, it seems logical to discuss the private sector and civil society in rural Bangladesh.

3.7.1   Private Sectors at Rural Level

For centuries, Bangladesh has been considered as an agrarian country, as most of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) comes from agricultural products. At present, about 73 percent of its 140 million people live in rural areas, and are directly or indirectly engaged in a wide range of agricultural activities (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2007). The agricultural sector, employing 52 percent of the rural labour force, contributes 18.9 percent to the national GDP (World Bank 2007b). Even with such a big population, there is no vibrant farmers' forum or association at the rural levels (Mallick 2004). An initiative was taken to form cooperative based farming through farmers' associations at the village and Upazila level in the country. However, those initiatives failed due to the inequality in access to the resources among the different classes of farmers (Abdullah 2006; Khan 1979).

Recently the business community is emerging as a vibrant private sector in rural Bangladesh. Due to the distribution of micro-credits by the NGOs and also the expansion of garments industries all over the country, local businessmen are becoming inclined to form local associations (Devine 2007). NGOs are providing training to the poor to do small business with the micro-credit they provide. Thus with the help of micro-credits, small and medium agro-business and backward linkage (like handloom fabrics and wooden buttons) garments industries are developing even in rural areas in the country. Presently there are 1.31 million SMEs, mostly related to agriculture in the country (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2007).

These business communities are increasingly participating in local and central government bodies. A study shows the percentage of MP from businessmen background has increased from 27 percent in 1970 to 53 percent in 2009 (Haque 2009). As a result the businessmen community is becoming an influential actor in local government bodies. The most vibrant businessmen association found all over the large markets in the country is named 'Banik Samity (Association of Businessmen)' (Mallick 2004).

3.7.2   Civil Society and NGOs in Rural Bangladesh

Civil society has been regarded as 'the third key actor in the process of developing and maintaining good governance' (Agere 2000, p. 73). Lewis described the concept of civil society

as 'a group of people (mainly voluntarily grouped) outside of state and business formed for collective purpose or common good, which keeps state accountable and effective' (Lewis 2004, p. 302). Similarly, Mercer conceptualised the notion as 'the realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules' (2002, p. 7). In the same way the UK Department for International Development describes civil society as 'the multitude of associations, movements and groups where citizens organise to pursue shared objectives or common interests. These organisations function beyond the individual or household level, but below the state' (DFID 2007, p. 2). In this sense, civil society is a civil congregation separated from the political and business dominion, which includes non-governmental or voluntary sector organisations. These organisations play major roles in: i) consolidation of democracy by fostering pluralistic activities; ii) checking abuse of state power by pursuing the authority to follow the rule of laws; iii) ensuring the state's accountability by mobilising wide citizen participation, and iv) strengthening the state's transparency by increasing public scrutiny of the state (Mercer 2002).

As authoritarian and representative governing systems are losing their credibility, civil society is emerging as an effective agent in the search to identify and implement programs that concern local people directly (Edgar, Marshall & Bassett 2006; Lewis 2004). Today, civil society can 'balance the state and the market in political terms by reducing the abuse of power, and in economic terms by becoming a third source of social service provision' (Lewis 2004, p. 302). Thus the civil society underpins an effective and streamlined state, ensuring legitimacy, accountability and transparency: effectively, strengthening the state's capacity for good governance (Mercer 2002). The civil society better understands the importance of building more effective relationships with government in order to create and implement policies and programs that are responsive, sustainable and cost-effective (Edgar, Marshall & Bassett 2006). Moreover, civil society organisations generate social capital through horizontal memberships that consequently support good governance. A figure (Figure 3.6) of the relationship between civil society and good governance can be drawn as follows on the basis of the above discussion.

Figure 3.6 Contribution of Civil Society towards the Development of Good Governance

Hold representatives and government account for services – accountability	
Help people get their voices heard –effective participation	

Civil Society ---> (Develop Social Capital) ---> **Good Governance**

Force government agencies to follow the rule of laws –legitimacy
Foster public scrutiny of the programs that concern them –transparency
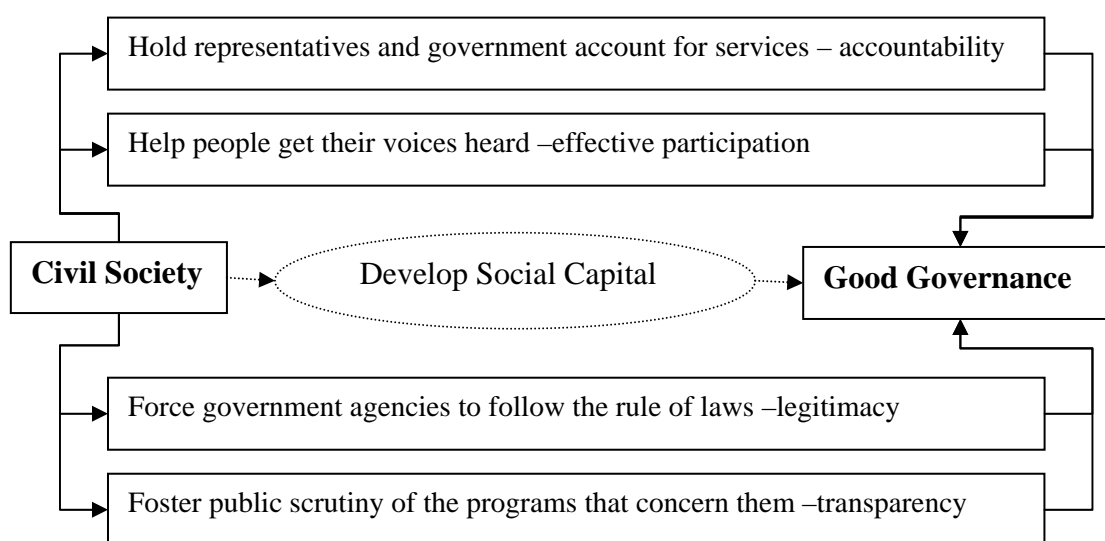
Source: The Author

Civil society groups play a significant role in improving governance through innovations in service provision, development of pro-poor policy, investigation of state abuses, monitoring and overseeing of state institutions, and advocating with and for poor people (Werker & Ahmed 2008). A strong civil society contributes to an effective local government that can sustain economic growth, combat corruption and provide basic services to the community (DFID 2007, p. 1). Civil society groups like NGOs can run parallel activities to those of government, play an oppositional role at local levels, represent weaker members of the society, and organise remote people to become more influential in the decision making and resource allocation that benefit them (Clark 1995; Werker & Ahmed 2008). Thus NGOs are moving their role from the 'supply side' approach of service delivery, to a 'demand side' emphasis, helping people 'articulate their concerns and participate in development processes' (Clark 1995, p. 594).

Bangladesh is commonly known for a strong civil society in terms of the activities of NGOs (Lewis 2004; Sultana & Abeyasekera 2008), and 'it ranks among the top Asian countries' in terms of numbers of NGOs (Shigetomi 2002, p. 30). For a long time, NGOs have been playing a significant role in international development in general and in the poor countries particularly. Three major factors in expanding NGOs worldwide in last few decades are: 'a trend towards more outsourcing of government services; new ventures by would-be not-for-profit entrepreneurs; and the increasing professionalization of existing NGOs' (Werker & Ahmed 2008, p. 74).

In Bangladesh, around 23,000 (Lewis 2004; Haque 2002) NGOs are working currently; among them only around 1,250 (Lewis 2004; Sarker 2006b) receive foreign funds. These NGOs are already deep-rooted in the country; they have countrywide regular institutional structures, and they engage a significant percentage of the rural population, especially women. It is believed that between 20 and 35 percent of the nation's population now receive services from these NGOs (Lewis 2004). These NGOs have now reached a countrywide inclusive scope of engagement in socio-economic development activities and services, which were previously handled by the government or private enterprises. Although these NGOs cover various 'developmental functions – ranging from education and health care to leadership training and income-generation activities – the most common practice is to provide collateral-free credit or loans to the landless and the underprivileged' (Haque 2002, p. 417). Some of the Bangladeshi NGOs are the largest and best-known in the world, and currently being replicated in other countries (Ahmad 2003). One outstanding example of this worldwide expansion of the Bangladeshi experience is the Grameen Bank (Rural Bank), which was awarded the Nobel Prize in 2006 co-sharing the prize with its founder Dr. Mohammad Yunus. This model of rural banking is now replicated in certain Asian, African, Latin American, and European countries in terms of its objectives, structure, and process of delivering microcredit to the poor (Ahmad 2003). Other large development NGOs, to become globally known for their success stories, include the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), Nijera Kori (Do It Ourselves), and Gonoshasthya Kendra (People's Health Centre) (Haque 2002, p. 412; Lewis 2004).

3.7.2.1   Functions and people's participation processes of NGOs

The main functions of Bangladeshi NGOs can be categorised as: welfare, development, services, environmental, advocacy, human rights, women's affairs, and religious (Lewis 2004). The following discussion will cover the top three NGOs working in rural Bangladesh including their participatory processes.

The BRAC was established in 1972 just after the independence of the country. The programs conducted by BRAC are: informal primary education, primary health care, family planning, training for leadership and entrepreneurship development, income generating activities related to fisheries, forestry, poultry, livestock and handicrafts (Abed 1992; Bhatnagar & Williams 1992). It has also a nationwide Rural Credit Program – providing collateral-free micro credits to the poor people (Ahmad 2003; Haque 2002). BRAC has also profit making big commercial ventures like: printing presses, cold storages, universities, shopping malls, convention centres. The main target population of BRAC programs are the disadvantaged people such as landless and small farmers, especially poor women (Abed 1992). Basically a four steps procedure is followed by BRAC to engage beneficiaries. Firstly, surveying and identifying the target

households by its field workers; secondly, encouraging the target population to form small groups (each with a selected chairman, secretary, assistant secretary and cashier); thirdly, providing necessary education and training to the group members; and finally providing credits to the interested people to pursue their activities (Abed 1992; Tasnim 2007).

Grameen Bank started its operation nationwide in 1983 with its micro credit programs to provide collateral free small loans to the poor. Grameen Bank provides small loans to its members to generate income through small scale business activities such as livestock or poultry farming, and handicrafts businesses (Wahid 1994). Grameen Bank also encourages its members to undertake larger economic entrepreneurship such as owning and operating deep tube-wells for irrigation, rice and oil mills, and power looms (Haque 2002). The process of group formation by Grameen bank is lengthy. Initially the field workers select 5-10 poor women to form basic groups, which are provided training by the local bank managers. The group members are then encouraged to make small deposits for more than two weeks to show the conformity of the group (Fuglesang & Chandler 1986). The bank provides a small loan to only two members at first, which is then followed by loans to other group members in return for the favourable records of repayment by the first two loan receivers (Tasnim 2007; Wahid 1994).

Proshika Manobik Unnayan Kendra, commonly known as Proshika, is another major NGO in Bangladesh, which started operation in 1976 (Haque 2002). However, presently the organisation is struggling with its leadership and gradually declining in terms of rural functions. The general functions or activities of Proshika include organising the rural poor and educating them in health and nutrition; building infrastructures for health, sanitation, and clean water; providing training in agricultural services; extending educational facilities for formal and non-formal primary schools; and promoting income-generation activities like livestock rearing, fisheries, sericulture, and seed production and marketing (Lewis 1997). The process of selecting the members of primary groups begins with identifying landless farmers. A village youth or women from middle class background are then appointed as the change agent to mobilise and train these newly identified group members (Haque 2002). These trained groups and change agents are then used for enhancing awareness of rights among all other landless and poor community.

The above study thus shows that the NGOs in Bangladesh are actually working as parallel institutions to local government bodies to provide services and facilities to the rural people (Sultana & Abeyasekera 2008). Beyond this, a few NGOs are also encouraging their members to put pressure on the local government authority to provide better public resources (White 1991). For example the NGO – Nijera kori – pressurised the government and obtained unused government land for its members (Lewis 1997, 2004).

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3.7.2.2   GO (Government Organisations) - NGO relation in Bangladesh

As the success stories of NGOs in Bangladesh are covered in the media, it drew the attention of international development agencies wishing to reach to the target people bypassing the government. Nowadays, Bangladesh is cited as large-scale Donor-NGO relations in terms of aid channelling (Stiles 2002a, p. 34). Since its independence in 1971, Bangladesh remains dependent on international aid at a level of just under US $2 billion per year. Although this trend is now declining both in real terms and as a proportion of the gross national product (GNP) of the country, the reality is that a large block of aid is channelling through NGOs instead of government. It is estimated that, every fiscal year, NGOs receive about 17 per cent of the total aid flows disbursed to Bangladesh (Lewis 2004). It is also said that the major factors in the rise of Bangladesh's NGO sector is the powerful role played by foreign aid.

As the donors put emphasis on NGOs involvement in service deliveries, now several foreign aided programs are being run jointly by government organisations and NGOs in rural Bangladesh. Among these programs some are very successful and remarkable: these are sanitary programs, child nutrition programs, family planning programs, and immunization programs. In all these cases local NGOs are working closely with local government bodies to implement the program. The entire project activities are divided into several units by the ministry and the works distributed among local government institutions and NGOs. The Local government bodies also facilitate the activities, and monitor and evaluate jointly to achieve success with these programs. By dint of all these efforts by the Bangladeshi's NGOs, now these civil society organisations are internationally recognised for their effort in poverty alleviation and social development (Goon 2002; Ullah & Routray 2003). Considering the importance of local NGOs in empowering people, this study thus aims to explore the views of local people, representatives and government officials towards the involvement of NGOs in local government affairs.

3.8   Shift from Local Government to Local Governance in Bangladesh

Shifting local government (run by a single actor or authority or provider) into local governance (run by multiple actors) needs the involvement of people in addition to the state and the private sector. But, inclusion of people in decision making is not an easy task as it often creates trouble for the rigid or hierarchical government system. So government systems need to be changed to create a space for local people to participate in the decision making process (Holzer & Kloby 2005). Most of the developed countries have changed their local government systems to provide greater people's participation. The Government of Bangladesh has also adopted different reforms and decentralisation initiatives to go towards better local governance. As decentralisation is today considered an effective tool to promote good governance, it makes

government more responsive to local people's needs (Faguet 2004). In the same way, reforms of the public sector mainly through decentralisation are now seen as 'one of the major tools in developing good governance' (Aminuzzaman 2006, p. 224).

Recently, several developing nations governments have shown an increased interest in reforming local government institutions to establish good governance through people's participation (Blair 2005; Dibie 2003). Decentralisation has been regarded as the major institutional reform to foster people's participation with local government institutions (Bardhan 2002). Several researchers suggested that a decentralised administrative structure is needed to establish good governance in a country (Sobol 2008; Zafarullah & Huque 2001). Governments need to reform and continue innovative practices to improve state capacity for networking with people (Kim et al. 2005). The World Bank has identified that the public sector is a crucial component of reform programs to enhance good governance through networking with people in the implementation of development programs (World Bank 1996). The World Bank has also identified public managers as 'the development agent' for good governance in developing countries, and hence that requires reform initiatives to change the rigid mentality of public bureaucrats (Minogue, Polidano & Hume 1998, p. 4). Nonetheless, 'decentralization means not only division of power between particular levels of government, but also participation of inhabitants in the decision-making process' (Sobol 2008, p. 194). In the developing countries, like Bangladesh, the majority of people live in rural areas, so local government needs to be effective in ensuring people's participation (Parveen, 2005). To comply with all these findings the Government of Bangladesh has adopted several initiatives for decentralisation of the government, and reforms in the administrative system to bring the government close to the rural people.

3.8.1 Reforms Initiatives to Establish Local Governance

Since independence the Government of Bangladesh has appointed eighteen reforms committees / commissions for the purpose of reforming, re-organising and improving different aspects of the governing system. Among these only five are related to local governance as listed bellow.

Table 3.4 Recommendations for Reforms by Different Committees

Name of the Committee /Commission	Main focus and recommendations
Committee for Administrative Reform and Reorganisation (CARR), 1982	Reorganisation of district and field level administration. Formation of three tier local government system with elected bodies at every tier. Creation of Upazila as the focal point of development at rural levels. Directly elected chairman for all local government bodies.
Commission for Review	Two tiers local government system, Zila Parishad (ZP) and

of Structure of local Government, 1992	Union Parishad (UP). Formation of Thana Development Coordination Committee (TDCC) instead of Upazila Parishad (UPZ). 3 women would be selected as the member of the UP.	
Local Government Commission, 1997	Strengthening of Local Government Institutions. Structural change of local Government. Recommended for four tiers. In addition to the former three a *Gram Parishad* (village council) at village level. Direct election for Women members for the Union Parishad	
Public Administration Reform Commission (PARC), 1997	Restructuring Field Administration and Decentralization. UZP and UP should be fully involved in the preparation, implementation, and monitoring of developing Programmes. NGO representatives within the locality may attend meetings of ZP and UZP.	
Committee for Accelerating and Strengthening Local Government 2007	Reinstated three tier local governments. Local government institutions (LGI) 'will bring out Citizen Charter and update it every year' (GOB 2009, p. 5). LGIs will ensure the use of IT (Information Technology) to ensure good governance. Recommended for formation of Local Government Commission to bring LGIs from the grip of central government and Law makers.	

Sources: Government of Bangladesh (2007), Morshed (1997), Rahman and Rahman (2004).

3.8.2   *Legislative Reforms on Rural Local Government*

The Government of Bangladesh also promulgated different Acts and Ordinances to comply with the constitutional bindings of people's representation at every level of administration.   The following table shows the major Acts and Ordinances related to rural local governance that were introduced by different political governments after the independence of the country.

Table 3.5 Legislative Reforms on Bangladesh Rural Local Government

Date	Act	Basic Features	Status
1976	The Local Government Ordinance, 1976	Provided for three tier local government system. These were the Union Parishad, the Thana Parishad and the Zila Parishad. Union Parishad was selected as the hub of local government, consisting of Chairman, nine elected members and two appointed women members.	Abolished in 1982
1982	The Local Government (Thana Parishad and Thana Administration Reorganisation) Ordinance 1982	Formation of Upazila Parishad. Former Thana was upgraded as an Upazila. Country divided into 460 Upazila administrative units. The focus of local government hub shifted from UP to Upazila Parishad.	Amended in 1987, 1998 and 2009.
1983	The Local Government (Union Parishads) Ordinance 1983	Elected union level LG unit with planning, financing, implementing role.	Amended in 1997

1987	The Local Government (Upazila Parishad and Upazila Administration Reorganisation) (Amendment) Ordinance 1987	Upazila Chairmen were subject to removal by the government if a chairman was found to be guilty for any criminal action, or involved in the activities detrimental to the interest of the Parishad or the public. Any Court is barred to enquire into or question the validity of the government's decision of removal under this Ordinance.	It's still valid and included in amended versions.
1997	Local Govt. (Gram Parishad) Act 1997	Ward level local government unit for planning and coordination of development programs	Abolished in 2007
1997	Local Govt. (Union Parishad) 1983 (Amendment) Act 1997	Union Parishads were sub-divided into 9 Wards, and 3 Wards for Women members. Direct election for women members (3) in the UP	Election held in December 1997 in which nearly 13000 women members were elected in 4500 Ups.
1998	Local Govt. (Upazila Parishad) Act 1998	Upazila based local government (LG) system recommended. Directly elected Chairman and indirectly elected male/female members will run the Upazila Parishad. Focal point of service delivery as well as planning, financing and coordinating of local development placed under Upazila Parishad.	No election held under this Act
2008	Local Government (Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad and Zila Parishad) Ordinance 2008	Compilation of separate acts related to different local government bodies vig. Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad and Zila Parishad. Parishad officials will be fined Tk 1,000 for providing false or incorrect information to the people. Parishad's annual budgets must be posted on notice boards at least for fifteen days before finalisation, so the people may give their suggestions and views. Publish citizens' charters declaring the services provides by the Parishad are mandatory.	Upazila Parishad election held in January 2009 under this Ordinance, but some amendment done by Upazila Parishad Act, 2009.
2009	Upazila Parishad Act	Local Members of the Parliament (MPs) are appointed as advisors of the Upazila Parishad, and obtaining advice from the MPs made compulsory. Upazila Chairmen are assigned to act as Chief Executive of the Parishad.	

Sources: Khan (2000) and Bangladesh Local Government Division (collected by the author).

The above record thus shows that, since independence in 1971, the Government of Bangladesh has adopted several reform initiatives, on a trial and error basis, in administrative and legislative terms to develop a pro-people government. The local government bodies in Bangladesh, from the beginning, have experienced significant changes in their structure and functions according to the reform efforts. Particularly with the change of government in 1976, 1982, 1991, 2001 and 2006, there were changes in local government structures. Among these reforms, the formation of Upazila Parishad (1986-1991) is regarded as a milestone towards the development of local governance in the country. Rural people in the country directly or through elected representatives have been participating in the local government bodies in all tiers. However, this participation has been recognised as ineffective in ensuring people's choice and thus in establishing good local governance in the country (Siddiqui 2005; UNDP 2002). By discussing all reform initiatives, Panday concluded that:

> The objectives [to introduce participatory and accountable local governance] were not realised and the governments failed to keep their commitment to institute and strengthen grassroots democracy and to devolve power to manage their own affairs to the people at lower administrative levels (2005, p. 20).

Truly, the local government is 'yet to take proper shape to ensure people's participation' in development activities in Bangladesh (ESCAP 2008, p. 20). Hence, this research is set to explore the causes of failure of successive governments in terms of introducing participatory governance.

3.9   Conclusion

Developed countries and development agencies are playing a central role as advocates of good governance in developing countries. In order to receive aid assistance, developing countries are required to comply with aid agencies requirements with respect to good governance. To comply with this, the Government of Bangladesh has been working to establish good governance through people's participation for a long time. Many administrative and legislative reforms have been assumed to develop the capacity of local government institutions in engaging local people with them. These reforms and decentralisation efforts show the clear and straightforward intention of the government to achieve good local governance. Hence, the timeliness and significance of this research to explore whether or not the intention of the government has been transformed into reality.

The following chapter develops a suitable conceptual framework to explore the barriers that may hinder the achievement of good local governance in the context of a developing country.

CHAPTER 4.
THE THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

'We live in a world in which the enterprise of government cannot be carried out by government officials alone. It has to be shared between elected political leaders and the citizens in their organizations (civil societies and private sectors)' – Dr. Kumi Naidoo, Secretary General, World Alliance for Citizen Participation (1999, p. 1).

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is three fold. Firstly, it provides a critical review of the existing literature on people's participation for good governance that strengthens effective development. Secondly, it provides an overview of the instrumental and normative values of people's participation for effective development. Finally it establishes a theoretical and conceptual framework by which the barriers for people's participation may be identified.

People's participation in development programs is not an end in itself; it is now considered as a means to get the highest benefit from public programs and services (Khwaja 2004). Traditionally, the defining characteristic of democracy is the right of people to elect the leaders of the government, who will then make the decisions and hold the bureaucracies accountable for implementing those decisions (Bardhan 2002). However, this definition of democracy is changing in many countries because of the greater people's participation in governance process. Though some authors indicated possible undermining of democracy because of greater and direct participation of people (Barten et al. 2002), most others supported people's participation as underpinning democracy (Blair 2005; Leighninger 2005). According to the latest theorists, the world is now heading towards a new definition of democracy, where public officials are bringing politics to the local people and forming a real democratic local organisation for reaping the highest benefit from services provided (Leighninger 2005). In this new democracy, the participation of people only through their representatives is becoming limited in many developed countries (Leighninger 2005; Tosun 2000). Today's view is that, people should be recognised as citizens and should practice their right to establish their voice by participating directly in development activities (Cornwall 2004a; Heller, Harilal & Chaudhuri 2007; Johnson 2001; Khwaja 2004; Mahmud 2002, 2004).

The development agencies and the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) are continuously trying in various ways to make people's participation effective in the country. The local people in rural Bangladesh have been participating in development programs in different forms, but effectiveness of these participations are still low (Aminuzzaman & Sharmin 2006; Bardhan

2002; UNDP 2002; World Bank 2002b). Hence this study is needed to find out the strengths and weaknesses of people's participation processes in international aided development programs in Bangladesh.

In order to achieve this chapter's purposes, this chapter is divided into three sections each addressing one of the purposes. The first section provides an overview of the imperatives of people's participation for good governance, and its practice in Bangladesh local governance when they implement local development programs. The second section provides an overview of the people's participation process in local development projects initiated by local government institutions in the developing countries particularly in Bangladesh. The third section provides a conceptual framework model upon which the barriers to people's participation for effective development may be identified and the performance of development programs may be assessed.

This framework links the theoretical models discussed in Chapter 2, the stages of participation and accordingly the shift in the level of governance to ultimately obtain effective outcomes of development programs.

4.2   People's Participation in Local Development Programs

Although people's participation in government processes may be considered as old as the age of democracy (Dahl 1998; Parent, Vandebeek & Gemino 2004), people's participation has been considered an element in public service delivery, in different ways, since the 1950s and early 1960s under different terms and names (Tosun 2000). Some American researchers pointed out that 'by the 1960s, it had become obvious to many people in [an] increasingly diverse American society that their interests were not being addressed adequately, either by the professional experts or elected officials' (Cooper, Bryer & Meek 2006, p. 77). However, though there is debate on the emergence of people's participation in development programs, in the 1980s, it attracted wide popularity worldwide (Khwaja 2004; Mansuri & Rao 2004), and in the 1990s it became an important vehicle for rural development (Carley 2006). Practically, now people's participation gets the centre stage in development discourse, particularly in local development programs, as elected representatives in democratic governments have been seen by some analysts to have failed to represent grassroots in local development programs (Leighninger 2005; Tosun 2000).

In developing countries, the slogans of 'people or community participation' or 'bottom-up approach' have been ushered into development programs by the development partners /IDAs that provided aid assistance during the end of the 1980s. In fact people's participation has been

introduced, together with good governance, as the vital element in achieving effective outcomes of aid assistance in developing countries. The failure of structural adjustment programs (SAP) has lead the development partners, to include people as a compulsory element, as a vital condition, in the aid supported development programs in the developing countries. Social researchers, side by side with donors, stipulate that good governance can only be achieved by incorporating the community's knowledge into their social and political life (Gaventa 2002; Lowndes & Wilson 2001). Nonetheless, some scholars and development agencies have perceived that good governance means greater people's participation. The basic philosophy of participation is to give people a meaningful role in local government decisions that affect them. At the same time, people become empowered to hold local government responsible for how that decision will affect them (Blair 2000). 'A first key challenge for the 21st century is the construction of new relationships between ordinary people and the institutions – especially those of government – which affect their lives' (Gaventa 2004a, p. 25). Putnam asserted that today 'civic engagement and good government become locked together in a 'virtuous circle' – in contrast to a parallel 'vicious circle' of distrust, disorder and poor government (1993, p. 117).

Recently, the concept of the relationship between the government and its people in respect to problems and policies of national interest has become central to the new development paradigm (Barten et al. 2002; Habitat 2000). While people's participation in development programs, on the one hand, helps to ensure a successful and sustainable development, on the other hand, it helps to achieve good governance at the local levels (Blair 2000). Now good governance is considered to be a result of the participatory approach to development projects (Khwaja 2004). Researchers stressed the need to involve both the government and the people in ensuring 'success and sustainability' of local government projects (Aminuzzaman 2006; Barten et al. 2002, p. 131; Dibie 2003). Carley (2006, p. 250) conceptualised that 'the emergence of partnership mirrors a shift from government to governance'. In the explanation to this concept, researchers (Rhodes 1997; Sullivan 2001) stated that now local governance is not a single actor function; it is now a pluralistic function and more definitely it is a local people-led function, which is actually 'community governance' (Carley 2006). So, International development agencies like UNDP, in its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the World Bank and the IMF have introduced poverty reduction strategies in developing countries through participatory development (Eversole, McNeish & Cimadamore 2006). A calculation shows that the aid assistance by the World Bank for 'community-driven development' projects rose from $325 million in 1996 to $2 billion in 2003 (Mansuri & Rao 2004). Development works without people's participation failed to alleviate poverty and 'suffer from a lack of sustainability' (Khwaja 2004, p. 427). Khwaja (2004, p. 428) claimed that community participation is an 'unqualified good' in terms of project outcomes and sustainability.

Different dimensions of people's participation like: who participates, why participates, should be clarified to get fruit from participation (Cooper, Bryer & Meek 2006).

4.2.1 Conceptualising Participants: who are people?

People's participation in the local service delivery implies an aspiration to avoid using traditional bureaucratic paternalism and establish democracy at the grassroots level (Tosun 2000). Here, the literal meaning of democracy is 'the rule by the people' as the word derives from the Greek words 'demos', the people, and 'kratos' to rule (Dahl 1998, p. 90). As good governance is used to be a synonym for true democracy (Leighninger 2005), we need to define the term 'people' in the socio-economic context of the developing countries.

Firstly, people should not be termed customers or clients (Harwood 2004; Minogue, Polidano & Hume 1998). A customers do not have any rights or stakes until they put in some wealth, but people are naturally entitled to a stake in the national wealth (Bogdan & Taylor 1999; Schedler & Felix 2000) . Secondly, people mean a unit of a local community. Community means a group of people with a sense of belonging, sharing common characteristics, with a common awareness of collective needs and priorities (Green & Mercer 2001; Jewkes & Murcott 1996, p. 556). However, in rural Bangladesh all members of a community do not share common characteristics or a sense of belongingness (Lewis & Hossain 2008; Mahmud 2004). Hence this study recognises the term 'people's participation' rather than 'community participation'. Finally, participants could be termed as citizens, as researchers have argued that people should be treated as citizen in governance systems (Harwood 2004; Minogue, Polidano & Hume 1998). However, recognising people as citizens in a developing country and, more precisely, in rural Bangladesh, where they have no access or freedom to participate in government policies and development issues, may be dubious. 'The Social Contract' by Rousseau, published in 1762, stated that 'human beings must be made citizens before they can be made men, but in order that they may be citizens, government must give liberty under law, must provide for material welfare and remove gross inequality in distribution of wealth' (Kamal 2000, p. 1).

According to this definition people in rural Bangladesh have not been developed as citizens yet, because rural people in the country are significantly suffering from limited welfare materials and unequal distribution of wealth (Kabeer 2002; Mahmud 2002, 2004). However, it is argued that the more people participate in local development programs the more they will secure a greater democratic base in local government and a new brand of citizenship (Denhardt et al. 2009; Lowndes & Wilson 2001; Schedler & Felix 2000). Therefore, people of developing countries like Bangladesh need greater involvement with local government affairs to attaining citizenry rights (Denhardt et al. 2009; Sarker 2008).

Hence the qualifying term to be used is 'people'. Baogang He (1996, p. 26) defined 'people' as being from all classes, strata, social groups and individuals, who support and participate in democratic functions. Thus, here, people actually refers to the expected beneficiaries of the implemented rural development programs, who belong to all classes, strata, social group and individuals surrounding the project area, and not just government officials or donor staff. Local people are the object of development programs and it is their participation in the planning and implementation of projects which is of concern here. These people, as defined by the Chinese leader Chou En-lai as 'the democratic elements' (Steiner 1950, p. 72), are here the element of good governance.

4.2.2 Defining People's Participation: what is participation?

As the term 'participation' falls in common usage, Wenger drawing on Webster's dictionary has defined it: 'to have or take a part or share with others (in some activity, enterprise, etc.) ... participation refers to a process of taking part and also to the relations with others that reflect this process' (2003, p. 55). Thus the word 'participation' implies both action and correlation, which suggests an act for developing a relationship in achieving a goal. It is not only a gathering or engaging or collaboration of specific people; as such it is not something we turn on and off. 'Participation is broader than mere engagement in practice' (Wenger 2003, p. 57); it is continuous sharing of activities to reach a goal.

However, when participation is put together with people it gets a more extended meaning such as: 'the organised efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations, on the part of groups and movements hitherto excluded from such control' (Stiefel & Wolfe 1994, p. 5). In this sense, people's participation is a process through which common, remote, poor and disempowered people obtain significant control / empowerment over development programs that have been scheduled for their benefit. More clearly, people's participation is now seen as an inseparable part of local development programs rather than only as traditional forms of political involvement e.g. voting, lobbying. The United Nations Human Development Report explains people's participated development as:

> essentially development which is: 'of the people' – enhancing people's capabilities, both directly and by providing an environment in which people's potential can be realised to the maximum degree possible; 'by the people' – involving as many of the people as possible, and as fully as possible, in the development process at all levels; and 'for the people' – ensuring that as many of the people as possible are beneficiaries of all aspects of the development process (ESCAP 1998, p. 2).

However, some authors tried to differentiate different meanings between the words people-participation and people-engagement. They argued people-participation means when people act

like a customer or stakeholder, which happened in the traditional model of governance (Barten et al. 2002; Paul 1987). On the other hand, engagement happens in the latest co-operative model of governance, where people are an obvious part of the production process (King & Martinelli 2005). In the same way, people's participation has been argued that it can happen in different ways, like: consultation, involvement or engagement (Callahan 2009; Ostrander & Portney 2007).

Here, people's participation can be defined as the synergic action of individuals with local government institutions (LGIs) to raise awareness and bring about change in the implementation of local development programs and services. Through participation, people get meaningful performance in local government decisions that affect them (Blair 2000). Crook and Manor thus clearly defined participation as people's 'active engagement with public institutions' (1998, p. 7). People's participation can finally be defined as people-centred development (ESCAP 1998), that develops a coalition between communities and local government institutions agreeing to work together for 'achieving mutual goals' (Carley 2006, p. 250). However, in rural Bangladesh people are not seen as an obvious part for development (Mahmud 2004; Rahman 2006). Hence this research has considered people's participation rather than engagement.

4.2.3   *Objectives of People's Participation: why participation?*

'Aristotle observed that if liberty and equality are to be found in democracy, people need to be involved' (Callahan 2007, p. 950). Today people's participation in governing bodies not only enriches democracy by fostering liberty and equality, but also builds trust, increases transparency, enhances accountability, builds social capital, reduces conflict, ascertains priorities, promotes legitimacy, cultivates mutual understanding, or advances fairness and justice in governance at all levels (Box 1998; Callahan 2007; King & Martinelli 2005; Putnam 2000).

The objective of people's participation in local development programs is various. Researchers (McRae & Watts 2006) have pointed out that people's participation in local development programs provides a number of benefits. Among them: ensure better services for people, mobilize local knowledge and resources for best decisions, and share management activities to get the job done etc.

Fiorino (1995) mentioned three primary rationales for why people should participate in development programs or policies: instrumental, normative and substantive: a) The instrumental rationale argues that participation improves the efficiency of decision-making. By involving the people, projects obtain more community support, more representation of community values and

have a better chance of being implemented. b) The normative rationale looks at participation as essential to a healthy democracy. Involving citizens in decisions that affect them is the right thing to do. c) The substantive rationale argues that the "best" decisions come through public participation. The public brings information and knowledge to the process that produces superior decisions. However, most others told about two rationales (instrumental and normative) as instrumental and substantive are sound alike (Gaventa 2002; Tosun 2000). The best decision (substantive value) comes because of the improvement of efficiency in decision making (instrumental value) through people's participation.

Four areas could be pointed out when people participate in development works (Leighninger 2005). These are: 1) people's awareness is developed when they become involved; 2) people moved towards action from only talking; 3) a range of views and policy options are developed through the process; 4) connecting individuals in the organisations encourages change in the public sector.

The main benefits from people's participation can be categorised as follows:

Increase transparency:

When people participate in the development programs they gain more information about the details of the event, which consequently increases the transparency of planning and policies through information (Mansuri & Rao 2004; Zafarullah & Huque 2001). In the traditional bureaucratic form of service delivery, public officials were only actors providing government services. All information related to services and other development programs was then confined only within the official boundary, and those officials played a central role (Martinelli 2005; Sarker 2006a). But, the collaborative action helps to form a network between local people and governing bodies which facilitates the rapid flow of information (Arko-cobbah 2006; Koenig 2005). This change entails the obtaining of more transparent public programs (Barten et al. 2002). Greater engagement helps participants to practice 'we-thinking' instead of 'I-thinking' (Carley 2006). This collective phenomenon, thus, makes everything transparent between all participants.

Empowerment of people:

The process of empowerment is actually embedded in the definition of participation; where people's participation is seen as a dynamic process by which people/ beneficiaries influence the direction and implementation of a development program with a view to upholding their well being in terms of income, self-growth, independence or other values they cherish (Bishop & Davis 2002; Denhardt et al. 2009; Martinelli 2005; Paul 1987). People's participation in development works that have an effect in their lives is, therefore, perceived as an instrument of

empowerment (Denhardt et al. 2009). Sharing the management task of a program, bringing more sense and awareness of their capacity and responsibility of the local communities, consequently helps people to have control over project planning, selection, initiatives, decision-making, resources (financial) allocation and implementation (Khwaja 2004; Shand & Arnberg 1996). Participation is also a means of exercising influence and bargaining power, when it creates an environment through distribution of power and ownership among the officials and the ordinary people (Isham, Narayan & Pritchett 1995). Because of empowerment, people are able to initiate actions on their own and thus influence the process and outcomes of development (Ngowi & Mselle 1998). Thus researchers argued that the more a community participates in an activity, 'the more likely it is to have a say in their activity' (Khwaja 2004, p. 429; Martinelli 2005; Shand & Arnberg 1996). This kind of participation not only helps local government institutions to reap the benefits of people's feedback on service delivery, but also 'revitalise[s] local democratic processes by genuine rather than token empowerment' (Carley 2006, p. 252). Theoretically, participation efforts foster a sense of citizenship that extends beyond what individuals get or own to some larger notion of the roles and responsibilities of individuals as part of a collective (King & Martinelli 2005).

Researchers have also mentioned that participatory development programs are a means to building capacity, trust, reciprocity and co-operation, that is, development of social capital (Lowndes & Wilson 2001; Putnam 1993). Sharing knowledge and experiences in-between governor and governed helps for amalgamation of social norms which is actually social capital (Putnam 1995).

Enhancing accountability:

Nowadays, an active people's participation has been regarded as an effective tool which can make political and government institutions more responsive and more accountable (Brett 2003; Callahan 2007). Several research studies conducted in different societies have revealed that only an election mechanism is not enough to make public representatives and their institutions accountable to the people, thus direct participation is sought out today (Blair 2000; Collier 2007; Gibson, Lacy & Dougherty 2005). The World bank defined participation and accountability as the degree to which a society's people are able to participate in their governance processes, as well as people's right to expression, freedom to form civil society and a free media (Knox & Qun 2007; World Bank 2006). In fact, today's local government institutions are restructuring to accommodate people's choice and views in local development programs and services (Docherty, Goodlad & Paddison 2001). Participation is the only means through which local people hold responsibility of local government institutions towards local people for any action that affects them (Blair 2000; Sirker & Cosic 2007). Now a new term

'social accountability' has emerged which refers to the power that citizens, communities, civil societies can use to hold public officials and servants accountable beyond just voting (Mehrotra 2006). This implies that citizens are meant to be master and bureaucrats or public officials are meant to be the servants (Mehrotra 2006; Sirker & Cosic 2007).

However, in addition to all the above objectives people's participation may serve one or more of the following objectives when it is viewed as the means or process (Lowndes & Wilson 2001; Martinelli 2005; Ngowi & Mselle 1998; Paul 1987).

- Effectiveness: People's participation contributes to increased project effectiveness. When people share management activities and knowledge with service providers that contributes to better program planning and execution and leads to a better match of services with beneficiary needs and constraints.

- Cost-sharing: Another objective of people's participation is the sharing of costs for the programs' implementation. When people voluntarily participate in local development programs, it is seen that they contribute labour or money or undertake to maintain the project.

- Efficiency: People's participation also improves program efficiency. Project planning and implementation become more efficient because of effective and timely inputs (materials or knowledge) provided by the local people. People's participation is used to promote agreement, co-operation and interaction among them and the implementing agency of the project so that delays are reduced, a smoother flow of project services is achieved, and overall costs are minimized.

4.2.4   People Participation Context: which environment fosters participation?

It is recognised that a participatory form of government, that is, a democratic government, would provide supportive environment for people's participation at the program implementation levels. The practice of democratic norms and values like voting represented in all spheres of life, lead people and the governing bodies to share power in service delivery (Mollah 2008). So the practice of democracy at macro and micro levels is a prerequisite context for people's participation. The international development agencies envisage that practicing democracy at central level would naturally lead to the gradual emergence of democratic institutions all over the country (Pruitt & Thomas 2007, p. 13). Here democratic institution means an organisation that maintains a political culture that consists of a set of beliefs, attitudes, values, norms, perceptions and the like, that support people's participation in all of its decisions (Docherty, Goodlad & Paddison 2001).

However, today, people's participation is also found in local government institutions while centrally the country is running non-democratically. For example, Chinese local government

bodies are now using three types of public hearing: administrative penalization, price, and legislation hearings (Yang 2003). By using these hearings, local government bodies compulsorily arrange public hearings in case of making penalties, pricing products, and promulgating legal regulations (Knox & Qun 2007). Thus, this research put emphasis on the local level democracy or, in other words, democratic practice of participation at the local levels for maintaining effectiveness of local developments.

4.2.5   Timing of People's Participation: when will people participate?

Timing in people's participation with local development programs or services is vital, but, at the same time, it is highly debated. In most cases government or service providers think that people will receive the outcomes of the programs or services (Parker & Serrano 2000; Sinclair 2008). In this sense, people will only be informed after the implementation of a project. There is also argument for people's participation only at the end of projects and evaluation of authorities' performance (Shah 1997).

Researchers have argued that for true participation, people should initiate a program (Arnstein 1971; Caddy 2001; Navarra & Cornford 2005; Wilcox 1994). Supporters of this theory argued that people should participate as early as possible in the development process. After all, people may well be more angry and frustrated at being asked for input when a decision has already been taken than if they had not been consulted at all (Caddy 2001).

However, some other researchers are also not agreed with early participation (Newman 2007; Paul 1987). They argued that people initiated programs are not always possible because the local people may not have such prerequisite knowledge and expertise to initiate a project (Bishop & Davis 2002; Parker & Serrano 2000; Paul 1987). So these researchers argued that people should be invited to consult by the providers at the second stage and gradually people will move up into making decisions and implementation(Paul 1987). Before inviting people, a reconnaissance stage or first stage of participation will be completed. At this stage basic information on the nature of the beneficiary, role of the community, power relation etc. will be gathered. Researchers have also speculated that people should mainly monitor the project progress and receive the outcomes (Andrews & Shah 2003; Newman 2007).

But most researchers and development agencies argued that it is wise to keep people along the full cycle of the program that is from planning to completion (ADB 1999; Gaventa & Valderrama 1999; Momen, Hossain & Begum 2005; Ngowi & Mselle 1998). Participation of people provides significant contribution in all phases of a project cycle, from needs assessment,

to appraisal, to implementation, to monitoring and evaluation (Gaventa & Valderrama 1999). In this thesis, this latter view is adopted to provide a broad inclusive analytical framework.

At the initial stage, a project may rely on local knowledge for project selection and planning. For instance, in the needs assessment stage, a needs analysis of beneficiaries could be attempted as a basis for designing the project to match community needs and capacities. Similarly, during the planning stage, consultation with the community helps in exploring people's role in the project including their knowledge and tangible help, while in the implementation stage, participants may help to voluntarily monitor and share the managerial role to ensure the quality of the works. Further at the final stage, participants can help to evaluate and maintain the project. This process can be considered as proactive rather than reactive. Participation in later stages may cause rejection of the project. Finally, it is recognised that people's participation is not the end; it is the means to achieving good governance or effectiveness of projects implementation; people should be participating all along the project cycle (Momen, Hossain & Begum 2005).

4.3   People's Participation Initiatives in Developing Countries

Aiming to achieve good governance, international development agencies (IDA) encourage greater people's participation in development programs (ADB 1999). During 1996-2001 the World Bank started over 600 governance related programs and initiatives in 95 countries and was involved in supporting programs of governance in 50 countries (Santiso 2001). Similarly USAID, by the mid-1990s, was supporting about 60 governance programs around the world, and UNDP has assisted over 250 such activities in different countries during the 1990s (Blair 2000).Among these programs the majority relate to anti-corruption, free press and media, reformation of judiciary, formation of local government bodies, public expenditure and financial accountability, and participatory decision making. Regarding the participatory decision making process, the World Bank has introduced 'participatory-budgeting' in different developing countries (Rahman 2005). The IMF has introduced a Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) approach, a revolving three-year plan, for poverty reduction with greater participation of people in developing countries (Dijkstra 2005). The UNDP, another major IDA, is running the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) program throughout the developing countries to improve governance to eradicate poverty from those countries (UNDP 2007). Different governments of developing countries are also endeavouring individually to strengthen good governance in improving the effectiveness of aid.

In Thailand, Public Hearing Regulation was introduced in 1996 to ensure people's participation in development programs implementation. Since then, governing bodies appoint a committee to conduct the public hearing. To conclude the process, the committee has to submit a public hearing report to the authority who ordered the hearing. Research found that the majority of governing agencies have a positive attitude towards public participation through public hearing. However, it is clearly observed that some of the authorities have negative attitudes towards public hearing, as they believe that a public hearing is only public relations activity by the government and that such hearings cause delays to project schedules (Manowong & Ogunlana 2006).

In Kenya, the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) approach has been used to mobilize community action in the implementation of development programs (Karanja 1998). Through the PRA approach, information related to development program and its impact on environment is made available to the local people, which ultimately settles any problem through a consultation process between the implementing authority and local community (Karanja 1998).

In Indonesia, the 'forum wargas' (citizen forum) has been formed to strengthen civil societies at local level. Through the 'forum wargas' approach local people, officials, businessmen and other sectors can meet, and discuss any issue to reach a solution (Gaventa 2004b).

In Bolivia, most of the local services are centralised, and performed in a top-down process from central to local bodies, then local bodies to community. People are just recipients of local services (Faguet 2004). However, recently a vigilance committee formed locally at every municipal area to strengthen people's participation in development programs. the main duties of these vigilance committees are to make plan for local infrastructure investments and to monitor municipal budgets (Blair 2000).

In Uganda, the local community is involved in participatory approaches to develop priorities and fund allocation for the national budget. Local government bodies organize the meeting with the local NGOs and civil societies (Awio 2001).

In Nigeria, local government bodies reorganized in 1996 to engage local people in local development programs. The new arrangement calls for a single tier-system with 776 local government bodies (Dibie 2003). The structure provides for an elected chairperson and councillors through a democratic voting system. But in the absence of a firm legal and institutional framework, development programs still are implemented in a top-down process

where local people have no access to the local government. 'Voting is only one element of citizen participation for Nigerian local government' (Dibie 2003, p. 1066).

In India, Panchayet Raj (village council) was established in the 1950s to ensure community participation in rural development programs, but until 1993, the Panchayet Raj system did not have a constitutional sanction (Jain 2001). In 1997-98, India introduced a 'Citizen's Charter' to ensure a transparent implementation process with local people, but still today the development implementation (except inform the local community) is controlled by the bureaucrats. A number of research studies have been conducted by various scholars on the functioning of the Panchayet Raj system, and these have pointed to the limited extent of the involvement of people in decision making at grass-roots level (Tayler 2005). However, the Panchayet Raj in Karnataka province is working well than other parts of the country. Presently, one-third of elected members of all Panchayet Raj within Karnataka are women, and that women hold one third of council presidencies and vice presidencies. The councils have also mandated that the Schedule castes (untouchables) be allotted memberships (Blair 2000).

The above examples, thus, show that most of the developing countries now are moving into developing people's participation for establishing good governance. Some of the local government bodies like in Bolivia, India and Nigeria are informing local people in perpetuation of good governance. In contrast, some of the local government bodies like in Indonesia, Uganda, Thailand and Kenya are consulting with local people to obtain good governance. However, international development agencies and researchers observed that there is little scope for the people to be effectively engaged in the affairs of local government in developing countries (UNDP 2002; World Bank 1996). The World Bank argued that most of these people's participation practices have been recognised as ineffective because of the presence of many practical barriers (World Bank 2007c). As Bangladesh poses similar socio-economic situation as the countries mentioned above, this research thus expects to find out these practical barriers to direct people's participation in local government programs.

4.4 People's Participation in Rural Bangladesh

In order to receive aid, developing countries like Bangladesh are required to comply with development agencies' requirements with respect to good governance. To meet the terms, the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) is trying to establish good governance through people's participation. Since independence in 1971 the government has taken many initiatives and different reform strategies to decentralise administration and develop local government bodies at different levels to foster participation.

Among these reforms, the most significant is the formation of a local government body named Upazila in rural areas throughout the country. The Government of Bangladesh introduced a Local Governance Regulation in 1982 and established Upazila Parishad (Sub-district council) to implement most development programs for the rural areas with the engagement of local people with this organisations (Morshed 1989). At the beginning, the Upazila Parishad comprised an elected chairman, elected representatives and public officials, but at present it is running without an elected chairman, as there has been no election at Upazila level since 1991 mostly because of the unwillingness of legislatives (Sarker 2006b). Instead of Upazila Parishad, the 'Upazila Development and Coordination Committee' (UDCC) has been performing the coordination functions of the Upazila, and has been entrusted with the responsibility of planning and implementation of development activities in four areas: roads and communications, irrigation and agriculture, education and physical infrastructure (Solaiman 1997). A Parliament Member (MP) of the respective constituency has been assigned to join the committee meeting in the capacity of an advisor. In this provisional system, one of the Union Parishad chairmen presides over the committee meetings by rotation. Even after this structural change, theoretically elected local representatives are still leading components of the decision making body for implementing development programs, which upholds the participation of local people. Though most of these participation processes are indirect, there is more direct participation also happening.

4.4.1 Indirect Participation

The Upazila Parishad has been designed to work as a focal point of all development and service activities in rural Bangladesh. Most of the development activities which were previously performed by the central government have been transferred to the Upazila Parishad. The present UDCC has the main responsibility for planning, coordination and monitoring of all development activities at rural level (UNDP 2004). People are participating in the UDCC through their elected Member of Parliament, as the advisor of the committee, and also through the elected UP chairmen, as the president and member of the committee. Moreover, if a project is less than fifty thousand taka, a Project Implementation Committee (PIC) is formed to monitor and evaluate the development activities. The president of these PICs is also elected UP chairmen or UP members. Payments for development works are not handed over without the approval of the president of the PIC.

4.4.2 Direct Participation

In the UDCC, one member is selected from local elites or from 'freedom fighters'[2] and three female members from the Union levels, which is directly representing local people. Similarly, in the PIC, except for the president, all other members are selected from the local people to link them with development programs. In addition, there are local management committees, formed mostly by local people, to look after the development activities when implemented by the contractors. If a project costs more than seventy five thousand taka or covers more than one Upazila or countrywide, a contractor is selected through an open tendering process to implement those projects, and local management committees are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the works. For example, there are two tier market management committees to monitor a development project related to the local market, which is as follows. The following figure shows the members of these committees and their span of control.

Figure 4.1 Market (Hat-Bazaar) Management Committees at Upazila Levels

Upazila Hat-Bazaar Management Committee
UNO- President
Upazila Engineer- member
Concerned UP chairman-member
Local elite (selected by District Administrator)-member
Local government official (selected by District Administrator)-member
Two representatives selected by local Market Management committee within the Upazila-member
Assistant Commissioner land (Subordinate to UNO) - Member secretary

Local Hat-Bazaar management Committee
Concerned UP chairman- president
Representative (elected) from permanent shop-keepers- member
UP member- member
UP female member- member
Union land administrator- member
Representative from shopkeepers that run by women- member
Community organizer of Upazila Engineer's office- member
Representative (elected/selected) from temporary businessmen- member
Representative (elected/selected) from human haler- member
Representative (elected/selected) from automobile owners- member
Elected representative among the permanent shop-keepers in the concern market-Member-secretary

Source: Bangladesh Local Government Engineering Department (LGED 2007).

Similarly, at the rural level, two tiers of the management committee deal with the primary school. At every school, a School Management Committee (SMC) is elected by the students'

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[2] People who fought for the independence of the country during 1971

guardians. The SMC is responsible for all development works at the local level, and is accountable to the Upazila School Management Committee for using funds. The members of these two committees and their capacity are presented in the following figure.

Figure 4.2 School Management Committee at Upazila Levels

Upazila Education Committee
UNO- President
Upazila Engineer- member
Upazila Education Officer-Member-secretary
Headmaster of a government primary school (selected by the Education officer)
Headmaster of a Non-government Primary School (selected by UNO)
Local elite who sponsor local education (Selected by the UNO)

School Management Committee

Elected local who sponsor education- President
Guardian – (four) member
One teacher representative from local high school- member
Ward Member- by dint of position-member
Donor (family member of land donor) – Member
Local elite (among two, one female) – selected by UNO – Member
Concerned Head Master/ Mistress – Member-secretary

Source: Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (Directorate of Primary Education 1998).

In addition to these systems, people also directly participate in preparing the annual development plan /scheme. The Upazila Parishad collects plans from the Union Parishad, while the basis of this development plan is chalked out by the Ward member (see chapter 3) in consultation with local people. Upazila Parishad then prepares a priority annual development plan thoroughly discussed at UDCC meeting (Morshed 1989). Recently the World Bank experimentally has introduced participatory- budgeting in the lower tier of local governance in some Unions to foster the direct participation of local people (Rahman 2005).

4.4.3   *Effectiveness of People's Participation in Rural Bangladesh*

After the formation of all these people's committees, and continuous efforts for almost two decades, still the government remains at the early stage of the participation process, that is, not truly involving local people with local government functions (UNDP 2002). Though the government is trying to alleviate poverty through removing physical bottlenecks at the rural level, several research studies show that poverty reduction at the rural level is not improving at the expected pace (Klasen 2007; Sen, Mujeri & Shahabuddin 2004). The following data shows the poverty reduction trend in Bangladesh on the basis of consumption expenditure data, and in

considering 1983/84 as the base year. During 1983 to 2000, poverty reduction trend in rural areas was only 18.9 percent while it was 35.5 percent in urban areas at the same time. This indicates rural development programs are not effectively helping in poverty alleviation, or in other words, rural development programs are not being utilised to the full extent as they are not fulfilling people's expectations (Islam 2007; Sen, Mujeri & Shahabuddin 2004).

Table 4.1 Poverty Reduction Trend at Different Levels in Bangladesh

Location	Poverty level in 1983/84 (%)	Poverty level in 2000 (%)	Reduction trend (%)
National	52.3	39.8	23.9
Urban	40.9	26.4	35.5
Rural	53.8	43.6	18.9

Source: Sen, Mujeri and Shahabuddin (2004, p. 68).

This research, thus reveals that the quality of services provided by the rural government institutions in the country remains very poor (Green & Curtis 2005; Islam 2007). Eventually, this type of people's participation in development programs, however, has been shown to be very ineffective in Bangladesh local government (ADB 2006b; Siddiqui 2005). One of the major reasons for this ineffectiveness is the barriers caused by the local bureaucrats and politicians (Morshed 1997; Siddiqui 2005). Unfortunately, none of the research studies to date have revealed precisely how these localised political and bureaucratic arrangements create barriers to participation. Thus the main thrust of this study is to find out the causes of barriers to people's participation in rural Bangladesh.

As both the international aid agencies and the Government of Bangladesh now share the view that enrichment in providing services is vital by ensuring good governance through people's participation, we need to find out the barriers to people's participation in local development programs. A framework has been developed through conceptualisation of theories regarding people's participation and good governance.

4.5   Present Model of People's Participation in Bangladesh

Though the present system of people's participation in rural development programs has been sporadically discussed throughout the previous Chapter, it is compiled together in the following sections to see the whole process at a glance.

In the present system development agencies send their aid to the Government of Bangladesh; the government then sends it to the local government institutions via its bureaucratic system (see organogram of Local Government Ministry and LGED in appendix 3). Finally it comes to the UDCC / Upazila Parishad (after January 2009), and then the Parishad uses those funds for the local development programs with the local management committee (SMC for school and HBMC for growth-centres). In this system, the government collects feedback from the Upazila offices and sends it to the donors. For a nationwide project, the government appoints a consultant following the development agency's guidelines to constantly monitor and provide advice to the implementing agencies. In short, it is a linear system of distributing aid and obtaining feedback from the field level. The system can be depicted in the following figure:

Figure 4.3 Present system of People's Participation in Aid Assisted Rural Development Projects
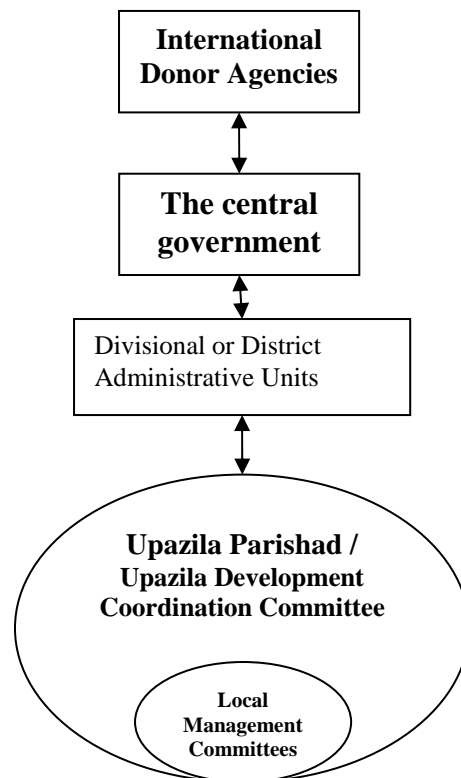
Source: The Author

The involvement of the key players in this present system is described below:

Development Agencies: The 'development agencies' means international development agencies (like the World Bank) including economically rich governments, which are now commonly known as development partners (PRSP). All the local government development programs in Bangladesh, scheduled under ADP (annual development programs), are implemented by foreign aid. Since independence in 1971 until June 30, 2006, Bangladesh

received a total amount of nearly US$44.83 billion of foreign aid, of which 44.7 percent was grants and 55.3 percent was loans (Haque 2007). However this trend is decreasing: Bangladesh's share of the aid received among all developing countries was 4.4 percent in 1987, and was reduced to 1.2 percent in 2006 (Gunter 2008).

Whatever the amount of aid, most of the infrastructure development projects at the rural level are undertaken with aid assisted funds, and as such development agencies play a significant role in ensuring good governance in the country. At the rural level, most of the development projects are implemented with the Block Grants from the Annual Development Programme (ADP). This fund is mostly provided by the donors channelled mainly through the Ministry of Local Government of Bangladesh to the local government institutions. The aid agencies put the condition of involving people in development programs, which could develop accountability, transparency and reduce corruption in using the funds. At the same time development agencies ask the government to appoint a consulting-firm according to their guidelines to monitor and evaluate the project independently (Planning Ministry 2005).

The Central Government: The central government in Bangladesh means the headquarters of the concerned ministry. The sponsoring ministry for the sectoral development programs plays a vital role especially if it is an aided project, like a growth centre or primary school. The ministry of Primary and Mass education is sponsoring the development of primary schools all over the country, and the ministry of LGRD&C is sponsoring the development of rural growth centres. For both cases the construction is implemented by the LGED as it is situated at the Upazila level. On the basis of the work schedules prepared by the LGED, the sponsoring ministry sought aid from the ministry of finance (Planning Ministry 2005). If the cost involves huge funds then the finance ministry requests donors for aid. Thus the ministry plays a vital role in controlling the funds. The line government officials posted in the Upazila Parishad are responsible for monitoring the development works, while the engineering department and UNO are responsible for the construction works (Local Government Division 2004). As a whole these officials are accountable to the Upazila Parishad for their performance. Hence, ultimately all local development works are apparently controlled by the elected representatives.

Divisional or District Administrative Units: Bangladesh is divided into six administrative divisions, and 64 districts (see Appendix 1). Central government officials who are working at these levels have the authority to control their subordinates working at Upazila levels. However, these administrative units have little power over fund distribution within Upazilas or Unions, but they can monitor any development works within their administrative jurisdictions (Ahmad 1991).

Upazila Parishad: Upazila Parishad is an elected institution, which is responsible for selecting and implementing all local development programs (see Chapter 3 for details). According to the Upazila Parishad Law-1998, Upazila is the lowest administrative unit of the central government (Morshed 2007). Government officials of most of the development Ministries are working in the Upazila Parishad as secondment. However, during 1991 to 2008 there was no elected Parishad; instead a UDCC continued the assigned works. In the absence of Upazila chairmen, UDCCs were chaired by UP chairmen by rotation and were responsible to make final decisions regarding any development within the Upazila. After sixteen years, on 9 January 2009, the rural people voted for 485 Upazila Parishads all over the country (The Daily Star 2008). This time one female and one male vice-chairperson were also elected to strengthen the participation of all levels of people.

Local Management committees: There are different management committees formed under the government guidelines, where most of the members of such committees are supposed to be elected by the direct vote of the local users. For example Hat-Bazaar management Committees at the Union level are responsible for the development of local growth centres. Seventy-five percent of a HBMC should be selected by the local businessmen (LGED 2008). Similarly, a SMC is responsible for the development of the concerned primary school (see Section 4.4 for details).

4.6 The Conceptual Framework of the Study

Poor countries like Bangladesh need aid to fight against poverty, but to get rid of poverty they need effective use of aid by ensuring effective development or service delivery. Here effective development means development that will come under productive use by the maximum populace or the highest number of users (Cornwall 2004a). The benefits come by using the development to then tapping into the national economy to eradicate poverty (Sobhan 2002). The highest use is possible when a development program is implemented by people's choice and decision. Thus it implies people's involvement with development programs. This phenomenon of people's participation in development programs is defined as 'participatory democracy' (Morone & Kilbreth 2003, p. 271), which means 'participatory governance' (Fung & Wright 2001, p. 6) or 'shared governance' (Blase & Blase 1999, p. 477), and actually that means good governance (Leighninger 2005). Considering the importance of people's participation, development agencies now impose it as a condition to achieve good governance to harness the highest benefit from their aid assistance. In their views, participation promotes good governance, enhancing accountability, transparency and predictability during the implementation of development projects (Gaventa 2002). UNDP observed that the result of good governance is a development that 'gives priority to the poor, advances the cause of

women, sustains the environment, and creates needed opportunities for employment and other livelihoods' (UNDP 1997b, p. 1). Considering the context, we can draw a figure in relation to people's participation with development outcomes as follows:

Figure 4.4 Primary Theoretical Frame

Action People's participation in local development programs	→	**Outcome** Uphold good governance and ensure effective development
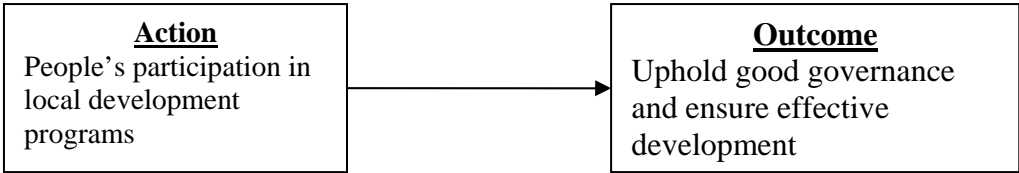
Source: The Author

Several researchers have said that the condition of people's participation in local development programs can enhance good governance: that is, a transparent, accountable and predictable environment which consequently helps to get quality and sustainable outcomes from aid-assisted programs (Gaventa & Valderrama 1999; World Bank 1998). But the impact of the people's participation phenomenon is not so straightforward. Researchers found that people's participation in development programs actually helps in two ways. On the one hand it helps to empower people; on the other hand, it enables a suitable structure within institutions for establishing good governance (Gaventa 2002). Similarly Tosun argued that involvement of people in the development process has two main considerations (Tosun 2000). He stipulated that people's participation philosophically underpins democracy by establishing people's voice and grassroots representation; whereas pragmatically, it facilitates success in development programs by making their representatives accountable to them. Nonetheless, it is argued that people's participation in a normative way is helping in achieving good governance, while in an instrumental way it is helping ripening the effective empowering of people which impacts on the synergic effect for effective development (Khwaja 2004; Paul 1987). This triangular relationship between participation, governance and development can be shown in the following figure:

Figure 4.5 Derived Theoretical Frame

Action Increasing levels of people's participation	→	**Instrumental Value** Empowering people	→	**Outcome** Increasing effectiveness of development programs / service delivery
	→	**Normative Value** Strengthening good governance	→	

Source: The Author

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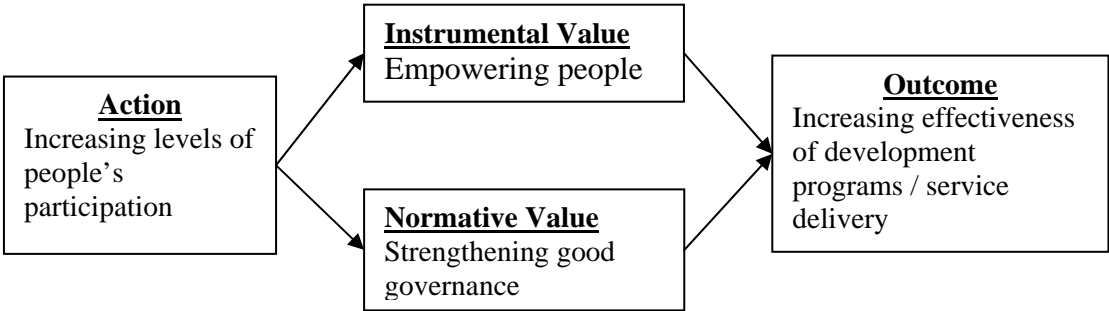
However, through the literature review we know that empowering people is a continuous process which goes through different stages. At the same time, the level of governance may also shift according to the level of participation (see details in chapter 2). Hence, the following framework has been developed by grounding all the above theories.

Figure 4.6 Theoretical Framework
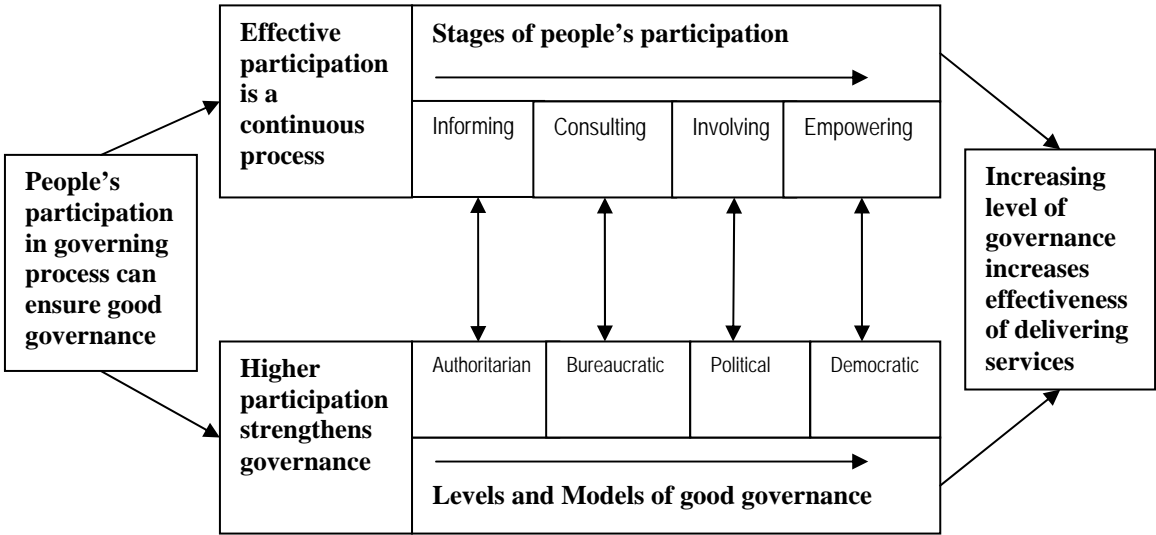
Source: The Author

The given theoretical framework, which is purely based on western concepts, needs to include some more issues when it is being tested in the context of a developing socio-economic system. These instrumental and non-normative values, mentioned in the above framework, may increase people's participation in a developed society, but may not be applicable in a developing society. For example public hearings are an established effective practice in American society, but do not work in Thailand, because the process does not suit to Thai culture (Manowang and Ogunlana 2000). Thus we need to consider local normative issues for making people's participation effective in a country like Bangladesh. For a long time local government officials in rural Bangladesh have been working as the central government's agents at the local level (see section 3.5). It is thus important to know whether these stakeholders understand the value of direct people's participation in local development programs, or not. Moreover, other normative factors like social hierarchy, power balances, etc – which impact on participation process (see section 1.7 and 2.7) – also need to be considered. The design of this research study thus uses the following conceptual framework, which includes local normative factors, to test the effectiveness of people's participation in rural Bangladesh.

Figure 4.7 The Conceptual Framework
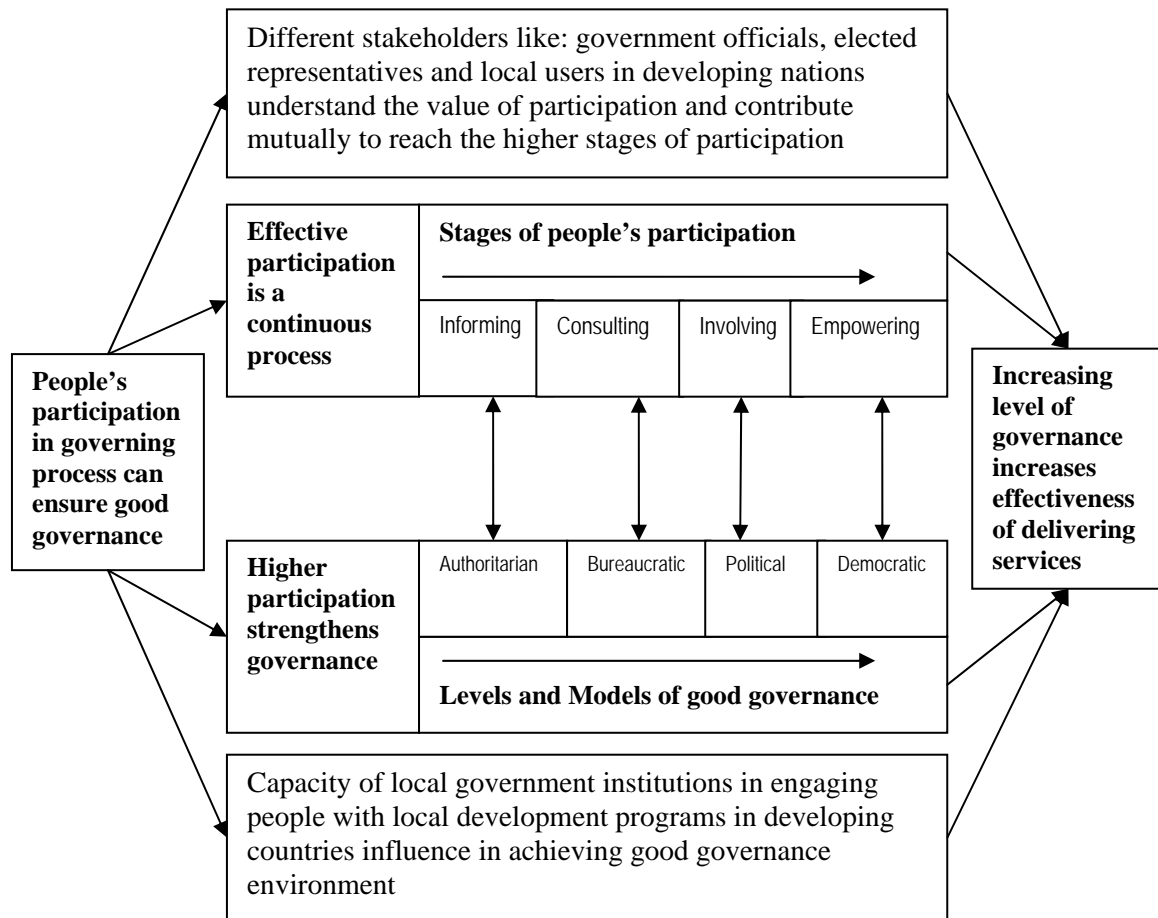
Source: The Author

The above conceptual framework provides an outline of the interrelated factors that the research demonstrates can contribute to people's participation for good governance. The independent variable, that is, 'people's participation' has direct impact on immediate dependant variables like 'good governance' and 'empowerment of people', and this subsequently impacts on ensuring effective development. Additionally, mindsets of different stakeholders responsible for ensuring good governance and capacity of participation process of local government intuitions also influence good governance through effective people's participation.

4.6.1   Effective People's Participation

Effective people's participation has been defined in different ways by the social researchers and development agencies. For instance, effective people's participation is a process when a decision by the authority is attuned to the voice of people (IAP2 2003); or a process when there is transfer of power (Gaventa & Valderrama 1999) or sharing of power between service providers and service receivers (Bishop & Davis 2002); or when participation causes significant impact on policy choice (Arnstein 1971); or when a governing authority puts significant value

on people's opinion (Cole & Caputo 1984). Whatever the language used in the definition, the plain meaning of effective people's participation is when citizens can influence the decision making in development programs that affect them.

Here, the word 'effective' refers to instances when people's participation makes a difference within the decision making processes or policy outcomes of government (Cole & Caputo 1984). 'Effective participation' is, as the World Bank (1996) defined, a process through which people influence and share control over development initiatives.

The participation process is a social transformation mechanism, where the power of the implementing agency is transformed by civil society. In this way 'effective participation' means when people's empowerment reaches a position that enables cooperative and collective actions to be performed with the implementing agency, resulting in enhanced influence over decision-making, monitoring and evaluation processes (Brett 2003; Cooper, Bryer & Meek 2006).

4.6.2   Effective Development

Effective development can be defined as the development outcome that reflects people's will (Berry et al. 1984), or the development that is owned by the local people (Patel & Mitlin 2002). Thus, contextually, effective service delivery means there is effective people's participation that means government is more transparent to people, more accountable to people, following the rule of people, and consequently establishing/ strengthening/ trying good governance. Effective service delivery thus means the service that is desired by the people and beneficial to the mass of people of the community.

Conversely, other approaches have a more economically defined view of development. Sobhan (2002) argues that an effective development program should not only be people centred but also be supportive to growing economic flow in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) i.e. use of that project for commercial purposes to develop economic flow in the national economy. Similarly, for the World Bank, effective development means economically viable/ sustainable projects, which have a positive impact on economic growth (World Bank 2005). It has been observed that increases in people's participation in nontechnical project decisions decreases maintenance costs (Khwaja 2004).

The word 'effectiveness' thus, given the above definitions, involves two distinctive components. One of these components is 'normative' i.e. social outcome: whether the program has fulfilled the people's expectation or not. The second component is 'instrumental' i.e. economic outcome: whether the program is economically viable or not. This research will

consider the normative component when considering and defining 'effectiveness'. Moreover, the study will seek to demonstrate how sustainable economic flows can not be achieved without the participation and use of the development program by the local people.

4.6.3   Different Stakeholders Responsible for Achieving Good Governance

Good governance means interaction or networking between stakeholders. Researchers argued that only one actor or stakeholder performs for government while it is more than one stakeholders for governance or good governance (Geddes 2005; Rhodes 2000). Usually there are three stakeholders, these are: state, private sector and civil society (Agere 2000; Barten et al. 2002; Newman 2007). These stakeholders help each other in achieving good governance. But in rural Bangladesh the private sector is not strong enough to influence government functions (Lewis & Hossain 2008; Mallick 2004). So this research selected government officials those that act on behalf of state, local elected public representatives and local users those that act on behalf of civil society of development works to explore how they are contributing towards establishing good governance, and making development effective in rural Bangladesh. More importantly, these three groups – government officials, elected representatives and local users – are directly involved or ought to be involved in local development programs in rural Bangladesh.

Local people elect their representatives for local government institutions and for looking after the local development programs on their behalf. In 1982, the government introduced Upazila Parishad to implement local development projects at the rural levels in the country. Almost all the voting members including women representatives of this Parishad (council) are directly elected by the local voters (Siddiqui 2005). Moreover, to ensure direct participation, local people also elect different management committees to monitor local development programs that affect their lives (see Section 4.4).

Government officials of different development ministries are working in Upazila Parishad on secondment (Siddiqui 2005). They are responsible for line ministries' work at the rural levels. Annual confidential reports about the performance of these officials are prepared by the concerned Upazila chairman (Ahmad 1991).

4.6.4   Capacity of Local Government Bodies in Bangladesh

The Government of Bangladesh introduced Local Governance Regulation in 1982 and established *Upazila Parishad* (Sub-district council) and *Union Parishad* (Sub-sub-district council, which was previously known as *Union Council*) to use these bodies to implement most development programs for the rural areas with the engagement of local people (Morshed 1989).

At the beginning, the *Upazila Parishad* comprised an elected chairman, elected representatives and public officials, but at present it is running without an elected chairman, as there has been no election at *Upazila* level since 1991 mostly because of the unwillingness of legislatives (Sarker 2006b). Instead of *Upazila Parishad*, the 'Upazila Development and Coordination Committee' (UDCC) has been performing the coordination functions of the *Upazila*, and has been entrusted with the responsibility of planning and implementation of development activities in four areas: roads and communications, irrigation and agriculture, education and physical infrastructure (Solaiman 1997). A Parliament Member (MP) of the respective constituency has been assigned to join the committee meeting in the capacity of an advisor. In this provisional system, one of the *Union Parishad* chairmen presides over the committee meetings by rotation. Thus, even after this structural change, elected local representatives are still leading-components of the decision making body for implementing development programs, which upholds the participation of local people. However, though this research study was conducted during UDCC time, in January 2009, Upazila Parishads were again elected by the rural people in Bangladesh. Thus discussion on both the UDCC and the Upazila Parishad has been covered throughout the thesis.

The Government of Bangladesh has taken several initiatives and reform activities to ensure people's participation in local government affairs, which has been articulated mandatory in its constitution. Several executive orders and laws also promulgated to ensure people's participation effective (see details in Chapter 3).

4.7   Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the people's participation in development programs and its practice in developing nations, particularly in rural Bangladesh. The donors and aid-recipient governments have no doubt that for poverty reduction to happen poorer nations need to reap effective development of aid assistance programs. As the discussion has revealed, there are barriers that hinder the achievement of a good governance environment and consequently shape ineffective outcomes for development programs. Effective development requires that the decision making process and implementation should be participatory. Nonetheless, the budgetary and other related functions also need to be transparent; and the implementing authority needs to accountable to the people and the implementation process should follow the existence rule and laws of the locality. The international development agencies and the Government of Bangladesh are trying to ensure people's participation in achieving effective development but this is not working as desired. Based on all of these discussions and previous research a conceptual

framework has been designed to conduct a research to explore the barriers to effective people's participation that could ensure effective development by establishing good governance.

The next chapter discusses and justifies the research methods used in the thesis to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER 5.
RESEARCH METHODS

'In many countries around the world conventional models of political participation have come to be complemented by a new architecture of democratic practice.' Andrea Cornwall (2004b, p. 75).

5.1   Introduction

The main objective of this chapter is to discuss and justify the research method used in this study to answer the research questions addressed in Chapter 1. To clearly represent the total activities related to data gathering and interpretation, this chapter is divided into four sections. The first section explains the rationale, purpose and nature of the study. It also introduces the research design and the sample region. The second section discusses the qualitative data collection procedures and ethical considerations. The procedures used to analyse the data are presented in the third section. The final section discusses the strength and limitations of the methodology which is followed by a discussion on the reliability and validity of the method.

5.2   Purpose of the Study

The purposes of the study are chiefly threefold. Firstly, this study intends to explore the concept of people's participation in the Bangladesh context. Secondly, it aims to find out the strength and weaknesses of the present people's participation process in local governance, particularly in its service delivery processes. Thirdly, it seeks to frame an effective means of people's participation or possible solution for removing barriers to ensure en effective participatory process that will ensure effective development. More specifically, this study will explore issues like the impact of social capital, civil society, trust, control of power, corruption, policy instability in making people's participation effective for a transparent, accountable and predictable governance, that is, good governance. In addition, this study attempts to investigate the gap between the theory and practice of people's participation mechanisms, i.e. look into the present situation of accountability, transparency and rule of law at the grassroots levels in Bangladesh, and how they have impacted on the performance of the development programs for people. Based on the suggestions of the stakeholders, those responsible for implementing good governance in the local government, the study will suggest probable future strategies for the successful implementation of the good governance strategies that are applicable for the local level in developing countries.

5.3   Nature of the Study

The main objective of this study is to discover the causes for the ineffectiveness of people's participation, that is, to find the barriers to good governance development and, thus, to find the factors that hinder the effective outcomes of the development programs. The review of the literature related to people's participation process in developing societies has shown that this barrier is mainly caused by the insignificant role played by the bureaucrats, public representatives and local stakeholders (Morshed 1997; Siddiqui 2005). Hence it is very difficult to identify a particular problem within such a big canvas of a research area. The problem may exist within any level of the bureaucratic hierarchy, i.e. ministry to local Upazila, or at any level of people's representation, i.e. MP to local chairman, or within the wide range of local stakeholders, i.e. elites to simple peasants. All these are purely subjective factors. In contrast, in the developing economies, where management activities linked with the society are not well developed (Battaglio 2009), the system itself may be faulty, that is, not an effective system bound by rules and laws to ensure people's participation, or mishandled by the actors running the system. Thus, the barrier could be a structural factor also. Hence, the inquiry issue in this study (i.e. the barriers to people's participation) has been shaped by the long practice of a government-run service delivery system within a particular socio-cultural context, which contains both subjective and structural factors.

The research framework developed through the literature review focused mainly on the stages of people's participation and the state of governance impacting on performance of funds invested for the projects at the rural level. Though the local people are participating in these projects through representatives, no effective outcomes have been achieved (ADB 2006a). So the question of people's participation remains ambiguous and complex. Hence an exploratory and descriptive research is necessary to expose such critical phenomena. Exploratory research is particularly suitable to clarify ambiguous (Zikmund 2003) and complex (Stebbins 2001) issues. The exploratory approach will help to gain insight and understanding into the social and human phenomena, that is, the socio-economic context that creates a barrier to effective people's participation. On the other hand, the descriptive approach will help to explain and describe the means to overcome existing barriers to people's participation in developing countries. Thus, it is concluded that the nature of the study is both exploratory and descriptive.

5.4   Research Design

This study is researching the local government bodies and their governance system in implementing development programs. The focus is more specifically on the local stakeholders,

their representatives, bureaucrats and the existing system that is harnessed to ensure good governance. To achieve the purpose of the study, qualitative methodology and a case study framework have been adopted for the research work. A case study research approach has been selected so as to use a range of methods to collect the maximum data for this research. As Travers pointed out, 'there are five main methods employed by qualitative researchers: observation, interviewing, ethnographic fieldworks, discourse analysis and textual analysis' (2002, p. 2), a case study can deal with most of these methods (Yin 1984, p. 51). This research, though, has adopted four qualitative methods, namely: interviewing, discourse analysis, observation and textual analysis to explore all research questions. The 'ethnographic fieldwork' which requires a long time to complete has been discarded because of time constraints. Cho and Trent assert that 'qualitative research can be more credible as long as certain techniques, methods, and/or strategies are employed during the conduct of the inquiry' (2006, p. 322).

While this research has studied multiple cases, some scientists advocate the single case study for in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Dyer & Wilkins 1991; Van-Maanen 1988). However, most other scientists have argued for multiple case-study that enables a higher degree of findings and can establish a wider data analysis in the one context (Eisenhardt 1989, 1991).

The following figure illustrates how the qualitative methods like interview, observation, discourse and textual analysis would help to analyse a wide range of data to find the effectiveness of development programs on their base of people's participation influencing the development of good governance.

Figure 5.1 Research Design Flowchart / Approach
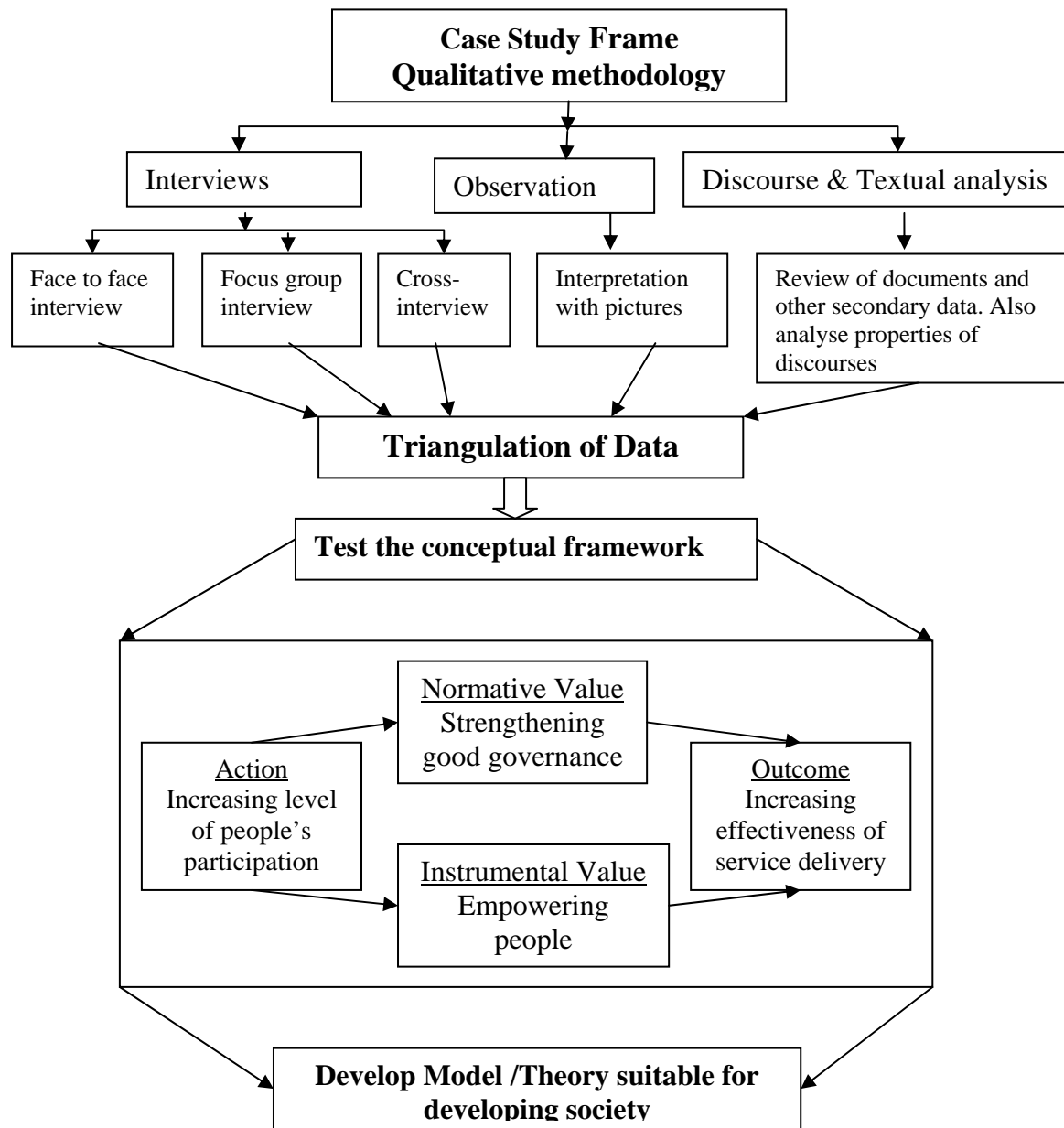
Source: The Author

5.5   Rationale of Using Qualitative Methodology

The central intent of this study is to explore how barriers hinder the development of the good governance process, and why these barriers emerged during the implementing of development programs in rural Bangladesh. This aspect of social enquiry leads to using the case study approach as researchers asserted that a 'how' or 'why' question being posed renders a case study strategy suitable (Yin, 2003). Nonetheless, a qualitative methodology has been selected to explore this research area to obtain a detailed understanding of the problem, because 'the qualitative study is a particularly suitable methodology for dealing with critical problems of

practice and extending the knowledge base of various aspects' (Merriam 1991, p. 54). The complexity and context of the research area are among the other concerns for selecting qualitative methodology. The following discussions will show how socio-cultural and literacy background in rural Bangladesh leads to using qualitative methodology.

The three players mainly responsible for improving good governance in rural Bangladesh are: local beneficiaries, public representatives and government bureaucrats. So this study will particularly focus on the interaction between these players and their dealing with extended society to make a transparent, accountable and predictable governance system. Therefore, as most of the inquiring elements are subjective or naturalistic, this study is justified in using qualitative methods, because qualitative techniques are particularly suitable to enquire into these types of socio-cultural, phenomenological or conventional realities. Guba and Lincoln asserted that 'qualitative methods are stressed within the naturalistic paradigm not because the paradigm is anti-quantitative but because qualitative methods come more easily to the human-as-instrument' (2000, p. 200).

As the main research data are expected from the local stakeholders (local businessmen and student's guardians) who are mostly illiterate, a questionnaire survey (quantitative method) may mislead them to understand the view behind the research questions (since it would be dependent on an interpreter's version). To avoid this phenomenon this study used interview methods, which are also supported by many researchers conducting research with illiterate people in developing countries (Elmendorf & Luloff 2001; Kroeger 1983). Some researchers mentioned that a qualitative method is better than using quantitative in an illiterate or semi-literate developing society to overcome problems related to getting an in-depth knowledge of reality (Van der Reis 2000). In Bangladesh, where 80 percent of the rural populace is illiterate, a qualitative interview is better than the quantitative survey since the interpretation of survey questionnaires, by the interpreter, can lead the interviewee to an answer through their interpreter's way of interpreting the question. Moreover, with the variations of different cultural and circumstantial contexts, more explanation of the survey questions is always needed, which poses difficulty in conducting a survey and in maintaining the consistency of a predesigned questionnaire for survey in developing countries like Bangladesh (Newby et al. 1998). In addition, the recall nature of the responses in interviews, that is, recall from memories and previous experiences gathered during the project implementation process, also leads to selecting qualitative methodology, because a qualitative method is important to facilitate recall procedure during interviews (Elmendorf & Luloff 2001).

The following figure shows the use of qualitative methods justified for the basic concepts of this study.

Figure 5.2 Rationale for Using Qualitative Methods

Conceptual themes of research questions	People's participation (PP) is central to Good governance (GG)	PP is a continuous process and only empowerment of people can ensure effective participation	Effective PP is a must for effective development by ensuring GG
Objectives of the research questions	To explore the value of People's participation in the context of developing society	To find out the gap of participation process between developed and developing society [gap between theory and practice]	To get a model of people's engagement to ensure good governance suitable for developing society
Epistemological issues behind research questions	Ethnographic realism –a system developed over time; mostly subjective variables	Critical realism- reality is there but not clearly identified; amalgamation of both subjective and structural variables	Relativism- constructive issues; mostly subjective variables
Method used to get answer of questions	Interview and observation	Interview, observation and Textual /documents analysis	Contexts and interviews compare and contrast with related theories

Source: The Author

As a new theory or model of people's participation for good governance suitable to the least developed society/economy is expected through this research, the chosen qualitative methodology could have been driven by Grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss 1999). This research, however, did not follow Grounded theory fully. Instead of the 'objective' (neo-positivist) approach of Grounded theory (Guba & Lincoln 2000), the epistemological issues of this study are more subjective and conceptually debateable. Similarly, instead of the long time observation/fieldwork on a single social phenomenon as typified in Ethnographic theory (Denzin & Lincoln 2000), this research collects data on different development programs and their use, from its stakeholders' [the beneficiaries and the implementation body] long experience during the implementation time and the use of those outcomes. Nonetheless, while both the grounded and ethnographic theories introduce either agency variables (focusing on

human subjectivity), or structural variables (social context –power, politics, wealth etc) at the case study level (Waters 1994), this research does not only investigate for agency issues or the structural issues. As both the agency and structural components are investigated in this research, this study draws on 'adaptive theory' (Layder 1993, 1998). Investigation of both agency and structure in this study is justified because the ontology of the paradigm is constructivism i.e. the research area is critical, ambiguous and complex (Guba 1990, p. 23). In adaptive theory it is possible to collect broad based data for broad based interpretation and an effective generation of theory (Denzin 1989, p. 159; Layder 1993).

5.6   Rationale for Selecting the Study Area

The main focus of this study is the effectiveness and position of people's participation in ensuring good governance in the rural government bodies, so as to achieve effective outcomes in implementation of the international aid-run development programs. Bangladesh has been selected for this research principally for four reasons.

Firstly, Bangladesh represents the salient features of a developing country. So it stands as a good example to study good governance among the developing countries which have accepted good governance as a core instrument to get the maximum use of foreign aid in implementing rural development projects.

Secondly, Bangladesh has a long history in developing rural local government institutions to foster people's participation as a strategy for effective development. This is unlike many other developing countries where local governing institutions have been developed recently. Nonetheless, local people have also been participating in some sort of pattern in these rural government bodies for a long time. Several reform programs also have been undertaken by local governance bodies in Bangladesh to ensure good governance through people's participation in different local government programs in the country (Momen & Begum 2005). The consistency between the government's initiatives and peoples' participation in implementing good governance needs to be explored in the context of increasing pressures from the IDAs (International Development Agencies) to pursue good governance to get effective outcomes for their aid support.

Thirdly, Bangladesh is a place where NGOs (Non-Government Organisations) are delivering their services effectively in the same rural areas by successfully linking local stakeholders with their system, whereas local governing institutions (LGI) have been unsuccessful in doing so (Rahman, Wadood & Eusuf 2000). Hence, a study is highly relevant to compare and contrast

the different strategies for engaging people by the LGIs and the NGOs. It is worth mentioning that the *Grameen Bank* and *BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee)*, two leading NGOs in the country, are doing well in microfinance distribution to eradicate poverty from rural Bangladesh (Stiles 2002b). In contrast, the performance of LGIs is very insignificant in boosting economic growth at the rural level as well as of the rural people (Klasen 2007). While, in Bangladesh, the overall annual per capita growth is 1.8 percent, the rate of pro-poor growth is only 0.7 percent because of the poor performance of LGIs (Klasen 2007). That means, poverty reduction activities through empowering people for good governance in the rural areas is very inefficient in comparison to urban areas in the country (Sen, Mujeri & Shahabuddin 2004). The LGI-NGO joint venture programs, however, performed well and proved effective in many cases. Sanitation programs, child health care issues and immunisation programs etc were proved to be effective in terms of LGI-NGO cooperation for the establishment of good governance. The immunization program, implemented in a collaborative framework, expanded from less than one per cent of the population in 1981 to over 90 per cent in the early 1990s. More recently, NGOs have become recognised partners of development within a long-term collaborative framework with the government to ensure good governance at the rural level through people's participation (Sen, Mujeri & Shahabuddin 2004). Considering all these aspects, Bangladesh is a unique study area where strong people networking by NGOs can be contrasted with a weak networking process by the government bodies in community based services.

Fourthly, Bangladesh has been attempting to introduce good governance since the beginning of the 1990s (UNDP 2007; World Bank 2003). Among its initiatives the majority relate to anti-corruption, free press and media, reformation of judiciary, formation of local government bodies, public expenditure and financial accountability, and participatory decision making (World Bank 2003). Regarding the participatory decision making process, the World Bank has introduced 'participatory-budgeting' in different local government bodies in Bangladesh (Rahman 2005). The IMF has introduced the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) approach for poverty reduction with greater participation of people in the governance process (Dijkstra 2005). The UNDP is running the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) program to improve governance for eradicating poverty from the country (UNDP 2007).

Finally, this study perceived it necessary to investigate the level of people's participation required for good governance in Bangladesh. The expected findings of this study can help donors and the governments of the developing countries in general and the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) in particular to get the highest benefits from aid by following suitable strategies to ensure good governance at the rural level.

5.7   Rationale for Selecting Local Government Bodies

The reasons for selecting the local government bodies to study good governance are manifold. These are: Firstly, the majority of populace in the developing countries, who are the beneficiaries of good governance, live at the door-step of the rural local government bodies. So, local government bodies close to the mass of people are suitable for study to observe the people's participation process to ensure good governance in its service delivery functions. In Bangladesh 80 percent of its people are living at the door-step of the rural local government institutions (Sen, Mujeri & Shahabuddin 2004).

Secondly, local development programs that run by the Bangladesh local government bodies are mostly funded by the donors through the central government, where the condition of people's participation is always applied during the releasing of funds to ensure maximum outcomes by ensuring good governance. A study for revealing the effectiveness of these implemented programs by the aid fund, thus, is perceived as important in this research.

Thirdly, it is noticed that among the developing countries Bangladesh has been a fore-runner in implementing good governance programs to get effective returns in its service delivery through local government bodies (UNDP 2005; World Bank 2002b). Since 1991, the Government of Bangladesh (GOB), with the help of international development agencies, has initiated several programs throughout the government process generally and in local government programs particularly to ensure good governance with people's participation (ADB 1999).

Fourthly, the Government of Bangladesh has taken different reform initiatives in local governance to achieve good governance by further facilitating people's participation in its service delivery processes as the people's participation has been made mandatory by the constitution of Bangladesh for any development programs at any level (GOB 1972). The various commissions for administrative reforms also address these loopholes where detailed suggestions have been made to improve local governance in the country. The Administrative Reforms Commission of 1997 has underscored the issue and suggested a number of decentralization approaches in order to ameliorate governance at the grassroots level (Panday 2005). The National Strategy Paper for Poverty Reduction (PRSP) in Bangladesh has also acknowledged that the governance issue is critical to a more effective growth and poverty reduction strategy. As an effective strategy for good governance, the PRSP (2005) prescribed reform from the bottom i.e. promoting local governance. The Public Administration Reforms Commission (PARC) in 2000 has also made recommendations to improve local governance in the light of New Public Management (Zafarullah & Huque 2001).

Finally, the researcher has had the opportunity of working as a civil servant in Bangladesh for more than twelve years, including four years at the Upazila level. The researcher's familiarity with and insight into the administrative structure and culture of the country have been an added advantage in selecting Bangladesh and the local government bodies in particular for the study.

In Bangladesh, presently two tiers of the local governance system are working at grassroots level: Upazila Parishad (Sub-district level) and Union Parishad (Sub-Sub-district level). The Upazila is the basic administrative unit of rural Bangladesh. The country has 495 Upazilas under 64 districts at present. An average Upazila has a population of 243,000 (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2007). Before 2001, Upazilas were known as Thanas. On the other hand a Union is the smallest administrative unit, comprising, on average, fifteen villages. Each Upazila is subdivided into 6–10 unions. While the Upazila Parishad is considered as the 'principal unit of local government' (World Bank 1996, p. 48), the Union Parishad is being considered as the implementing unit to materialise rural development programs (Siddiqui 2005). This research thus selected sample cases i.e. rural development programs which encompassed both the Upazila Parishad and the Union Parishad in implementation.

To select suitable Upazilas and cases for data collection [address all the abovementioned purposes] the researcher first met with his colleagues and batch-mates[3] who are now working in different ministries and have experience working as chief of administration [here UNO- Upazila Nirbahi Officer] at the Upazila levels. To satisfy all mandatory criteria for a suitable case they suggested four development projects, namely: growth centre, culvert construction, road construction and building a primary school, to include in the research. They also helped the researcher to select suitable Upazilas where these kinds of projects have been implemented.

Six Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNO -Chief Executive Officer) of six Upazilas (Dhamrai, Savar, Kushtia, Chougachha, Badalgachi and Tentulia) were contracted by telephone to get permission to conduct the research in his/her administrative jurisdiction. The researcher discussed details about the research area, procedure and aim of data collection with the UNOs. Among the six, four UNOs (Dhamrai, Chougachha, Badalgachi and Tentulia) responded well, however, Dhamrai, Chougachha, and Tentulia Upazila were selected finally on the basis of availability of suitable cases and because of their position within different socio-cultural environments. A growth-centre case and a primary school case were also selected from each of those selected Upazilas after thorough discussion with respective UNOs.

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[3] The researcher is a public service manager in his country, and Batch-mate means those colleagues joined in a batch in Bangladesh Civil Service.

To investigate the research questions three Upazilas of Bangladesh, namely: 1) Dhamrai Upazila, 2) Chougachha Upazila, and 3) Tentulia Upazila, with different socio-economic development status, as shown below, have been selected for study. This has been done to get a wider picture of people's participation in different socio-economic situations.

Table 5.1 Demography Information at a Glance on Study Areas

Attributes / Upazila	Level of Development	Literacy	Social structure	Demography
Dhamrai Upazila	High	Educated	Loose social bonding	Heterogeneous demography
Chougachha Upazila	Medium	Medium	Medium	Relatively homogeneous
Tentulia Upazila	Very low	Less	High	Homogeneous

Source: The Author

The position of these Upazilas in three different socio-economic places is shown on the following map of Bangladesh.

Figure 5.3 Poverty Levels of Different Upazilas in Bangladesh (representing different colours)
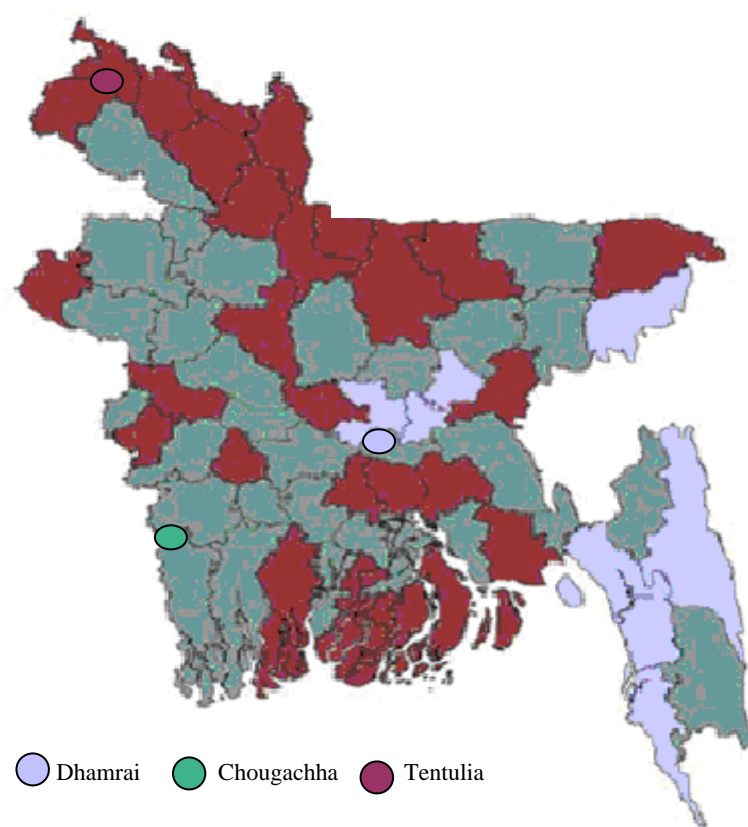
Source: Sen, Mujeri and Shahabuddin (2004)

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Dhamrai Upazila is substantially developed and close to the capital city in comparison with the two other Upazilas. The second one is Chougachha Upazila –a moderately developed Upazila. The last one is Tentulia Upazila –the most remote and least developed. A salient sketch of demographic comparison between these three Upazilas has shown in the following table.

Table 5.2 Different Attributes of Selected Local Government Bodies

Criterion	Upazila		
	Dhamrai	**Chougachha**	**Tentulia**
Distance from capital city, km.	27	375	603
Area sq.km	303.35	269.20	189.12
Population	347,520	222,801	106,140
Literacy %	49.01	43.75	36.52
Made road, km	99.50	70.08	56.11
Govt. Primary school	139	61	39
Industry	408 (ceramic, Pharmaceuticals, leather, garments)	5 (weaving /cotton industry and a few agricultural industries)	Few agricultural farms, Not mentionable
Hat-Bazaar (number)	35	24	19
Poverty level *	Less than 35%	In-between 35 to 45%	More than 45%

Sources: Respective Upazila offices (collected by the author) and *percentages of populace have less than one US dollar income (Sen, Mujeri & Shahabuddin 2004)

As Upazila is the focal point of the local development activities in the country (World Bank 2007a), the people's participation process in the Upazila Parishad has discussed thoroughly and decisively. Along-side the discussion on the people's participation process in particular development works, a discussion on the overall implementation system is undertaken to assess their role in ensuring good governance and consequently the overall development pursuit.

5.8   Rationale for Selecting Sample/ Cases/ Development Projects

Finding a suitable case has appeared as significant since it was required to select such a case which has been implemented at the rural level, close to the mass of the people, that included rural government bodies for implementation (to see participation of local people), and funded by both the governments and development agencies. To fulfil all these pre-requisites, two development programs were selected from two different sectors, the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) and the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE). People's participation in a growth-centre (village market) development program implemented by the

LGED, and a public primary school constructed by the DPE have been studied, because these are the major areas of development activity that involve both the Upazila Development and Coordination Committee (UDCC) and the Union Parishad (Solaiman 1997). Thus, there were six cases: construction and use of a Growth-centre, and building a primary school, including its use, in five different Unions within the three Upazilas. These six cases in different Unions in each Upazila are shown in the following figure:

Figure 5.4 Suapur Bazaar and Demran Primary School in Dhamrai Upazila

Source: Banglapedia (2008)

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Figure 5.5 Primary School and Hoibatpur Bazaar in Chaugachha Upazila
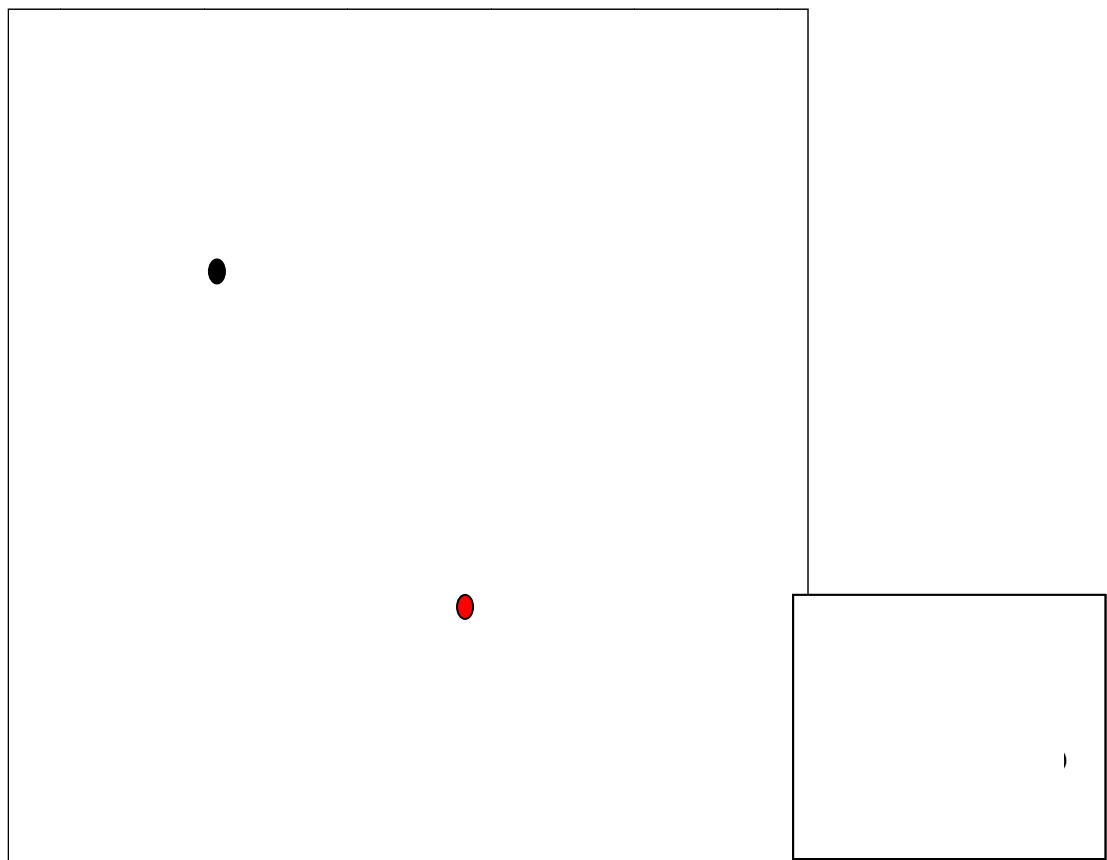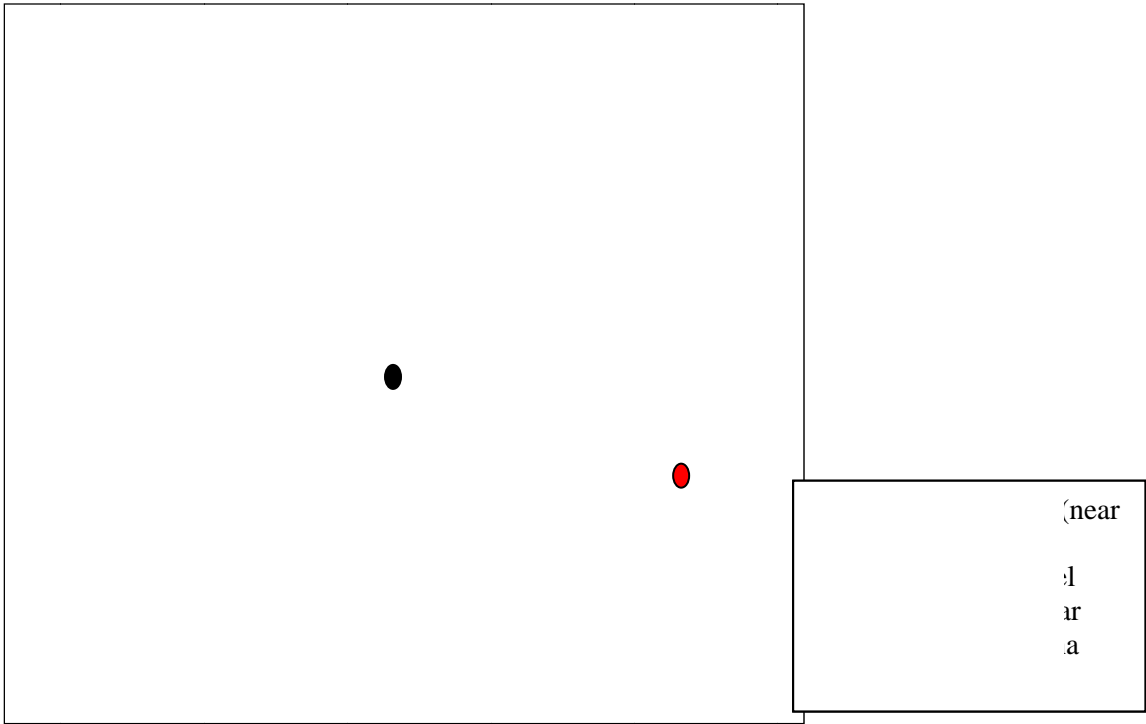
Source: Banglapedia (2008)

Figure 5.6 Bhajanpur Primary School and Shalbahan Bazaar in Tentulia Upazila
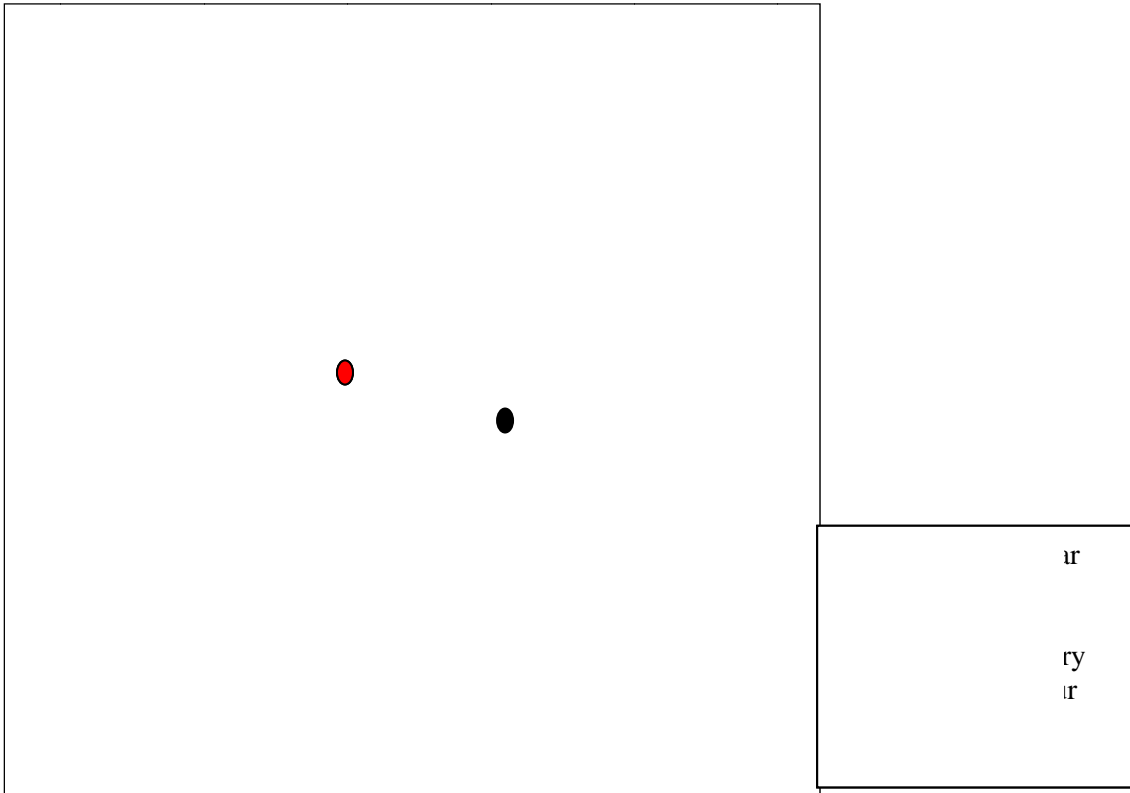
Source: Banglapedia (2008)

5.8.1 Case-1: Growth Centre

There are three kinds of market at the rural levels in Bangladesh. These are: Village Bazaar, Semi-urban (village-town) Bazaar, and Urban Bazaar (figure below). Among these markets, Semi-urban markets those are used for assembling of primary goods –raw products grown by local farmers, and Growth-centre is the term used for processed secondary goods for terminal markets in Bangladesh (LGED 2007). The local businessmen collect the primary farm products from the farmers and assemble those products in local growth centres for the purpose of sale to the tertiary markets. The primary function of a growth centre is to make a bridge between the local businessmen and big merchants. The Planning Ministry of Bangladesh has selected 2100 growth centres all over the country at present (LGED 2007). According to the 'Public Tenants Act-1950 -section 20 (2K)', the government is the owner of the land that belongs to a Growth centre. The local government institutions collect taxes from the businessmen and distribute them between central government and local governments (Upazila and Union). Nine percent of this tax is distributed to the central government, sixty percent to Upazila, and twenty-five percent to the Union Parishad (Central : Upazila : Union=9:66:25%) (LGED 2008).

Figure 5.7 Classification of Rural Markets in Bangladesh
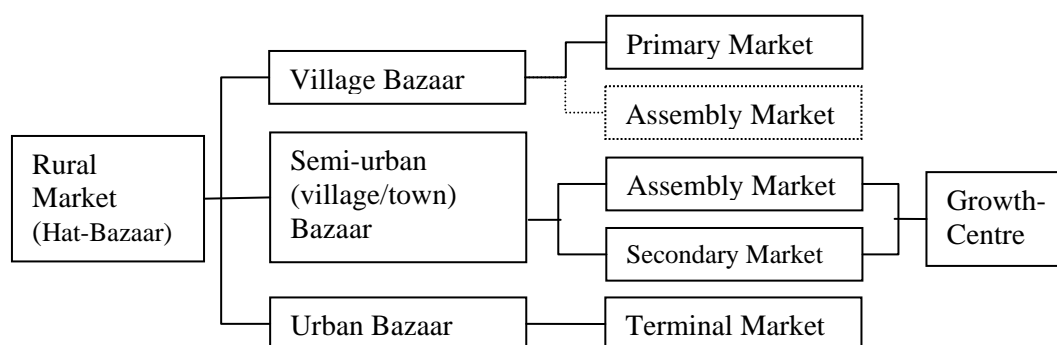
Source: Adopted from Local Government Engineering Department (2007)

At the local level there are two-tier management committees to look after the market affairs. One is Upazila (sub-district) Hat-Bazaar Management Committee (UHBMC) and another is Local Hat-Bazaar Management Committee (HBMC) (see chapter 4).

Growth centres are particularly helpful for the farmers and local businessmen to promote their business and products, but the infrastructures of most of these centres are not well developed (Khan & Akther 2000). So the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) has taken the initiative, with the support of IDAs, to develop these growth centres in phases. Two phases under the project named Rural Infrastructure Development Project have been completed and the third phase is continuing (ADB 2006a, 2006b). The project objectives are to accelerate agricultural, non-farm

economic and social development in the project area by improving basic rural infrastructure in a sustainable manner with participation of the beneficiaries. The objectives are consistent with the government's goals to 'promote economic development and poverty reduction through removing physical bottlenecks and reducing cost in rural transport and marketing and thereby improving the access of the rural people to economic and social facilities and services' (ADB 2006a, p. 1).

The Division of Local Government under the Ministry of 'Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (LGRD&C)' is the sponsor agency for growth centres development projects. All the concerned agencies responsible for the development of growth centres and their links are shown in the following figure:

Figure 5.8 Concerned Organizations for Development of Growth-centres and their Relationship
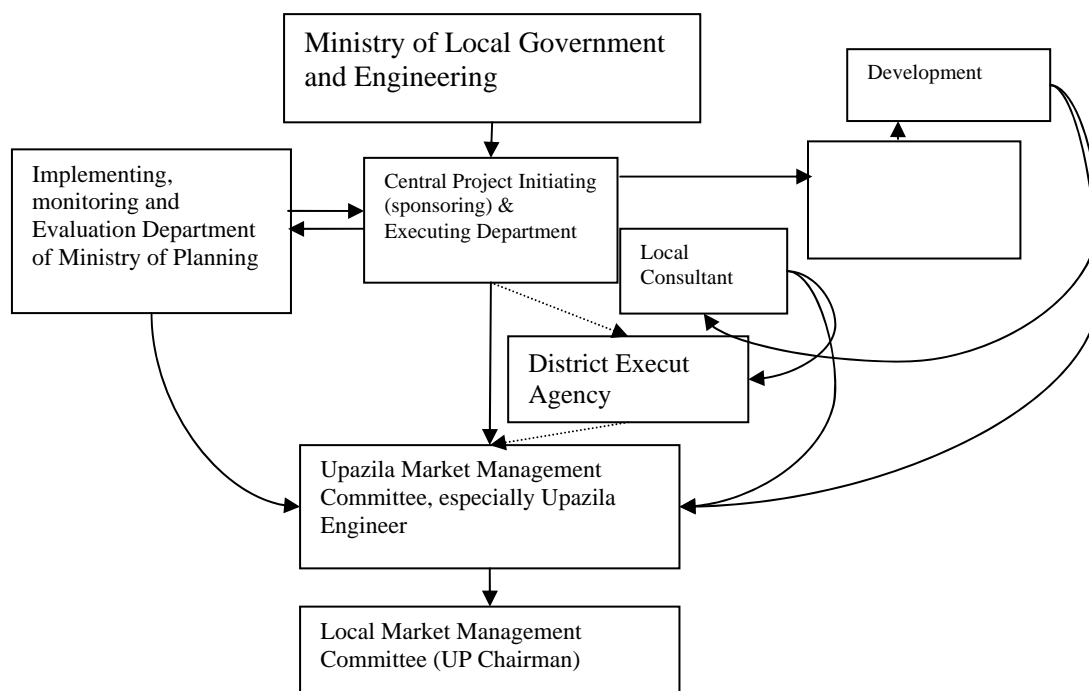
Source: The Author

Three growth centres each in every selected Upazila have been selected to study the development process and its present use by the local stakeholders. A comparison between the three selected growth centres namely – Suapur, Hoibatpur and Shalbahan –has been illustrated as follows:

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Table 5.3 Comparison between Three Selected Growth-centres

Name of the Growth centre	Project, Development year and cost lakh taka (10 lakh=1 million)	Development agency and Fund	Area of the market (m²)	Number of permanent shops
Suapur, Dhamrai Upazila	RDP-11, 1999-2000, cost 33,10,160	IDA and SDC	2970	39
Hoibatpur, Chougachha Upazila	RDP-25, 2005-06, cost 80,73,520	ADB, KfW and GTZ	10003	76
Shalbahan, Tentulia Upazila	RDP-13,1990-91 Reconstruction RDP-21,2001-2003; total cost: 60,08056	ADB, JBIC, IFAD and SIDA	8148	56

ADB=Asian Development Bank, JBIC =Japan Bank for International Cooperation, IFAD =International Fund for Agriculture Development, SIDA =Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, KfW =German Financial Cooperation, GTZ =German Technical Cooperation, SDC=Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, IDA= International Development Association, RDP=Rural Infrastructure Improvement Projects

Source: Respective Upazila Engineers' offices (collected by the author)

5.8.2   Case-2: Primary School

The poverty reduction strategy by the Government of Bangladesh has acknowledged the primacy of the educational role in combating and overcoming poverty (Ramsay 2007). To achieve the strategy, the Government of Bangladesh has taken several steps to promote primary education throughout the country. Since 1991 primary education has been free, and since 1993 it has been made compulsory (Ramsay 2007). Now, Bangladesh has as one of the largest primary education systems in the developing world (UNDP 2006a). In the year 2001, 17.7 million students were enrolled in over 78,000 primary-level institutions and were taught by more than 320,000 teachers (ADB 2003). This represented a 30.8% increase in formal primary education enrolments from the level in 1991. In 2001, the gross enrolment ratio was 97.5% nationwide. In Bangladesh, investment in primary education is generally considered strongly pro-poor—56% of all government subsidies on primary education benefit the poor, who represent roughly 50% of the total population (ADB 2003).

To ensure universal primary education for all children by 2015, the Government of Bangladesh has announced the 'Education For All (EFA)' program throughout the country. To achieve the goal of the EFA and by focusing on the infrastructural and environmental development for education, especially in the rural areas, the Government of Bangladesh, with the help of development agencies, has scheduled two mega projects to implement countrywide. These two development projects, namely: Primary Education Development Project-I (PEDP-I) and Primary Education Development Project-II (PEDP-II), translate the poverty reduction strategy into action-oriented interventions by which the population of Bangladesh are expected to be a

more literate society, and by doing so establish a stronger foundation on which to build economic growth and future economic development (ADB 2003).

The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE), which is the implementing agency of the 'Ministry of Primary and Mass Education' (MPME), began implementing, in May 2004, the PEDP-II, with the support by eleven development partners including the International Development Association with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as the lead agency. The PEDP-II represents a major step towards achieving the Government's EFA and poverty reduction agenda, with a financing envelope of US$1.8 billion of which 64 percent represents the Government's own resources. Prior to this project another mega project, the PEDP-I, was implemented with a total investment of US$741.7 million, of which half was contributed by the development partners (Directorate of Primary Education 2003). PEDP-I had three main components: 1) to improve school quality and system efficiency; 2) to strengthen institutional capacity and management; and 3) to increase equitable access to quality education (World Bank 2008). The overall goal of the projects PEDP-I and PEDP-II is to reduce poverty through universal primary education and contribute to sustainable socioeconomic development and equity in Bangladesh society as envisaged in the MDGs. The specific objective is to provide quality primary education to all eligible children in Bangladesh (ADB 2003).

The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MPME) through its subordinate organisation the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) looks after all the programs and development of primary schools affairs in Bangladesh. The concerned agencies and their relations are shown in the following figure:

Figure 5.9 Concerned Organizations for Development of Primary School and their Relationship
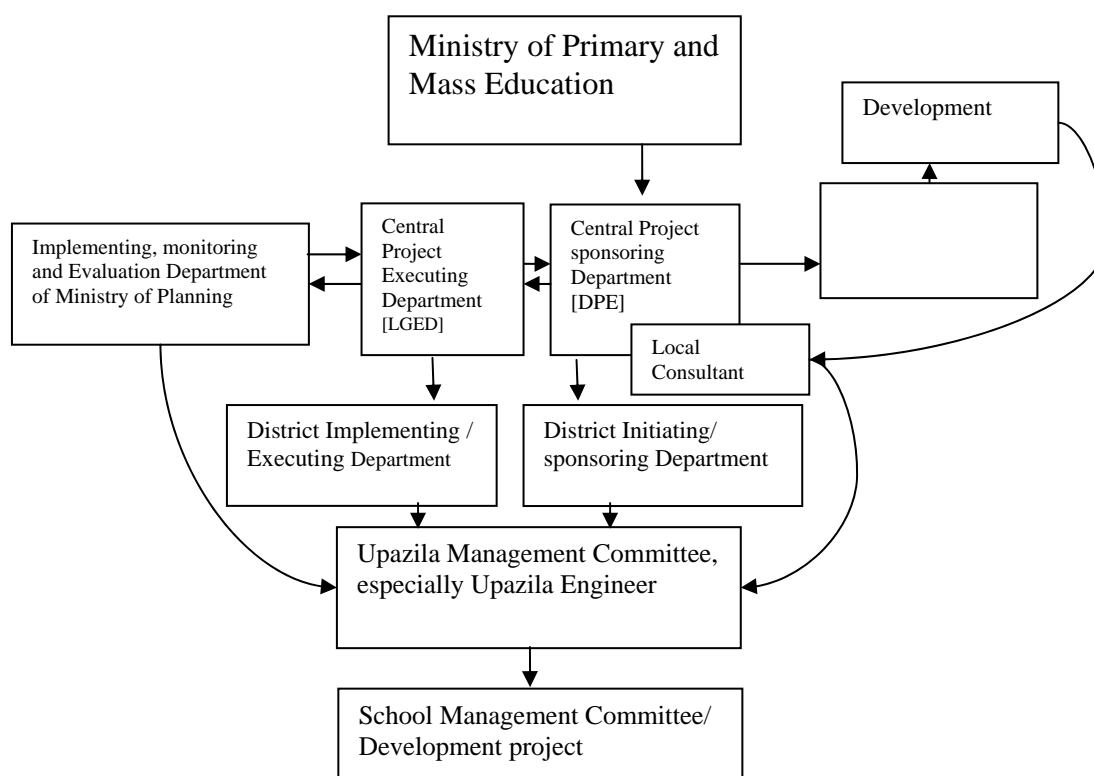
Source: The Author

At the rural level, two tiers of the management committee deal with the primary school. At every school, a School Management Committee is elected by the student guardians, which is responsible for all development works at the local level, and is accountable to the Upazila School Management Committee for using funds (see Chapter 4).

Three primary schools, namely: Demran, Chougachha Model and Bhajanpur, have been selected for study. Positions of selected three primary schools in three different Upazilas are shown in the figure (above), and salient features of those schools are depicted as follows.

Table 5.4 Comparison between Three Selected Primary Schools

Name of the school	Project and completion year	Main Donors of the project	Number of students
Demran Govt. Primary School, Dhamrai Upazila	Second Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-II), 2003-2009	ADB, AusAID, CIDA, DFID, EC, IDA, JICA, NORAD, SIDA, UNICEF	192
Chougachha Model Primary School, Chougachha Upazila	Second Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-II), 2003-2009	ADB, AusAID, CIDA, DFID, EC, IDA, JICA, NORAD, SIDA, UNICEF	602
Bhajanpur Govt Primary School, Tentulia Upazila	First Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-I), 1997-2003	ADB, NORAD, KfW, GTZ, IDA, CIDA,	250

ADB = Asian Development Bank, AusAID = Australian Agency for International Development, CIDA = Canadian International Development Agency, DFID = Department for International Development, EC = European Commission, IDA = International Development Association, JICA = Japan International Cooperation Agency, NORAD = Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, SIDA = Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, UNICEF = United Nations Children's Fund, KfW =German Financial Cooperation, GTZ =German Technical Cooperation,

Source: Respective Upazila Education Officers' offices (collected by the author)

5.9   Data Collection

Two cases, namely the 'Rural Infrastructure Development project' and the 'Primary School Development project' from three different local government bodies, were selected to test the validity of the conceptual framework of this study.

Once the local government bodies and cases were selected, data collection methodology was chalked out. A guide to data collection was developed through reviewing literature on people's participation for good governance. The overall research design for data collection is summarised in the following figure:

Figure 5.10 Methodology for Data Collection

UP = Union *Parishad* (Sub-Sub-District Council), UNO= *Upazila Nirbahi* Officer (CEO of Sub-District), UE= *Upazila*
Engineer, UEO= *Upazila* Education Officer, PIO= Project Implementation Officer, B.Com=Business Community, S. Gur=
Student Guardian, UEdC= Upazila Education Committee, MMC= Market Management Committee, PD= Project Director
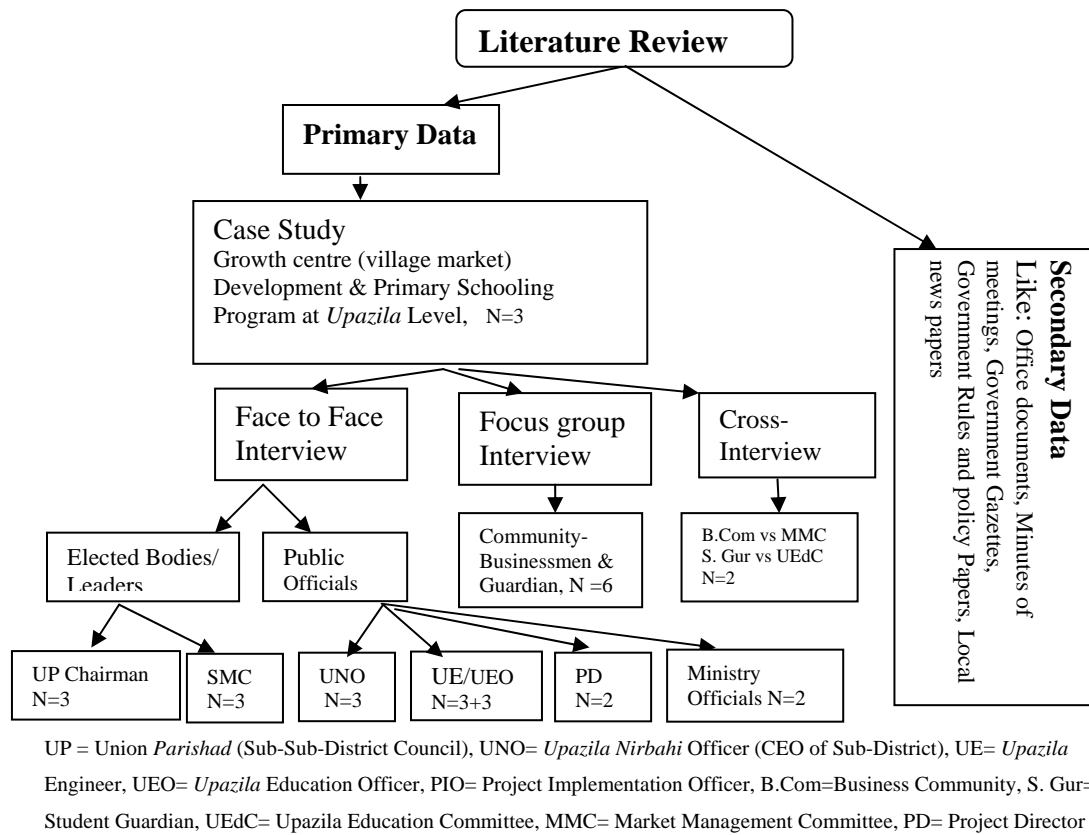
Source: The Author

The field research for this study was conducted in February – June 2008. On an average three
weeks was spent in each Upazila for data collection. To get a wider range of data in different
situations two cases related to the Growth centre and Primary school were studied from three
different local government bodies with different socio-economic conditions in Bangladesh.
Altogether twenty-seven interviews were conducted along with observing the use of the
development works and collection of necessary documents for the study.

5.9.1   Primary Data Collection

Primary data were collected through interviews in addition to practical observations of the
development project sites. Four types of interviews such as focus group interview, group
interview, face-to-face interview and 'cross-grouped interview' were conducted, and recorded
by audio-tape recorder. All interviews were 'tape-recorded to ensure accuracy of information'
(Elmendorf & Luloff 2001, p. 143). For each case, 3 beneficiaries groups, 3 elected
representatives, 3 elected committees, 1 beneficiary with management committee, and 4

bureaucrats were interviewed. Interviews were conducted in three local government bodies, which were designed to help comparing data on a single question from different groups.

A semi-structured questionnaire was prepared to conduct interviews. More or less similar questions were asked to all interviewees to gather maximum data for each aim of the research, and then triangulation to get the best possible interpretation of the study. The basic philosophies framing the questions for interviews are shown in the following table:

Table 5.5 Basic Philosophies that Framed the Questionnaire

Premise of research concept	Objective/ aim/ purpose of the study	Knowledge/ rhetoric view/ philosophy that frame questions for interviews
People's Participation (PP) is central to Good Governance (GG)	Explore how people's participation matters to the local governing bodies in the developing countries	1. Does people's participation matter to the government of developing countries? 2. How is people's participation perceived by the concerned stakeholders in Bangladesh local governance?
People's participation is a continuous process and only empowerment of people can ensure effective participation	Investigate the effectiveness of people's participation process in service delivery by Bangladesh local government bodies.	1. Can people be empowered through a gradual engagement (participatory process) with governing bodies in developing societies? 2. What is the strength and weakness of BD local governance concerning people's engagement to establish good governance? 3. Does the people's participation process have to be the same to ensure effective development in all societies?
Effective people's participation is must for effective development by ensuring good governance	Examine how people's participation varies within different socio-economic contexts, in particular the gap between the developed and developing society, and possible remedy to fill up the gap (if any).	1. Can greater people's participation ensure effective development in rural Bangladesh? 2. What is the solution to fill the gap, if any, between theory and practice of people's participation process?

Source: The Author

The sequence and pattern of asking questions were changed as per the demand of the situation and due course of conversation. The total interviews were: local stakeholders /beneficiaries (2 cases X 3 locations); UP Chairmen (3 UPZ); Engineers (3 UPZ); Education Officers (3 UPZ); UNOs (3 UPZ); School Management Committee (3 SMC/UPZ), local stakeholders /Expected

Beneficiaries with Upazila Management Committees (1 X students' guardians with Upazila Education Committee and 1 X businessmen with Upazila Market Management Committee); Project Directors (2); Ministry (1) and IMED (1 planning). In other words, total 16 individual interviews, 6 focus group interviews, 3 group interviews, 2 cross grouped interviews i.e. 27 interviews were conducted. In total, 12 government officials, 21 elected representatives, 89 expected beneficiaries were interviewed individually and in groups. Extracts from all interviews have been placed in Appendix 4.

5.9.1.1   Focus group interview

A focus group interview with the expected beneficiaries of each development project was conducted in each Upazila. That means altogether six focus group interviews were conducted – one businessmen group and one student guardian group from each of three Upazilas. Focus group interviews were conducted to gather people's perceptions formed through their participation in local development programs. Hughes and DuMont (1993) argued that the focus group is very effective for reflecting the social realities of a group, through direct access to the language and concepts which construct the participants' experience.

In the case of a survey within the rural Bangladesh context where the majority of people are illiterate, an educated person is needed to read and explain the questions. In this situation there is every chance of bias by the preconceived ideas of the interviewer or the interpreter or the translator. Patricia van der Reis (2000) identified that illiterate and less-literate respondents encounter the lack of a full understanding of the questions, even though they may be asked in their own language. Moreover, in Bangladesh, rural people are always shy to speak individually [from my previous practical experience while working in rural areas] but not when in a group. To overcome these types of problems a focus group interview was found very useful. Kidd and Parshall (2000) found through their research that individuals in groups answer questions in more comprehensive ways, and the control over the direction of the interview actually shifted from the interviewer to the interviewee during focus group interviews.

Target population and Sampling strategy

The target population is the specific complete group relevant to the research area (Zikmund 2003). In this way the target populations for this research are local businessmen and student-guardians related to the growth-centre case and primary-school case respectively. In the case of Suapur bazaar (Dhamrai Upazila), local businessmen are socio-culturally more heterogeneous than in Shalbahan bazaar (Tentulia Upazila), because the local businessmen at Suapur are from different Unions and some migrated from other different districts to live close to the capital city. On the other hand, all businessmen at Salbahan are from local villages, because of its

remoteness. Similarly in the case of the student guardians, the population is relatively heterogeneous in Demran, because they came from different places to work in this industrial area. However in terms of those interested in the development programs related to the growth-centre or primary-school, the population was homogeneous in all cases and places. The population was also homogeneous in terms of age and status as most of them were aged between 25 to 45 years [mature], and from the same rural areas. Though some researchers (Carey 1994) supported the homogeneity of focus groups in terms of age, status, class, occupation and other characteristics, many others (Powell, Single & Lloyd 1996) rejected the issue placing more importance on the purpose, time and availability of interviewees for study. Local businessmen doing business in the selected growth-centre or doing business during the implementation of development project are considered as population. Similarly, the guardians who had children studying at the time of the interviews or studying during the implementation of the development project were considered as population for interviewing. All six focus groups were homogeneous in terms of participation in development programs, and use of the outcomes of the project. Kitzinger (1994, p. 105) mentioned that 4 or 5 focus groups may be a perfectly adequate number when working with particular populations, whereas, Krueger (1994) suggested that the minimum may be 3 and the maximum of 12 per focus group session is adequate.

Analysing the arguments of different researchers, McLafferty (2004) viewed that the sample size for a focus group may vary from four to twenty. Thus, this research followed the middle way: neither a small nor a large sample size for the interview. From each project area 7-12 of the expected beneficiaries [businessmen and guardians] were randomly (from various age groups) selected as a sample for focus group interviews. Here all populations were from rural Bangladesh, and the total focus groups were 6 in number, which seems adequate according to the previous findings.

Data collection technique

The research data collection was started through visiting Dhamrai Upazila. At first the researcher went to the UNO's office to procure her consent to conduct interviews within her jurisdiction, though a verbal consent had already been indicated over the telephone. However, at the beginning, the researcher requested her to hide the researcher's government [affiliation] identity, and requested that she introduce him as a research student. The researcher also requested the UNO to allow him to do research in his own way i.e. without any open help from the local government body, which might demonstrate a relation between the researcher and the UNO. After completion of these formalities the researcher went to the Union [lowest local government body at remote area] to meet the UP chairman and took his consent to conduct research at the local growth centre and in the primary school. As and when the researcher

obtained consent, he went to the growth centre to collect data. As requested by the researcher, the chairman introduced the researcher to a businessman who had been doing business for a long time in that growth-centre and had the capacity to call some other businessmen for a meeting. The experienced businessman helped to select a time and place after discussing with other businessmen. For Suapur and Hoibatpur, the meeting place was arranged at the adjacent UP office, while at Salbahan it was in the Bazaar Management Office. The time was around eleven in the morning when most businessmen go to the local restaurants for a cup of tea. Light refreshments were served by the researcher during the interviews in consultation with the local restaurants. The discussion time was approximately one hour.

The next day the researcher went to the primary school as selected in a prior discussion between the researcher and the UNO. The respective Head-teacher arranged a meeting with the students' guardians as requested by the researcher. The school hall-room was used to conduct the interview during lunch break time when many of the guardians come to the school to provide food to their children. Light refreshments, like in the businessmen's interviews were supplied in this case also.

After completion of the interview, the researcher went to see the project outcomes accompanied by the interviewees. This helps the interviewees to recall many other related events during implementation of the projects.

During both cases, the local chairman and head-teacher were not present in the focus group interview. No businesswoman was found for the interview, though almost as many female guardians as male presented for the interviews and were just as vocal as the male guardians.

As moderation is a very important role during focus group interviews (McLafferty 2004), the researcher himself moderates the focus group interviews. His previous knowledge of working with rural people and observing development sites with interviewees (during previous interview) helped to moderate the interviews.

5.9.1.2 Group interview
A group interview was conducted with the School Management Committee (SMC) of each selected school in every Upazila. Like the focus group, the sample group was not drawn from a large population; rather the interviewees were the existing members of the SMC. Moreover, unlike in a focus group, little discussion on the topic happened because the group was highly stratified on the basis of the official positions of the members. In the group discussion, no topic was focused on for discussion; rather the activities of SMC members during project

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implementation were collected through the interview. These group interviews provided valuable information through the sharing of views of the interviewees. Kitzinger used a metaphor for a group interview as 'a group that weave or repair nets together' (1994, p. 106).

Target population and Sampling strategy

To empower local people in planning, management, and utilization of resources, the Government of Bangladesh has made compulsory the election of a SMC for every school since 1995. Now in Bangladesh, every Government Primary (GP) school has an eleven member SMC elected by the local students' guardians (Directorate of Primary Education 1998). However, among the eleven members of the SMC, on an average, 5-6 members were present for interviews.

Data collection technique

The schools for study were selected by the Upazila Education Officer in consultation with the UNO. However, the Head-teacher of the concerned school mainly helped to conduct a group interview with the SMC members. The office room of the Head-teacher was used for the interview. Light refreshments also were provided by the researcher with the help of the head-teacher. It was found, in most cases, that the full committee was not formed yet, and not all members interested in spending time for school affairs, because of non-signatory status of other members, except the Member-secretary and the President, for any expenditure. The president of the committee and the head-teacher were found to dominate the interviews with some exceptions.

However, a group interview with the local Hat-bazaar Management Committee (HMC) failed as no one could confirm the existence of any such committee. Instead of the HMC the local UP Chairmen were interviewed since they were believed to be the President of the HMC by dint of their position according to the government order (LGED 2007).

5.9.1.3   Face to face interview

Face to face interviews with local public representatives, bureaucrats, and high officials were conducted for detailed understanding of the people's participation process with the development projects. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to conduct interviews. Most researchers assert that in face-to-face interviews, any oblique answer can be detected through the respondent's behaviour, body language, manner, emotion or any other indication/ reflection (Denzin & Lincoln 2000).

Target population and Sampling strategy

The target population in this case were the concerned individuals who are involved in growth centre and primary school development programs. Sampling choice was very narrow in this case because emphasis was placed on the most important persons who are mandatory to implement such projects, and who have sufficient documents related to those projects i.e. key informants. UP Chairmen (3 UPZ); Engineers (3 UPZ); Education Officers (3 UPZ); UNOs (3 UPZ); Project Directors [PD] (2); Deputy Secretary of the LGRD&C Ministry (1) and Deputy Chief of Planning Ministry (1 IMED section) were selected for face to face interviews. The reasons for selecting these people are stated in the following table:

Table 5.6 Interviewees Selected for Face to Face Interviews

The Growth-centre case	The Primary School case
The UP chairman –as the President of the Hat-bazaar Management Committee (HBMC) of the local market.	The Upazila Education Officer –as the sponsor agency of the primary school at Upazila level.
Upazila Engineer –in both cases he is the main implementing agent; also supervise and monitor the development works at rural levels.	
UNO – as the President of both the Upazila Hat-bazaar Management Committee and the UEdC (Upazila Education Committee)	
IMED- this division of Ministry of Planning is responsible for monitoring and evaluation of all domestic projects.	
Ministry- Division of LG under Ministry of LGRD and Cooperative is the central sponsor agency for rural infrastructure programs.	
PD- LGED- Local Government Engineering Department is the central implementing agency and supervisor for growth-centres.	PD –DPE- Directorate of Primary Education is the central sponsor and monitoring agency for all government primary schools works under the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education.

Source: The Author

Data collection technique

At the end of the Upazila visit, the researcher went to the Upazila headquarters to collect data and conducted interviews with the government officials. Interviews with the Ministry officials and Project officials were very difficult since most of them were unwilling to face any interview, especially when it would be recorded. However, official and personal communications have been used to conduct such interviews.

5.9.1.4 Cross-groups interview

The cross group discussions, i.e. the community group and other management committee members working at Union and Upazila levels, were brought together and sat face to face to get an in-depth discussion on the issue. This interview was like a roundtable discussion including service-users and service-providers at local level. This was done to verify any anomalies/ dissimilarities to their previous responses, and also to find out the relation between different

stakeholders, especially among the leaders, public officials and the community. This interview was termed a cross-interview because of its nature as an exchange of views when all three groups – local beneficiaries, government bureaucrats, and public representatives – discussed an issue together, face-to-face. This interview particularly helped to identify the differences in responses from the same individuals, sometimes quite distinct from their prior separate interviews. In the presence of government officials, public representatives and local business community, an opinion from one group was crossed or endorsed by other group. Only two cross-group interviews, one with the students' guardians with UEdC (Upazila Education Committee) and another of businessmen with UHMC (Upazila Hat-bazaar Management Committee), however, were possible to conduct.

Target population and Sampling strategy

The population for cross-group interview was all the people related to the implementation of local development projects at the Union and Upazila levels. At one end, it was local stakeholders /Expected Beneficiaries while, at the other end, it was the Upazila Management Committees.

Data collection technique

This interview would not have been possible without the help of the UNO. In response to the request of the researcher, the UNO asked the Upazila Management Committee to arrange a meeting with the local expected beneficiaries of certain projects. The UP chairman also helped to organise the interview place and other facilities. The members of the UHMC [Upazila Hat-bazaar Management Committee] came to the local Union Parishad [Union Council] office to face the meeting with the local business community, where the researcher played the role of moderator. However, cross interview did not occur in all places and cases. Only one cross-group interview took place at Suapur, with businessmen and another at Chougachha, with the student guardians. In most cases such an interview was endlessly postponed by Upazila government officials (question of unwillingness/non-cooperation), though the businessmen and student guardians were ready to join in such interviews. A cross interview with guardians at Demran did not happen because of the unavailability of the Upazila Education Officer and such an interview with local businessmen did not occur at Chougachha due to the prior business of the Upazila Engineer. On the other hand, no cross-interview was possible at Tentulia due to the busyness of the UNO. Total interview schedule for all the Upazilas is shown in the following table.

Table 5.7 Interview Schedule for all Three Upazilas

Type of Interviews	Participants from different Upazilas (number of female participants in parentheses)					
	Dhamrai		Chougachha		Tentulia	
	Growth-centre	Primary school	Growth-centre	Primary school	Growth-centre	Primary school
Focus group	10 (0)	7 (2)	12 (0)	9(3)	12 (0)	11 (6)
UP Chairman as the president of the HBMC*	1		1		1	
SMC*	-	5	-	6 (1)	-	5 (2)
Cross-interview	20 (1)	-	-	21 (11)		
Upazila Engineer	1		1		1	
Upazila Education Officer	1		1		1	
UNO	(1)		1		1	

*HBMC-Hat-Bazaar (Market) Management Committee, SMC-School Management Committee
Source: The Author

5.9.2   Observation of Project Sites

Observations of project sites were conducted with the focus groups to evaluate the outcomes of the implemented projects in terms of their current levels of use. All the development project sites within the study were observed by the researcher, which was useful in interpreting the outcomes (Yin 2003). These observations were compared with other data through the interviews in general and the effectiveness of the development programs in particular. The observation of the development sites will be presented through illustrations – photos /pictures – in Chapter 7 (throughout the text of the chapter).

5.9.3   Secondary Data Collection

The secondary data was collected from the different layers of administration like Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad (Sub-district), District Office, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Planning and also from the aid agencies related to those projects. Batch-mates (see Footnote 2, Section 5.7) who are working in the Ministry levels have helped to collect official documents and other development agencies' reports related to cases. Moreover, the bureaucratic position of the researcher helped to gain access to all these institutions to collect data.

5.10 Ethical Consideration

The research approach and questionnaire for interviews were subject to approval by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HRETH), Victoria University. As advised by the ethics committee, extra precautions need to be taken when interviews are conducted. At the beginning, to get consent from UNOs, six UNOs were approached, and three were selected who provided

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unreserved consent. The same policy was adopted to conduct other face to face interviews. In the same way, group interviews were conducted with those individuals among the businessmen or students' guardian community who agreed spontaneously to join in the interview. The questionnaire was also very flexible, and any question that embarrassed the interviewee was dropped unconditionally. A written statement of confidentiality and privacy was also provided to all of them, along with the purpose of the study; and the right of withdrawing anytime was made clear to the respondents, both through the informed consent form and through clarification by the researcher. In terms of protecting the individual from any adverse consequences of participating in the interview (Black 2002), the researcher allowed responses to be submitted anonymously. In the case of government officials and public representatives, as requested by the respondents, off the record comments have been extracted separately to keep the confidentiality of the interviewee.

However, in qualitative research, maintaining ethics is not just about maintaining confidentiality and anonymity of the objects (here interviewees): recognising and taking into account the reflexivity and positionality of the subject (here, the researcher) is also equally important (Sultana 2007; Nagar 2003; Robertson 2002). Reflexivity in research entails reflection of self in the research process and in data collection and interpretation. Being reflexive is significant in situating the research and knowledge assembly so that ethical commitments can be sustained (Sultana 2007; Nagar 2003). On the other hand, positionality is a key component of self-critique, which is premised on the specification of the identity of the researcher in different cultural environments (Robertson, 2002).

In this research, as already mentioned the researcher was on leave from his position as a public service manager, and as the field study was closely related to public sector issues and networks, this posed a few dilemmas for the researcher. The socio-cultural environment of the research area was previously known to the researcher because of his experience in the public sector and in rural Bangladesh, but through the fieldwork he came to the realisation that doing research is quite different than doing public management in the same socio-cultural environment. Mainly, balancing between actual organisational positions and collecting data were found to be very difficult. The researcher was introduced as a research student to mid-level government officials, public representatives and local beneficiaries at the Upazila levels (see Section 5.9.1.1 – data collection techniques). However initially these people did not believe the researcher was a student. At that time the government was running an anti-corruption drive, and those officials and other people interviewed considered the researcher, with a camera and recorder, to be a *tiktiki* (spy or a staff of intelligence branch). This situation could have been easily overcome by revealing the actual identity of the researcher as a public service manager, but that would block

the gathering of data. In some cases, many stories about Australia, mostly related to Kangaroo and Platypus (the way rural Bangladeshis know Australia), were given at the beginning of interviews as ice-breakers. In other cases, when the researcher was introduced as a public service manager, government officials tried to hide information that might be used against them. To deal with this, a process of triangulation was used, and many reports and secondary data were collected from related offices to reveal the full picture. Above all, the non-political governing environment during fieldworks (care-taker government[4]) helped the researcher significantly to cope with the prevailed environment of mistrust. Local businessmen, student guardians and public representatives came spontaneously for interviews and provided impartial data. The researcher thus easily avoided the grid of political and power relations in rural Bangladesh in terms of collecting authentic data.

5.11 Data Analysis

The primary and secondary qualitative data were analysed thoroughly to address the research questions. The recorded data from face to face and other group interviews were transcribed manually (see Appendix 4 for extracts from all interviews). This transcription was used as the basis for the analysis. Each transcript was read and reviewed in its entirety. The transcripts were read by two reviewers. The transcribed data initially were filled and indexed to prepare for using the NVivo program for qualitative data analysis. Margin codes that related to each of the research questions were identified and tagged with different marks. Here, the entire perceptions and interpretations by all interviewees regarding the issue of people's participation in development programs implementation have been categorised according to their relationship with the research questions. A precise indexing through comparing and contrasting different segments of texts was done to get a general theme. A hierarchical coding was then done manually, to break down that general theme according to similarities and differences in conceptualizing people's participation by different segments, and thereby enable the construction of different categories or sub-themes of a big picture (King 2004). Interview transcriptions were examined line by line during coding and categorizing to find out contradictions and consistency within entire texts that shared particular distinguishing characteristics (Strauss & Corbin 1998). A comprehensive set of core themes were thereby generated by clustering the codes into more inclusive categories. Emergent categories were then reconstructed through expansion, consolidation or division to further generate and develop previously identified categories (Johnson et al. 2007). The NVivo software thus entailed new

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[4] A non-political selected government headed by the immediate retired Chief Justice of the Country. The main function of the care-taker government is to create suitable environment for a fair parliament election.

themes since it involved coding, categorizing, choosing, centring, shortening, and transforming the basic raw data (Welsh 2002).

The entire data that were collected from interviews and written documents were also analysed through the constant comparison method (Denzin & Lincoln 2000, p. 783). In this method, data related to same research question from different development programs and locations were gathered and compared critically. These results were then compared and contrasted with the data from the practical observations and other secondary sources i.e. documents and literature. Finally these results were contrasted with the related theoretical concepts. This involves a constant 'flip flop' between the data and analysis (Strauss & Corbin 1998). Notes and comments from direct observation of development programs in different socio-economic environments that provided additional contextual information also were included to support data from other sources. Access to subjective factors (thoughts, feelings and desires) of interviewees also was considered to compare and contrast with the recorded data. This process of data analysis thus helped to develop a wider base of understanding the empirical context, and also helped to determine the emergent themes.

Triangulation of data from the cross- sectional socio-economic environments and multiple sources like local community, local leaders, elected members, local government bureaucrats and existing literatures was applied in the critical interpretation of the data to get greater validation, reliability and predictive value (Fielding & Fielding 1989). Behavioural and emotional reactions of the local community, leaders and bureaucrats also were considered to analyse thematically and interpret the data in all possible ways. Moreover, just as in a case study, the same data was used for different purposes (Travers 2002); the collected data were used to interpret both the level of participation and the quality of governance.

Figure 5.11 Data Analysis Approach

Compare and contrast all data (extract of interviews, observational and documentation data) with theoretical conceptual knowledge					

Analysis for Normative value — Position of people's participation

Analysis for Instrumental value — Effectiveness of development programs

Value of people's participation in Bangladesh context	Practice of people's participation and gap with theories	Ways to ensure effective participation for effective development	Expected Outcomes of the development works	Present status of development outcomes

Analysis for final outcome — Status of good governance

Level of people's participation	Transparency of works	Accountability of the system	Rule of laws in implementation of projects

Test the conceptual figure of good governance through people's participation

Predictability

Transparency Area of Good Governance Participation

Accountability

Emergence of new theme /rhetoric/ knowledge

Source: The Author

5.12 Strengths and Limitations of the Research Method

The strength of this research is ingrained within the use of the qualitative research method. The primary fact of reality of this research is that people of rural Bangladesh are participating in their local development programs through their representatives, but that is not carrying any

effective outcomes i.e. people's participation is not becoming as effective as to ensure good governance that can bring effective outcomes from development projects. Thus the axiomatic concept of the research is phenomenologically very complex. To one end, the research is focused on exploring the position of people's participation in aid supported development programs. To the other end, it is concerned with identifying the state of good governance that is reflected during service delivery practices by the local government bodies. Both the epistemological issues, that is, position of people's participation and state of governance, can hardly be exposed /discovered by measuring 'on a physical scale' (Schulze 2003, p. 12). Thus a qualitative approach appeared the best option to conduct this research. Kaplan and Maxwell (2005, p. 30) asserted the 'goal of qualitative research is understanding issues or particular situations by investigating the perspectives and behaviour of the people in these situations and the context within which they act'. Therefore, the qualitative method has been particularly adopted here in investigating the uncongenial situation for people's participation and behaviour of the people in that situation to understand the management issues of participation and the social situation of governance in the rural Bangladesh.

Moreover this research area developed on the basis of several theoretical concepts which are pervasive within different disciplines. The management of service delivery by local government bodies or project implementation or people networking that can be framed under public management is one discipline. Again the act of social science of empowering people, or developing civil society or developing social capital is another discipline of this research. Cassell and others argued that the qualitative research is precisely defined 'because of its multi-disciplinary, and interdisciplinary nature' (Cassell et al. 2006, p. 161) . So, at the present body of knowledge, no single theory is available that can be deducted for this particular context, mainly, because of its multi-disciplinary nature. Thus this research is inductive in nature. While Popper (2003) claimed that science advances only by disproving theories, this research is opposite to it: being naturally inductive, this research is aimed at improving or developing theories. This position can be justified with Locke's statement that 'theory building research in the social sciences, management and psychology included, should be inductive' (Locke 2007, p. 867). Hence the use of the qualitative methods proved a point of strength of this research as qualitative is primarily inductive (Kaplan & Maxwell 2005). Nevertheless, 'qualitative research is more useful for exploring phenomena in specific contexts, articulating participants' understandings and perceptions and generating tentative concepts and theories that directly pertain to particular environments' (Schulze 2003, p. 12).

Another point of strength of this study is in the setting methods for data collection. Use of only one method to collect data from such a complex and vast phenomena could be as insignificant

as the story of seeing an elephant through the eyes of the blind[5] (Bosson, Swann & Pennebaker 2000). Thus this research used interviews, observations and related documents to get a wide range of data for triangulation and analysis. Kaplan and Maxwell described that 'qualitative data are gathered primarily from observations, interviews, and documents, and are analysed by a variety of systematic techniques' (2005, p. 30). So this research gathered data primarily in the forms of words rather than numbers. This approach is useful in understanding causal processes, and in facilitating action based on the research results (Kaplan & Maxwell 2005).

The local knowledge of the researcher helps to frame the questions for interviews. As the researcher worked in the rural administration as well as in the ministry his empirical knowledge helped him to moderate the interviews to collect possible data. Moreover, he got free access to many people and places where other researchers had hardly reached.

One of the major limitations of the study has been the probability of getting biased responses from the interviewees. This might have happened, due to conflict of interest, during interviews when the respondents were asked to comment on issues such as: asking the public officials of their assessment of the quality of development projects, disclosing information to the people and other stakeholders or the public representatives in involving local beneficiaries in making decisions or with projects, involving local people or NGOs with development projects. These biased responses are reasonable as the perceptions of the respondents are affected by their interest (Funnell 1996, p. 169). However, in this research, data from different cases and multiple sources/stakeholders like community, local leaders, government bureaucrats and review of existing literature have been taken into account for triangulation of data, and thus helped to avoid the charge of bias (Funnell 1996).

Another limitation of the research could be inaccurate information supplied by the respondents based on their memories from the previous events. As the research selected two cases which already have been implemented and are being used by the local beneficiaries, the respondents might have needed to recall the then situation during the implementation of the projects (Elmendorf & Luloff 2001). To overcome this situation, the completed projects were visited with the respondents to revisit their memories. On the other hand, public officials used their

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[5] According to [South Asian] folklore, there were once six blind men who had heard of the animal called the elephant but did not know what one was like. To satisfy their curiosity, they decided one day to use their sense of touch to determine the creature's appearance. Matters become confusing, however, when each man touched a different part of the elephant and become convinced that he alone understood its true nature. 'The elephant is very like a snake!' proclaimed the man who had touched its trunk. The fellow who had touched its side, however, declared the elephant to be 'nothing but a wall,' whereas the man who touched the creature's tusk claimed that the elephant was 'like a spear,' and so on. It is no wonder, then, that the six men could not agree on the true appearance of the elephant. (Bosson, Swann & Pennebaker 2000, p. 631)

official archived documents to recall the situation for authentic answers. This observation and document consultation helped to overcome this limitation (Elmendorf & Luloff 2001).

Visiting more cases and developing countries could have helped to have a wider range of data and more findings. However, it could not have been possible because of time and resource constraints. This limitation may preclude this case study from making generalisations on the basis of the conclusions of this research.

5.13 Reliability and Validity

Zikmund (2003) stated that reliability applies to an evaluation process when similar results are attained over time and across situations. Generally, reliability is the scale to which measures are 'free from error and therefore yield consistent yields' (Zikmund 2003, p. 300). Theoretically validity and reliability are related, however, reliability is necessary but not sufficient for validity. Validity, on the other hand, is a term describing an evaluation process that accurately reflects the idea it has intended to evaluate (Kumar 1996). The quality of the data and the method used to gather that is broadly addressed by the reliability and validity issues in research studies.

Though concerns about validity in qualitative research have increased presently, the related issues have been addressed for more than half a century (Atkinson, Coffey & Delamont 2003). Cho and Trent stated that 'validity in qualitative research involves determining the degree to which researchers' claim about knowledge correspond to the reality (or research participants' constructions of reality) being studied' (2006, p. 319). To justify the statement, several steps have been taken in this research, firstly, in the selection of participants for conducting interviews. As local people are the main beneficiary of the good governance and development programs, most valuable data were collected from local beneficiaries through focus group interviews. Respondents in group interviews were selected randomly and voluntarily, so they responded willingly. Moreover, the fact that these groups of peoples previously knew each other, through their living, working (in case of businessmen) or socialising (in case of school), helped them for collective-remembering during interviews. Kitzinger (1994) argued that research participants who already knew each other provide advantage through relating to each other's comments and collectively remembering any shared events. Nonetheless, people of rural Bangladesh are not only shy, but also afraid to comment individually when it is tape-recorded. Group interviews helped to overcome these limitations as it is already established as a valid measure that people in groups discuss a topic more openly than in individual interviews (Höijer 1990, 2008; Kidd & Parshall 2000). Morgan mentioned that 'focus group are particularly suited

to the study of attitudes and cognition' (1988, p. 17). Secondly, all data through interviews, observation and documents were collected during the time of the non-party caretaker government[6], when conventional political party affiliations were not perceived as important, so people were less guarded in answering questions. The local knowledge of the researcher, experienced during his work in rural Bangladesh, also helped to overcome any political problem in getting unbiased data. Finally, justified use of the inquiry paradigm determines the validity and reliability of the research. Creswell and Miller (2000) pointed that the appropriate validity of research depends upon the application of inquiry paradigms in qualitative research. To fulfil this concern, this research has used more than one inquiry paradigm to answer the problem with deep insights into the agent and structural phenomena of the research realms.

Validity is also adjusted by interviewing several groups with some open questions based on the same epistemology of philosophy in an array of socio-economic contexts. The realities [matter of inquiry] of this research are not only confined within service delivery management, or project management, or office management or people networking management. Management is commonly conceived of as a collective institutional necessity or as a set of individual practices (Tsoukas 1994). Here we are testifying to the institutional necessities and practices of individuals within the local government bodies. These necessities and practices are not universal, not 'one shoe fits all'; they vary from society to society. So they are rooted within the socio-cultural context of a particular society. Not a single paradigm is thus deemed enough to see the whole problem in this research realm. All data related to the same research questions were then triangulated to get more accurate and reliable results. Seale emphasized that triangulation, when 'use[d] with due caution, can enhance the credibility of a research account by providing an additional way of generating evidence in support of key claims' (1999, p. 61).

5.14 Conclusion

This chapter has depicted details of the research methods used to answer the research questions of this study. The research is both exploratory and narrative in nature. The use of qualitative methods for in-depth understanding of the research problem has been justified. To conduct inquiry into the multi-disciplined and multi-contextual phenomenon, several inquiry methods have been used. The triangulation of multiple sources of data has proved to be particularly helpful in analysing the complex issues. The concurrent procedure was used to provide a complete analysis of the research problem and to integrate the information in the interpretation

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[6] Care taker government is a transitional government formed by non political individuals in Bangladesh to carryover a free and fair election. This government forms at the end of five-year term by one elected government.

of the overall results. The chapter has also discussed in detail how the data were collected and analysed, along with the strengths and limitations and reliability and validity of the approach taken.

Having described the research methods used for the study, the next chapter analyses the responses related to people's participation in the Bangladesh context.

CHAPTER 6.
ASSESSING THE VALUE OF PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN THE BANGLADESH CONTEXT

'individual is helpless socially if left to himself...if he comes into contact with his neighbour, and they with other neighbours, there will be an accumulation of social capital' – Hanifan, 1916, cited in (Blakeley 2003)

6.1   Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data which examines how people's participation is valued in a developing socio-economic context. Views of different stakeholders – local beneficiaries, local elected representatives and government officials – who are responsible to ensure good governance for effective development in rural Bangladesh are represented in this chapter.

The focus of development has moved from economic efficiency to the promotion of human well being and from modernisation to sustainability (Eversole & Martin 2005). Consequently the roles of different actors e.g. government, public leaders, private sector and citizens in the development process have also shifted. To perform this new role, different interdependent actors (state, representatives and citizens), who are responsible for ensuring good governance through people's participation, need to forgo the conventional sense of public management and to value people's knowledge to make these developments effective (Callahan 2007; Holzer & Kloby 2005; Sobol 2008). Moreover, the traditional representative form of democracy should be shifted towards direct democracy, as the hope is that as government comes closer to the people, more people will participate, which is not possible through representative democracy (Holzer & Kloby 2005; Putnam 1993). This chapter will reveal the present mindset of different stakeholders towards people's participation in local government programs, and will explore the extent to which direct democracy has been valued in rural Bangladesh.

This chapter is divided into two sections, mainly discussing how the three factors – government, public representatives and citizens – value people's participation, and how they perceive making people's participation effective. Though researchers mentioned the importance of private sector in addition to these three actors (Eversole & Martin 2005), private sector is not included in this research as this sector is not well organised in rural Bangladesh, and thus have no significant involvement in implementation of development projects (Mallick 2004). The first section includes the conceptions of stakeholders as to how they value people's participation, and their views towards effective participation. The second section discusses and compares these views with the findings of other scholars and institutions.

6.2 Perceptions on People's Participation in the Bangladesh Context

The constitution of Bangladesh and several reforms in public management imply direct people's participation in local government affairs that have an effect on the local communities. The international development agencies have also made people's participation compulsory in aid assisted programs run at rural levels. To gain results from all these initiatives, first an environment is needed where all actors responsible for good local governance should have a clear idea about the value of people's participation. Concerned stakeholders were interviewed to assess the level of their understanding of people's participation in development-programs, and what they view as the proper way to achieve effective people's participation. The extracts from these interviews related to the value of people's participation were then organised by the categories of government bureaucrats, elected public leaders and local beneficiaries.

6.2.1 As Perceived by the Government Bureaucrats

Most of the government bureaucrats interviewed, particularly engineers who are responsible for construction of local developments, perceive that people's participation means participation through representatives. They believe that people should participate in local development activities through their representatives. According to their views, people elect their representatives through a democratic process to ensure their voice at the decision making tables on their behalf, and to look after their interests. Thus they feel that local elected representatives are enough to make any decision for the local people in the Bangladesh context, and filter the outcomes of decisions through to the people.

> *We are involving UP chairmen; they are elected by the direct votes of the people. In that sense, people are participating through their representatives (interviewee 3.2).*

> *I think people representatives are perfectly representing their people, and they are perfectly representing to get a better result (interviewee 3.3).*

> *I think if the present UP Chairmen and his Members (Member of UP) work properly that is sufficient to ensure people's participation (interviewee 3.1).*

However, a few officials, mostly from local executives, understand the value of direct people's participation, and they believe there is no such thing in rural Bangladesh, although they are not concerned about that. They pointed out that they are just implementers of the government decisions; the policy is formulated by the policymakers at the central level, and officials at field level have been asked by the government to go to the people through representatives.

> *truly, there is no people's participation in local development programs. There was no real participation of people at rural level in the past, it will never happen in the near future in the existing system. …The government asks us to ensure the participation of people via elected representatives; not via direct participation of people. So, we include local representatives in the project (interviewee 5.2).*

Some other local government bureaucrats, in the same way, mentioned that the mode of participation is a subject for the central government. When they were asked to include local beneficiaries in the decisions that affect local people, they replied:

How we will do that? To do government jobs or to implement government programs we need to follow government instruction and rules. If we are not instructed to involve people directly we cannot do so, because we are government servants (interviewee 3.3).

Conversely, some of the government bureaucrats, mainly mid-level, do not even believe in local people's participation. These bureaucrats claim that they have more knowledge and information than local people, and hence they are enough to make a decision that will effectively benefit the local people. When they were asked how they determine the best desired project and satisfaction of local people with those development outcomes, they replied:

we are working in this area and we know all the pros and cons better than local people and their representatives, thus we are the best section to identify and select any development project within this Upazila (interviewee 3.2).

We don't need that, because during our regular inspection (ATEO and EO) throughout the year, we collect all information about the schools. On the basis of those inspection reports, we can easily detect a school which needs rooms or teachers (interviewee 4.2).

Our people, by the grace of almighty, are very simple, and very happy with little achievement. Whatever they receive from the government they are satisfied. Don't think that much about people; also think of us. We the government officials are working at the grassroots level to help the locals. We came here through a highly competitive selection process. Don't you think our knowledge is greater than that of the ordinary people? We know what is good for the people, for the Upazila, for the country. We are taking a salary from the government that is people's money. We are not here to betray those people (interviewee 4.3).

Some bureaucrats believe that participation is not possible because Bangladesh is a highly populated area. Nonetheless, they also have indicated doubt about direct participation, as many people may spoil the intended goal.

Moreover, we have to consider that Bangladesh is a highly populated country, and we cannot involve all the people in any program. Involving of many people means it will spoil the programs because conflicting decisions may arise from various persons (interviewee 3.3).

Opposing people's participation, some government officials stated that rural people are illiterate and are always troublemakers. So bureaucrats are not interested in bringing them to the decision making table.

Most of the locals are illiterate; they have no sense of good or bad. Especially for government projects they don't come forward to help the officials. They are not aware about their rights or about their obligation to take care of public institutions (interviewee 4.2).

No, the locals have no function in this project. If any help is needed from the locals the SMC [School Management Committee] asks it of them, and the SMC usually gets it (interviewee 4.1).

At the rural levels, simple and good local people do not want to be involved in the government activities; only those who are cynical/suspicious/pessimistic will come forward to be involved, and they, naturally, will put negative opinions on all decisions. Thus, all projects will suffer from unnecessary hurdles to accomplish them in a timely manner (interviewee 5.1).

Some government officials conceptualised people's participation as the reflection of people's desire through the decisions made by their representatives. In their views, elected representatives should have strong relations with their voters, which will ultimately ensure the electorates' participation in the public programs. When these bureaucrats were asked about the proper way to ensure effective people's participation, most of them believed that elected representatives should have strong and trustworthy relations with their people.

These big shots are not willing to engage locals in their programs. ... People's representatives are not representing locals, willingly or unwillingly, due to our existent environment [socio-cultural] (interviewee 5.2).

In my experience, I do not think public representatives do work or are interested to involve the mass of the people. They don't perform any service properly that is delegated to them (interviewee 5.1).

Many of the other local officials viewed that they need more control over representatives to make representatives inform the people about the decisions. They urged an increase in control over the public leaders. In their statements, people are not effectively participating because of the negligence of the public leaders in relation to the ordinary people generally, and to the opponent groups in particular. Moreover, the tendency to corruption by the leaders is another reason for them to keep local people away from their development projects. To bring all people into the local decision making process, local bureaucrats sought for more controlling authority over the public leaders, which will help in combating corruption and ensure participation by forcing representatives to follow government rules of informing people about local programs (include people).

If we had more controlling authority over the public leaders, we can force them to follow government rules to involve people with local development programs (interviewee 5.2).

Senior bureaucrats – policy makers, working in ministry level, on the other hand, conceive that people's participation means participation through elected representatives. They are in favour of the inclusion of more local representatives (non-institutional) in local government bodies to ensure the participation of rural people in local development programs. They are thinking to increase the public representatives in local project management and implementation committees. According to their view, '*if we can bring more public representatives than*

bureaucrats to the decision making table, people participation will be effective' (interviewee 9.1).

6.2.2   As Perceived by the Elected Public Representatives

Like bureaucrats, local elected representatives also believe that they (public leaders) are the proper sector to ensure people's participation in local development programs. In their view, they are elected by the local people through the democratic process so that they are actually working as spokespersons at the decision making table, instead of the people, and the people have bestowed a mandate on them to do so.

> *I don't ask local people to be involved in the development programs. People have elected us to look after all the 'positives and negatives' that affect them, so I don't find any further need to ask every person about their opinion (interviewee 2.1).*

> *People have elected us to represent them in any government meetings, and we are doing that accordingly (interviewee 2.2).*

However, most of the representatives do not believe in people's direct involvement with programs. They believe government programs mean 'their program' not 'people's program', and they are elected and authorised to perform that on behalf of the people. When they were asked about direct people's participation they replied like bureaucrats: 'inviting people [for any decision] means inviting trouble'.

> *I always keep local people involved in my development works. For the projects which are funded by the Union Parishad or Upazila Parishad, we formed a PIC (Project Implementation Committee) with locals to conduct them. But sometimes, inviting people [for any decision] means inviting trouble, because all people are not cooperative. Every time or every case I found some people who oppose for the sake of opposing (interviewee 2.2).*

Sometimes, these public representatives also provided self-contradictory statements. On the one hand, they spoke about people's involvement. On the other hand, they showed their concern about more rivals for leadership. According to these representatives, mostly from high socio-economic background, people's participation should not be direct or bypass the elected leaders. Nevertheless, they believe that multiple community leadership creates problems in government activities.

> *I already have said it, that local people are actually participating in local programs through their elected representatives. If we go to ask every person of my Union it will bring extra trouble, because many men mean many minds. And it is not possible to ask all individuals, since it will then take a long time to implement a project. Especially in our society, there are some people who always try to spoil any good initiative. They oppose just for the sake of opposing or from motives of rivalry; they don't care about the development of the area, they care about their supremacy / leadership over others (interviewee 2.1).*

> *All people are not good also. There are some people –my rivals –who always say things against me; whether I am disclosing details of the fund or not. My rival/ opponent always*

goes to the bureaucrats and makes them annoyed against me to show the people that he is more powerful and has broad capacity to handle officials. The people prefer that leader who can maintain a good relation with high officials, and this relation, the locals think, helps to bring fund for local development projects (interviewee 2.1).

Some of the representatives do not believe in people's knowledge about local affairs. In their view anyone staying in the area is able to identify the needs of the people. Moreover, they perceived that local people are afraid to join in government projects.

Look, my Union is not a big area. If you drive around it on a motor cycle it will take 2 to 3 hours to complete the visit. By seeing with your own eyes, you can easily assess the urgency (interviewee 2.1).

People have no scope to be involved directly in the government projects. And in fact people also have no interest in government projects. Actually people of this area are very simple and the majority of them are illiterate. They are very afraid to involve themselves in government activities (interviewee 2.3).

Unfortunately, some of the public leaders can not differentiate between people's voluntary participation and forced participation.

If I need help from any local person I ask that individual to provide it. If he does not perform that willingly, I [would] ask local officials to look into the matter, and they [officials] obtain it anyway (interviewee 2.2).

According to the law, all land within bazaar periphery belongs to the government. For that reason, businessmen are compelled to cooperate with any government decision e.g. move from the original possession for the construction of new sheds or construction of ladies' corner etc. If they don't cooperate they may lose their possession of the government land. The local land office also plays a vital role to manage all issues related to land (interviewee 2.3).

Most of the public leaders with high socio-cultural background believe that they have been truly representing rural people for a long time, and this is the perfect practice to ensure people's participation effectively. However, almost all of these public leaders, mostly from rich socio-economic background though not highly educated, expressed their limitations (controlling power regarding authority and economics) in being able to act unreservedly to reflect people's intentions in local development programs.

People are already participating through their representatives at the moment, but we need more power over the local bureaucrats. And we need direct funding so that we can implement development programs according to our choice (interviewee 2.1).

If people want to know anything about the project I am ready to disclose it to them, but that depends on the extent of the information that I have been given by the officials or higher offices. Very often, we cannot understand the calculation and planning sketches of the engineers. We just believe what they say to us (interviewee 2.1).

Yet, some other public representatives, who are from remote area with low socio-economic background but well educated, are not vocal to express their rights, rather they are pleased with existing process of participation.

> *However, the selection of projects by the officials is logical and relevant in most cases. Personally I am happy with the activities undertaken by the local officials. If there is any Upazila chairman, like the present MP, he supports development projects for his own locality. The lion's share of the development fund is used for their own area. But a bureaucrat is an outsider; he has no bias on locality. So we are receiving an equal share of the development fund (interviewee 2.3)*

Representatives also perceived that involving local people will not lead to any change unless they are provided with adequate power for handling authority and funds. They think if they had control over the money and the bureaucrats that could help them to make a decision aligned with the local people.

> *No, involving locals could not bring any better results while the funds are controlled by the officials. We need more power, both to handle the funds and, at the same time, to control the officials (interviewee 2.2).*

6.2.3 As Perceived by the Local Beneficiaries

Most of the local people interviewed do not have any idea about their participation in local development programs. They believe that they should not have any scope to participate in development activities that are carried out by the local government body. Rural people still consider all local development works are a government function, which should be done by officials or, at best, their representatives.

> *This is a government program and the government is paying local bureaucrats to look after these activities. This is their [officials] job to conduct; our involvement may cause annoyance to them (interviewee 1.3.1).*

> *There are government officials and engineers who will look into any government works. We only can help them to accomplish the job (interviewee 1.2.1).*

Nevertheless, many local people are not interested to be involved in government functions, as they believe they do not have adequate knowledge to handle government programs. According to them, government officials are educated and trained enough to handle government functions, so they [officials] are the best instrument to perform local government programs.

> *But, we haven't much idea about the planning and estimation of such a big project. We don't want to participate in government functions. We selected our chairman and members who are enough to participate on our behalf (interviewee 1.2.1).*

> *This is a government school, what can we bring (further result) in terms of involvement with the development programs. We don't want to participate (interviewee 1.2.2).*

Especially our headmistress has been working here for a long time. She knows every pore and corner of the school; she alone is sufficient to choose the best option (interviewee 1.3.2).

Similarly, many of the mass of the people do not want to participate as they are scared of government rules, regulations, and technical knowhow. Local people do not consider a government program as their own program. They perceive they may be seen as offenders if they join in government functions.

We are poor businessmen, we don't know much about government laws to handle government functions. We may be framed for any anomalies and sent to jail. Allah [God] will see everything, not we (interviewee 1.2.1).

I think we could not have done this, because we don't have sufficient technical knowledge about building-planning and architecture (interviewee 1.2.2).

This could pave our way to go to jail. We are not supposed to perform jobs together. We can only help the officials to perform a job (interviewee 1.2.2).

No, it could invite problems for us. We do not want to touch government money, because we do not know how to handle a project (interviewee 1.3.1).

Some other local people, on the other hand, are not interested in joining in with local government functions. They believe one should do one's own job, and local government job is not their job.

We have our own job also, we cannot join in regularly. But if they ask for a little help we can do that rather than cope with huge demands (interviewee 1.2.2).

We have our own business and the government appointed its officials to do this kind of job. So, they will do the job; we don't want to participate (interviewee 1.3.1).

Some of the expected beneficiaries have no idea about the people's participation. They are ambiguous about their contribution and participation.

Actually, we are participating. We are sacrificing our business during the development time and we moved from our previous position though it had been leased from the government for the whole year (interviewee 1.2.1).

What is our job in the government program? This is government land, we have gotten lease of our plot, so we cannot say no if the government wants to develop this bazaar. Where is our scope to participate? We are poor businessmen. If the government orders us to participate, we are ready to do that (interviewee 1.3.1).

In contrast, some local people propose a reverse idea: they do not want to keep themselves apart from government programs. Many of them, with high educated and socio-economic background, now believe a government program means their program, and government officials are bound to inform them about that. When local people were asked [during interview] whether they want to participate in the local development programs, they spontaneously agreed that they wanted to participate and asserted that they could achieve a better outcome than the present one.

What's wrong if we participate? We can work like a team. We know our problem better than the engineers and contractors. This project could be done differently if the officials asked us to participate (interviewee 1.2.1).

We may be poor, we may have little academic knowledge, but we also have a voice regarding the activities that affect us. Unfortunately, no one is there to listen to us (interviewee 1.2.1).

Similarly, some people are found to be very cautious about their rights of participation. According to these people, the local government's program is for them and local officials are working to render service to them.

Of course we wanted to participate all along in the program but nobody called us. We elected our leader to speak for us, but he serves the purpose of officials (interviewee 1.1.1).

They never invite us to join in their planning process, even if we want to do it voluntarily. They don't disclose their budget to us. It is really disgraceful/ ridiculous that they are here to serve us but they behave like our guardian. Sometimes they do not disclose their plan; what they intend to do for our benefit (interviewee 7.1).

However, some other local people are interested in joining in for limited functions, not for all. They believe their involvement should be limited only to what can fulfil their interest in that program. These people are mostly from remote, illiterate and low socio-economic backgrounds. When they were asked to nominate their desired way to participate in local government programs, they replied:

We just want to speak about our problems and needs; we don't want to be involved in budgeting or monitoring or other such business (interviewee 1.3.1).

We have our own job. This is a government job and our chairman and teacher are sufficient to see to those jobs (interviewee 1.3.2).

However, many of the mass of poor rural people are frustrated with the activities, and their relations with local officials and representatives.

We respected our officials and leaders, but they deceived us (interviewee 1.2.1).

We would sit together for planning, and then we would find out our needs and we could solve those problems. But, the government will never allow us to do it in this way. God made them officials, and they know better than us, so they don't need to discuss anything with us (interviewee 1.3.1).

6.3   Conceptualising People's Participation in Rural Bangladesh

The above findings were analysed thematically and it was found that the actors responsible for people's participation and good governance in rural Bangladesh –government bureaucrats, public representatives, beneficiaries –are not clear about, or undermine, the value of participatory development, and clearly have a conceptual gap regarding the issue.

6.3.1 Conceptual Ambiguity about People's Participation

The analysed data revealed that the three actors – government, representatives and local stakeholders – define and conceive the value of people's participation in different ways. The government bureaucrats think people's participation means participation through elected representatives. Similarly, representatives also think they are perfectly representing local people. On the other hand, local people are generally unaware of the value of participation, though a few of them have an interest in getting information about the local development programs.

In Bangladesh, government officials work in the local government institutions, particularly in the Upazila Parishad, on secondment. These government officials are mainly controlled by the line ministry (partly by the Upazila Parishad), and can not differentiate between their line jobs and the local government jobs. They believe they are placed in the local government body to establish the interest of the central government, instead of the local people (Sarker 2006b). Nonetheless, these officials wield a lot of power, directly or indirectly, to make final decisions at the local levels (Bardhan 2002), though they are not voting members in the Parishad (council). Thus bureaucrats' attitudes become very important during interdependent actions with public representatives and local people for local governance (Bardhan 2002). Most middle level government officials in the Upazila Parishad have argued against any type of people's participation. These mid-level officials (engineers and education officers) believe their knowledge about locality is sufficient to implement any sustainable program. These officials do not believe in any participation of local people as they believe they themselves and their subordinates know enough about the local needs and facilities, and don't recognise the better technical knowledge of the local stakeholders. On the other hand, top-level government officials at the local level (UNO-chief executive officer) 'cautiously' believe in public representation. However, the motivation behind these cautious views may not be honest. Once they find that people's participation is mandatory, imposed by the development agencies and the central government, they implicitly endorse it through their representatives. They might think it is better to control a lesser number of representatives rather than a mass of people or beneficiaries.

The education, knowledge and training of the government officials to fit them for the new public management also influence their views in the matter of people's participation (Brett 2003; Hope Sr. 2009). In Bangladesh, the government system is still running on the Weberian bureaucratic system where managers emphasise administration rather than management, inputs rather than outcomes, and activity rather than achievement (Alwis 1999; Zafarullah & Khan 2005). This is also supplemented by the World Bank (World Bank 1996), which has described

government as preoccupied with processes, as too centralized, and overly bureaucratic and discretionary in governance. Given this bureaucratic mindset, government officials can not differentiate between *output* (cost effective) and *outcomes* (effective use of output by beneficiaries) of local government programs (Cole & Parston 2006). Because they lack this kind of knowledge, government officials working in Upazila Parishad, may prefer to have no people's participation, direct or indirect. And this is why these government officials impose their developments, whereas for good governance, development should actually be negotiated with local stakeholders rather than imposed (Eversole & Martin 2005).

However, almost all the government officials pointed out that they are not the proper people to think about people's participation. They are just following government instructions. Elected representatives are perfectly adequate to ensure people's participation in government programs; this is how they are instructed by the central government. Top government officials at the local level, like UNO, mostly talked about their obligation to the government policies. These officials also believe that local people are bound to contribute in government programs. The top government officials who are responsible for formulations of policies also do not show much awareness of the value of direct involvement of people. While local people and their knowledge are perceived as social capital in the developed nations (Rankin 2002), the policy makers in Bangladesh do not see any value in social deliberations and interactions.

In the same way as bureaucrats, the elected public leaders conceive that people should participate via their elected representatives. These public leaders are elected by the direct vote of the local people, but mostly come from the upper class of the society in rural Bangladesh (ADB 2004a). Historically the rural society in the country is stratified by different castes and classes. During the colonial period, local Zaminders [landlords] and their representatives controlled local affairs, and communicated with rulers for any local needs. This tradition and mindset is still prevailing among the public leaders in the Bengal region (Lewis 2004). Only local-elites have access to the government offices (Agrawal & Gupta 2005), and they control the resource allocation at the local level in Bangladesh (Wood 2000). Because of the legacy of this mindset, elected representatives maintain a distant relation with local people. They still believe that local people are their slaves /clients, and they are the rulers/ patrons, and that they got a mandate to rule once they were elected.

However, the formal education of local elected leaders has not found any correlation with their consciousness of their rights or people's rights to participation. The chairman of Tentulia is more educated than the other two chairmen but not overly concerned about his right or power to

participation; on the other hand, the chairman of Dhamrai is both rich and determined to exercise his power to control local government programs.

Local people, in contrast, have versatile opinions. Most of them believe that they don't have any function in local government programs. Mahmud (2004) in her research of people's participation in the health sector in rural Bangladesh found a similar result; she mentioned low self-esteem (belief of not being important) of rural people restrains them from speaking with local elites and public leaders. However, this kind of low self-esteem is more prominent among very poor and women. This research has found that the level of education is a factor for improving conceptions. Like in Dhamrai, where the literacy rate is high (49.01%), they think local government programs are their programs. Conversely, in a remote area like Tentulia where literacy is comparatively low (36.52%), they view local programs as a function of the government. This finding is also supported by Mahmud, as she argued that 'formal schooling and mobilisation' of the poor would increase participation (Mahmud 2004, p. 17).

However, this research found out that development of awareness of community value may not increase the practice of participation in rural development programs. As in Dhamrai, people are found more aware of their right, but their conduct is similar to the people participating at Tentulia (low educated people). Agrawal & Gupta (2005) explained this situation, as they argued that educated people in rural areas in the region barely participate in development programs though they are aware of the value of participation. As participation starts at the individual level, rural people participate in any group activity when they foresee any objectivity or own stake (benefit from participation) within the anticipated program (Vettivel 1992). Thus rural educated people in Bangladesh do not participate in local government activities as their involvement is not valued by the government officials or representatives, and local people can not see any stake in those programs. A leader can empower the educated in rural areas to form a power group i.e. civil society group, but the representatives do not want that. However, not only the leaders in this region look upon the local people with suspicion, politically disempowered local people are also 'look upon government leaders and administrators with suspicion' (Jabbra & Dwivedi 2004, p. 1122). The reason of this suspicion might be resulted from the legacy of colonial rule when poor people 'looked at the public servant with fear' and 'they consider the same figure today as unaccountable and untrustworthy' (Jabbra & Dwivedi 2004, p. 1122).

With the given situation, conception of different stakeholders [actors] for participation in local development programs in rural Bangladesh can be presented in the following figure.

Figure 6.1 Conception of Stakeholders about Participation in Development Programs
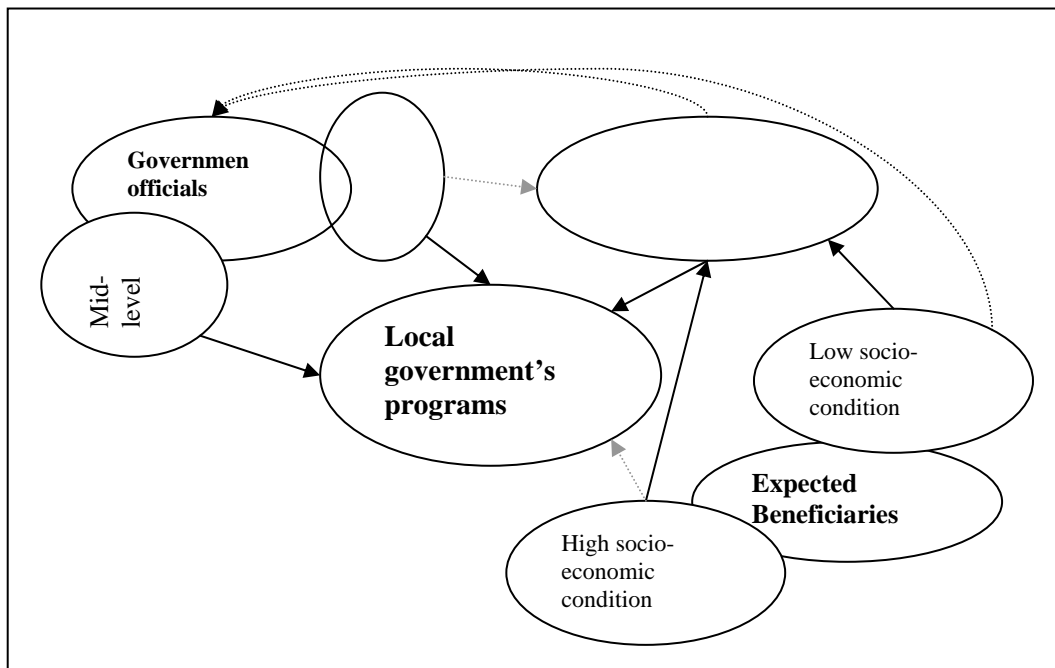
Source: The Author

This figure indicates that while almost all government officials and public representatives want to participate directly, a few numbers of local people are interested to join directly with the local government programs in rural Bangladesh. The straight and continuous lines indicate the intention of the concerned actor in joining with the local government programs. Conversely the dotted /broken lines represent the secondary options of different actors in joining with local development programs.

The Government of Bangladesh (GOB) as well as other development partners, who are working in Bangladesh, surely are not aware of this mental-matrix of the stakeholders. Since its independence in 1971 the Government of Bangladesh has formed more than 5 committees and commissions to formulate the means to empower local people and ensure true people's participation (Chapter 3). But the analyses of those recommendations suggest a range of ways to obtain a solution. One group suggested the creation of local government institutions at the ground level that will empower people; another group suggested that delegating authority to existing local government bodies will empower local people. Interestingly none of these recommendations suggested any mechanism for direct people's participation in Bangladesh local government programs. One of the members of the present LG (local government) Reforms commission opined during the interview (with the author) that overriding the control of the central government over the local government body will help local government bodies to ensure people's participation and empowerment (see Interview 9.1 in Appendix). In this sense, the

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representation of local elected leaders in local development works means participation of local people in the local development programs. But this research study has found that the presence of only the local elected leaders does not ensure people's participation, as elected leaders do not endorse the value of people's contribution in local development programs. Participation of anticipated beneficiaries is a must to ensure people's participation, and to achieve a pro-people development. Here people means not an elected representative but rather stakeholders in general and anticipated beneficiaries in particular. Researchers asserted that representative participation, in general, is found to fail to represent the grassroots in local development programs (Leighninger 2005; Tosun 2000), particularly in the South Asia (Jabbra & Dwivedi 2004). Akkerman mentioned that today 85% of the Netherlands local governments are engaged in consultation with local people (Akkerman 2003). Several developing countries also introduced 'public hearing' a must for any local development programs (Heller, Harilal & Chaudhuri 2007; Manowong & Ogunlana 2006). Thus, because of globalisation and as good governance is perceived theoretically, the Government of Bangladesh essentially needs to follow such mechanisms to ensure direct participation of rural people in local development programs.

6.3.2   Conceptual Gap in People's Participation

While the view of all the three actors for implementing good governance in the country is found ambiguous, there is a conceptual gap as well about the stages of empowerment in terms of making people's participation effective. Conceptually, people get control of local development programs through a continuous participation process and each stage of participation defines a particular state of good governance. But in this case all the three actors were found to have a knowledge-gap in term of pursuing true good governance. Bureaucrats and representatives spoke about increasing control over each other to make participation effective (broaden participation). On the other hand, people are only interested to get true information about the development programs; some of them even think that complete involvement is somehow an illicit practice.

Through the interviews it is clear that the expected beneficiaries are hardly informed about the local government programs that affect them. Local government bureaucrats, with the local public representatives, implement all programs without any direct participation. Local people perceive government works should be done by government officials. Local people are also afraid to participate in government works as there are many rules and regulations to follow which is not possible for the, mostly, illiterate people to know. Similarly, government bureaucrats and representatives think it is their work and they should perform it as assigned. Government bureaucrats are only concerned about representatives, as they believe elected representatives are enough for effective participation if they are controlled in a proper way. So

government bureaucrats want more controlling power over elected representatives to ensure people's participation is effective. Conversely, representatives are concerned about bureaucrats, as they think they are able to perfectly represent local people if they have more controlling power over bureaucrats and funds.

One thing that is clear is that while the idea of participation was almost identical (through representatives) for both of the officials and representatives, they argued against each other in case of making participation effective. None of them think about local people, as both of them perceived that '*more people mean more trouble*'. Nonetheless, none of the actors has any idea about the stages of people's participation and do not know about the value of empowering people. They all think that just informing local people is enough to ensure a democratic model of good governance for effective development. While in the conceptual framework (Chapter 4), we found that people's participation has four stages and each stage of participation denotes each level of good governance, all stakeholders in Bangladesh think participation is a one off event. Thus, in practice, governing agencies are informing local people and pursuing an authoritarian model of good governance, which actually leads to ineffective outcomes of development programs. Their views can be framed as follows:

Figure 6.2 Conceptual Gap about People's Participation Process
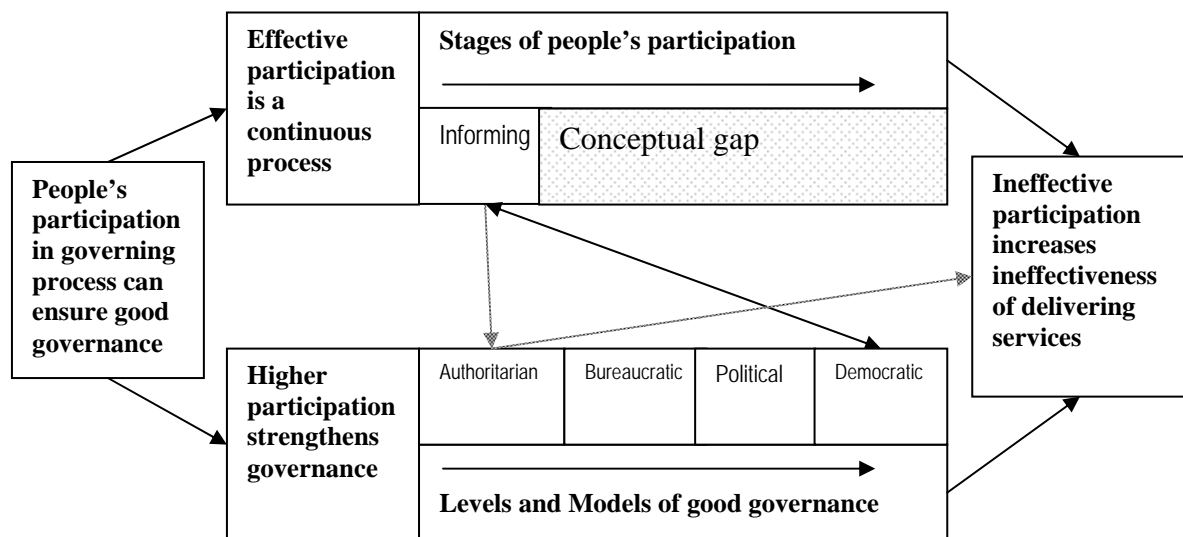
Source: The Author

In the above figure, dotted lines within the loop indicate the consequences of the conceptual gap. Local governing agencies have no knowledge of the higher stages of people's participation to perfectly empower people and attain a democratic model of good governance. Because of just informing and pursuing authoritarian models of good governance in rural Bangladesh, outcomes of development programs are becoming ineffective.

While in developed societies people's empowerment is growing through proper education and continuous participation in local government works (Akkerman 2003; Morphet 2008), in Bangladesh bureaucrats and representatives want to avoid this, fearing a loss of power and above all opportunities for corruption. Apart from this anti-people attitude, inadequate regulations and weak management systems also helping government and elected officials to be involved in corruption (see Chapter 7 and 9.3.2.4). Nonetheless, as the World Bank has observed that public officials in Bangladesh evade their accountability because too little attention has been given to establish effective checks and balances on the exercise of official power (World Bank 2002b). One recent study has revealed that corruption of officials in Bangladesh local government institutions is the second highest among the most corrupted sectors in the country (TIB 2008). The people of rural Bangladesh, mostly illiterate, are not receiving any helping hand to become aware and empowered (Sen, Mujeri & Shahabuddin 2004). They only know about the first stage of people's participation, which is informing. Because of this conceptual gap the development is not being effective.

Moreover, because of this ineffectiveness, poverty at rural levels is not decreasing at the pace it is in urban areas. A study shows that one of the major reasons is that people are not using the infrastructures at the highest level as projected by the development agencies (Islam 2007). The World Bank, similarly, mentioned that Bangladesh local government fails to deliver social services of minimum acceptable quality, to the poor in particular (World Bank 2003). The United Nations Development Program also mentions that good governance in third world countries is impeded because of the lack of opportunity for people's participation in government policy formulation and decision-making (UNDP 2006b).

6.4   Conclusion

Whatever the urge for engaging people in the governance process, for a very long time, people were seen as the mere recipient of government services without having any role in policy-formulation, decision-making or in program implementation. Bangladesh is a prominent case in this regard. The actors, who are responsible for participatory governance in Bangladesh for effective development, are not clear about effective people's participation intentionally or unintentionally. This research reveals that in Bangladesh one of the major problems in achieving good governance is traditional mindsets of all related actors responsible for ensuring people's participation. The elected representatives, public officials and local stakeholders do not value of direct people's participation for effective development. These actors also do not aware of the empowerment of local people. They have conceptual ambiguity and gap about the way

ensuring people's participation effective for local development programs. At one end, government officials want more control over elected leaders. At the other end, elected representatives want control over bureaucrats' legislative and financial power. Hence, the government bureaucrats and public representatives need sufficient knowledge about the participation process; and people need to be more empowered to make the participation effective.

The next chapter will explore the strengths and weaknesses of the local government systems in Bangladesh regarding engaging people with their programs.

CHAPTER 7.
EVALUATING PRESENT PARTICIPATION PROCESSES IN RURAL BANGLADESH

'We will strive increasingly to quicken the public sense of public duty; that thus…we will transmit this city not only not less, but greater, better, and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us' – Oath of office required of council members in the ancient city of Athens (Shah 2006b, p. 1).

7.1   Introduction

The main objective of this chapter is to describe the strengths and weaknesses of the present local governance in Bangladesh regarding people's participation. Interviews and practical observations during the field study have facilitated a deep insight into the existent system of people's participation process in aid assisted local development programs.

For good local governance, which requires a capacity to establish alliances and influence the public agenda, the traditional centralist and bureaucratic system in local government service delivery are needed to be relinquished (Barten et al. 2002). To achieve this new governance process, the Government of Bangladesh has been trying to ensure people's participation through different decentralisations and reformations in local government systems (Sarker 2006b). One of the major steps was to establish Upazila system in rural Bangladesh in 1983 to facilitate people's participation in government programs. Now we need to evaluate the performance of these local government institutions, particularly the Upazila system, in engaging people in its development programs.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section presents the analysis result from the data related to different stages of people's participation in local development programs. Views of different stakeholders are compared and contrasted with each other to provide a clear picture about participation in different stages of local development programs. The second section explores the strengths and weaknesses of Bangladesh local governance concerning people's engagement in establishing local development programs particularly at Upazila level. Review of different stakeholders' comments is triangulated with practical observation and other government documents to clarify several issues of strengths and weaknesses.

7.2   Present Participation Process of People with Development Projects

Since the establishment of Upazila Parishad, an elected body has been responsible for undertaking and implementing all local development programs at the rural levels in Bangladesh. Several initiatives through laws and executive orders have been promulgated to make these

developments pro-people. Collected data has been analysed to explore how people are participating in different stages of the participation process. The state of people's participation in each of the four stages of the participation process, namely: informing, consulting, involving and empowering, are discussed separately to find out the existent picture of participation in local development programs in rural Bangladesh.

7.2.1   Existing Mechanisms of Informing People

Most of the government officials interviewed claimed that they inform local people about any development programs through their elected representatives. They also opined that this is the representatives' duty, to inform mass of the people, since they are not instructed by the government laws to go to the mass of the people.

> *…we share detailed planning and budgeting with public representatives. Now, it is their [representatives] duty to further disseminate the information to the mass of the people (interviewee 5.1).*

> *We cannot provide details about the project to all the people. We usually inform the local representative about it, and it's their responsibility (representatives) to inform the mass of people (interviewee 3.1).*

> *I provided detailed schedules of the project to the Chairman, and it is the chairman's duty to inform his people. The chairman is a very popular leader and most of the businessmen were convinced to participate (willing to move) in the program (interviewee 3.2).*

However, some local government officials do not understand the value of informing people. They believe a decision by the elected people's representatives means the people's decision. According to these government officials elected representatives are representing people at the decision making table, so the decisions that approved by the representatives are automatically approved by the local stakeholders. Thus, in their views it is no use informing people directly.

> *At the Upazila level, people participate in government projects through their elected representatives. The UP chairmen do preside over the UDCC [Upazila Development Coordination Committee] meeting by rotation. Moreover, the MP is the advisor of the UDCC. In this sense all decisions are made by the people. The government officials are just maintaining the files and official procedures (interviewee 3.1).*

> *Well, we have a strong people's participation mechanism in primary schools in the country. Government has introduced the formation of School Management Committees [SMC] for every primary school to manage all the activities related to primary education at the local level. And now SMCs have been formed across the country. Obviously, people are participating through these SMCs, because people have elected these committees by their direct vote. So, the SMC's decision means the people's decision (interviewee 4.3).*

The local government engineers interviewed claimed that they inform local people by displaying a signboard contains information about that particular development project. Officials also pointed out that they display important information on the signboard, which they think is adequate for the local beneficiaries.

The overall information about the project is depicted in the signboard (Interviewee 3.1).

To inform the local people we hung a signboard showing details about the project like: total budget, commence and finishing date, sponsoring authority, name of the contractor etc (interviewee 3.3).

In the same tone as the bureaucrats, the public representatives also said that they are informed by local people about their needs and they incorporate that information in making decisions for development programs. They also obtain information from the mass of the people through lower tier representatives within their jurisdiction.

I always ask people for their needs; at least I don't make any decision without asking my members (Ward Member- 12 Ward members for each Union including 3 female members). We usually prepare a Project Committee (project implementation Committee) at the beginning of the project works. The UNO, the engineer and I sit together and form a committee, which we send to the MP for the approval. These committees look after and monitor the implementing programs (interviewee 2.3).

People have elected us to represent them in any government meetings, and we are doing that accordingly. You see, people always gather in front of my office for some sort of assistance. I also visit every corner of my Union, so I know what they running for (interviewee 2.2).

Elected representatives also claimed that they also inform local people directly and they keep their office open to provide information if anyone wants to know anything about local projects. However, they mentioned their own limitations to access information from the higher government officials.

If people want to know anything about the project I am ready to disclose it to them, but that depends on the extent of the information that I have been given by the officials or higher offices. Very often, we cannot understand the calculation and planning sketches of the engineers. We just believe what they say to us (interviewee 2.1).

Conversely, local people mainly from high and middle socio-economic background spoke of not being informed about any local development programs. They neither get information from the local government officials nor from their elected representatives.

We do not know much about the details of the project though most of our children are studying here (interviewee 1.1.2).

We know nothing about the planning or budgeting. The school teachers and managing committee (SMC) knows about that. We even didn't see any signboard for the work (interviewee 1.1.2).

I have heard from a school teacher who is my neighbour in fact. He told me the government has selected the school to have two extra rooms and will provide two additional teachers (interviewee 1.2.2).

In most cases local people come to know about any development projects by seeing the works or being informed by their friends. According to them, they are usually not informed before the

construction works start. Once the physical work starts, they themselves see the works, and come to know about the development projects.

> *Yes, we have seen the program when the construction work got started. We heard that a new classroom will be constructed (interviewee 1.2.2).*

> *We saw it with our own eyes, because most of us come here everyday to bring our children to school. Our children also told us that a new building is getting constructed in their school periphery (interviewee 1.2.2).*

> *Our SMC president, who was ex-chairman, told us to join a meeting when Upazila officials came to inaugurate the construction. Most of us came on that day, and knew about the works. Chairman [President] told us about the project and told us to attend that program, so we did (interviewee 1.3.2).*

Local people also argued that they did not see signboards for every development work. Where there was a signboard it might not display sufficient information.

> *No, there was no signboard. Actually we did not try to know anything about it. Because it is a government work, and a contractor was selected by the Upazila to build a building and supply furniture (interviewee 1.2.2).*

> *Yes, they hung a signboard, but that was in English. One pharmacist/ homeopathy doctor, because we don't understand the English, explained to us that it mentioned the area, time, gross budget, sponsor, funding authority etc. Except for that signboard, nobody disclosed to us any details planning and budgeting (interviewee 1.2.1).*

> *During their construction work they hung a signboard that showed the starting and finishing date of their works (interviewee 1.3.1).*

However, some people of mid socio-economic and educational background said they do not get sufficient information from representatives or officials if they ask for it. Some local people also blamed government officials and offices for keeping information away from the reach of the mass of the common people.

> *We asked the local member about the budget, and he replied that the budget is about 4 million taka. But, he did not know about the break up of the budget (interviewee 1.2.1).*

> *I asked our Ward Member to bring a copy of the work-schedule but he failed. He went to Upazila and had a cup of tea with the officials, and that's it. Our ward member is a good for nothing (interviewee 1.2.1).*

> *I bribed a staff member of the Upazila Engineer Office to collect a Schedule of the School project (interviewee 7.3).*

Like common people, representatives from high socio-economic background said they do not get all necessary information from government bureaucrats. Some representatives expressed their limitations in accessing information. One UP chairman expressed his frustration when asked why they do not provide details to the local users about the development programs that have an effect on the local people.

the officials also do not disclose all the information and budget details to us; so how will we inform people about planning or budget when we are not sufficiently informed (interviewee 2.1).

Even local management committees democratically elected by the people are not being informed about the development programs. Elected members of the SMC [SMC-School Management Committee] spoke against the concealment of information by the higher government officials.

Actually, in most cases we do not know anything about the selection process. When they select a school, and when they send a proposal to the Department [of Primary Education], these are not our concern. We know about the project when we get a letter from the Upazila office that our school has been included in a project (interviewee 7.1).

I am the president of the SMC but they did not discuss planning, implementing, monitoring; only when they needed help to implement the project they did ask us for help. After completion of work they asked for a completion certificate that would be signed by the president and member-secretary (interviewee 7.2).

Local beneficiaries mostly of high socio-economic and education background also blamed government officials and their elected representatives for providing wrong information about the local development projects. According to local people, government officials and representatives played with them by providing twisted information which was required to implement their project according to their blueprint.

…they told nothing. They said that they will construct concrete rooms for every one, will construct made roads. Everyone will get better facilities to do business. At the end of the program I found there is no room for my shop in the bazaar; only big shades have occupied all spaces (interviewee 6.1).

7.2.2   *Existing Mechanisms of Consulting People*

The local government officials said that they consult with the local people about any development programs to be implemented in the area. According to them they consult with the expected beneficiaries before implementing any development programs that have an effect on the local community.

I contacted businessmen to convince them to move their permanent shops to outside the market periphery during the construction works (interviewee 3.2).

One government engineer also asserted that even they do not always consult with local people; elected representatives do that, which ultimately helps keep the whole communication channel open. When these officials were asked whether consulting firms on behalf of the development agency asked them to consult with local people, one replied:

The local chairman and his Parishad (council members) were consulted constantly and they were involved in making all decisions regarding the growth centre (interviewee 3.3).

Some mid-level government officials do not differentiate between consultation with people and just collecting information from people. Government officials sometimes collect information from the people's representatives and take decisions unilaterally without consulting with anybody.

> *During the UDCC meeting we ask all chairmen to prepare a priority list and also ask them to send it to us. After collecting all those lists my office prepares a priority list for school construction for the whole Upazila. However, the final authority to select a school in the national project, in different phases, is the PD office (interviewee 4.1).*

One local elected representative (body languages and comments of local people during interviews indicated that this elected leader has good relation with local people) also said that they sit with their lower level elected leaders for selecting programs by consultation.

> *We have two types of programs: one is fully controlled by Union Parishad, another one controlled by the Upazila Parishad. For the former one I sit with all UP Members, when we receive a lump-sum grant from the Ministry, to select our projects (interviewee 2.1).*

Elected management committees, on the other hand, sometimes consult with local people, but that is not related to infrastructure development or where there is no financial involvement. This is just like SMCs consulting with the local student's guardians, but only about the guardian's affairs, not related to the development of the school.

> *Yes we do, especially when we arrange annual sports or we conduct cluster meeting [inspirational/ motivational meeting for the guardians to send their children to school] with the student guardians (interviewee 7.3).*

> *For any major decision I make with the local guardians. Like to appoint [unofficially but for the benefit of the students] new teachers, or to raise fund for the tiffins [snacks to the students during lunch time] are made with the consensus of the local guardians (interviewee 7.3).*

However, the majority of local beneficiaries from every socio-economic background spoke against the local government officials and their representatives. They said these people did not consult with them before the commencement of any program. According to local people, officials and representatives, in practice, informed them instead of consulting them.

> *One day, the local Chairman and Upazila Engineer called us here; there was an old hall room here, in this UP conference room. ...Then they declared that the Government has decided to develop this bazaar. We all were very happy with the announcement, because we thought our business will get momentum as their words lavishly assured us (interviewee 1.1.1).*

> *The contractor with a SE (Sub- Assistant Engineer) came to the market and measured the government land. After completion of the land marking (market periphery) they told me to move to outside the mark until their works were finished. But, they made a vegetable-shed after I was moved, and they never gave me back my land. Even now I am still located in my own land outside the market periphery (interviewee 1.2.1).*

Local beneficiaries also argued that the officials and representatives are not interested in consulting with all of the expected beneficiaries; they are mostly interested about rich

businessmen. They mentioned that officials and representatives are only interested in big-businessmen whom they need to consult with for the development of the local growth centre.

They did not come to all of us; they only came to those shopkeepers whose shops needed to be moved (interviewee 1.3.1).

The chairman consulted with those businessmen who had big shops within the bazaar periphery (interviewee 1.2.1).

Even government officials also admitted that they did not inform all the users of local development programs; rather they consult with those people whom they think they need for the implementation of programs.

What is the use of informing local people? They are not doing anything for the project. We informed those businessmen who needed to move to facilitate the construction works (interviewee 3.3).

The local management committee complained against government officials: that they do not disclose and discuss with them anything before the project started.

That is only in black and white. Engineers do not consult with the SMC for planning or budgeting or for anything (interviewee 1.1.2).

They never called us and did not discuss any issue regarding the improvement of the quality of education or for the school. We are agreed to participate in any development work for the school because our children are studying here (interviewee 6.2).

However, some consultations with elected representatives are not actually for engaging local people; they are actually for the need of the system. As some government officials said, they unintentionally twist the objective of consulting with representatives for the sake of the development-implementation.

I sat with the every UP chairman individually to find out appropriate growth centres that needed to be improved. Actually my objective was to select a chairman who was ready to provide a 10% matching fund, because we need to fill-up hundreds of pages including an assurance of providing 'matching funds' to include a growth centre in the final project (interviewee 3.2).

7.2.3   Existing Mechanisms of Involving People

According to the local people with high socio-economic background, there is no involvement of local people in local development programs. Elected public officials also commented that they do not involve local people directly.

No, nobody asked us to be involved in the project (interviewee 1.1.2).

I try to involve all of the Ward Members and Female Ward Members in all of my projects. But, I don't ask local people to be involved in the development programs. People have elected us to look after all the positives and negative that affects them, so I don't find any further need to ask every person about their opinion (interviewee 2.1).

Conversely, government officials mainly Upazila executive officers said that people do get involved in local government programs. In their view people are involved in two ways. Firstly

people are involved through their elected representatives. Secondly, they are involved through local management committees that are elected by the local people.

> *The local people get involved in different ways. Firstly, they participate through their elected representatives like chairman, members, female members etc. Moreover, for different projects we form different PICs. For mega [or nationwide] projects we formed different management committees to look after the development works. Like: We formed local Market Management Committee and SMC [School management Committee] to look after all development programs concerned with local market or school respectively. Until these committees provide any certificate we [UNO and Engineer] don't pay final bill to the contractors (interviewee 5.3).*

> *I think so [there is involvement of locals]. Moreover, every headmaster does conduct guardians' meeting in each month, and personally communicates with the parents of those drop-out students. These activities are also helping locals to get involved in the school affairs and participate in decision making about the school (interviewee 4.1).*

The government officials further argued that to involve people, government decided to form management committees (comprising local people) which indirectly involve people with local development programs. The development outcomes are not received by the officials until approved by a final report provided by the local management committee. In that sense, the involvement of local beneficiaries is being ensured in the development programs.

> *We form a PIC by the local people who have a stake in the project. The president [that selected for] of the PIC is usually the UP chairman or the UP Member which depends on the volume of works and volume of funds. A contractor who is being selected through the tender process is responsible to carry out the order of the PIC (interviewee 5.1).*

> *Well, we have a strong people's participation mechanism in primary schools in the country. Government has introduced the formation of School Management Committees for every primary school to manage all the activities related to primary education at the local level. And now SMCs have been formed across the country. Obviously, people are participating through these SMCs, because people have elected these committees by their direct vote. So, the SMC's decision means the people's decision (interviewee 4.3).*

> *We put emphasis on people's participation through the SMC. We don't select a school if it doesn't have an elected SMC. Moreover, we release the final instalment of fund on the basis of the final report [provided by the concerned SMC]. You know, there are all levels of representation in a SMC, like: student guardians, land donors, local patrons of learning etc. i.e. there is perfect representation of people (interviewee 8.2).*

In contrast, local people from all socio-economic categories mentioned that they do not know anything about a local market management committee (locally named as Hat-Bazaar Management Committee) or did not see any activity of that committee. Moreover, they said that they do not know all the members of the SMC.

> *We never have heard about MMC. We had a Banik Samity (unofficial association of Businessmen), which has also been abolished due to poor business. The Government built a MMC office that is now used by the leaseholder as his office room. This leaseholder is an outsider and wealthy and a muscleman (interviewee 1.1.1).*

We don't know much about their activities [of SMC]. We know there is a School managing committee that is looking into the matters of the school and that's all (interviewee 1.2.2).

We do not know who the members of the SMC are, except the President and the Headmistress. They never called us and did not discuss any issue regarding the improvement of the quality of education or for the school. We are agreed to participate in any development work for the school because our children are studying here (interviewee 6.2).

On the other hand, local government officials expressed their helplessness in forming local management committees or project implementation committees (PIC) due to what they said was the illegal interference of the local Parliament Member (MP). According to them, because of the illegal interference of the local MP, they can not ensure people's involvement practically and truly.

However, there was no democratic way/official procedure to select a Contractor or Project Implementation Committee during the term of the political [elected] government. The MP forced me to select a contractor inclines or similarly minded to his party. In other cases, the local UP chairman or a Member [UP member] gets selected as the president of the PIC if that chairman is in the good books of the MP. Thanks God this time we are not controlled by the MP who has poked his nose into all government programs; he even selects a SMC member. When political government will come in power, these MPs, whether they will be in the position of Advisor or not, will interfere in our development works, otherwise they will make obstacles for us to get funds from the central [ministry] (interviewee 5.1).

No, there was no election for SMC. The then MP told Mr. [not mentioned] he will be SMC president, and from then on he is president. After that he [the president] selected other members for the committee. The SMC is not honest, they were controlled by the MP and kept money from the subsidy fund (fund that subsidised by the government for the 'food for education' program) illegally (interviewee 1.1.2).

However, sometimes, the MP has formed a project committee [PIC] with his own people and forced us to handover the development works to that committee. Consequently we had no control over the project. In that case the satisfaction level can be varied (interviewee 3.1).

According to the international aid agencies guidelines, the local government is now trying to ensure local people's involvement with the aid assisted programs. According to this guideline, local expected beneficiaries are now asked to pay ten percent of the total cost of the project. Donors believe that through paying a stake local beneficiaries will be more involved in the projects. Government officials and representatives also pointed out that they asked for and received subscriptions from the expected beneficiaries to ensure their involvement with the local development programs.

Matching fund that is provided by local businessmen for market, donation of land for school, and guarding materials by local people during development works constitute some kind of direct participation. I think if the present UP Chairmen and his Members (Member of UP) work properly that is sufficient to ensure people's participation (interviewee 5.1).

Conversely, local beneficiaries mainly from high socio-economic background said they did not pay any such subscription to be involved in the local government run programs.

> *They requested us to move temporarily to facilitate the construction works. The chairman and the Engineer also asked us for a fund, what they called the Matching fund, but we declined (Interviewee 1.1.1).*

> *No, not in that way, but I have heard that our Chairman has paid a lot of money for this development work. And to do that, he asked us to pay a subscription according to the size of our business (interviewee 1.2.1).*

On the other hand, one Project Director spoke about matching funds as a tool to give ownership to the expected beneficiaries. However, paradoxically, these top officials do not know that there are no MMCs at the rural levels in Bangladesh, and matching funds are not provided by the businessmen.

> *To ensure the participation, we collect 10 percent of the total funds from the businessmen [expected beneficiaries] as the matching fund. The Upazila engineer with the help of the local MMC collects the fund. We also invite the local MMC [market management committee] and Banik samity [association of businessmen, if any] to monitor our works. At the end of the project the MMC and UMMC provides a report of the quality of the works. On the basis of that final report we release the final fund (interviewee 8.1).*

Similarly, some local government officials also mentioned that subscription from the beneficiaries have been ignored because of maintaining donors guidelines to obtain funds. [In that case the necessity of the development may be overlooked]. In the same way representatives also admit that they paid the matching funds from their own fund.

> *We have to do everything very fast. We collect all related data and fill-up lots of schedules /forms, and prepare a map at present and future plan /sketch. Nevertheless, all chairmen doesn't agree to pay 10% fund as matching fund, so we select that market where the concerned chairman agrees to collect and deposit/pay the matching fund (interviewee 6.1).*

> *Actually my objective was to select a chairman who was ready to provide a 10% matching fund, because we need to fill-up hundreds of pages including an assurance of providing 'matching funds' to include a growth centre in the final project (interviewee 3.2).*

According to government regulation, local elected leaders are asked to prepare a project-priority list joining with the local people to ensure the involvement of local people. At the same time, the Union Parishad and Upazila Parishad should maintain that priority list in selecting any project. But, during interview, everyone denied maintaining such a list or any involvement of local stakeholders for selecting any project. Nevertheless one UNO said a list is prepared at the Union level but the Union Chairman denied it. According to government regulation, the Union Parishad Member should sit with the people within his ward (all the Union is divided into nine wards) and will select the development programs that they need to complete within the year on the basis of urgency. After selection of the programs, a list will be sent to the UP chairmen. The UP Chairman should then sit with all the Members and will make a priority list of programs for

the Union. But, when asked to show a list, however, all UP Chairmen failed to show such a list. According to them:

> *A few years before we also prepared an annual development list but now we do not prepare any annual development list because nobody cares about it. We cannot maintain the priority because we don't have sufficient funds to accomplish those projects (interviewee 2.3).*

> *Yes, that is mentioned in the book, and UNO and DC also told me to prepare such a list during their inspection time. But, practically it is impossible. If we prepare a priority list, we cannot follow that, because funds for implementing such projects are not in our hands. I know, though I haven't written it down, what I need urgently, but I need money to do it. What is the use of preparing a priority list if I cannot implement it? So considering the reality we do not prepare any list (interviewee 2.1).*

However, local people mentioned that, hereditarily (generation after generation) and culturally, they have voluntarily been involved with local development programs.

> *My house is adjacent to the school field; if we didn't keep an eye on the construction materials, they could be stolen. But the contractor has never spent a penny for me, not even offered me a cup of tea. Rather his people took rest in my house (interviewee 1.1.2).*

> *We heard that most of our ancestors paid money to raise a fund for this school when it started some fifty years ago. My grandfather was a voluntary teacher in this school at that time. Actually at the beginning this school was running better because everyone felt this is our school, but now it is marked as a government school (interviewee 1.2.2).*

7.2.4   Existing Mechanisms of Empowering People

To get control over local development programs (i.e. for empowerment) local people in rural Bangladesh need more collaboration with local government institutions. But local government officials and elected representatives in rural Bangladesh are not particularly interested in more deliberation with local communities. When these officials were asked whether they think involving local people can yield better outcomes or not, they answered negatively.

> *I am not fully agreed with this. You know, we form PIC and management committees with the locals, but sometimes these committees create problems for our works. As I said, no person wants to provide voluntary services, they ask for a share [benefit from supplying] from the contractor. They [PIC] provide unsatisfactory reports if the contractor doesn't pay them money even he provides a good service. In contrast, they [committees] provide a satisfactory report even the contractor provides a worse job but shares the fund. So I think involving more people means get a lesser quality service. In my opinion we the government officials are sufficient to get a project done (interviewee 5.3).*

> *I think we don't need to involve people; rather we need to get rid of the idea of these people and their representatives having involvement in government programs (interviewee 4.3).*

At the same time, it was found that local people from all socio-economic backgrounds also do not want to take a steering position. Most of the local people, mainly from low socio-economic and poorly educated areas were found unwilling to join fully with local government programs, though they were found to be interested to know about the programs.

Actually this is a government job, so government officials are looking into it. We are not interested to bother government officials. At best our headmistress can be involved with that (interviewee 1.2.2).

If officials or our MP/chairmen ask us to participate, we will join with them, and our job will be scheduled by them. We don't know how we will join; rather we will do the job that they will seek from us (interviewee 1.2.2).

This is the government's job; what is our business in their works? And they will not allow us to join in the government functions (interviewee 1.3.1).

However, certainly, it is found that the mentality of people is changing. Most local people, mainly from high socio-economic areas and highly educated, are very unhappy with the activities of local bureaucrats and their elected leaders. They complained against the local leaders and bureaucrats for not involving local people and not using their knowledge for any development works.

Of course; we are doing business in this bazaar for generations after generations, we know how many farmers come with their vegetables, how many come with fish or meat. If the officials discussed the planning with us before it was implemented, we could provide them with effective suggestions (interviewee 1.1.1).

I think government can give money to the school, either to the Headmaster or to the SMC, and we all [together] could make a better school [including] building and furniture (interviewee 1.1.2).

We are agreed to participate in any development work for the school because our children are studying here (interviewee 6.2).

These people not only want to participate; they also provided some good suggestions for making their participation pertinent. They are very much interested in using their knowledge to make local development programs effective. This is undoubtedly a good sign of the self-empowerment of rural people.

We don't need any technical knowhow for these types of works. We have a few guardians who are quite sound in small engineering works. We could have asked for their help. And I am sure they would have done that (interviewee 7.2).

We don't want to involve in routine works; that will be done by the SMC and officials. But, we think our involvement with the major decision making process will bring a win-win situation (interviewee 1.1.2).

No one needs technical expertise to do all these tasks. We also will hire a contractor to do that. But, the contractor could not be that crooked if we had the authority to supervise the work (interviewee 1.1.2).

Government officials and representatives also admitted the raising of people's consciousness. In their views, the rural people of Bangladesh are very inquisitive about local development programs.

In Bangladesh, people are very curious about any activity. They always monitor our activities (i.e. the activities of the officials) (interviewee 3.3).

Look this is not Australia; this is Bangladesh where people come forward to get involved even if you don't ask for any participation. They watch our activities rigorously. If they smell any rat they find out what is in the bag. Don't think they know nothing. They are good to the good person; bad to the corrupt person. We are tired of these people and their representatives (interviewee 4.3).

Not only has the people's awareness been raised, but at the same time, the mindset of the government and elected officials is also found to be changing. When they were asked whether they would think to include people if they need to do jobs again or whether involving local people can bring about a better outcome, they replied affirmatively. Officials mainly in executive levels are also changing with the raise of awareness of local people or global demand for empowerment.

Yes, we can discuss with the businessmen before implementing development project in the growth centre. Local people have detailed knowledge on the local bazaar; using their knowledge for making a decision is very helpful. I would sit together with the businessmen before implementing any construction work in the local market. But we need to avoid those people being involved who spoil any good initiative (interviewee 2.1).

The public now have more access to the government programs. At the same time, we share detailed planning and budgeting with public representatives. Now, it is their [representatives] duty to further disseminate the information to the mass of the people, but they are not performing their duty (interviewee 5.1).

We are continuously trying to introduce more instruments to increase locals' participation in school affairs. The Cluster meeting, the mothers' assembly, etc are some of the instruments that have been introduced recently (interviewee 8.2).

However, not all the government and elected officials are thinking in this positive way. Still a number of officials, mainly from engineering department, are thinking negatively, [though it may not be a problem at the moment if the majority has changed]. Some officials found that they learned about the value of people's participation after they failed to engineer effective development.

If you visit our site you would not say something like that. I admit that [previously] we made some mistakes [in implementation of this kind of projects], but now our plan is very sound. We included a lady's corner for the empowerment of the rural women; we included the MMC office for the empowerment of the local businessmen, and so many. You will be happy [to see that] all local businessmen are working together with our engineers and helping them to get a better outcome (interviewee 8.1).

I think there is something wrong in our way of developing growth centres. We need to motivate our businessmen to use all those sheds and platforms. The government is spending millions of taka, especially lending loans from donors, to develop a growth centre. But, local businessmen don't want to use it. They want to keep to their previous habits. They cannot come out of their old habits. The public representatives should motivate the local businessmen to use the development outcomes. In my opinion we can force the local businessmen to use these sheds otherwise they will not be allowed to do their business in the developed market. With the chairman I went to visit several houses, especially of those women who are doing homebound business with micro credits, to motivate businesswomen to start a business in the ladies corner (interviewee 3.3).

7.3 Bangladesh Local Governance: Weaknesses and Strengths

In Bangladesh, Upazila Parishads have been considered as the key implementing agency for rural level projects, while Union Parishads have operational authority for those projects (Islam 2007). But in the absence of regular Upazila Parishad (there has been no election for the Upazila Parishad since 1991) an interim authority named UDCC (Upazila Development Coordination Committee) was entrusted with the responsibility of planning and implementation of development activities in four areas: roads and communications, irrigation and agriculture, education and physical infrastructure (Morshed 1997). To foster bottom up planning i.e. participatory planning, the Upazila Parishads (presently UDCC) are following some measures introduced by the executive orders of the central government. Thus the strengths and weaknesses of these participatory processes of the Upazila system in terms of facilitating people's participation are important to assess for further improvements. Strengths and weaknesses in the local government systems of delivering services, particularly for providing structural developments, have been determined through the analysis of the above findings through field studies.

7.3.1 Strengths of the Present Mechanisms of Engaging People

There are a number of remarkable strengths of the present system of engaging people in local development programs in rural Bangladesh. Firstly, the mechanism of engaging people in local government's affairs is becoming more pro-people than the previous one-way service delivery: what was previously completely under the control of the government officials, is now under shared authority with local elected leaders. Rural people are now engaging with local development programs in a different way, mainly through their representatives or elected committees or directly. Every school in rural areas has a SMC (school management committee) elected by the students' guardians. Similarly HBMC (hat-bazaar management committee) – which is supposed to be elected by the local businessmen- is responsible to foster the engagement of users with the process of development initiatives. People's elected representatives, like the UP chairmen and the local Parliament Members, are also participating in local development affairs and deciding about the development programs. This process is ultimately helping people to be empowered.

Secondly it is found that local people are inherently and culturally participating in local development programs, which is more common in a homogeneous society. For example, in Tentulia (homogeneous rural society) many people donated land, or helped suppliers by their direct and voluntary involvement. People are participating through direct donation of land, or through other mechanisms like guarding materials or providing voluntary help. The government

and development agencies are also trying to strengthen participation by sharing the costs of development through subscribing to 'matching funds'. Through matching funds, local users share ten percent of the total cost and ensure their 'ownership' of the local development projects that affect their life.

Thirdly, the environment of rigid service delivery system of local government institutions is now changing. At the same time the environment of the participation process has been changing: government officials are now instructed by the central government that government servants should act for the people. As officials said, they are now following government instructions to line up the administration for the people, which was earlier administration for the development. One sticker was found on an official file-cabinet in a government office (see Figure 7.1) showing a slogan about changing government bureaucracy. Government administrative officials are now instructed by the central government that they should serve for the people.

Figure 7.1 Sticker in an Official File-cabinet Asking for Reforms
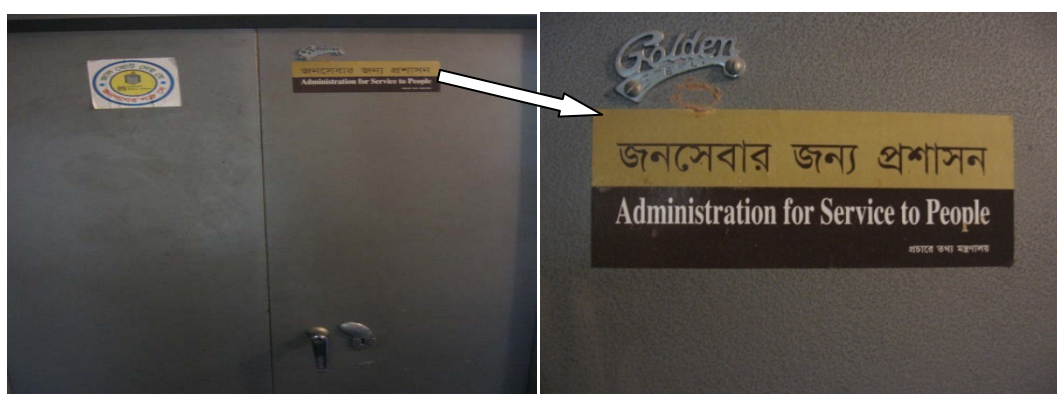
Source: The Author

Finally, the directly elected women members in the UP and in Upazila Parishad have encouraged rural women to be aware of their right to participation. There have been regular elections at the Union level, for a long time, where women members are getting elected increasingly, which indicate a positive trend in empowering vulnerable groups at the Upazila levels (Haque 2002**).**

7.3.2   Weaknesses of the Present Mechanism of Engaging People

With the given statement of strengths in participatory local governance, there are many weaknesses in the participation process as well. Drawing upon findings during the field study the following weaknesses have been revealed.

7.3.2.1   No information provided to the beneficiaries

In most cases local government officials or representatives do not inform local beneficiaries about the local development programs. During the focus group interviews, students' guardians in three rural primary schools spoke about seeing the development works themselves after the starting of the works. Among the total focus group members of 26 in all three students' guardians groups 6 said they were informed by officials, 8 said they were informed by the representatives /management committee, 10 said they had seen works for themselves, and 2 said they were informed by friends. This finding, in a percentage, can be shown as follows:

Figure 7.2 Sources of Information to the Local People about Development Projects
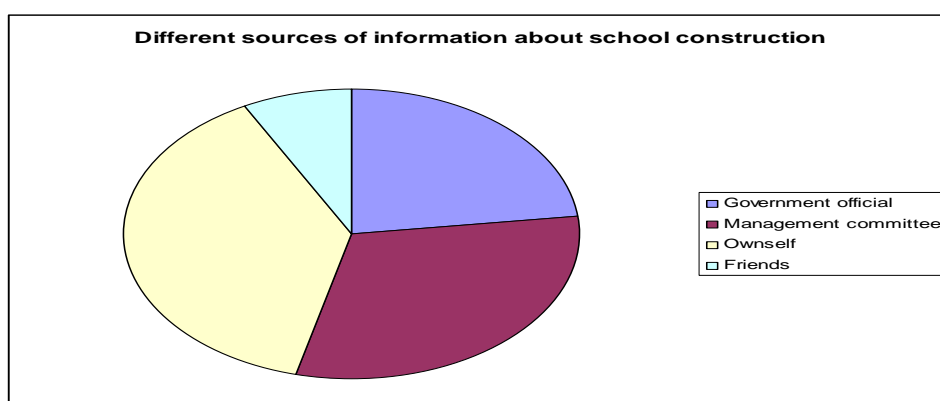
Source: The Author

7.3.2.2   Inadequate information

Weak information tools, like noticeboards, are the only tools used to inform local people. Even these noticeboards are not placed in the best ways or places. The local governing agencies put up a signboard about a brief description of the projects to inform local people, and in most cases, that's all that is done about people's participation with development projects. During field visit a signboard (see Figure 7.3) about a new unpaved road was found placed above head height to inform local people about the program, nevertheless there was insufficient information, which was made just to fulfil the aid agency's and government's condition. Similarly, a foundation-stone onto the side wall of a new culvert was found used as a signboard (Figure 7.4), which displayed inadequate information; it mentioned the name of the sponsored department, implementation time, and the name of the project, length of the culvert, total cost, and estimated cost.

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Figure 7.3 A Signboard on the Top of the Tree

Source: The Author

Figure 7.4 A Brief Description of the Project in a Foundation Stone

Source: The Author

However, these types of signboards are not even placed for every development project: many development projects, during the field study, were found to be without any signboard. One report of the Asian Development Bank also mentioned that 'whilst GoB [Government of Bangladesh] requires that information is publicly displayed, for example at the site of construction work, in practice this is seldom the case' (ADB 2004a, p. 28).

7.3.2.3   Unavailability of information

Though sometimes people get brief information through the signboards, detailed information is hardly available to the public or beneficiaries. At one end, common people have no access to the

government offices; at the other end, officials do not supply any official documents to them. During interviews, government officials mentioned the 'Government Secrecy Act-1923' as a safeguard for not disclosing information to the commoners, which is a common practice in Bangladesh (As-Saber, Hossain & Srivastava 2007). Even if any government project-schedule is made available to the people, it is not readable by the local people as most of these work-schedules are written in English. In 1988, the Government of Bangladesh declared Bengali as the language for all official functions (Alam 2006), but it is not seen in practice at the rural level, where people can seldom read and understand English. A work-schedule for 'primary school construction and supply of furniture' was collected during field study, and it was found to be written in English. The first two pages of that schedule are shown in the following figure:

Figure 7.5 Work Schedule Written in English

Source: Upazila Engineer's Office (collected by the author)

7.3.2.4 False or imperfect information

Information provided to the mass of the people by government officials or by the elected representatives, was, in many cases, found to be false. During field study it was found that expected beneficiaries blamed government officials and their representatives for providing false or wrong information before the implementation of projects. Promises provided by the government or elected officials before the implementation of the project, were not the same that beneficiaries found after completion of the project. Most businessmen interviewed claimed they were deceived by the concerned authority for project implementation. For example, before implementation they were informed that everyone would get his plot/possession back, but that was not true. During field visit a blacksmith and a tea seller (Figure 7.6) informed this author that they had plots for their own businesses before construction of a concrete floor for the

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growth centre, but now they do not have any space to sell their products while all the market place has been used for sheds and the rest of the open places have covered with a hardcore structure.

Figure 7.6 False Information Displaced Businessmen

Source: The Author

Similarly, some permanent shop-owners [daily businessmen] did not find any place (Figure 7.7) to make a permanent shop within the market periphery. Most of the spaces of the market were used for making long sheds where no room is available for storing their goods after shopping time.

Figure 7.7 Businessmen have no Place to Make a Permanent Shop

Source: The Author

In the same way, before construction of a school room, engineers informed the SMC that every student would get a room to sit, but students are sitting outside because of insufficient space in the room (see Figure 7.8). Similarly, they did not provide the materials as per the schedule, providing only very weak tables and unusable blackboards, which are not according to the promise and work schedules.

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Figure 7.8 Inadequate Information about Classroom and Furniture

Source: The Author

One Upazila education officer said during interview that

All functions are performed by the Upazila Engineer and his collaborator –the contractor. I think you have seen the worst quality of the building and furniture they provided. This engineer is the worst (corrupted) one I have ever seen in my life. They constructed such a building that will not last for five years; it started cracking at once. The plaster is falling out from the wall, and the furniture is damaged virtually before being used (interviewee 4.2).

Where a project is pro-people, ADB reported that 14-30% cost of the project is provided by the local communities as labour or in other forms (ADB 2004a, p. 27). By providing false hopes, local engineers and contractors exploited these contributions, but after the completion of the work, people found themselves deceived by the service providers.

Government officials and elected representatives did not discuss details and schedule with expected users before implementation of projects. Local government officials just implemented the plan that was scheduled by the project headquarters at the central level. During the field visit, constructed long vegetable sheds in the market were found to remain unused (Figure 7.9) though they were constructed for the local businessmen.

Figure 7.9 Result of False Information: Unused Vegetable Sheds in a Growth-centre

Source: The Author

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In another but similar study, one researcher mentioned that most of the planners for rural development projects live in the city, and have little idea about rural conditions (Islam 2007). Their plans could be very effective if they utilised the knowledge of local users, but because of the lack of people's participation, local businessmen found it unsuitable to use by them. Thus, in most cases, so-called developed growth centres were found to not be used effectively, or underused or used for other purposes. Sometimes local businessmen completely rejected, and did not use these sheds.

Figure 7.10 Result of False Information: Fish Shed Used for Cycle Stand

Shed made as a fish-shed is used as cycle stand (left). The construction changed to use those sheds as the permanent shops (right). (Source: The Author)

Figure 7.11 Result of False Information: Rejected Market

Picture of two rejected sheds, which are now completely abandoned (Source: The Author)

Many businessmen opined that:

> *We don't need such a big meat shed. We need a slaughter house to run the blood out, because that creates a bad odour, and make the environment uncongenial (interviewee 1.3.1).*

> *This bazaar is famous for bamboo business; earlier there was much space inside the market periphery to keep the bamboo in, but now we don't have enough space to stack*

bamboo. So everyone keeps it on the road-side and that makes for traffic jams (interviewee 1.3.1).
Those long vegetable sheds are useless. Now shopkeepers are using those sheds for permanent structures. They built shops adjacent to the sheds and are using the high floors for their porch (interviewee 1.3.1).

A similar picture was found in case of a sanitary latrine: the room was used as a storeroom by the poor people when it was imposed on them by the local government in West-Bengal, India (Tayler 2005).

7.3.2.5   Manipulation of people's participation

Both the Constitution and the government executive order put an especial emphasis on ensuring accountability of service providers to the people. Article 7(1) of the Constitution mandates that:

> All powers in the Republic belong to the people, and their exercise on behalf of the people shall be effected only under, and by the authority of this Constitution (GOB 1972).

In the light of the direction in the constitution, a Project Implementation Committee (PIC) and a Standing Committee are to form to monitor each local development program (Local Government Division 2004). While the president of such a committee is to be an elected UP chairman or member, most other members are to be elected for each particular project by the local people. But during the field visit and through the interviews it is found that the PIC is formed and approved by the local MP – who is the advisor and top approval authority of decisions made by the UDCC (Upazila Development Coordination Committee). In most cases members of these PICs are selected from the party-men by the MP. And no standing committee was formed to monitor local development programs. ADB reported that these committees 'have not yet been formed in most UPs, and where formed, are not generally functional' (ADB 2004a, p. 28).

According to the Upazila Parishad Act 1998, the Local Member of Parliament (MP) has been appointed as the Advisor of the Upazila Development Coordination Committee (GOB 1999). While the intention to involve the MP was to ensure more people's participation, in most cases this involvement has worked against that spirit. Instead of working for the people and for development of local areas, the MPs' highest priority has been to develop a strong political base for their own political party. Probably it is a general phenomenon in representative form of governance, as researchers mentioned that:

> Elected officials are focused most often upon engineering the calculus of majorities and building majority coalitions through electoral politics. Their goal is to seek followers and build a support base. Rarely are their goals to create partners in the governing processes (Gibson, Lacy & Dougherty 2005, p. 4).

However, in comparison to other political leaders in the world the South Asian political leaders 'tried to govern too much' (Jabbra & Dwivedi 2004, p. 1117). In Bangladesh, MPs appoint their own political contractors and UP chairmen for the Project Implementation Committee to implement all development works in their local jurisdiction. It is well known that, all local affluent elites like contractors belong to a political party, and provide funds to local political leaders during parliamentary elections (Chowdhury 2002). One government official expressed her frustration in the way that:

> There was no democratic way/official procedure to select Contractor or Project Implementation Committee during political government. The MP forced me to select a contractor who is inclined/same minded to his party (interviewee 5.1).

Through the field study it has been uncovered that the MP helped those Union Parishad (UP) Chairmen who were elected from his own party. A similar study pointed out that the UP Chairmen also worked for the MP to manage local police and administration in their favour and thus to cover their corruption (ADB 2004a). Moreover, the allocation of funds for the UP also depends on the desire of the MP (Blair 2005). In practice the allocation of funds [though supposed to follow area and population] between the UPs have became subject to manipulation by the MPs through the UDCC (ADB 2004a, p. 20). Bureaucrats are also inclined to follow the order of the local MP, as he has the power to transfer a bureaucrat to a remote place; and release of funds for development projects also depends on the MP's persuasion when it comes from the central government (ADB 2004a). One engineer opined that:

> MP helped us to get more projects from central (select this Market for development) by pursuing [these] at the head office, so sometimes we follow his requests. He also helped us to overcome any problem to manage local people if they protest against any development works (interviewee 3.3).

As in the PIC, the local MPs are also involved in formation of the SMC (school management committee). The government forms SMCs to manage all development programs for the respective school, but these SMCs are not sufficiently ensuring people's participation because of political interference by the MP. One local students' guardian vented his frustration about the SMC:

> The SMC is not honest, they were controlled by the MP and kept money from the subsidy fund (fund that subsidised by the government for the 'food for education' program) illegally (interviewee 1.1.2).

The rural people in Bangladesh think that an important man is one who can provide them with relief and funds for local development. This mentality of the local people also tends to influence local MPs to interfere in the local development works. Nonetheless, in most constituencies, an MP's jurisdiction area is the same as the jurisdiction of an Upazila Chairman. However, MPs' authority to control local bureaucrats and UP Chairmen is diminished when there is an elected Upazila Chairman. For this reason, MPs forced the political governments not to arrange any

Upazila Parishad election (Blair 2005; Sarker 2003). Thus no election has been conducted for Upazila Chairman since 1991.

The field study was conducted when the Caretaker government was in power, and there were no elected MPs. It was found, during the field study, that education officers and SMCs are more rigid against corruption by the engineer and contractor because of this non-political governing environment. They said they are not providing any false reports because there is no MP now to request any false final report.

> He (the MP) asked me to issue a final report in favour the Contractor about the work that was done by the contractor, and we did so. But, this time we are not providing that report because it is the time of a Caretaker government (interviewee 4.2).

Thus the practice of people's participation was found to be manipulated by the local political leaders. ADB mentioned that 'special relief schemes decisions involve less participation, being generally controlled by the MP who acts on the advice of selected individuals' (ADB 2004a, p. 21). Even after all these irregularities committed by MPs, recently the Parliament has again reconfirmed the position of MP as the advisor of the local Upazila Parishad through the approval of the new amended Act for the Upazila Parishad 2009.

Like MPs, local government officials also manipulate people's participation by ignoring the role of local elected representatives. Though a UDCC meeting is chaired by a UP Chairman, by rotation, most decisions are made by the local bureaucrats because of their higher technical know-how and inspection authority over the development programs. Moreover, to bypass the UDCC, as some public leaders admit, bureaucrats choose the Upazila Sub-Committee for the respective sector to select any project. Most Upazila Sub-Committees are staffed predominantly by local bureaucrats, who are not voting members in the UDCC, such as the Upazila Market Management Committee, Upazila Education Committee etc.

7.3.2.6 Overlooking people while aiming to empower them

Empowerment of the poor and women are two lucrative words to both the central government and international development agencies (IDAs). So, when the sponsoring department seeks funds from IDAs, they include them as issues whether they are practical to implement or not. IDAs are happy to provide funds in relation to the empowerment of women and the poor: a dire need in Bangladesh rural society. During the field study it was found that there are new buildings for local Market Management Committees, but, practically, such committees do not exist. Even the name of the committee was found to be different in different documents. While in the Manual of Growth-centre it is mentioned as Hat-Bazaar Management Committee (HBMC) (LGED 2007), in the land manual it is mentioned as Union Market Management Committee (UMMC) (Khan & Akther 2000). Nevertheless, the Manual published by the

Ministry mentioned that a local UP chairman is the president of the committee, while the executive instructions published by the Local Government Department mentioned that the president will be elected by the local businessmen among them (LGED 2007). These anomalies indicate neglect of committees by the central government. During the field visit it was found that the newly built management offices (see Figure 7.12) have never been used and local people said that they are always found locked, though they were made to empower local businessmen.

Figure 7.12 People Missing out on Empowerment

A management office that has never been used (left) and the office periphery used for drying crops (right). (Source: The Author)

Supporting the observation one engineer pointed out that:

> *I think we need to enhance the activities of the local Market management Committee. We built an office room for them, and we also provided beautiful furniture. But, they are not using it properly. The government can delegate more power to us (engineers' office) to control these MMCs to activate them (interviewee 3.3).*

In the same way as with the MMC office, the '*Lady's Corners*' that were built for the empowerment of rural women were found not to be functioning as such. Most of the shops in these corners are not run by the women, being either closed (see Figure 7.13) or run by their husbands or sons (ADB 2004a). During field visit a local businessmen commented that*:*

> *No women come here to open a shop. When there is no female shopping corner in the city how do they expect a female shopkeeper in this rural area. So all the shops in the 'Ladies' Corner' are either closed or run by their husbands who can 'manage' the chairman (interviewee 1.3.1).*

Figure 7.13 Women out for Work because they do not Understand Business

While the 'women corner' was closed (left), women were found working in the field (right). Rural women do not yet know about business, but they know how to work in the field (Source: The Author)

The final 'Project Completion Report' (PCR) on the Third Rural Infrastructure Development Project in Bangladesh by the development agencies also recognised that:

> although the women corner in the growth centre markets proved to be effective for empowerment of the rural poor women yet, it is not equally popular and socially acceptable everywhere (ADB 2006c, p. 14).

Thus, through the above analysis, it is revealed that the empowerment of rural women or poor is not happening according to the expectation. Empowerment does not take place when it is imposed on the users; it needs more participation of the expected beneficiaries. Avoiding targeted people means avoiding targeted objectives. However, the Project Director (PD) of the Growth-Centre admitted that now they are learning by these experiences about ineffective development in growth centres (interview 8.1). For example, one Project Director mentioned that, they are more careful to take account of the demands of the local businessmen in the latest phases of the project (as growth-centres have been implemented in different phases). But these issues of ineffective development and empowerment could be avoided if local businessmen would have been able to participate from the beginning with these projects. While government officials are learning through their experiments, in the mean time government are losing aid money and donors are apparently overlooking it.

7.3.2.7   Neglected local level planning: neglecting involvement of people

For a long time, the Government of Bangladesh was very much dependent on the central planning efforts, mainly because of the centralized and unilateral character of the state itself, although there has been a tendency of announcing popular commitment for decentralisation of administration and participatory local planning. However, now it is recognized both by the development agencies and the government, that in an agrarian society like Bangladesh, local

level planning is an important factor for maximising the use of development outcomes, and thereby alleviating poverty. In pursuit of this end, several initiatives have been adopted to ensure bottom-up planning. As per the recommendation of Local Government Commission-1997, a bottom-up planning process has been designed as follows:

Figure 7.14 Bottom-up Planning Process for Rural Development Projects
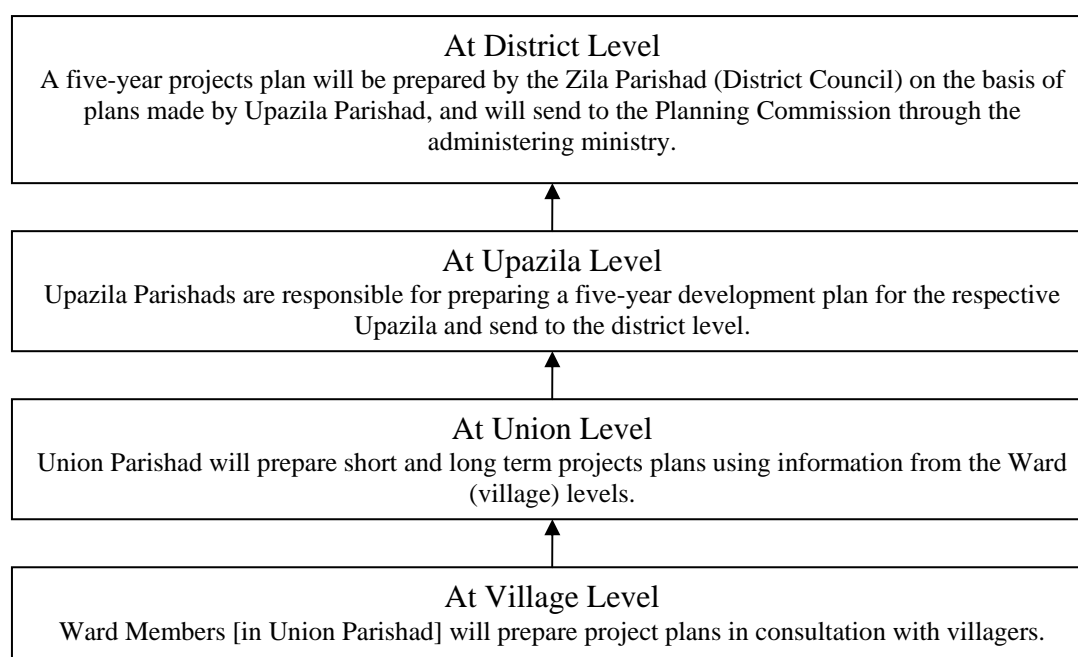
Source: adapted from Morshed (2007).

Following the recommendations, the Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) of the central government envisaged that the priority projects list should be started from the bottom (Bhuiyan, Faraizi & McAllister 2008; Islam 2007). Similarly, according to the instruction of section 42(1) of the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 (GOB 1999) and also by executive order of the ministry (Local Government Division 2004), Upazila Parishad in consultation with the local people, would prepare a 'project priority list' for five years. Section 42(3) of the same Act also stated that the list would be placed before the local people and would incorporate their suggestions. The Manual of Upazila Administration stated that:

> Upazila Parishads should prepare an Upazila Development Plan and maintain a Plan Book on the lines so long maintained by most of the development circles and keep it continuously updated and for each financial year shall prepare an Annual Upazila Development Program (AUDP) (GOB 1983, p. 22)

The PRSP prepared in 2005 is also emphasised preparation of such a list at the Union level with the consultation of villagers and then would be sent to the Upazila and Upazila would send it to the ministry (PRSP 2005).

During this field study, however, neither Union Chairmen nor UNOs confirmed the preparation of such a project plan or any Plan Book. Most of them blamed the central government for the budget allocation not being distributed according to the projects. Hence, UP or Upazila could not maintain a project priority list. By the name of planning the Upazila officials prepare a list of projects with estimation of costs (Ahmad 1991). Moreover, for aid assisted programs like growth-centre and primary school development, final selection and project design is mainly done by central level engineers, where bottom level plans have no importance.

7.3.2.8   Missing link with local people /beneficiaries

In rural Bangladesh, where elected representatives are supposed to represent local people, they were instead, found to be supporting government bureaucrats. The long legacy of supporting central government officials by the local public representatives may be the main reason for such a mindset. This mentality of local representatives creates a distance and patron-client relation between local people and elected representatives (Aminuzzaman & Sharmin 2006). Some social researchers mentioned 'democracy [in rural Bangladesh] often locks the poor into a patron-client relationship with their political representatives' (Aminuzzaman & Sharmin 2006, p. 172).

Thus there is a big gap between ordinary people and elected representatives. These leaders do not keep good relation with local people once they have been elected (Sarker 2006b). These local leaders neither consult nor even inform the local people about the projected program before starting implementation. In most cases, ordinary people face difficulties in meeting their elected representatives as these representatives are found to be busy in the Upazila headquarters with bureaucrats. Nevertheless, the ultra poor have no or limited access to the office of elected representatives.

Figure 7.15 Rural People Face Difficulties in Meeting Their Elected Representatives

Ordinary people (left) face difficulties in meeting their elected representatives (right). They (left) were found waiting all day to see 'their' chairman (UP Chairman). (Source: The Author)

Moreover, though government executive-orders directed the formation of local managements committee and a PIC for implementing all local projects, in most cases there are no management committees (ADB 2004a). For PIC, usually a UP Member is the president and another 4-6 persons from the ward are selected by that Member (ADB 2004a). Interestingly, whilst certifying quality for final payment, the only signature required is that of the president of PIC. Similarly, in case of growth centres, no local HBMCs were found or no Union Market Management Committee was found. According to the local businessmen all functions at the higher level, including the submission of the final evaluation report, are completed by the local UP chairmen. Thus we see a missing link with local beneficiaries as presented as in the following figure.

Figure 7.16 Missing Links between Government and Local Businessmen
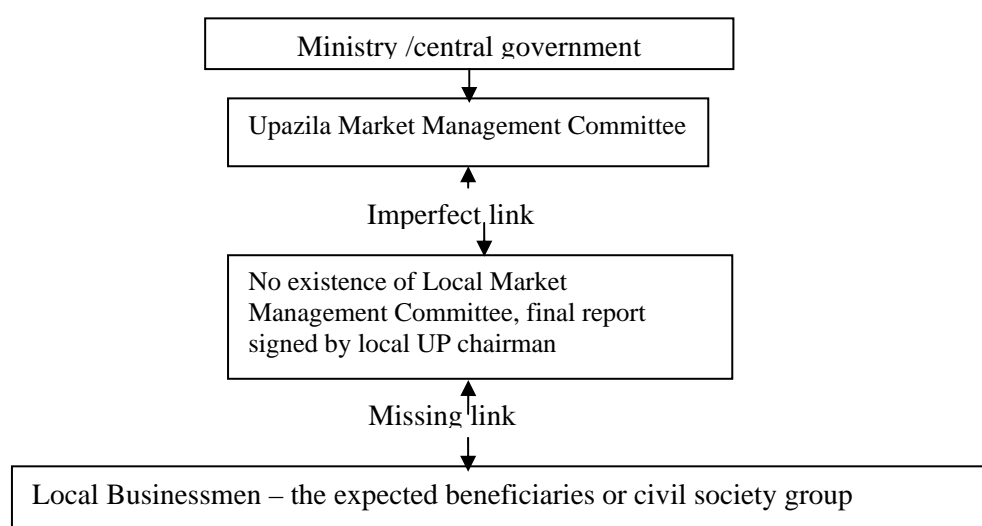
Source: The Author

In contrast, an SMC was found in every school visited, but these SMCs were found to remain in the dark in the selection and planning process. In most cases even the president of the SMCs is nominated by the local MP, which is not functioning democratically. The final reports of the projects are prepared by the head-teacher and by the president. There is no provision of the elected guardian representatives to have any input or fix any complaint against any faulty work as they have no authority to sign in the final report. The head teacher is a government employee and the president follows the order of the MP, and thus the final report does not reflect local beneficiaries' opinion. Hence, in the case of SMCs, by default of the system, a missing link, with the local guardians, is created.

Figure 7.17 Missing Links between Government and Local Student-guardians

```
                    ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
                    │   Ministry /central government    │
                    └──────────────────────────────────┘
                    ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
                    │   Upazila Committee for Education  │
                    └──────────────────────────────────┘

                              Missing link

┌────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐   ┌────────────────────┐
│ President of SMC –  │ M │ Members –    │ M │ Member-secretary   │
│ selected by MP,     │ i │ directly     │ i │ of SMC             │
│ counter signatory   │ s │ elected by   │ s │ –a government      │
│ for final report    │ s │ the students'│ s │ employee,          │
│                     │ i │ guardians –  │ i │ signatory for      │
│                     │ n │ have no      │ n │ final report       │
│                     │ g │ signatory    │ g │                    │
│                     │   │ power on     │ l │                    │
│                     │ l │ final report │ i │                    │
│                     │ i │              │ n │                    │
│                     │ n │              │ k │                    │
│                     │ k │              │   │                    │
└────────────────────┘   └──────────────┘   └────────────────────┘

   Missing link                                  Missing link

┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Local Students' Guardian – the expected beneficiaries or civil    │
│ society group                                                      │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Source: The Author

A report mentioned that though the government is spending huge sums for the development of primary schools at the rural level, the environment of education or educational levels at the rural level is not increasing as it was expected before the project implemented.

> Many in the NGOs and the wider education community believe that the PEDP [Primary Education Development Project] process has had minimal impact on the education system in Bangladesh despite massive funding and the input of highly qualified, highly paid international experts (Ramsay 2007, p. 100)

The missing link with the guardians is one of the major issues for this ineffective outcome. Nevertheless the World Bank also pointed out that the corruption of the government officials has resulted in the poor construction of these school buildings. The World Bank also highlighted that

> …corruption in procurement has resulted in poor quality of school construction. These types of governance problems contribute to the poor quality of education in Bangladesh, and undermine the considerable progress made in expanding access (World Bank 2008, p. 42).

Thus, though it is stated that there is no scope for 'poor and socially disadvantaged groups to raise their voice and exercise any influence over public policy and resource allocation' (Aminuzzaman & Sharmin 2006, pp. 173-4), elected members of the local people (guardians' or businessmen's representatives) have virtually no link with government due to the faulty and weak system of participation. Thus, when Haque (2007) has speculated that only 25 percent of aid goes to the target groups and 75 percent is siphoned off in Bangladesh, these missing links are to be regarded as contributing the main reasons for this.

Through the above analysis, hence, we identified two types of 'missing link' between the Government of Bangladesh and its rural people: one is cultural, another is functional. For the cultural missing link, we can mention the legacy of the colonial ruler. Throughout history, public representatives have represented the central government at the local level and they have acted like a patron; this attitude is still held by the representatives (Blair 2005; Sarker 2008). Moreover the local people have treated them as the ruler ever since the introduction of such ruling system in colonial times (Jabbra & Dwivedi 2004; Mahmud 2004). So, a missing link has been established in Bangladeshi society, mainly in rural areas where people are poorly educated and hardly empowered. On the other hand, the functional 'missing link' has been created by the faulty system of engaging people in development programs. The present systems do not support the involvement of genuine sections of people in the participation processes. For example, local businessmen have no direct representation in local market management committees; on the other hand, though local guardians have direct representation, the faulty system of representation means the voice of the guardians can not be established. Donors from western societies and different cultural backgrounds have failed to recognise these missing links in a long colonised society like in Bangladesh.

7.4   Conclusion

Local government institutions in rural Bangladesh have been going through several changes in delivering services to the local communities. Rural people are participating in local development programs directly or through democratically elected leaders. Central government has asked, through executive orders or laws, to form several committees, comprising the local people, to ensure participation. However, people's participation is found to be ineffective and incomplete for establishing their voices in decisions that affect them. Among the four stages of the participation process, local people are only reached at the first stage. That is, local people are only informed about any local development programs, while they are virtually ignored by the system for consulting, involving or empowering.

The instrumental reason for involving people is to get effective outcomes of local development programs. These outcomes will then be effectively used by the local beneficiaries and consequently support the national monitory-backbone. These chains of reaction ultimately alleviate poverty at rural levels. But the majority of people at the rural level are not obtaining any scope, culturally or functionally, to participate in development programs. While culturally they are ignored by the government officials and elected local elites, functionally they are ignored by the existing systems. Having no mechanism for mobilizing resources at UP level, most resources come from the central government, and those resources are also used for project

implementation by the line bureaucrats. These bureaucrats are the extended part of the central bureaucracy and now are working at the Upazila level and, though keeping apparently friendly relations with elected representatives, have a missing link with local people. To divert resources from these missing links, officials do not inform the government headquarters about functional faults; at the same time central officials do not seal-up this leakage for fear of losing their share of the siphoned resources. Hence, a missing link silently makes development programs ineffective.

Despite all these difficulties and 'missing links', there is ground to be optimistic about the solution. The local development projects for a long time had been implemented by the government officials alone, but now local elected representatives are greatly sharing the control of the delivery process. Apart from the excessive interference by the law-makers, local leaders are now significantly empowered to make government officials accountable for their functions to the bottom.

The next chapter will see how these strengths and weaknesses of participation process determine the state of good governance in rural Bangladesh.

CHAPTER 8.
EVALUATION OF THE STATUS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN BANGLADESH

'Development depends on good governance, and that is the ingredient which has been missing in far too many countries'. US President Obama during Africa visit, The Age 13/07/09

8.1   Introduction

This chapter focuses on exploring the state of good governance in rural Bangladesh. The present position of the main four components of good governance namely: accountability, transparency, predictability and participation, will be assessed by analysing the environment of people's participation in local development programs. Finally this chapter will explore the gap between the theory and practice of people's participation for good governance. Theories that conceptualise the idea of good governance and were introduced in the developing countries for poverty eradication, have been examined through practical study in this research.

To explore those objectives, this chapter is divided into two sections. The first section discusses the position of all components of good governance. The state of accountability, transparency, legitimacy and participation is determined by analysing comments of different stakeholders responsible for establishing good local governance in Bangladesh. The second section discusses the position of good governance in rural Bangladesh. The four categories of good governance discussed in chapter two are examined in relation to the findings of the previous section, thereby indicating the good governance position in rural Bangladesh.

8.2   Present Position of Good Governance Components in Bangladesh

Several initiatives have been incorporated to ensure accountability, transparency, legitimacy and participation in delivering services in rural Bangladesh (Sarker 2003). Comments of government officials, elected representatives and local people regarding accountability, transparency, legitimacy and participation have been triangulated and constantly compared with related theories to find out the existent position of these elements. Secondary sources of data, like official documents and reports, are also incorporated and contrasted for a clearer picture of good local governance.

8.2.1 Position of Accountability

Accountability of the local service providers, particularly social accountability, has been a major issue in developing countries in ensuring good local governance (Khan 2000; Mehrotra 2006). Social accountability mechanisms include a wide range of tools, methods, and strategies that 'involve ordinary citizens and civil society' in the process of allocating, tracking and monitoring the use of public resources (Sirker & Cosic 2007, p. 7). Researchers argued that social accountability confirm direct accountability relationships between people and the government and puts them into establishing good governance (Sirker & Cosic 2007).

However, different actors like government officials, elected representatives and local beneficiaries in rural Bangladesh have perceived the issue of accountability in different ways. Some of them believe there are sufficient mechanisms for ensuring accountability; others do not.

Government officials both from ministry and field levels believe local people watch all activities of the providers and mainly they ensure the accountability through public representatives. Everyone in the system is in a chain of accountability. When they were asked, during interviews, how they ensure accountability, they replied almost in the same tone:

> *We are always open for locals. We appreciate their suggestions if they have any. In Bangladesh, people are very curious about any activity. They always monitor our activities (i.e. the activities of the officials). People easily identify the corrupted officials, and they try to prevent this corruption. So in our project we always involve people's representatives throughout the project life (interviewee 3.3).*

> *The Upazila chairman cannot work alone. All the decisions are taken by the Parishad [council]. So the Upazila chairman is accountable to the other UP chairmen [member of the council]. In the same way, the UP chairmen are accountable to the UP members, and UP members are accountable to the bottom I mean to the locals. So it is a chain of accountability, which is rooted within the local people. I think there is no problem with the present system [to ensure accountability] (interviewee 9.1).*

However, this chain of accountability is not always in as much harmony as officials have opined. It is not ensuring accountability, as the chain is not functioning smoothly because of the noncooperation of elected leaders (as officials perceived). Government officials, working as chief executive at the Upazila level have argued that public representatives are not accountable to the local people for their responsibilities and functions.

> *…they [representatives] are not performing their duty. They think if they disclose everything that will make it harder to do their work, and may also be their corruption. You know Most of the representatives are corrupt; low [almost illiterate] educated and corrupt. We always try to control their capacity for malpractice (interviewee 5.1).*

> *In my experience, I do not think public representatives do work or are interested to involve the mass of the people. They don't perform any service properly that is delegated*

to them. Such as: TR [test relief] works for vulnerable groups or for adults, distributing food for works etc. If we don't monitor them, they appropriate all funds. In my opinion, every Upazila [council] should get more controlling power over the Union Parishad (interviewee 5.1).

However, this blame of not maintaining accountability by the representatives is not applied in all situations. Interestingly this blame is overlooked by mid-level government officials when representatives serve their [officials'] purposes. As one Upazila Engineer argued that:

I think people representatives are perfectly representing their people, and they are perfectly representing to get a better result. These people representatives, like MPs or Chairmen, are not only engaged directly in the project they also help us to get more projects. Like our MP helped us to get more projects from central (selecting this Market for development) by pursuing [these] at the head office, so sometimes we follow his requests. He also helped us to overcome any problem to manage local people if they protest against any development works. Nowadays, both the government and the donors are emphasising the involvement of local representatives in all government programs, and we are doing so. It helps both of us (interviewee 3.3).

On the other hand, *elected representatives* mentioned that they overlook the accountability of their duties, particularly to the local people; rather they are more accountable to the upwards because the local government officials hold the control of fund and authority directly or indirectly.

Public representatives should have more controlling authority over the officials and funds. If we had enough controlling power over project fund, we could have taken a decision according to the people's choice (interviewee 2.1).

The officials are the main barrier as they don't listen to us. They perform the development works according to their discretion. They should be accountable to the local elected representatives (interviewee 2.2).

None of the chairmen dare to go against the officials. To go against the officers (Upazila officials) means you (a chairman) will get less projects and services from the government, because they maintain all official correspondences with the central office. A chairman doesn't correspond directly with the high offices or with the central ones. Moreover, all chairmen are not the same [qualified] (interviewee 2.3).

Local people mostly from high socio-economic background, on the contrary, pointed out that government and elected officials are not accountable for their jobs. According to them, the contractors for providing services do not even listen to them because these contractors maintain illicit relations with the government officials and elected leaders. Moreover, elected representatives also maintain good relations with the government officials to share illegal funds amongst themselves.

Local leaders or bureaucrats are not accountable to us. Actually they were never accountable to us for their jobs. We can change a chairman after five years, i.e. through election. But where is a good candidate? Those who are good are penniless. They have no capacity to spend money for election. Even if a good person got elected, he would become changed after holding that chair (interviewee 1.1.1).

Of course we wanted to participate all along in the program but nobody called us. We elected our leader to speak for us, but he serves the purpose of officials (interviewee 1.1.1).

...the contractor did not work properly. But, this is obvious: those contractors are always dodgy. They are thieves. They steal public money. They share the illegal money with the officials (interviewee 1.1.2).

Sometimes officials deliberately overlook the accountability mechanism to conceal their corruption. Like in the education department, ATEOs (Assistant Thana [now Upazila] Education Officer) are responsible for visiting government schools regularly and sending feedback to the higher authorities. Higher authorities make decisions on the basis of these reports, but it is not happening in that way.

When *senior government officials* responsible for primary education were asked to describe their selection process for any development projects in this sector, they replied:

These types of activities start with a selection process. I asked my ATEOs to select schools that need emergency repairs or new building construction. At their end, they select the schools and prepare a list, which we then send to the district office. On the basis of fund allocation, the Upazila Engineer then conducts the construction work. The SMCs do help them according to the demand of the situation (interviewee 4.3).

Our education officers at Upazila or district levels are visiting the site frequently and send us reports. The staff members of my office are also visiting from one corner to other of the country to find faults. If we find any anomalies we bring it to the notice of the appropriate authority for rectification (interviewee 8.2).

Local student's guardians, mostly from high socio-economic background, on the contrary, spoke of a different story. The local student guardians argued that they do not see any accountability of government officials, as staff members of the education department do not pay visits to the local school, especially to select any school for development. Members of the School Management Committees also spoke against the government officials in the education department for overlooking their accountability by ignoring their duties.

ATEOs don't visit here regularly, rather they send an inspection sheet and we fill it up on their behalf. They then submit it to their bosses and submit TA (transport allowance) bill for inspecting schools (interviewee 7.1).

He [engineer] did not even come here to see the works. He sent his man on his behalf to look after the works. So we didn't get a chance to put any complaints (interviewee 7.1).

I did not see any consulting firm or ministry personnel visiting here to evaluate the development works (interviewee 7.1).

As with government officials, *local representatives* also deliberately overlook their accountability. The level of corruption is so rampant that elected representatives often do not care about the support of local people for their future election; rather most of them engage in big

business with the capital that they illegally earned during their five-year tenure. In fact, to perform all private businesses, public representatives need lot of money, which they earn through corruption and misuse of local funds, joining with local bureaucrats. These representatives also use local bureaucrats as a shield to bypass accountability when local people complain against any low quality works. As one shopkeeper confided during interview:

> When we asked him about the low quality works/ unplanned works he pointed to local engineers as the scapegoat. …chairman did not care about perfection of the work, he only cared about the amount of money involved in the activities, because more money means more percentage (percentage of bribe for final report) (interviewee 1.1.1).

However, *elected representatives* mentioned the imbalance between their poor economic condition and huge social liability, which inclined them to overlook their accountability. The elected representatives from both rich and poor background mainly mentioned their poor salary cause of overlooking accountability.

> People are happy if we can donate money for them. You know, presently we are getting 750 taka, but we spent almost 15 thousand in a month, the government should increase this honorarium (interviewee 2.1).

> The chairmen also need money for election and for everyday public functions. For example, I [a chairman] spent 1 millions taka during the last election, which will be much more during the next election. This money is spent mostly for activists who work for me to motivate (buy/ pursue) voters. Moreover I need at least 500 taka everyday to donate for someone's wedding or for purchasing cloths or for something else otherwise I will lose my popularity. So, chairmen also need some unseen earnings. Every person in Bangladesh knows all these facts. Where will the rural people go for remedy? People believe being an officer means he will take a percentage (money as bribe) from all government projects. So they do not want to know details of the budget and don't want to be involved in any projects. They are simply happy to see the marginal outcome if it doesn't cause further difficulties (interviewee 2.3).

On the other hand *local people* from high economic and education background saw things differently. Though theoretically elected representatives are accountable to the people through the voting right of the local stakeholders, this is not reflected in their thinking once election are over. Nevertheless, elections are not very frequent in Bangladesh local government; the interval is five years, which is enough time to earn big capital illegally.

> Actually, He does not care whether he will be elected for the second time or not, because what he earned during the last five years is enough for the rest of his life (present chairman against former chairman) (interviewee 2.1).

Some *local people* were also found to be sympathetic to the poor salary of the chairmen. Local people also believe that representatives need more money for their day-to-day functions to keep their accountability high. Government officials also admitted the poor salary and said they are going to increase the salary.

> Our Chairman is not that dodgy like other Chairmen, but he needs some money to distribute for his own purposes and paying for services to us like arbitration (interviewee 1.3.1).

We are [planning] increasing the remuneration for the UP chairmen, as they are getting more responsibility for local development implementation (interviewee 9.1).

One government official working in executive level at Upazila level also spoke about the rural socio-economic environment, which indirectly allows corruption by overlooking accountability.

Do you think a chairman is elected for his honesty or integrity? In rural Bangladesh a person gets elected by dint of his money not by virtue of honesty. The candidate who has ability to distribute more money he gets more votes [elected] by the local people. This issue of concern is also influencing the local representatives to be corrupted –more money more votes (interviewee 5.2).

Some *ministerial officials*, conversely, found themselves frustrated about ensuring accountability because of inaction in connection with their inspection reports. Government officials from the Department of Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation (IMED) who are responsible for the final evaluation of any aid assisted projects at the field levels argued that their evaluation reports are not recognised by the relevant authority. According to them if their reports were properly valued and action taken, then accountability could stand confirmed.

We do monitor all rural development projects time and again, and we prepare a report on the basis of our inspection, but nobody reads it. Everybody cares about the accuracy of financial expenditure, nothing about the people's participation or use of the development works (interviewee 10.1).

Local people, however, have no trust in such monitoring or cross verifying mechanisms to ensure accountability. Local people believe all the government officials are alike and involved in corruption, evading accountability. Local people mainly from middle economic and education settings complained that the officials responsible for monitoring or evaluation are not also accountable for their duties; they are also involved in the chain of corruption.

If we do not provide a certificate they will prepare a false certificate, because no one is verifying it. The authority [official] who is responsible for verification is involved in corruption too (interviewee 7.2).

I did not see any consulting firm or ministry personnel visiting here to evaluate the development works (interviewee 7.1).

Even *government officials* from one department do not trust in officials from other departments. At the Upazila level, the UNO and the Engineer have the authority to maintain the fund, which privileges them to control all development functions. Hence, officials from other departments do not trust them and accused them for involvement in corruption bypassing their accountability. Like one Upazila Education officer said against the same rank official:

No, we don't. All functions are performed by the Upazila Engineer and his collaborator – the contractor. I think you have seen the worst quality of the building and furniture they provided. This engineer is the worst (corrupted) one I have ever seen in my life. They constructed such a building that will not last for five years; it started cracking at once. The plaster is falling out from the wall, and the furniture is damaged virtually before being used (interviewee 4.2).

From the above analysis it is revealed that the accountability mechanisms in rural Bangladesh are not functioning properly. In representative democracy, while elected representatives should hold the government officials accountable for their services (Mollah 2008), in rural Bangladesh these representatives are overlooking this issue. The controlling power over funds and authority makes the representatives dependent on the local government officials, which consequently has inclined them to overlook the accountability of the government officials. Moreover, there is no mechanism to make the government officials directly accountable to the local people. Actually, as the World Bank observed, that too little attention has been given to hold government and elected officials accountable in Bangladesh (World Bank 2002b).

8.2.2 Position of Transparency

Transparency of local government development programs is an important issue. For the establishment of good governance, accountability must be accompanied by transparency, as such, 'governmental actions and operations must be visible to those directly or indirectly affected by them' (Zafarullah & Huque 2001, p. 1394). In this regard *ministerial government officials*, during interviews, argued that all of their activities are transparent to the local people as they make government programs transparent to people's representatives.

> *We cannot provide details about the project to all the people. We usually inform the local representative about it, and it's their responsibility (representatives) to inform the mass of people. The overall information about the project is depicted in the signboard (interviewee 3.1).*

> *... every decision for the Upazila is made in the UDCC meeting, so it is transparent, nothing fishy. The only problem is conducting regular elections [for Upazila], that we are expecting [to organise] at the end of this year. Furthermore, this time we are planning for a post of a male vice-chairman and a female vice-chairman for the Upazila Parishad, which will make the Upazila Parishad more accountable and transparent (interviewee 9.1).*

Similarly, *local elected representatives* also claimed that their activities are transparent to the local people.

> *If people want to know anything about the project I am ready to disclose it to them, but that depends on the extent of the information that I have been given by the officials or higher offices. Very often, we cannot understand the calculation and planning sketches of the engineers. We just believe what they say to us (interviewee 2.1).*

Some *government officials* working at the Upazila level mentioned their limitations in and reservation about not being transparent in relation to everything. They indicated government secret processes, which may hamper government interest; they only follow government instructions to be transparent as instructed by the government. One Upazila Engineer interviewed claimed that:

> *The schedule of work is an official document, which cannot be open to people before finalisation of the tender. Nevertheless, if any person is interested he can collect a*

photocopy from my office or he can collect it from the contractor. We are always open for locals. We appreciate their suggestions if they have any (interviewee 3.3).

Local elected representatives from high socio-economic background said the reverse. According to them, government officials are not transparent as they do not inform them of everything. Even the local management committee (SMC) from similar background made similar claims as the representatives:

… the officials also do not disclose all the information and budget details to us; so how will we inform people about planning or budget when we are not sufficiently informed. Public representatives should have more controlling authority over the officials and funds (interviewee 2.1).

Actually, in most cases we do not know anything about the selection process. When they select a school, and when they send a proposal to the Department [of Primary Education], these are not our concern. We know about the project when we get a letter from the Upazila office that our school has been included in a project (interviewee 7.1).

As with representatives and the elected management committee, *local people* mostly from high socio-economic and education background argued that nothing is transparent to them. Local people also complain against elected representatives for not being transparent to them. Local people claimed that nothing is transparent to them as they have no access to the local government offices.

We want to know all about the planning and budget from our representatives or officials. But none of them provide any information. When I asked for a work-schedule from the supplier he replied that is with the Engineer; then I went to Upazila Engineer office and collected a copy by paying a bribe to an office staff member when an Assistant Engineer refused to supply me a spare copy (interviewee 1.1.1).

They hung a signboard that was in English, same as their schedule [though very costly to get hold of one from Upazila office] of works (interviewee 1.2.1).

I asked our Ward Member to bring a copy of the work-schedule but he failed. He went to Upazila and had a cup of tea with the officials, and that's it. Our ward member is a good for nothing (interviewee 1.2.1).

However some *local people* from low socio-economic background were found a kind of careless about the transparency of government functions. According to one student guardian:

We only know about construction of two classrooms and furniture. This is a government function; we do not have any chance to know details about the planning and budgeting. We selected a president who is looking into it (interviewee 1.3.2).

Interestingly, while many people are frustrated and do not want to know anything about development programs, many other (mostly from high educated and socio-economic condition) were found who wanted to get detailed information regarding any development programs that affect them. However, in most cases *local people* fail to collect any official documents.

We want to know all about the planning and budget from our representatives or officials. But none of them provide any information. When I asked for a work-schedule from the

supplier he replied that is with the Engineer; then I went to Upazila Engineer office and collected a copy paying bribe to an office staff when an Assistant Engineer refused to supply me a spare copy (interviewee 1.1.1).

Sometimes people or their representatives do not want to get any more information from the government officials due to fear of being regarded as cynical and of losing relationship with the high-ups. They said that high officials and local MPs feel annoyed if they are asked for information, so they do not press them to disclose everything in return for keeping good relation with them, which consequently helps them to get further funds.

A good relation with the MP, or the UNO or the Education Officer, of course, helps to select a school for major works (interviewee 7.1).

Same as with the engineers; if I had a bad relation with the engineer, he would not bring any project to me in future. So we always keep the engineers satisfied by following their instructions. Even, sometimes, the contractors are also very powerful. These contractors have very good relations with the officials and the MPs. To annoy a contractor means to annoy the officials (interviewee 2.1).

The above discussion thus exposed that while government officials and representatives have claimed the transparency of their works, local people have claimed differently. However, it is found that many local people, mainly from higher educational and socio-economic backgrounds are now aware about their rights in local developments, and they wish to be informed of all activities that affect their lives. Though this is a positive sign, the Government of Bangladesh needs to remove some structural barriers to make government functions more transparent (Azmat 2007; World Bank 2002b). The World Bank has asserted that:

'The Official Secrets Act makes unauthorized disclosure a criminal offence…If the Bangladesh citizen is to benefit from accountable government freedom-of-information legislation must be enacted, as is happening more and more elsewhere in the world' (World Bank 2002b, p. xxii).

8.2.3 Position of Predictability

Predictability in practice refers to the existence of proper laws, and its fair practice to make any development fruitful to the people. Through the interviews it was found that there are no complete laws or legal bindings to inform local beneficiaries about any development programs. At the same time there is no clear or functional legal system to deal with complaints by the local people. While questions were asked of the local beneficiaries whether they placed any complaint about any anomalies against anybody, they replied in the negative. Most of the *local people* from rich economic and education settings said that there is no appropriate authority to listen their complaints.

Where will we go to complain? We can go to the UNO or at best to the DC, but all these bureaucrats favour Chairmen. They don't listen to us (interviewee 1.2.1).

We need a court at Upazila level or some commission who will listen to us; because, officials and Chairmen engage in corruption by supporting each other. So when we bring any complaint against any Chairman he is always acquitted from that charge after an incomplete investigation done by the UNO. They are birds of the same feather (interviewee 1.1.1).

Local people also, mainly from low educated and economic background showed resentment, mentioning their frustration that they do not want to make complaints, because there are no remedies for these.

Why would I go (for lodging a complaint)? Do you think government doesn't know who is involved in corruption? How will the government charge one (officer) while there is no document? Who will come to investigate he will take another percentage (bribe). It is a chain of corruption; though there are a few exceptions (honest bureaucrats), like the present Education officer, he doesn't take his percentage. But that is only on his own part; he cannot even prevent his subordinates from taking bribes (interviewee 2.3).

On the other hand, *government officials*, even was working as an executive at the Upazila level commented on their limitations. They spoke of their handicap regarding complying with complaints, specifically in the laws.

Believe it or not, the UDCC has no control to take or initiate any action against the negligence of any member such as the Education officer for not doing a proper inspection of the construction works or services, Upazila Engineer for certifying bad services or construction works. The government should provide me more controlling authority, so that I can mitigate these anomalies (interviewee 5.3).

Local *elected representatives*, from high socio-economic background conversely, argued that local people are very simple and happy with a little achievement; they do not want to place any complaints.

You know about rural Bangladesh, where wants are unlimited. There are lots of things we need to do at village level. People are always happy whatever is done for them. They never come forward to complain against anything or anybody even if they have found any anomalies (interviewee 2.1).

However*, local stakeholders* mentioned their inaction in placing a complaint is not the reason mentioned by their elected leaders. The case is somehow different.

If I protest against the anomalies then the Chairman will impose higher tax on me (one shopkeeper said during interview) (interviewee 1.2.1).

Local people also mentioned the unfavourable environment in which to seek remedy. They suggested they should be invited during the visits of the monitoring authority, which may help them to express their grievance against any anomalies. Local beneficiaries from high socio-economic background argued that they can not place any complaints because the high-ups are always surrounded by the wrongdoers in question.

District officials should call local people to be present during their inspections. So the local people will get scope to lodge any complaint (interviewee 1.1.2).

When foreigners come they come with the local engineer and chairman so we cannot say anything against them (interviewee 1.2.1).

Elected representatives are also frustrated the limitation in their power to exercise their duty against political and government high-ups. They are frustrated over the malpractice and misuse of power of the wealthier service providers. They said that if anyone wants to establish the rule of law, by maintaining the schedule of work, service providers use their muscle and economic power to prevent that. As one guardian representative from remote schools' management committee mentioned:

> *I bought the schedule from the Engineering office at Upazila Headquarter and compared all works with the materials supplied by the contractor; most of the items were misappropriated. The contractor came with police to threaten to file an extortion case against me unless I refrained from poking my nose into his business...All of my family members asked me to withdraw from this business, and I did so for the sake of my security...I told it to the Education Officer. He has no capacity/authority to do anything against the contractor or the Engineers (interviewee 7.2).*

Because of all these malfunctioning systems and practices, local people from all socio-economic background are very frustrated over the rule of law and protection of their right in development programs that affect them.

> *There is no remedy; only God can change these contractors and engineers into better men (interviewee 7.2).*

> *Only Allah [God] can help us, if he changes the mind of these corrupted people then we will get better service (interviewee 7.1).*

Thus, from the above analysis, it is revealed that the presence of rule of law in rural Bangladesh is almost absent. Local government officials, at the one end, indicated an absence of legal authority to deal with any anomalies. At the other end, local people are now becoming frustrated with inaction over their complaints against any anomalies.

8.2.4   Position of People's Participation

People in rural Bangladesh are participating in local development programs mainly through their elected representatives. The idea of direct participation of people is not clear among any groups of stakeholders like officials, elected leaders and local beneficiaries. It is found that local people do not consider a government program as their own program. They believe the government program is the officials' program, and that it will cause suffering to them. Most of the rural people were found to be not interested in joining in local government programs if they are not called by their elected representative to do so. Local people actually are not well organised as a group to establish their voice in local development programs, and thus they mostly depend on their local leader for any call to participate. *Local people* mostly from low

socio-economic and education background said they need a leader who will lead and allocate duties among them for the local development programs.

> *If officials or our MP/chairmen ask us to participate, we will join with them, and our job will be scheduled by them. We don't know how we will join; rather we will do the job that they will seek from us (interviewee 1.2.2).*

> *If our chairman tells us to pay voluntary service we all are ready to do that (interviewee 1.3.2).*

Rural people mainly are less-educated and poor are depended on the local leaders as the commanding force to organise them to join together and participate in local development programs. It is observed that where people are more grouped and organised under the leadership of elected representatives, a better outcome has been achieved.

> *Because, our chairman [previous UP chairman now president of the SMC, but people still call his as chairman] is a good person, and always tries to help us with everything; we trust in his activities. What he does, he does for our wellbeing (interviewee 1.3.2).*

> *The local MP and officials came on the day of inauguration of the new building. We chanted repeatedly for good quality furniture. Actually our chairman told us to demand that, and we did so. The contractor changed all of the bad furniture (interviewee 1.3.2).*

The formation of groups is not related to the level of education or socio economic condition; rather the network is developed on the basis of the honest leadership and community trust in that leadership. Like in the example mentioned above in low socio-economic condition, people from highly educated and socio-economic condition also wait for a call from leaders:

> *Our present chairman had a shop in the market, and he led us in protesting against the work (interviewee 1.1.1).*

> *Of course we wanted to participate all along in the program but nobody called us. We elected our leader to speak for us, but he serves the purpose of officials (interviewee 1.1.1).*

> *…the Chairman has shifted his business to the new market, and we are all trying to follow him (interviewee 1.1.1).*

However, local communities have less trust in their elected MPs than their UP representatives, especially when this chairman works in favour of them.

> *You know, the development outcome/ consequences of the development works affect us. This type of work is being selected for our benefit, but we don't have any voice. Our present chairman was the biggest merchant in this market. He went to the MP to change the planning, but the MP listened to the Contractor because that Contractor was a donor for that MP's election. Now, the Chairman has shifted his business to the new market, and we are all trying to follow him; because, nowadays we don't get enough customers (interviewee 1.1.1).*

However, most *local elected leaders* answered differently when they were asked to share knowledge or views with local beneficiaries so as to select priority programs, or when asked to

directly involve local people. They do not believe in direct participation or participation through other community leaders. It is found that elected representatives highly distrust other leadership, as they do not want participation of any other leaders except elected ones. Some public leaders are also concerned about the illegal nexus between local bureaucrats and local non-elected leaders.

> *My rival/ opponent [person] always goes to the bureaucrats and make them annoyed against me (interviewee 2.1).*

> *I don't want more independent management committees like SMC; because of SMC we the chairmen have lost our authority over the local school. But we know which teacher is good and who is not. I think, peoples' participation means our (elected chairman) participation. It is not possible to involve all people with a project (interviewee 2.2).*

Local government officials conversely said about the existing culture that it creates a gap between the elected representatives and the local stakeholders, which ultimately inhibits leaders from leading and organising local people. According to them, the culture of rural Bangladesh and the system also do not properly support people's participation in local development programs.

> *...need to consider our socio-cultural environment at rural levels. Once a chairman gets elected, he is becoming a part of the government –the administration; he is no longer a part of the people. On the other hand, people are also not accepting him as their own. There is no trust in each other (interviewee 5.1).*

> *Look this is about a governance system in third world countries –even more at rural level. Hence there are manifold problems. The main problem, in my thinking, is the concern about it. I am in doubt, whether the government is concerned about people's participation. As a government of third world countries the government has many other big problems like poverty. We the government bureaucrats are trying to increase the span of income generation for the rural people. Suppose we worked hard to develop a growth centre to develop business at the farmers' door level; the public representatives, however, are not working as well to boost the business in the growth centres (interviewee 5.1).*

Among other issues, the role of civil society groups is found to be significant in people's participation. There are a number of NGOs found in every Upazila in Bangladesh, which are working as civil society groups for the empowerment of poor people. Hence, NGOs could play a suitable role for the empowerment of the rural poor. During interviews when *local beneficiaries* were asked about the involvement of local NGOs to inform them about the program, some (*mostly from mid socio-economic and educated background*) opined positively:

> *NGO managers are not that bureaucratic. I think if they have any information they will provide that to us (interviewee 1.2.2).*

> *If this work could be done by the NGO, then we might get a better outcome. Because they are not like engineers; they discuss with us before implementing any works (interviewee 1.2.1).*

One thing is good with NGO- they are easy going. I think NGO managers are not that bureaucratic. I think if they have any information they will provide that to us (interviewee 1.2.2).

In contrast, some *local people mostly from high socio-economic background* argued against the involvement of NGOs in local development programs. Local people are also suspicious about the nexus between NGOs and elected leaders or with government officials. Many local people were found to be annoyed with NGOs for their microcredit business in their society.

We don't need an NGO, we don't need any engineer, and we can do better if the government would delegate the fund into our hands [everyone laughing, someone whispering good daydreams] (interviewee 1.2.1).

NGOs are busy with their micro credit business and they always support the officials and Chairman. I think, they will not do anything better than this (interviewee 1.2.2).

Elected representatives, on the other hand, spoke strongly against these NGOs. According to them, local NGOs are mainly looking into the microfinance activities, and thus they should not be involved with the local government programs.

I don't think so. NGOs are just doing business by exploiting poor people. They are more corrupted than government bureaucrats (interviewee 2.1).

The local NGOs have no affiliation with development programs. They don't even aware of government system of work. They only know about microcredit. Though they are sponsoring some primary schools but those are not running very well. The students whose parents are credit borrower from BRAC, they got admission in that school (interviewee 2.2).

Government officials also had the same view as the representatives. During interview one executive official mentioned NGOs at the rural level are not interested and have no integrity to be involved in government programs.

Never, they have any idea or expertise to conduct government programs. They are making poor people poorer; they are doing 'interest' [taking high interest] business. We are professionals in providing services. We are doing this for a long time. Unlike NGOs we don't support donors, we support our government. We full heartedly want the development of our government, but NGOs are traders –they show the negative side of our country to the world. In the name of helping people they are doing business (interviewee 5.3).

Most other *government officials* interviewed, however, were ambivalent: neither fully supporting nor fully opposing the inclusion of local NGOs. According to some of them, NGOs might serve better than elected representatives, while some of them expressed doubt about the inclusion of local NGOs.

Sometimes we get better results if it is done by the NGO instead of Union Parishad. However, except established NGOs, others are very crooked. NGO and we [government] implemented some successful projects like 'sanitation program' and 'nutrition program'. So I think NGOs can help us to provide services (interviewee 5.1).

I am not sure of it. The NGOs are also corrupt. The only thing they (NGOs) are doing better is depolarising the power at the local level. The people united by the 'samity' [association of microcredit borrowers] are now a big source of power. And specially most of the women

members in the Union Parishad are coming from these Samities (associations). The other positive side of the NGOs is that they are apolitical in selecting poor people [to relieve], while the MPs forced us to distribute relief materials only to their political fellows, whether they deserve it or not. But NGOs also have limitations. They impose their views over the borrowers. And people cannot say anything against them because of their liabilities –they borrowed money from them. In this sense, in my view, rural Bangladesh is not still ready to implement your theory of participation (interviewee 5.2).

The above findings make it clear that the awareness of citizenry rights is high in highly educated areas and low in less educated areas. However, effective participation was found to mainly depend on the relation of trust between the leader and the local community. If the relation is trustworthy, they can control the development programs. Local people, whatever the level of their education, always wait for a leader to lead them for change. For example, in Tentulia, with the lead of the SMC president, local student guardians forced the supplier to change the furniture. Similarly, in Dhamrai, with the lead of local chairmen, local businessmen rejected the development and are moving to the new market.

8.3   Quality of Governance

Through the analysis of the above findings, it is observed that local people are, practically, participating indirectly in local development programs. In the development of growth centres, the local elected Union Parishad chairman, who is also a president of the local market management committee, is participating on behalf of the businessmen. At the same time the School Management Committee represents local guardians in the development of schools.

It is found that public representatives do not work for people all the time; rather, in most cases, they work for local bureaucrats. Three main reasons for doing that are: firstly, the inspection authority of government bureaucrats over the Parishad's (Council) activity (Ahmad 1991). This system has inclined local representatives, mainly corrupted ones whose fault may surface through the inspection, to follow the order of the local bureaucrats. Secondly, keeping good relations with local bureaucrats means use of official power to control opponents/ protesters against any corruption or unlawful/ unwanted activities (Blair 2005; Lewis & Hossain 2008). This power also helps the elected leaders to bring more funds for its Parishad. Thirdly, to share illegal money with the bureaucrats, as the elected representatives need much money for making election and everyday donations among the local poor people. Thus by dint of the illicit nexus with local elected leaders, local government authorities are playing the most important role in the delivering services to the local communities. Nevertheless, in rural Bangladesh, when a leader is elected for local governing bodies, they behave like government officials. At the other end, local people also have conventionally relied on this patron-client structure generally for

economic advancements and particularly for employment, food, shelter and clothing (Blair 2005).

Given that the government and elected officials are behaving like patrons, local people are not aware and united enough to make them accountable for their performances. Though Bangladesh is highly regarded as a country of strong civil society groups because of presence of NGO groups in all corners of the country (Ahmad 2003; Lewis 2004), that has not had any impact on the local government service delivery systems. While NGOs are working with local government bodies they have performed well (World Bank 1999), but generally they do not come forward to empower people to get control of local government development programs, neither do they facilitate people to hold the governing body accountable to the bottom (Parnini 2006). However, it is found during interviews that many local people support the involvement of NGOs with local development programs, and they believe that NGOs can bring good for the development that affects them. Conversely local leaders are found to be dead against the involvement of NGOs. Mainly they fear the alternative leadership which is actually growing through the NGOs at rural levels (Lewis & Hossain 2008). It is documented in rural local government bodies, that women elected members in the UPs mainly come from NGO backgrounds or are supported by the local NGOs (Haque 2002). Moreover, because of NGOs, poor people who earlier borrowed from local elected elites (Blair 2005) do not borrow money from them now, thus they are voting against the corrupted leaders (Haque 2002).

Furthermore, available laws regarding ensuring participation are also found to be inadequate. Any process and procedures, mainly for placing a complaint against any anomalies by any section are found to be insufficiently indicated. Section-61 of the existent Upazila Parishad Act-1998 illustrated the hearing of any appeal (GOB 1999), but did not mentioned details, like: where to go, whom to go to for placing complaints. Because the local government is predominately run by the nexus between elected and government officials, the poor are not getting any remedy from this legal instrument. Moreover, laws related to local government (Local Government Ordinance, 1983, or Upazila Parishad Act, 1998) do not mention anything about the curbing measure for forceful disentanglement of local representatives or people with local development programs.

The involvement of local MPs, furthermore, make the rule of law more complex, as any complaints are regarded as a political issue and handled by the political muscles and wealth where the poor and other vulnerable group are helpless. It is well known in rural Bangladesh that all the elected representatives have their own '*mastaans*' (criminal bodies) to handle any complaints against them; even state police also help these corrupted representatives (Blair 2005;

Prothom Alo 2009). When these lines were been written (29 July 2009), some '*mastaans*' of a UP chairman beat the complainers who placed a complaint with the District government official against the stealing of relief (Prothom Alo 2009). On the same date, another UP chairman was asked by the government officials to pay double what he stole from the relief goods (The Daily Star 2009). Thus local intended beneficiaries have 'no redress against the state's failure to provide essential services or its violations of human rights' (Blair 2005, p. 925).

Indeed the culture of participation is almost absent in rural Bangladesh, and the main reason for that is lack of involvement of the local with politics which could organise them as a pressure group (Jabbra & Dwivedi 2004; Thorlind 1999). In the absence of such an organised pressure group, no complaint stands against any anomalies in delivering services, and state resources are distributed among the rich corrupted elites. Asian Development Bank mentioned that:

> 'in most UPs [Union Parishads] decisions about resource allocation and the selection of schemes under the ADP [annual development programs] are made in closed meeting of the UP, perhaps after informal consultation with a limited number of trusted individuals in the area' (ADB 2004a, p. 21).

The above mentioned anomalies and violation of laws can only be brought into light through a transparent system of service delivery by the governing bodies. No doubt, transparency is equally important to ensure accountability and enhance good local governance (Khan 2000). But in Bangladesh, local government work is also not transparent. The 'Government Secrecy Act-1923' has been used as shield by the officials for not disclosing information to the people (World Bank 2002b). But now local development programs are theoretically implemented by the people's representatives; in this sense, everything ought to be transparent to the people via their representatives. But this study reveals a different picture. Everything is in the hands of government officials, and representatives while nothing is transparent to the people. To make all activities transparent to the people, the Government of Bangladesh recently has introduced a 'citizen charter', which should describe all the functions, cost, delivery time etc. A citizen charter should be posted in the Union Parishad Office and high officials will monitor that (Majumder 2009). But during the field visit it was not found in any of the offices. Nonetheless, in rural Bangladesh where 80 percent people are illiterate, the effectiveness of a written charter might be considered questionable. However, after 86 years (counted from 1923 when The Official Secrecy Act introduced), on 1 July 2009, the government enacted the 'Right to Information act', which addressed government officials to be transparent to the people (Haque 2009; Majumder 2009). But again the question of illiteracy and the mindset of officials regarding providing information to the people is a big hurdle. In a country like Bangladesh, 'with a high rate of illiteracy, RTI [right to information act] will have a very little impact if the

common people are not acquainted with the procedures of seeking information' (Haque 2009, p. 4). Moreover, where there is no one to listen to complaints from the people in the rural level, the question is: who will monitor all these things? The fact was revealed during the field study, and pointed out by the people, that monitoring is not adequate in any case. The day when higher officials visit for any enquiry, everything is pre-planned to show that everything is well done.

From the above analysis it is clear that participation in the local government development programs is low, that there is little accountability, transparency and predictability. Moreover, all the decisions taken by the governing authority and the budgets are also pumped from the top – down. So if we compare this situation with the four models articulated in chapter 2, undoubtedly it is an authoritarian model of governance, which can be represented in the following figure.

Figure 8.1 Present Model of Governance in Rural Bangladesh
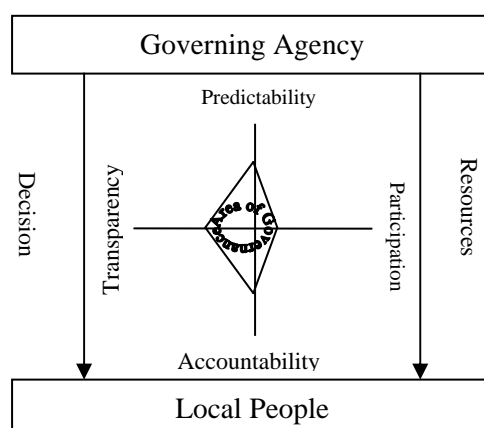
Source: The Author

This finding is consistent with the observation of many international development agencies and researchers, that there is little scope for the people to be effectively engaged in the affairs of local government in Bangladesh (ADB 2004a; Momen, Hossain & Begum 2005; World Bank 1996). The UNDP (2002) pointed out that public participation in development activities is far from being an efficient tool of governance in Bangladesh.

8.4 Gap in Achieving Democratic Model of Good Governance

Like Bangladesh, many other developing countries are also practicing top-down service delivery system (Waheduzzaman 2008a) and thus are following an authoritarian model; on the other hand, most developed countries are following, basically, consulting or involving local people (Akkerman 2003; Gibson, Lacy & Dougherty 2005; Shand & Arnberg 1996) i.e. a kind of bottom-up approach, which is a bureaucratic and political model of governance. In this way,

true bottom-up service delivery is still not even established in many developed societies. But a difference between developed and developing societies is that, while in developed society, the local governance authority is trying to develop appropriate benchmarking for evaluating their quality of governance, and thereby endeavouring to reach the target of achieving democratic governance (Bovaird & Löffler 2002), in developing societies, government like Bangladesh does not understand the quality of present governance and accordingly does not know their means and goals.

Evaluation of Bangladesh local governance in terms of achieving democratic governance reveals that, from the beginning, the local government bodies in Bangladesh experienced significant changes in their structure and in functions, but no significant change in terms of involving people. Particularly, after the independence in 1971, with the change of all six governments, there were changes in local government structures (Panday 2005; Zafarullah & Huque 2001). While these changes were regarded as the instrumental change of local government bodies, in no way did they bring any normative/intrinsic change in their functions. Indeed, these changes never facilitated the local community to make their own decisions and engage themselves in their own programs (Panday 2005). Moreover, because of government mechanisms and the socio-economic culture, people's representatives also never worked for the people. In fact, as Panday pointed out that 'every successive Government of Bangladesh has used the local government bodies to strengthen their own political base in the rural areas, ignoring the principles and importance of decentralization of power to the local level' (2005, p. 20). Nonetheless, the central government and its representatives at the local levels, for their own interests, still are retaining great measures of controlling the people's representatives, excessively taking part in the functions of local governments, and keeping the local people apart from development programs (Bardhan 2002; Panday 2005; Subramaniam 1990). Several research studies have revealed that after all the decentralisation and deregulation processes, the central government is still controlling its substantial role over the local government's affairs instead of delegating it to the bottom i.e. to the local people (ESCAP 2008; Khan 2000; Mallick 2004, p. 86; Panday 2005).

Nine major controlling functions which are articulated in the 'Upazila Parishad Act- 1998' (GOB 1999) are stated below:

1. The National Government exacts legislation on local bodies and formulates detailed rules relating to conduct of election, business, powers and duties of chairmen, assessment of taxes, preparation of budgets, making of contracts, appointment and service matters of local government employments, accounts and audits. Even when local government bodies make regulations, these are to be approved by the central government;

2. The Central Government has the final authority in the determination of the size and boundaries of the local body's territory;
3. The Central Government has the power to decide on the structure and composition of the local bodies;
4. The Central Government substantially controls the personnel system of local bodies, for example: Deputy Commissioners (DC) appoints the secretary in UPs and UNOs appoint *Chowkider* (village police) for UP (Sarker 2006b).
5. The Central Government controls the functional jurisdiction of local bodies. Besides, designated functions (as in ordinance), the government can assign any other function to a local body;
6. Inter-institutional disputes within local body areas are to be settled by the central government;
7. In the field of finance, government supervision and control is wide and strict. In addition to financial control in general, the central government can wield power by reducing or enhancing Grant-in-aid to local bodies; for example: divisional commissioner and DC are authorised to visit development projects and inspect functions of Upazila Parishad and UP (Khan 2000).
8. The central government asserts control and supervision over general administration of local bodies. The central government may order an inquiry into the affairs of a local body generally or into any particular affair either on its own initiative or on an application made by any person to the government; and
9. The central government has the power to dissolve a local body on charge of gross inefficiency, abuse of power, or inability to meet financial obligation.

As a result of sustain all these vital functions, the central government and its representatives at the field levels are still played a substantial role in local government institutions (Ahmad 1991; Sarker 2006b; Zafarullah & Khan 2005). Exercise of these powers by the central government or its field representatives could be considered as a kind of autocratic practice (Blair 2005). Virtually these unequal power distributions are also responsible for creating a hostile and distrustful relation between local government institutions and local government officials.

The international development agencies envisage that practicing democracy at the central level would naturally lead to the gradual emergence of democratic institutions all over the country, but there is no sign of democratic local governance in Bangladesh though centrally it has been practicing democracy for a long time (Waheduzzaman 2008a). In fact the uneven distribution of power between central and local government is passively hindering the progress of democracy at the bottom levels. Moreover, the power structure and social structure of a colonised country, which has established a hostile and distrustful mindset among all actors forwards a good participation, can not be ignored. Thorlind (1999, p. 131) mentioned that:

> The accountability mechanisms between the Bangladeshi people and its elected representatives are non-existent, while the local bureaucracy has very strong influence over the Union Parishad members. As there are no effectively organised political parties [civil society groups] active in the rural areas of Bangladesh.

Analysing the prevailing distinctive situation in rural Bangladesh, it is clear that rural Bangladesh should be considered as a unique case, which requires exclusive tools to foster

effective direct participation. In this sense the argument of different participatory process for different societies is correct: every society needs a different process to make participation effective (OECD 2000). At the same time, views of development agencies working for good governance in Bangladesh are found to be fruitless. If they think the poor *people* in Bangladesh have been developed as *citizens* who are empowered to form a pressure group against local authority, this is a wrong view. Parnini (2006, p. 193) views that:

> A solely western top-down approach of the so-called 'good governance' conditionality prescribed by the donors in Bangladesh could hardly improve the indigenous governance system in Bangladesh. Moreover, the western concept of civil society, meaning only NGOs, can not help genuine civil society to flourish and to have an impact on ensuring the indigenous bottom-up nature of good governance.

This view can also be justified when international development agencies are found endeavouring for participatory budgeting in rural Bangladesh. The currently introduced participatory- budgeting program by the World Bank in several local government bodies in Bangladesh has also been controversial. Where approximately eighty percent of the populace at village level are illiterate, how much they understand about the budgetary calculation and how they establish their voice for making decisions is a major question. All these efforts by the development agencies or government can be considered as just an information process to the people at rural level. But information is not enough for democratic model of governance in developing societies where people are politically, economically and socially disempowered. A supportive statement by Jabbra and Dwivedi (2004, p. 1124) can be mentioned, which pointed that:

> When local culture and traditions are discarded in favour of Western-style management practices, a hodge-podge of two value systems begin to operate…To remedy this situation…the process of globalization will begin to bring political, economic, and social empowerment to the local level, so that developing nations may achieve sustainable participatory development in an equitable and just world.

Hence, in the socio-cultural context of Bangladesh, people need to participate from the beginning to the end of the development programs to be developed as democratic element for the democratic governance.

In achieving effective participation, researchers (Bovaird & Löffler 2002; Wolf 2000) prescribed a table to be followed to get good local governance, which has been presented in the following table in short form, particularly focused on the basic things required by the developing nations.

Table 8.1 Required Practices to Get 'Good Local Governance'

Present practices	Need 'to be practised' for good local governance
Accountability issues	
Benchmarking results, internal processes or organizational performance against other local authorities	Involving stakeholder groups in the definition of governance standards and measurement of performance
focus on quality of service	focus on quality of life, in terms quality of service outcomes for users and other stakeholders
Improving the internal efficiency of local authorities	Improving the external effectiveness of local authorities
Transparency issues	
Reporting systems based on needs of public managers and government oversight bodies	Publishing of performance information based on the needs of stakeholders in the community (social, ethical and environmental reporting)
Use of performance information for control purposes	Use of performance information for encouraging innovation and learning at multiple levels (individual, organizational, networks)
Predictability issues	
Serving the community by producing policies and laws	Enabling the community to plan and manage its own policies and laws
Improving technical efficiency	Improving social efficiency, including equitable distribution of budgets and services
Annual plans, concentrating on current expenditure	Long-term plans, incorporating community plans, capital budget plans and asset management
Participation issues	
Focus on the needs of customers	Activating civil society (through information, consultation and participation) in local policies and management
Separation of politics and administration	Public management as a process of interaction between elected officials, politically appointed officials, ad hoc advisors, career civil servants and external stakeholders
Increasing user satisfaction of local services	Building public trust in local government through transparent processes and accountability and through democratic dialogue

Sources: (Bovaird & Löffler 2002, pp. 21-3; Wolf 2000, pp. 691-2)

Analysis of the practical primary data and secondary documents has shown that the international development agencies and the Government of Bangladesh are still far away from these 'to be practised' issues (Table above 8.1) in pursuing good local governance. The results of

accountability, transparency, predictability and participation do not support the issues of these 'to be practised' for true good governance in rural Bangladesh. While this table envisages shifting complete power to the people for developing good local governance, the findings of this research showed that the power is remaining with government officials and elected representatives. Thus, there is certainly a gap between the theory and practice in achieving good governance. In Bangladesh, democracy at the central level helps in establishing people's own administration through elected representatives. But that is only the commencement of the democracy. True democracy can only be established if elected representatives take initiatives for people-oriented programs, and truly develop local institutions to foster effective people's participation.

8.5   Conclusion

Developed countries and aid agencies are playing a central role as advocates of good governance. In order to receive aid assistance, developing countries are required to comply with development partners' requirements with respect to good governance. To comply with this, different developing democratic countries are trying to establish good governance through people's participation, but still, after almost two decades of effort, these countries remain at the early stage of the participation process, that is, not truly involving local people with local government functions. In Bangladesh, local people have been participating in local government bodies through their representatives for a long time. But these representatives, because of structural and functional mechanisms, except during election periods, do not involve people with the local government's functions.

From the above findings it can be seen that though participation is mandatory in contact between aid agencies and the Government of Bangladesh, there is little people's participation in development programs in rural Bangladesh. Most of the times elected leaders and local bureaucrats only inform local people about local development programs. However, on behalf of the people, elected representatives/ chairmen (for growth centres) and SMC (for schools) are participating in development programs. But this participation is not effective, i.e. does not establish people's choice, for two reasons. First, there is a gap between representatives and the local community, and second there is a gulf between representatives and officials. Representatives do not get full control over development projects. Nevertheless people are not educated and aware enough to form civil society groups, to make their representatives accountable to them.

Even the aid agencies are practicing and nurturing the information process at the expense of engaging the people in rural Bangladesh. While representative-participation and hearing people is effective for western society – where people are educated and highly aware about their rights as citizens – this is not suitable for a poor socio-economic society like Bangladesh. This study reveals that Bangladesh local government, as it remains at the information stage in terms of people's participation, is thus, practicing the Authoritarian Model of governance instead of the Democratic Model of governance. While Bangladesh is practicing democracy centrally, at the local level it is practising a kind of autocratic government. This is undoubtedly a paradox.

The next chapter will recommend remedies to overcome this paradox and conclude the research.

CHAPTER 9. CONCLUSION

'In Third World conditions, Western-style democracy is as much use as a three-piece suit in the desert.'
Anonymous Sudanese military official (White 2006, p. 60)

9.1   Introduction

In this chapter, findings that surfaced in the previous three chapters are analysed collectively to identify ways of reducing, and perhaps overcoming, the barriers to establishing good governance in rural Bangladesh. The main objective of this chapter is to overview the whole research, its preamble, problems discovered by analysing research questions, and probable solutions. To achieve this objective, this chapter is divided into five sections. The first section sketches a brief outline of the research preamble. The second section provides a review of the findings in accordance with research questions. The third section evaluates the conceptual framework prepared in Chapter 4, and helps to develop theories for effective people's participation. The fourth section discusses the present model of people's participation and then recommends a possible solution on the basis of barriers identified through this research. The final section states the contribution, implications, methodological justification and further research areas.

9.2   Outline of the Research Setting

Good governance has emerged as a major tool for poverty eradication (Grindle 2004; Khwaja 2004; Santiso 2003). In other words, good governance ensures an environment fostering accountability, transparency and predictability of development works through maximising people's participation. Consequently this environment helps in establishing pro-people development i.e. development that is used by the highest number of people and boosts the economic backbone of the country (Grindle 2004). People's participation, thus, has appeared as a must for pro-people development. There is a nexus between good governance and people's participation, which are complementary to each other. However, people's participation, particularly in developing countries, is not happening at the expected pace (UNDP 2006b). Hence, practical and thorough research appears to be essential to explore the barriers to people's participation in local development works.

Given this, the main objective of this research was to find out the causes of barriers to people's participation in local government development works. Keeping this main objective to the forefront, other related issues, like the influence of the present attitude of different stakeholders

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towards valuing people's participation, and present mechanisms of people's participation in local government programs, have been included in this study. Finally, the gap between theories and practice regarding good governance has been included as an objective of this research.

To explore causes of the barriers to participation, a number of research studies have been conducted on good local governance and decentralisation in the Bangladesh context, but most of these are confined to the structural and financial issues of Bangladesh local governance. Nonetheless, some of them examine the corruption and violation of laws that hamper good governance. Most of this research concluded that government bureaucrats and politicians have created barriers to people's participation, and are thus slowing the establishment of good local governance (Khan 2000; Morshed 2007; Sarker 2006b; Siddiqui 2005; Zafarullah & Khan 2005). Thus it is necessary to explore how these actors create barriers to people's participation processes in local government programs.

This thesis has discussed the present people's participation processes in Bangladeshi local development programs generally, and particularly in relation to local growth-centre development and government primary school development programs. As effective development outcomes include the use of the outputs of a program, this study also focused on the use of those developments by the expected beneficiaries. Decentralisation of local government in rural Bangladesh has been studied critically, focusing on how these decentralisations and reforms have enhanced local people's participation in local government affairs.

A conceptual framework has been developed in Chapter 4 by reviewing literature related to establishing good governance through people's participation. To test this framework, a case study approach has been used which includes interviews, observation and documentary analysis. These qualitative methods were found effective to explore the organisational context (the official system of people's participation), the cultural context (attitude of different stakeholders to value participation), and the social context (mobilisation and organisation of people in rural Bangladesh). All qualitative data collected from interviews, observation and official documents were then triangulated to answer three research questions.

9.3   Findings in Relation to Research Questions

This section summarises and further analyses the findings of this research to critically answer the research questions outlined in Chapter 1.

9.3.1   Value of Participation

The first research question was: how is people's participation valued by different actors responsible for good governance in Bangladesh?

To answer this, perceptions of different stakeholders that were collected through interviews were analysed through continuous comparison and contrast. An advanced analysis of the findings in Chapter 6 found that the developing socio-culture that builds the attitude of the different actors, works against the creation of the proper environment for establishing good governance in the country.

9.3.1.1   People's participation: devalued by stakeholders

Through the analysis it surfaced that the government officials and public representatives in Bangladesh do value traditional democracy and conform to representative local governance. They believe that elected representatives are solely responsible for ensuring the decisions on behalf of local people. Like some researchers they believe that direct participation is against democracy (John 2001, p. 155) or undermines democracy (Barten et al. 2002). Hence, government officials and public representatives in rural Bangladesh need to change their attitude if they are going to involve local people directly and continuously with the local government programs.

Before 1983, all development works in rural Bangladesh were solely conducted by government officials (Morshed 1997). This monopoly facilitated officials in developing a patron type relation with local leaders and local people (Jamil 2002; Wood 2000). Thus, though government officials are non-voting members in the Parishad, they play a vital role in making decisions in their own favour (Bardhan 2002). This may be one reason for the officials being happy with representative participation instead of having to deal with many people and losing control.

As with bureaucrats, elected leaders' attitudes are also ruler-like: inherited through the legacy of a long history. If we analyse the history of local government in Bangladesh, most elected representatives come from the wealthy and elite families of the society (Bardhan 2002). As such, the mentality of these family members is always like that of a ruler. They do not want to come close to the general public except during election time (ADB 2004a). Most of these elected leaders in rural Bangladesh also see local people as cynical and distrustful (ADB 2004a; Wood 2000). Like many researchers (Holzer & Kloby 2005; King & Martinelli 2005) they believe that local communities are always cynical and distrustful, and they are primarily comfortable with participation from a distance. However, this study shows that, though public leaders believe people are cynical, in practice in rural Bangladesh it is actually the elected

representatives who are cynical and always fearful of rivalry from the local people. In their mind, the people who want to be involved in the development programs are their rivals. Through this study, we found that there are some local people who are distrustful, but more frustrating is that most are not aware of their rights.

Finally, people's choice is not reflected in developing policies because of the distance between elected public leaders and the mass of people. As rural Bangladesh is a very eclectic and stratified society, there is a gap between the elected leaders and the common people (Mahmud 2004). Presently, local leadership is confined within some locally powerful families, and they make or influence decision making by excluding the poor local communities (Wood 2000). Such informal decision-making is often the result of corrupt practices or leads to corrupt practices in rural Bangladesh (ESCAP 2008).

As well as local stakeholders, the international development agencies (IDAs) were also found to be confused in valuing people's participation at local levels in rural Bangladesh. Though the World Bank (1996) defines participation as a process through which people influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources which affect them, this is not reflected in their initiatives for participatory programs. The initiatives of participatory budgeting (ADB 2004a) or participatory evaluation (World Bank 1998) or participatory planning (Parker & Serrano 2000) or participatory rural appraisal (Cornwall 2002) in different local government institutions in rural Bangladesh indicate that local people will only participate either in the planning stage or in the evaluation stage of developments to obtain the highest effectiveness.

These initiatives however do not reject direct participation of people, but also do not support continuous participation, i.e. continuous participation for empowerment (Wilcox 1994), with local developments. The theoretical framework of this research (Chapter 2) has indicated that people need to be involved in the full lifecycle of a program to be fully empowered and to achieve effective development. This implies that people should be involved in selecting, budgeting, planning, monitoring and evaluating a project to be fully empowered to attain the democratic model of governance, however such participation is absent in IDA's initiatives. Through these analyses it is clear that the development agencies are not clear about people's continuous participation for achieving true good governance in the Bangladesh context. They think people's participation is a one off event and should be confined only to a specific stage of participation: sometimes for informing, sometimes for consulting, and so on (Paul 1987). These are models developed in western society, where people are mostly empowered and direct involvement of local people is commonly valued by all stakeholders. To achieve good governance in a society like rural Bangladesh, people need continuous participation with local

government affairs for their empowerment and thus for effective development (Momen, Hossain & Begum 2005).

This analysis indicates that the practice of direct people's participation in Bangladesh needs to consider the local environment in terms of valuing participation in local development programs. While government officials and elected representatives do not value direct people's participation, local people are also not able to assess the value of their own engagement with local development programs. The theories concerning good local governance imply the importance of the capacity of civil society participants to understand the value of their involvement and to shoulder the responsibility to foster participatory governance (Blair 2005; Parker & Serrano 2000). But rural people in Bangladesh are mostly illiterate and unaware about their citizenry right to participation in local government affairs (Kabeer 2002; Mahmud 2004). At one point they believe local government programs means a central government program, which should be conducted by the government and elected officials. At another point they believe they do not have the capacity to understand government laws and policies to implement a development program, which consequently may pave the way for their punishment (see Chapter 6). Moreover, local people are not provided with enough consultation and education which would help them to be empowered and bridge their gap from elected leaders.

The present attitudes of all these actors do not comply with the required attitude and social structure for bringing forward the desired result. However, now at least some of the government officials support the inclusion of public representatives in decision-making. They are trying to understand that development should be negotiated rather than imposed. At the same time some local people are coming forward to learn about and participate in local development programs. It is undoubtedly a positive sign towards people's participation – a little progress. Now, the Government of Bangladesh and the aid providers need to know that governance should be considered the result of the participatory approach to development (Barten et al. 2002). If they want good governance they need to develop this environment by motivating leaders and bureaucrats and by empowering people.

9.3.2   *Present Participation Process in Bangladesh*

The second research question posed in the thesis was: What are the strengths and weaknesses of Bangladesh local governance concerning people's participation to ensure good governance?
To answer this research question, the interview data from different stakeholders were contrasted with practical observation of the outputs and uses of different development programs. Different government initiatives to foster people's participation through decentralisations and reforms of

administration were compared with the empirical data to find out the strengths and weaknesses of present participation process in local government institutions.

9.3.2.1 Decentralisation not focusing on participation of grassroots

As people's participation paves the way for good governance (Morphet 2008), or in other words, good governance helps to open the officials' door to welcome the grassroots, the Government of Bangladesh has decentralised its administration to facilitate grassroots participation in achieving good governance. Now, the people of Bangladesh are participating through their representatives, and sometimes directly in local government functions, to pursue this end. Decentralisation in local government is particularly emphasised, as the local level is the one which most affects people (Morphet 2008). All the reform initiatives and decentralisation processes are theoretically focused on and addressed ensuring people's participation directly and indirectly.

But empirically, the situation is different. Since independence, the organisation of local government has been changed five times. In 1972 it was two tiers, then in 1976 it was three tiers, then in 1991 two tiers, then three tiers again in 1998, then four tiers in 2003 and since 2008 it is again three tiers. Similarly the functions of every tier went through several changes (Sarker 2006b). Once, Union Parishad was selected as a focal point for local development, then it was Upazila Parishad, or sometimes it was Zila Parishad (District Council). Members of these bodies and their functions changed at least six times with executive orders (Morshed 2007). Whenever a reform committee formed they asked for new changes and that happened through executive orders. Nonetheless, the financial element of these tiers also changed: sometimes to empower local government bodies financially they asked for more revenue or tax collection, or sometimes for block grants.

However, this research has found that all these changes did not change the method of people's participation with local government affairs. All these reforms actually focused on three elements of local government bodies – structural, financial and functional. But, today, when local government is moving towards local governance, we need to focus more on participatory process – the congregational element (see Figure 3.1) which promotes local people to gradually reach the upper stages of participation to be empowered. This has been found to be important but absent in Bangladesh.

People of rural Bangladesh, as in many developing democratic countries (Pruitt & Thomas 2007, p. 13), participate in electing their representatives through democratic election every five years, and that is the sole and final practice of democracy at local levels. But policy makers and

donors say that this representative democracy is not enough for ensuring good governance in the country. Good governance needs direct democracy i.e. people's direct participation (Bovaird & Löffler 2002). Researchers have indicated that for poverty eradication and for human development (people's life and economic condition) in developing countries, people should participate from the beginning to the end in all those affairs those have an effect on them (Momen, Hossain & Begum 2005).

The only remarkable development of local governance was Upazila Parishad during 1986-1991, but in the absence of mechanisms and laws of compulsory people's participation, these institutions and their elected heads and members were considered to be corrupt and not supporting local people (Ahmad 1991; Siddiqui 2005). Moreover there has been no election since 1991 for Upazila Parishad. However, at the beginning of 2009, an Upazila Parishad election was conducted after 16 years, where people's representatives have been increased with two more vice chairman, including one woman (Chapter 3). But, because of the dearth of laws and faults in the system, participation is ineffective (Imam 2009; Liton 2009). In fact, historically, people never properly participated in local government functions because they were always ignored by the central governments or rulers. The study of people's historical participation in local governments shows participation never actually fully happened in Bangladesh (Waheduzzaman 2008a).

Moreover, in most cases, local developments have been imposed by the central government without seeking or addressing the participation of local people (Ahmad 1991; Khan 2000). Through decentralisation they changed tier after tier, and the structure of the body year after year, even the function many times (see Chapter 3), but the participation process has always been ignored (Goon 2002), either intentionally or (because of lack of knowledge) unintentionally.

In addition to the controlling mechanisms of the central government, another barrier is created by appointing a local MP (Parliament Member) as the advisor of the Upazila Parishad. Because of the legislative power of MPs, local government officials and Parishad itself are being more accountable to the top (here MP) rather than bottom, that is, people. Nonetheless, this study found these MPs are manipulating direct participation because of their political and corruption motives. In fact it is a sort of autocracy at the rural level in Bangladesh (Blair 2000).

Furthermore, the Upazila Act defines Upazila Parishad as the administrative unit (run by the central government employees) rather than a local government unit (run by the local people) (GOB 1983). Some researchers mention that de-localisation of central government is not de-

centralisation of government bodies (Khan 2000; Sarker 2003). Upazila Parishad and other local government institutions in the country are in no way run by the local people, and are still not self-governing bodies but only a lower administrative unit (Morshed 2007). All decentralisation and reforms efforts failed to achieve this right end, and thus it is seen that participation is ignored.

Finally, it can be said that Bangladesh has fulfilled the basic need to empower people by establishing local government institutions at rural levels. Now these institutions should be bestowed with self-control, that is, control by local people's power to get effective self-local governance. Now the Government of Bangladesh needs to put emphasis on the congregational element in the local government institutions (see Chapter 3) to get good local governance, that is, true self-governance.

9.3.2.2   Inadequate reforms in public management to foster participation

Through decentralisation, the government has implemented institutions on the doorsteps of the rural people. But, at the same time, a robust management process is needed to ensure the participation of the grassroots. This means people would be invited to these institutions through sound public management (Evans et al. 2005). As such, public officials who are working on secondment in the Upazila Parishads and playing a vital role (Ahmad 1991; Bardhan 2002; Thorlind 1999), need to be accustomed to proper and modern public management processes to enhance local people's participation for effective development (Liou 2001).

For good governance, government officials need a managerial (New Public Management theory) or facilitator/ negotiator (Public Value Management) approach (see Chapter 2). However, in Bangladesh, a kind of administrative approach is in place (Wood 2000). This specialised, routine oriented, hierarchical, and impersonal bureaucracy makes for difficulties and clashes in relation to the inclusion of citizens in the process of government (Callahan 2007). The administrative structure in Bangladesh is 'centralised, procedures antiquated and the bureaucratic culture characterised by elitism, conservatism and malevolence' (Zafarullah & Khan 2005, p. 222), where public servants are still behaving like bureaucrats, the organising focus is on programs, discipline is based on laws and the main tool types are regulatory. If we compare the changes in public administration in developed countries (see Table 9.1) with Bangladesh public administration, it indicates the administration in the country is fixed in inertia (Ali 2004; Zafarullah & Khan 2005) or 'bureaupathology –not progressing forward' (Morshed 1997, p. 10), and is still following the 1930s or partly the 1960s system.

Table 9.1 Change in Public Administration in Developed Countries over Time

	1930s	1960s	1990s	2010s ?
Public servant	Bureaucrat	Public administrator	Public manager	Knowledge facilitator
Organising focus	Bureau	Programs	Output groups	Networks
discipline	Political science, law	Policy studies	Management and economics	Governance
Main tool types	Regulatory, budgeting	Planning, management	Competition, productivity	Sustainability, deliberation

Source: edited from (Hess & Adams 2005, p. 232).

Like the traditional public administration paradigm, the Government of Bangladesh views public leaders as solely responsible for defining public value and the role of government officials to maintain organisational performance (Zafarullah & Huque 2001). The government believes officials aim to maintain their official role /bureaucratic role, and not to be developed as managers to define public value through contact with local people. But for good governance, people should define their value in collaboration with managers and representatives (Staples & Dalrymple 2008). Therefore, the traditional view needs to be changed to properly transform officials as 'agents of development' (Morshed 2007; World Bank 1996). In this regard, Zafarullah and Huque have asserted that achievement of good governance in Bangladesh 'remains a distant dream in the absence of a vital and effective tool of public management' (2001, p. 1380).

This research study found that government officials are not aware of the new managerialism articulated in New Public Management, or of the facilitator role of Public Value Management. At the one end, government officials are controlled by a strong hierarchy angled against involvement with local communities; on the other end, they do not have sufficient knowledge, and perhaps also training, to value local people's choices and thus have not yet developed into agents of change and development (World Bank 1996). Moreover, the main instrument of setting managers' personal responsibility for development outcomes articulated in NPM, has not been introduced in Bangladesh. Thus, government and elected officials in local government bodies easily evade their responsibility for ineffective developments. When Rhodes said 'good governance marries NPM' (2000, p. 57), he meant, a 'marriage' between local stakeholders and managers, is achievable by establishing good governance and valuing public participation (also see Section 2.3.1). Ironically, in rural Bangladesh, government and elected managers do not want this 'marriage'. The faulty systems that cause a missing link (see Chapter 7) between local government and local people are nourished by both the government officials and elected representatives, and this makes their corrupt practices safe and smooth.

However, some researchers suggested that NPM as practised in some developed countries should not be practised in the same way in developing countries (Aguilera & Cuervo-Cazurra 2004; Schick 1998). Developing countries need to introduce NPM considering and according to their own situation. No doubt, changing the governing system is not an easy task, because governance practices are embedded in the long practice of the broader institutional practices (Aguilera & Cuervo-Cazurra 2004). Thus, the long existence of a patron-client relation in public services in Bangladesh (Sarker 2008) is not changing sharply. New Public Management or Public Value Management (Stoker 2006) can help to balance this patron-client relation for ensuring good governance (see Chapter 2), but these theories are not working in Bangladesh because of institutional incapacity (Samaratunge, Alam & Teicher 2008). In addition, this research has found that a dysfunctional system of engaging local stakeholders, the involvement of lawmakers in local government management, improper decentralisation in public bureaucracy and absence of vibrant private and civil society groups at the rural levels are other causes of inactivating pro-people public management in Bangladesh.

9.3.2.3 Imperfect assessment of participatory outcomes: 'Teleopathy' in government programs

Today, for public programs, authorities should pay attention to outcomes (Hughes 2003). Stewart (1999) suggested public managers should not focus on outputs according to inputs, but rather be focused on outcomes: that is, the impact of the outputs on the society in general and particularly on the users. Any output is obvious if any inputs are used by the management, but outcome depends on the acceptability to the users, that is, requires involvement of both management and users (Andrews & Shah 2003). Stewart (1999) drew the following figure (Figure 9.1) where he pointed to the public sector as a box placed between input and outputs, whereas outcomes situate these outputs in the context of consumer satisfaction and customer demand. Stewart also demanded that today's public service managers should consider this equation in formulating public policies.

Figure 9.1 Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes in the Public Sector

Inputs + Outputs + Outcomes = Policy process
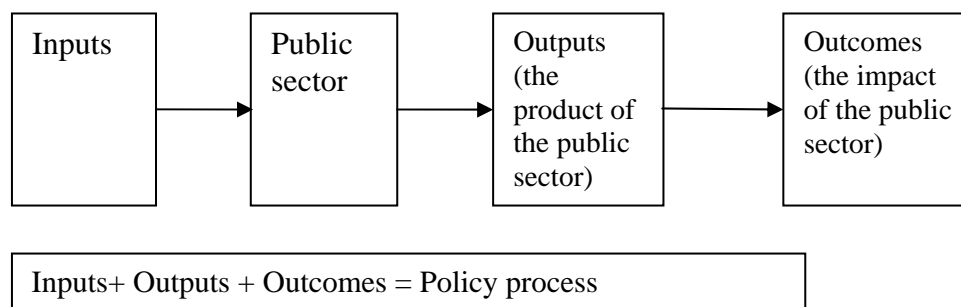
Source: Stewart (1999, p. 32)

However, this study found that in Bangladesh, no one apparently has paid attention to the outcomes of the local development programs. In most cases government officials and elected leaders pay attention to the output, not outcomes; that is, they concentrate at the end product of a project, not into the users' satisfaction or how it is used by the beneficiaries of that project. The policy process of the local government and the development agencies were also found not to be following the above guidelines in implementing development programs. The development agencies and the local government bodies are actually looking into the outputs not the outcomes (see Section 6.3.1).

For every project, implemented in rural Bangladesh with aid fund, there are three types of evaluations: first, evaluation done through a project completion report (PCR) by the concerned department (here LGED - Local Government Engineering Department) or ministry; second, evaluation done by the IMED (Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division, Planning ministry); and finally, evaluation done by a consulting firm. Reviewing all these evaluation reports found that the first project completion report that was prepared by the LGED is nothing but a financial statement, such as: cost of the project, duration of the project, procurements for the projects (LGED 2000). There is nothing mentioned about the outcomes or impact of the output on the local users.

The second evaluation that was conducted by the IMED with their appointed evaluation team was said to be focused on the objective of people's participation, however it was not (Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division 2006a). In their evaluation report, under the heading of 'beneficiaries and community assessments' they interviewed local 'elected leaders/influential' [their word] about their involvement in the development programs, and found:

> …implementation of the project was accomplished by the LGED personnel, but about half of the influential (48%) affirmed that their opinions were heeded by the LGED authorities…Slightly over half of the influential (55%) were concerned about the quality of work. …one sixth of the influential felt neglected by the LGED authorities on recognising their opinions on the specific project. Only one third (33%) of the influential claimed that the local people were encouraged by the LGED authorities to participate directly (investing labour) in the project [participate as labourer]….Only one fifth of the poor men and women of the localities participated as labours in the project. (Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division 2006a, pp. 25-6)

Interestingly, the evaluation team asked only 'influentials', not general people or beneficiaries, and they did not ask anything about the use of the outputs or did not look into the impact of those outputs on those users.

The final evaluation by a consulting firm, appointed according to the international development agencies' guidelines, is actually an economic and physical structure development report. The contact between Government of Bangladesh and development partners mentions that community involvement and participation should be maintained in implementing development programs (Planning Ministry 2005). For instance, in the project objectives for growth centres, it is stated that '…to accelerate agricultural, non-farm economic, and social development in the project area by improving basic rural infrastructure in a sustainable manner with participation of the beneficiaries' (ADB 2006c, p. 1). However, the section 'Evaluation of performance' of the report has stated nothing about participation. The following contents of the particular section (ADB 2006c, pp. 10-4) have been reviewed, and this review shows that:

    A. Relevance: this is about how the project design is aligned to project objectivity;

    B. Effectiveness in achieving outcome: this is about what is provided by the project, mainly income generation, based on base line survey and after-works survey.

    C. Efficiency in achieving outcome and outputs: this is all about implementation efficiency within budget and time.

    D. Preliminary assessment of sustainability: this part referred to the training provided to the local beneficiaries for maintenance of the infrastructure

    E. Impact: this part stated how the project has improved environmental condition; what money flowed to the local poor as cost of construction; annual lease revenue; toll collection; and monthly turn over of the shops within the growth centre.

Moreover, this evaluation also depends on the local officials as one final report mentioned that: 'Most consultants did not work full-time on the project, and so depend on colleagues and counterparts to follow their work' (Carroll 2002, p. 20). Because of this dependency, sometimes faults in the development works are overlooked, as IMED reported, in an evaluation of 'German assisted Primary Education Development Programs', that they found fault in the construction of the toilet for a school after the completion report by the German consultant.

> … two soak well for the latrine have not been constructed. It is informed during evaluation that a German engineer appointed by the local consulting firm has been monitored this work. It is strange how these huge anomalies has been overlooked by the consulting firm (Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division 2006b, p. 652).

Similar incidents of negligence by local agents of international development agencies are also observed in local development programs in Uganda (Nicholls 1998) and in Malawi (Mphande 2005).

Thus, it is clear that none of the authorities in Bangladesh is perfectly evaluating the outcomes of the development programs. While the aim of the evaluation should be to determine the

relevance and fulfilment of objectives, impact and sustainability (Kusek, Rist & White 2005), none of the evaluation reports observed that they accurately accomplished this aim. In most cases they look into the outputs, and they think that is the end of a development program. No one, intentionally or unintentionally, is looking into the outcomes.

Following Aristotle, there is an established position that 'the ends justified the means': if end (*telos*) is good then means is good (Nelson 1998). To this point, the complete end should be used to judge the means, but the evaluation done by several authorities in Bangladesh has not assessed the true end, the outcomes. When the Government of Bangladesh has failed to understand the impact and sustainability of a development program, aid agencies are just evaluating as a routine job to comply with the conditions of the contract. Both of them are justifying their means by looking into the wrong end.

Sternberg has described 'choosing the wrong end, misunderstanding the end in question, and pursuing the right end in the wrong way are all examples of teleopathy' (2000, p. 42). If we compare and contrast the 'teleopathy' in public service delivery through local governments in Bangladesh, we find that whereas the Government of Bangladesh and donors have misunderstood the right end, the public representatives and local government officials have chosen the wrong end. By pursuing this wrong end, government officials and public representatives are maximising their benefit (through corruption) from development programs. In the other words, these officials and representatives are not making sustainable projects, that is, not pursuing the right end for which they are assigned and paid from the public exchequer. This phenomenon we can define as the 'teleopathy' in public service delivery.

These teleopathic activities now need to be overcome during project implementation in rural Bangladesh, otherwise people will not use these development outcomes and consequently poverty will not be reduced. Though the present law does not fully bind the bureaucrats and concerned leaders to follow the outcomes, it is implied that authorities should do so. However, empirically, authorities are not doing so. Though it is not unlawful according to the existing legal instruments, it is unethical. While bureaucrats and elected leaders are pursuing the wrong end, or pursuing the right end in the wrong way, poverty will not be alleviated in rural Bangladesh. All concerned authorities need to evaluate users' satisfaction in development projects. Local people also need to come forward to force service providers for providing sustainable outcomes.

9.3.2.4   Corruption hindering participation

Corruption in public management is defined as an 'exercise of official powers against public interest or the abuse of public office for private gains' (Shah 2006a, p. 2). Corruption is now

omnipresent whether in developed, or developing society (Pillay 2004). However, corruption is particularly damaging in developing societies because these nations tend to have less resources, and they need 'effective use of these scanty resources for the alleviation of poverty' (Pillay 2004, p. 589). Moreover, public sector corruption indicates poor governance, which negatively affects economic growth by contributing to a decline in direct foreign investment (Shah 2006b).

Corruption is not a new phenomenon in Bangladesh, but recently it has reached a peak and spread into all parts of the society (Sarker 2006a; Zafarullah & Siddiquee 2001). Researchers have found many forms of corruption practices in Bangladesh such as: embezzlement, bribery, negligence, nepotism, favouritism, patronage, theft and deceit (Sarker 2006a). However, among this corruption, negligence is the single highest (51% in education, 43% in health) in Bangladesh (Knox 2009, p. 453). Like other institutions in the country, local government institutions are also involved in corruption in service delivery systems.

Like other institutions in the country, local government institutions are also involved in corruption in service delivery systems. In 2007, Transparency International in Bangladesh (TIB) has described local government as the second most corrupted institution in Bangladesh (TIB 2008). In 2004, Transparency International identified 370 major corruption cases in the country, among them 71.9% committed by the elected representatives and bureaucrats. Misuse of power and bribery are two common ways of committing corruption; among others, exploitation, appropriation, and extortion are mentionable (Shamokal 2009). Transparency International surveyed 3000 households (70% rural) in 55 districts in the country in 2004 and found (TIB 2005, p. 3):

- 26% households who needed *shalish* (mediation) by elected local government representatives had to pay 4035 taka (AUS $1= 50 taka) on average as bribes.
- 3% households who were enrolled for relief had to pay bribes at an average rate of 56 taka.
- 39% households who received relief complained that they were given less than the allocated amount.

In fact, at the rural level, no robust legal or management systems were found, through this research, that could seal off corruption. While in a democracy, elected representatives are responsible for making officials accountable for their services, in a corrupted society, such as Bangladesh, public representatives do not accept the choices of the people; rather they work for officials and for themselves (Mollah 2008). They also corrupt democratic institutions for their own interests. The only option left to the commoners in Bangladesh, to control this type of political corruption, is the right to vote, which happens once every five years. But, to keep their way clear, the politicians also engage in vote-manipulation, or buy votes by paying money to

the poor people (Majumder 2009). Politicians use their unethically and corruptly earned wealth to get elected (Majumder 2009), which has inclined them not to involve people in development programs which would render their corruption transparent. Shah accurately pointed out that: in developing countries 'neither political representatives nor administrators have an incentive to open governance processes to citizen involvement, as this would threaten established lines of relationship, decision-making and influence' (Andrews & Shah 2003, p. 6.4).

The field study for this thesis has exposed that most local government officials and elected leaders are not interested in involving people mainly because of their own tendency towards corruption. They are wary of being transparent to the local people, which could not be avoided if they included people in development programs. Both the government officials and elected representatives are interested in controlling funds that are supplied from the central government for the local development projects. Moreover, they also want to control each other's authority: at one end officials want full controlling power over Union Parishad Chairmen; at the other end, Chairmen want to control officials. However, when they were asked about direct people's participation or involvement of other community leadership, they responded in the same tone. The nexus between government officials and elected leaders is found to be strong in the case of ignoring accountability and transparency. To avoid accountability, they do not form management committees appropriately (i.e. according to the government instruction), and do not form any monitoring committee to monitor development programs (ADB 2004a). The practice of stealing relief materials (that come from the central government to distribute among the poor) by the elected representatives is common in Bangladesh (Blair 2005; The Daily Star 2009). Nonetheless, to avoid transparency they misuse the law of official secrecy, which stated:

> Any person who has in his possession or under his control any secret official code or password or any model, article, document or information which- … he has obtained or to which he has had access owing to his position as a person who holds or has held office in the service of the State …communicates such code, password, model, article, document or information to any person, other than a person to whom he is authorised to communicate it, is liable to prosecution (GOB 1991, p. section 3).

More frustratingly, there is no court or other authorities at the Upazila level to listen to any complaint against any anomalies (see Chapter 7). While in a democracy local people establish their voice through their MP in the parliament, in Bangladesh local MPs are becoming a part of this corruption, as acting as advisors in the Upazila Parishad. The only available instrument for placing any objection against any anomalies is through locally elected management committees (PIC or SMC). But due to the improper monitoring and interference of MPs, local people can not establish their objection in the final report on any development projects which are prepared by the management committees at the end of the project. Moreover, all the elected representatives at the rural levels come from local elite families who maintain their own muscle-

men, who allegedly restrain local people from tracking any complaint to the 'higher-ups' (Blair 2005; Prothom Alo 2009). During field study, local people complained that government and elected officials surround the high officials when they pay visits to the locality. Consequently, local people have no scope to put any complaint before those visiting higher-ups.

In effect, the governance system developed in local government institutions in Bangladesh is not democratic; it is rather a sort of autocracy, going by the name of democracy (Blair 2005). Year after year, government after government has initiated reforms in local governance systems, but none have become effective in upholding people's aspirations in local development programs. Rural people in Bangladesh now do not believe in political government: that will come forward to change this system. Local people are now frustrated and believe in God: "*only Allah [God] can change these people [officials]. This system will not be changed until the day of final judgement*" (interviewee 1.2.1, Appendix 4). Other researchers have also mentioned that people from all around the developing countries are now placing 'their hope in God since the government is no longer involved in delivering services, and denial of social, legal, and economic protection of citizens –especially the poor' (Grindle 2004, p. 525; Narayan 2000, p. 100). The findings of this study indicate that representative democracy (Chapter 2) and corruption can co-exist and feed off one another; however, participative democracy (Chapter 2) can spring this trap. In fact, corruption and democratic good governance can not coexist.

9.3.3   Gap between Theory and Practice

The third research question outlined in this thesis was: Is there any gap between the theory and practice in ensuring good governance through people's participation in Bangladesh? If so, how can this be bridged?

Theories of effective people's participation are found not to be grounded practically in achieving of good governance in rural Bangladesh. In Chapter 4 we found that continuous people's participation can ensure the control over decision making and influence the outcome in their favour. This controlling power of the people tends to make service providers accountable, transparent to them, and forces them to follow the local laws. In rural Bangladesh, though people are participating in local government affairs, they are not obtaining effective outcomes for locally implemented development projects. The gaps that have been found between this participation practice and theory are basically twofold.

- The first gap is related to leadership. In theory, people's participation does not mean they always need a leader so as to be organised to be involved in any local development programs. If people are aware about their rights, they will come forward to join in local government affairs that have an effect on them. But in rural Bangladesh, people do not

come forward spontaneously and individually until someone comes forward to lead them to join in local development programs. The fieldwork for this thesis found examples of this concerning. For example, in the altering of furniture at Bhazanpur and abandonment of development outcomes at Suapur (see Section 8.2.4).

- The second gap is related to trust. A trust based relation between all actors, officials, leaders and users is also found to be vital in order to achieve an environment in which to pursue a synergic effort in achieving good governance. In rural Bangladesh, the people were found to be unwilling to participate in local development programs unless they have trust in the local leaders or officials (see Section 6.2.3).

These two elements, namely leadership and trust, are aspects of civil society and social capital respectively, which will thus be discussed in detail in the following sections.

9.3.3.1 Weak civil society

Civil society, which is considered as the third actor in achieving good governance, connects individual people with the local economic and social programs through different interest groups and organisations (Agere 2000; Parnini 2006). Though Bangladesh is regarded as having a vibrant civil society (Lewis 2004), no strong interest groups or organisations were found to be actively participating with local government affairs in rural Bangladesh.

Different NGOs, which are reported as civil society groups present in every village in Bangladesh (Lewis 2004), have been found through this research to have no direct impact on the development programs that are implemented by local government institutions. As analysis of this research data shows that NGOs in rural Bangladesh have failed to bridge the relationship between government and people, though theoretically they enhance close relations between these two actors (Parnini 2006). This impact has been conspicuous in two ways. Firstly, local government officials were found to be dissatisfied with the activities of NGOs and the people involved in NGO activities. The main reason for this is because NGOs are allegedly cutting the monopoly power of officials in rural program implementation. From the seventeenth century, when colonial government took the responsibility of providing for local development programs, they have been directly controlled by government officials (Waheduzzaman 2008a). But because of corruption and ineffective developments, now donors are more interested in providing loans to the NGOs to implement development programs at rural level. In fact, today, NGOs are becoming an alternative service provider and donors are interested to provide services and reliefs through NGOs (see Chapter 3). More than seventeen percent of the total aid yearly in Bangladesh, which previously was under the full control of the local government officials, is now channelled through NGOS (Lewis 2004).

Secondly, the activities of NGOs at rural levels have created a distance between them and rural public leaders. During the field study, the UP chairmen interviewed spoke against the involvement of NGOs with local government affairs. One of the reasons for this resentment is development of alternate community leadership by NGO members. It was found that local poor people who previously borrowed money from the local elites and obeyed and supported the leadership of those elites are now borrowing money from NGOs (Lewis & Hossain 2008; Sultana & Abeyasekera 2008). Thus local people are no longer agreeing to follow the leadership of those elites. Thus because of NGOs, local elites are now losing two things: leadership and their money-laundering business. One research study exposed that one UP chairman was not happy with NGOs because he needed to spend substantive time for informal arbitration (*shalish*) between borrowers and NGOs (Lewis & Hossain 2008).

To ensure the participation of local users, the Government of Bangladesh, following the advice of the international development agencies, decided to form elected management committees for the development of concerned sectors. For instance, the Hat-Bazaar Management Committee (HBMC) and the School Management Committee (SMC) were formed to mobilise the users groups, and to render volunteer services to ensure the interests of local businessmen and student-guardians respectively (Section 4.4). Looking at the similar characteristics of rendering volunteer services and being formed mostly by the civil society, HBMC and SMC could be defined as civil society groups in rural Bangladesh. Though HBMC and SMC were formed according to the government guidelines, they are sufficiently autonomous, however not absolutely autonomous, to be able to make decisions for local development management. Parnini argued: 'civil society retains autonomy from the state, that autonomy is rarely absolute' (2006, p. 192). Moreover, HBMC and SMC are supposed to be formed by voluntary vote by the greater civil society and to be responsible for playing a watchdog role like any other civil society groups do (Arko-cobbah 2006; Parnini 2006). Thus local management committees can be seen as civil society groups in rural Bangladesh.

However, during the field study, no full-bodied HBMC were found in concerned growth centres. Thus, it could be concluded that no civil society group is working for ensuring the interests of local businessmen. Though long-standing *Banik Samity* are available and active in almost all growth centres (Lewis & Hossain 2008), they have no scope to be involved with development programs. On the other hand, SMCs were found in all government primary schools, which are formed by the volunteer votes of the students' guardians. However, SMCs were found to be mostly active in relation to their function of distributing *upabritty* (government-provided sub-scholarships to encourage education) instead of the development of the school. One of the reasons may be that SMCs are involved in misappropriation of the

upabritty fund (TIB 2008). Moreover, because of the missing link between guardian members and the president of the SMC (see Chapter 7), they are not mobilising and organising student guardians as a pressure group. Thus, though people are supposed to express themselves and resist abuse and intrusion by the government through civil society participation (Parnini 2006), SMC was found to have failed to do so.

There are no strong civil society groups, such as the Businessmen Committee or the Parents Committee, which have the potential to influence the local governing body in decision making and management at rural level. They also have no scope to protest against any anomalies occurring during the implementation of development programs. The only civil society available is local NGOs, but they do not interfere with public development works. As local NGOs often seek help from local administration for the smooth continuation of their activities at local level, they do not want to annoy public officials or representatives (Tasnim 2007). Hence, despite many positive changes facilitated by the NGOs, local NGOs were found not to be interested in direct participation in local government affairs. Thorlind criticised NGOs because of 'mainly considering the specific interests of their target group than advocating the interests of rural society at large' (Thorlind 1999, p. 131).

Therefore, though international development agencies regard civil society as the best instrument for good governance in developing countries (Chapter 3), in Bangladesh it is not performing according to the theories. Local NGOs that are recognised by aid agencies as civil society groups are not working effectively as civil society groups in rural Bangladesh (Parnini 2006; Tasnim 2007). The donors and the government are found to have failed to recognise the local setting of civil society groups, and to schedule accordingly in achieving good governance in Bangladesh. Researchers have mentioned that the policy of applying Western experiences and theories in non-Western societies by neglecting indigenous settings, local conditions and histories has provoked controversy (Jabbra & Dwivedi 2004; Tasnim 2007). Thus, it is found essential to think again about the development of civil society groups, for rural Bangladesh, which should directly influence the local development programs.

9.3.3.2   Low social capital

Social capital has appeared as essential for establishing good governance and economic development (Angeles 2004). However, this study found that inadequate social capital in Bangladeshi rural societies is a barrier to achieving good governance.

Traditionally and historically, rural society in the Bengal region was divided horizontally, i.e. stratified in different castes where every caste had a specific task (Heller, Harilal & Chaudhuri 2007). But for the local development programs, for example in relation to drinking water, forest

management or irrigation, all those castes helped each other to ensure the job was done (Gupta 2007). During the regime of colonialism in the 17th century, this society became further divided on the basis of land ownership. The then central government appointed *zamindars* (landlords) by promulgating the Permanent Settlement Act in 1793, to rule an estate and to collect land tax by leasing those lands (Khan 1995). These *zamindars* (also *talukdars*-sub leasers) rented their land and collected land-taxes from peasants – *bargadars*. The central government also appointed administrators and armed forces to help those landlords to smoothly collect land taxes (Khan 1995). Thus rural Bengal was divided vertically. At the upper end, local elites –*jotedars* (feudal and semi-feudal landlords – *zaminders* and *talukders*), who held a good relation with the colonial ruler, got ownership of lands and were supported with the power to use against poor tenants to collect tax. At the other end, local poor –*bargadars* were bound to follow the orders of the upper class in the question of their survival: yielding crops by cultivating rented lands. Thus, the trust of the common people in the upper castes, the sharing of common values and the concerns that were historically found in the rural society, diminished gradually through vertical divisions. Even after decolonisation in 1947, local elites (*jotedar* – feudal and semi-feudal) held the power in connection with the local representatives of the central government and appeared as *matbaar* (Lewis & Hossain 2008). These *matbaar* are now actually getting elected in local government bodies (Lewis & Hossain 2008).

During the field study, it was found that most local people do not trust elected representatives and officials. Conversely, elected representatives do not trust local people and government officials. Similarly, government officials do not trust local representatives and people. Thus it is really a crisscross in terms of lack of trust in the rural society of Bangladesh. As a consequence of this crisscross of distrust, trust in rural Bangladeshi society has been limited to a person's close relatives and friends. This phenomenon is described as 'particularised trust' where a person only trusts the closest ones and does not trust others outside their close relations (Ulsaner 2002). Sobol mentioned this kind of common distrust as 'amoral familizm', which leads to barriers to governance and creates ground for corruption (Sobol 2008, p. 199). Comparing Panchayet in West Bengal in India and Union Parishad in Bangladesh, Thorlind (1999) found that in West Bengal there is trust in local institutions or institutional trust, which helps for formation of community networks in rural areas, which is absent in rural Bangladesh.

As with social trust, norms and networking are also underdeveloped in Bangladesh rural society. Apart from two other elements for forming civil society group, such as, community feelings and awareness to community rights, leadership (Agere 2000) was found the single most important element in achieving good governance in rural Bangladesh. However, leadership was found to have correlation with education or any other socio-economic characteristics. Because of the

South Asian culture and the common struggle against nature, community feelings are high enough (Parnini 2006), which means people tend to help each other during the implementation of any local development project. Thus we found local people have an interest to contribute voluntarily to local development programs (ADB 2004a; Hasan 1999). But, because of poverty and illiteracy, the rural poor are not aware of the group's force. They wait for a leader to call them to use their community feelings to form a civil society group, and to provide a group contribution to local development programs. But, in present rural Bangladesh, local leaders mainly come from the elite class (*matbaar* – agricultural /land based elite) or rich clan (*goshty* – wealth-based elite families with hired muscle) (Rahman, Matsui & Ikemoto 2008), they mostly do not come forward to lead the poor to establish their rights; rather they want to sustain their power in the society (Abdullah 2006; Lewis & Hossain 2008). This is a further reason why no vibrant and politically viable civil society is formed in rural Bangladesh.

Moreover, poverty is the other reason for devaluing the right of every individual in the rural society in Bangladesh. People of Bangladesh, particularly in rural areas, are still struggling with personal problems like day to day earnings, which have diverted them from thinking about collective problems. That's why they are easily motivated by the money distributed by the local representatives. They think a moneyed man, who will help them in time of financial need, is good for them, which is not possible for an honest but poor candidate. Voters are in debt to the rich candidates because of their employment in the field or industry or by having borrowed money (Blair 2005), and thus they cast their vote for a wealthy candidate without thinking about the candidate's honesty.

The long legacy of colonial rule, which contributed to creating an stratified society and developed a patron-client type relationship among public leaders and poor people, has also impacted on lowering social capital and weakening civil society in rural Bangladesh (Blair 2005; Sarker 2008). Mutual trust has further deteriorated because of a weak legal framework. The present laws in Bangladesh have not adequately defined the role of all actors responsible for local developments-implementation. The laws help to clarify any doubt about the role of every actor, whereas distrust is based on weak legal frameworks (Agere 2000; Lowndes & Wilson 2001). This study has found that, because of malfunctioning of the executive order and absence of laws of participation, distrust/mistrust of each other has developed, consequently undermining social capital in rural Bangladesh.

9.3.3.3   Relation of social capital and civil society with good governance

Through the above analysis, it is clear that a strong civil society and social capital is essential for establishing good governance. The existence of low social capital, like low trust or a small

radius of trust in a society, are obstacles to good governance and developments, with a resulting failure to achieve economic growth of the country (Graddy & Wang 2009). In fact, the declining of trust decreases democratic governance in practice (Lenard 2005), which creates barriers to people's participation in the development process and tends towards ineffective development. On the other hand, a strong civil society helps to ensure good governance for establishing effective development through users' participation (Lewis 2004; Parnini 2006). Thus it is shown that both civil society and social capital have a relation with the development of good governance. But the question is: how much social capital and how strong a civil society is optimum in achieving good governance particularly in a developing society in Bangladesh?

By analysing the context of rural Bangladesh, it is found that the existent distrust among all the actors in the whole society is hindering the formation of a strong civil society (see Chapter 6). Again, with the absence of civil society groups, good governance is not flourishing as expected. Thus there is a triangular relation between social capital, civil society and good governance. In a situation where social capital is low, civil society is low; people need to be empowered through continuous participation in contributing to good governance. Because of low social capital, people keep themselves away from local government affairs; consequently they fail to see the impact of development in their life. Hence they do not organise themselves in a network to protest against any ineffective development. In contrast, in a society where social capital is high, people usually join together to respond to any development program that has an effect on them. In this case, simply informing the local communities about the program is enough. Thus we see that where social capital is high and civil society is high, simply informing is enough to ensure effective participation, that is, good governance in the society. For instance, while public hearing is a long-time and effective practice during project implementation in different US societies, it is found to be ineffective in a developing society, for example, like in Thailand (Manowong & Ogunlana 2006). The main reason is that social capital and civil society are not equally distributed in the local societies in the USA and in Thailand. Trust between the governing agencies and people, that is, social capital is found very crucial to make the public hearing effective in Thai societies (Manowong & Ogunlana 2006). Simple information may be effective for participation if people in that society are well aware about their citizenry rights and have high social capital. Thus we see, stages of people's participation for achieving good governance depend on the levels of social capital and civil society. This triangular and mutual relation can be represented in the following diagram.

Figure 9.2 Relation between Civil Society, Social Capital and Good Governance
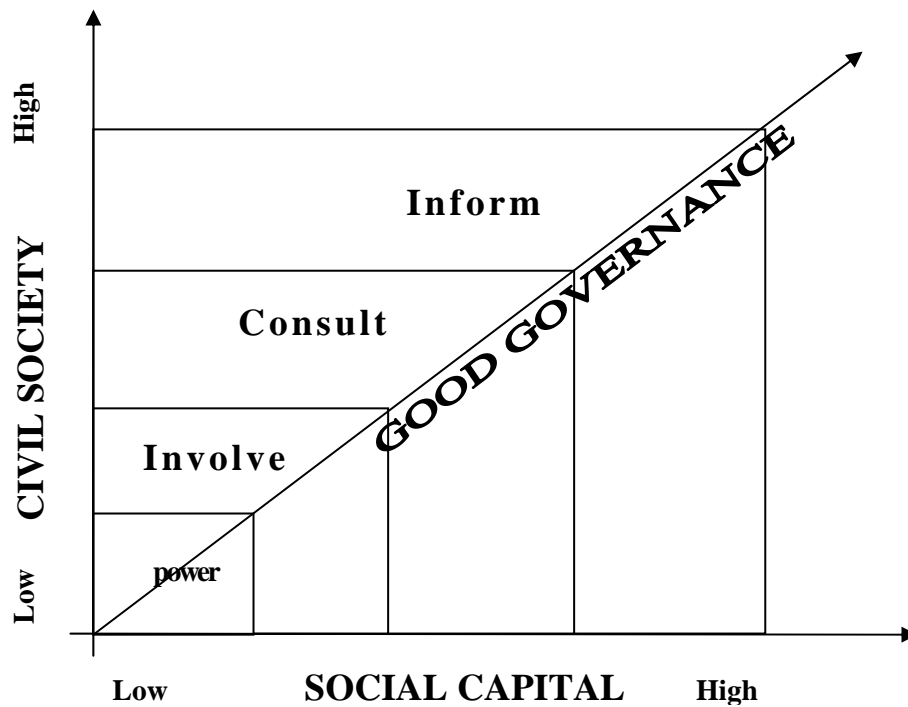
Source: The Author

This diagram also suggests why different local government institutions should use different stages of participation. For example, this study found local people joined with the school management committee at Bhajanpur to force the contractor to provide a better service, though they were simply informed by their SMC's President. Practically it became possible due to trustworthy relations between the student guardians and the SMC President, which ultimately helped in the formation of a strong civil society in that remote area (see Interview 1.3.2 Appendix 4). This finding reveals that people's participation even could be a 'one size fits all' for different local government institutions in rural Bangladesh if equally trustworthy relations i.e. social capital prevail between the local people and their elected representatives, which can sufficiently empower local stakeholders i.e. civil society. Unfortunately, this type of relation of trust that 'lubricate[s] cooperation' (Pretty & Smith 2004, p. 633), rarely happens in rural Bangladesh. Thus, people in rural Bangladesh need to join directly with the full life-cycle of the local programs which have an impact on their lives, to be empowered and to develop networks for achieving development according to their choice. Initiatives to form civil society groups and training about developing awareness of citizenry rights will also help rural Bangladeshis to be sufficiently empowered.

9.4 Change in Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that was initially prepared for testing through the field study was based on the theories like: more people's participation ensures better governance (see Chapter 4). That is, if people reach the higher level of participation through continuous participation, better governance could be achieved. Different local actors are supposed to facilitate local people with local government provisions to reach the higher level of participation. However, the field research has revealed a different situation. Though the people in rural Bangladesh have been participating in local government for long time, they still remain at the information stage i.e. initial stage of participation. Their participation is not automatically shifting to the upper stages of participation. Neither local actors (elected and government officials) nor the local government provisions are helping local people to move to the upper stage of participation. The two main reasons that have been identified through the above studies for this ineffectiveness are: lack of social capital and lack of civil society.

The three actors (government officials, elected representatives and local people) responsible for ensuring good governance in rural Bangladesh are interlinked through distrust. While local people believe government officials and elected representatives are not working for people and are not truly sincere in delivering services, at the same time, local bureaucrats and representatives believe that involving local people means inviting trouble into local development programs. The traditional bureaucratic mentality of government and elected officials is also part of this distrust in people (see Chapter 6). Moreover, the legal framework for involving people is faulty. In the absence of a comprehensive legal framework, local users can not establish their voice in the system of providing a final report of an accomplished program (see Chapter 7).

Civil society which is vigilant in Bangladesh overall is not vibrant in rural Bangladesh (Tasnim 2007). While interest groups like PIC, HBMC and SMC are not formed according to the government instructions, they nevertheless do not have any true participation by the incumbents, because of the 'missing link' and unawareness of the local people. Moreover, local NGOs are found not to be interested in joining (see Chapter 8) in local development programs (Thorlind 1999).

Thus, it is clear that a trustworthy leadership is needed for pushing local people from the initial stage of participation to the upper stage to make their participation effective. In addition a robust legal framework is needed that will specify the roles of all actors responsible for good governance, which will consequently develop the value of trust. And ultimately the conceptual framework will be:

Figure 9.3 Final Theoretical Framework
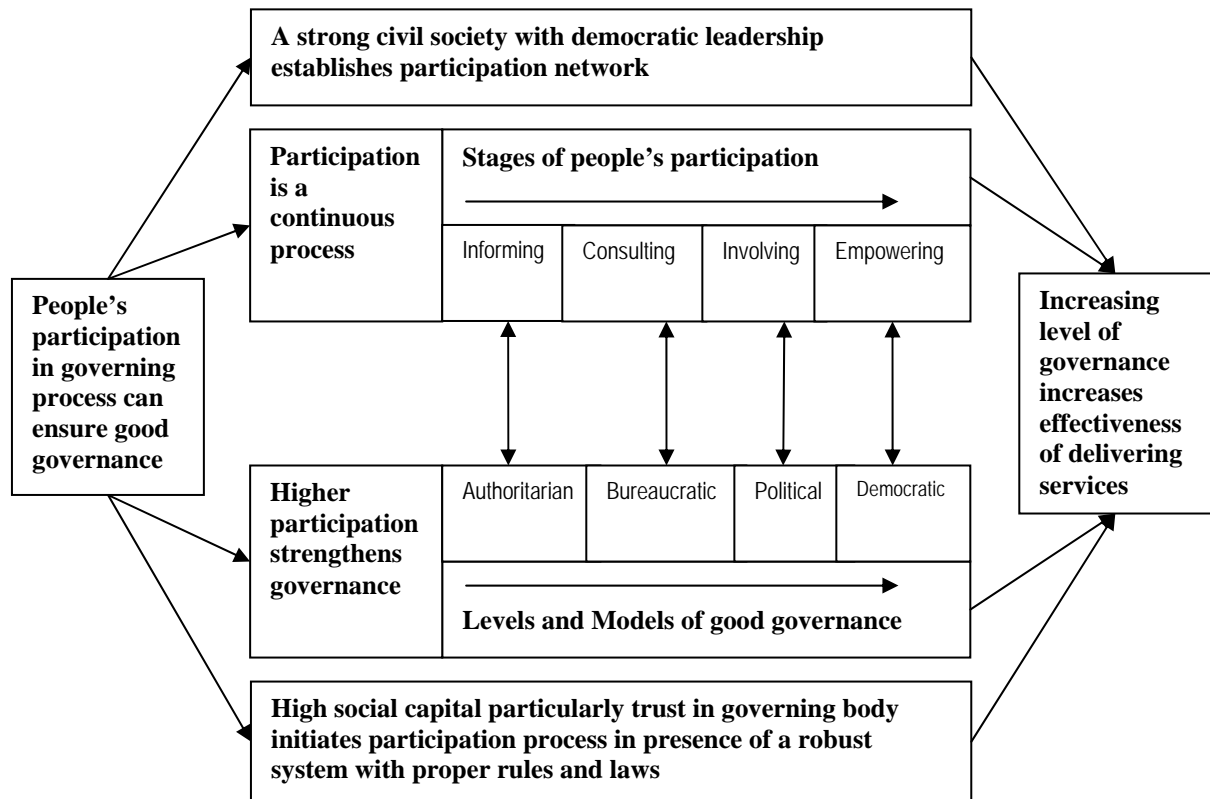
Source: The Author

The initial (Figure 4.7) and the modified (Figure 9.3) frameworks can also be simplified through the following lines:

The initial framework represented that if people's participation increases with development projects then good governance will increase, as well as project outcomes. But it doesn't always work in this simple form in every society. For example, people of rural Bangladesh have been participating in local development programs through their elected representatives and also through monitoring and evaluation committees for a long time (see Chapter 3), but this is not ensuring good governance. This research has found that this is because of low social capital and a weak civil society. Therefore, though people's participation in rural Bangladesh is apparently high, low social capital and absence of active civil society groups are creating barriers to achieving good governance, and as such, ineffective outcomes. Hence, we see that people's participation should be based on the local situation or broader institutional environment to establish good governance for that particular society, otherwise it will not ensure effective development.

9.5 Possible Solution for Strengthening Good Governance

Undoubtedly, for good governance, people should establish their voice beyond their voting mechanisms (Pruitt & Thomas 2007, p. 13), especially in Bangladesh, where people are mostly illiterate and less aware about their rights as citizens. Entirely transparent, accountable and predictable governance, that is, good governance in developing countries, can only be achieved through more involvement and empowerment of the local people (Aminuzzaman & Sharmin 2006; Azmat, Alam & Coghill 2009). Hence a practical solution is required to find the correct way of fostering more involvement and empowerment of local people in Bangladesh. If we do not know the way to achieve good governance, we will reach the wrong destination. And obviously in the present mode of pursuing good governance in Bangladesh, we will not reach the right destination. However, before trying to find any possible solution to overcome the barrier of people's participation to local development programs, we need to review the present system of involving people in aid assisted programs.

9.5.1 Loopholes in the Present Model of People's Participation

Throughout the analysis of the research questions it has surfaced that the present system (see Figure 4.3) of people's participation in rural development programs is not functioning as it should. The reality of engaging people directly with development programs is different and the major shortcomings in the present system can be depicted as follows:

a. The local actors, who are responsible for ensuring people's participation for good governance and effective development, are not fully aware of the value of participation. Government officials and elected representatives not only retain the traditional attitude of excluding local people (see Chapter 6), but they also avoid social accountability by creating distanced relations (a missing link) with the local people (see Chapter 7). The absence of a legal framework also helps them to avoid accountability and create this distance. At the other end, the legacy of a dearth of social capital has disengaged local people from joining in local development programs. This situation not only promotes distance but also enshrines an antagonistic relation between all local actors related to development programs. In fact, the local good governance in Bangladesh is somehow trapped in a relation of antagonism amongst the three actors, that is, the government officials, elected representatives and local people. The government officials are seeking controlling power over the local stakeholders and their representatives. Similarly, elected representatives, instead of gaining local power by closing the relationship gap with local people, are seeking power to control the local authority and its funds. On the other hand, most of the local people believe they have no reason to join local

development programs since government officials or, at best, elected representatives are solely responsible for delivering any development.

The central government and the local workers of international development agencies are, nevertheless, found to have failed to understand the local context and the indigenous empowerment process in rural Bangladesh. While the Government of Bangladesh has failed to understand the value of participatory local governance, the development agencies, though understanding the value of direct participation, have failed to understand the ladder of empowering rural people (confined only to the first step of participation). This study has found that the condition of involving people is not effectively observed in implementing development projects. The Government of Bangladesh and the development agencies are also not seriously monitoring this issue. To them, direct people's participation means direct involvement of local people as paid labour for the projects (Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division 2006a). Virtually, this misconception of participation also leads to teleopathic evaluation in local developments (see Section 9.3.2.2).

b. The local government system for engaging people is imperfect. Theoretically the system allows the local people to elect members for a management committee (in addition to electing representatives for local government bodies), which is responsible for monitoring and ensuring people's say in a development project. However, this research found that these committees can not present local people's opinion to the Upazila Parishad (see Chapter 7). Moreover, these committees are also not representing local users adequately. Interferences by local MPs are paramount in selecting vital members for such a committee. Moreover, in most cases, the Upazila engineering office implemented any development project unilaterally and asked the management committees to receive it without any question. If, by any chance, the local management committee refused to receive it, due to anomalies or the low quality of the work, the engineering office would pressure the committee through the high officials or in extreme case, the MPs. During the field study it was highlighted that no one monitors the formation of local management committees and their activities at local levels. Or in other words, no one wants to investigate any anomalies in the formation of local committees lest they discover any illegal interference of local MPs. Thus the missing links between local people and local government bodies help elected representatives to ignore their social accountability, and to tap government money into their pockets.

In fact, there are gaps between the theoretical aspects of participation at the Upazila level and the practical aspects of the participation process in local government affairs. Instead of empowering people with direct involvement in local development projects, the government has been trying to empower local representatives. These local representatives are only accountable to the local communities through the election, which happens only once in five year periods. Thus it is found that the congregational element, which is vital for shifting local government to local governance (see Chapter 3), has completely been ignored by successive governments.

c. The legal framework for participation is not adequate for ensuring direct people's participation at Upazila levels. Most of the activities like formation of management committees and their functions are described in the executive orders by the concerned ministry. However, only the executive orders from the central government in engaging local people with development programs are found to be dysfunctional in rural Bangladesh. Specific legal instruments for making participation effective are found to be urgently required in the case of local government institutions in Bangladesh. Bridging the 'missing link' between local people and government, and syphoning fund money through these 'missing links', can not be stoped without robust legal instruments. Moreover, the jobs of different stakeholders have not been specified because of the dearth of rules and laws, which consequently cause a distrustful environment at rural level by obscuring the limits of their roles and their expectations of each other. This research has found that local government officials and representatives are not clear about their legal bindings in terms of sharing power and knowledge with local stakeholders. On the other hand, local people have failed to understand what they are entitled to receive legally from elected and government officials. Thus the already loosened network between different stakeholders in rural Bangladesh is further deteriorating in the absence of adequate legal instruments.

d. Decentralisation processes in Bangladesh rural local government institutions have not happened effectively. This research has found that central government holds substantial power in selecting, monitoring, and evaluating aid assisted projects. Despite the strong support for the development of local government in the Constitution, the central government has undermined these instructions by exercising control over local government institutions. Elected local representatives, in many cases, remain unaware about the final project selection and design, even sometimes about budget. Many researchers (Aminuzzaman 2006; Khan 2000; Sarker 2003) argued that the Bangladesh administrative system is highly centralised, which is a barrier to the bottom up

approach. During interviews, local level officials and representatives complained that they can not maintain locally prepared project plans because of the inadequate budgets sanctioned by the ministry. On the other hand, donors have no control over the fund once they hand it over to the sponsoring ministry. In fact, the absence of a direct link between local people and donors helps central government to mishandle funds and impose any development they like on the rural levels.

Given the above shortcomings, in reality, the present system of aid assisted local development programs is actually being implemented as depicted as in the following figure.

Figure 9.4 Present System in Reality of Aid Assisted Local Development Programs

Source: The Author

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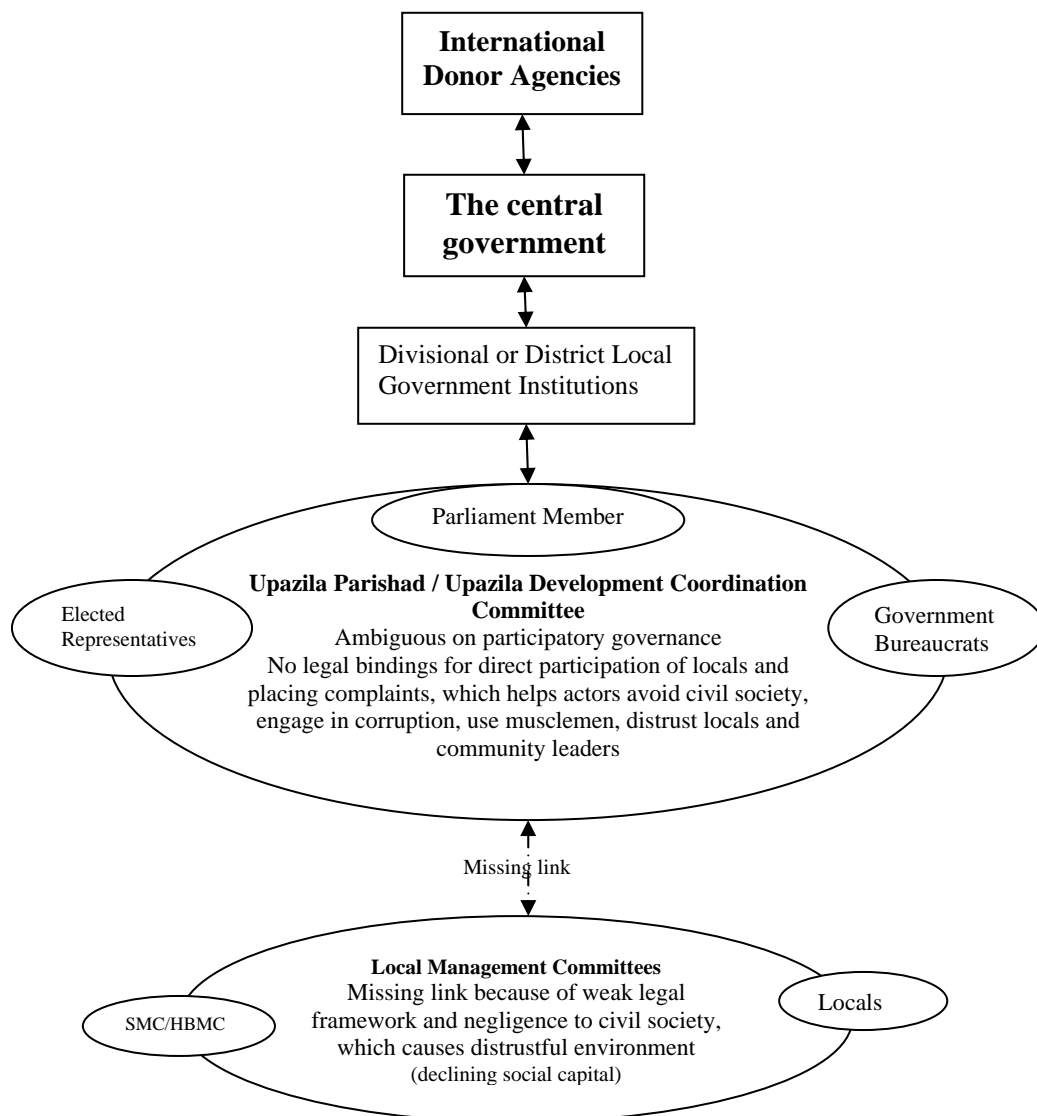
9.5.2 Recommended Model of People's Participation

This research study found that the present system of people's participation, described above, is not desirably working for ensuring good governance in Bangladesh. This system can only be used for a top-down approach to service delivery, not for involving people. In fact, this system weakens all three of the elements of local governing bodies. The three components of a local governing body are: structural, financial and functional. In the case of Upazila Parishad, none of these three components is sufficiently functioning. For instance, an Upazila is not structurally fit because lawmakers control these institutions instead of local people, and there is no sound structure for including the grassroots for decision making. Likewise, an Upazila is not functionally sound, because there is no mechanism to monitor the participation, and there are not even any rules or laws to make a viable participatory environment (no mechanism to empower local communities). Similarly, an Upazila is not financially viable because of its dependency on the central government's fund (unilateral link with central not with donors). However, studies show that while the structural, functional and financial elements of Bangladesh local government bodies have been changed time after time, the main function of local government, such as linking local people to the government, has not yet been fulfilled (Khan 2000; Sarker 2003; Siddiqui 2005; Waheduzzaman 2008a; Zafarullah & Siddiquee 2001). More precisely, the normative/visible structure (four tiers or three tiers or two tiers) has been changed many times but the instrumental/core structure that helps the government to reach the grassroots level has never yet been established by any government. To ensure good governance, government needs to encourage more participation, which this study suggested as a fourth element of local government: that is, congregation.

Though the challenges and difficulties of people's participation have been noted (Booher 2004; Bureekul 2000; Carley 2006; Olson 1965), this study has revealed that effective developments can not be provided by Bangladesh local government institutions without direct people's participation. Like other developing societies, where local people have a distant relation with their political leaders (Mahmud 2004; Thorlind 1999) and officials are not accountable for their services (Sarker 2006b), direct participation is found to be obvious in achieving pro-people development for poverty alleviation.

Nonetheless, a robust legal framework is needed to develop trust among all actors. Researchers have recommended that trust and ethical behaviour should be reflected in the legal framework in achieving good governance (Agere 2000, p. 77; Lowndes & Wilson 2001). Thus laws for people's participation need to change, but laws do not change automatically, because of the socio-cultural legacy of the society (Aguilera & Cuervo-Cazurra 2004). Political and bureaucratic will is essential to change these laws, overcoming legacy and paving the way for

good governance (Zafarullah & Khan 2005). A sound legal system not only increases social capital, but also helps to reduce corruption. Two World Bank researchers (Shah & Schacter 2004, p. 14) developed the following table for enhancing good governance by reducing corruption in the society.

Table 9.2 Enhancing Good Governance by Reducing Corruption

Incidence of corruption	Quality of governance	Priorities of anticorruption efforts for enhancing governance
High	Poor	Establish rule of law; strengthen institutions of participation and accountability; establish citizens' charter; limit government intervention; implement economic policy reforms.
Medium	Fair	Decentralize and reform economic policies and public management.
Low	Good	Establish anticorruption agencies; strengthen financial accountability; raise public and official awareness; encourage anti-bribery pledges; conduct high-profile prosecutions.

Source: (Shah & Schacter 2004)

This Table indicates that highly corrupted Bangladesh local government institutions (TIB 2008) need to establish rule of law for enhancing good governance at rural levels.

Moreover, social accountability has not been affirmed in the present system of service delivery by local government institutions. Social accountability has appeared as an essential tool for good governance by ensuring the responsibility of service providers to the users (Sirker & Cosic 2007). Because of a faulty system, the local committee of users in rural Bangladesh can not hold government officials and elected representatives to their responsibility in development programs (Chapter 7). Nonetheless, the theory of NPM that assigns and spells out the responsibility to government officials for delivering services has also not been introduced in the country (Sarker 2006a).

Thus we see that, for Bangladesh, many issues need to be considered to ensure participatory good governance. Among these issues, legal frameworks, leadership and the development of people's awareness are very important for ensuring effective people's participation. Local governments in Bangladesh need a system based on their local culture and setting to make participation effective. Failing to understand the local setting, international development agencies' *modus operandi* of engaging people is not working in rural Bangladesh. In particular, the 'missing link' between people and government, and the distrustful society in rural Bangladesh is not easy to comprehend from a western perspective. Thus it is doubtful whether development agencies' initiatives, like a public hearing about 'participatory budgeting'

(Rahman 2005) or participatory evaluation through a 'citizen report card' (World Bank 2002b, p. 97), are likely to ensure effective participation. Researchers have argued that 'the World Bank's model of good governance or the Western countries' precepts of democracy can serve only as guides and not as the criterion for understanding a developing nation's success or failure' (Zafarullah & Khan 2005, p. 216). 'The reorientation of development efforts must recognise historical and cultural specificities, as well as the uniqueness of formal and informal institutions' (Angeles 2004, p. 187).

A new system based on the local context is therefore recommended. In this new system, a consortium of local NGOs jointly will select a user group or people's school, which will mandatorily join with development-projects undertaken by the Upazila Parishad, and will independently report to the NGO consortium. That local NGO consortium will forward the report to the aid agency, so that donor agencies will be aware of the uses of their aid. Details about key players and their functions are shown in the following figure.

Figure 9.5 Recommended System

Source: The Author

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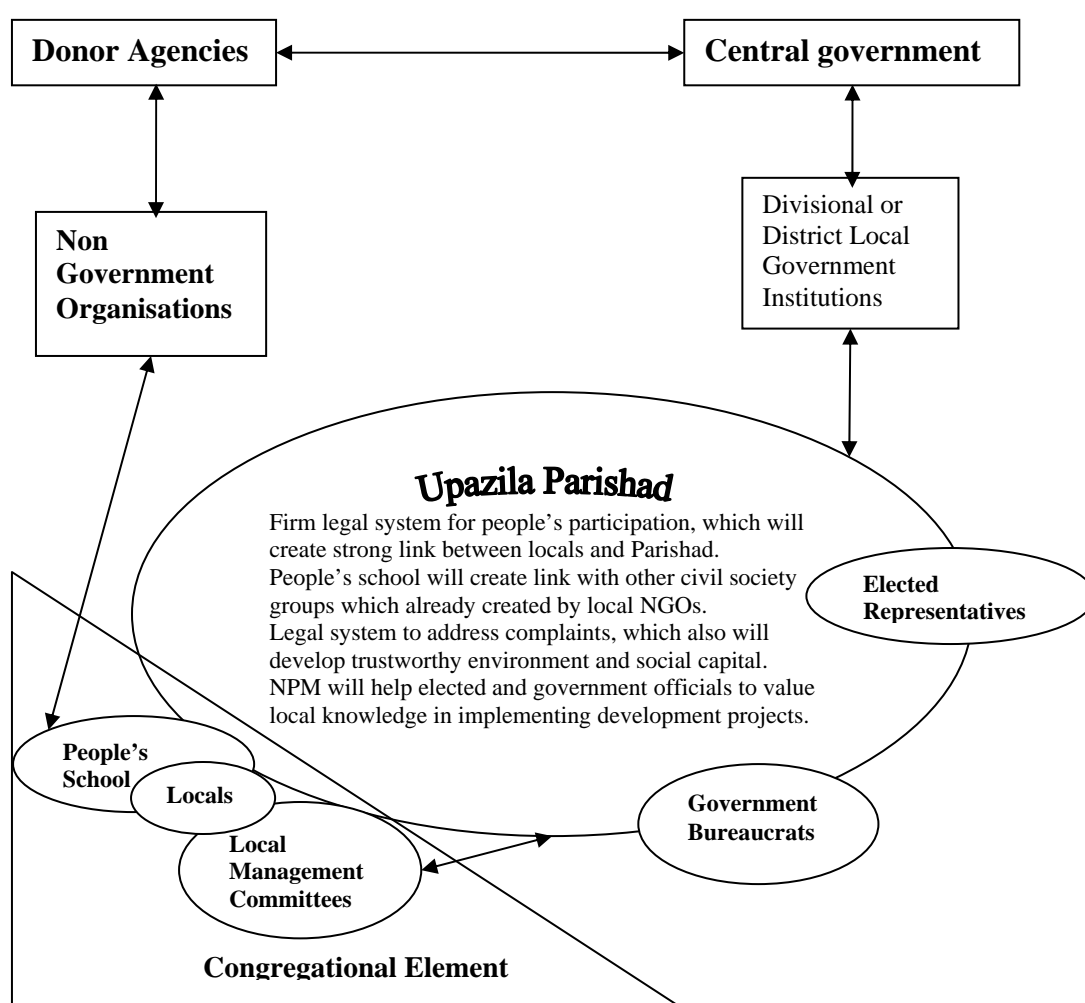
For good local governance in Bangladesh, the congregational element needs to be established more robustly (Chapter 3), and this recommended system tried to do so by incorporating a People's School elected by local NGOs. The following sections will discuss details about new key players this research proposes to be incorporated in the present system (Figure 4.3) of people's participation in local development programs in rural Bangladesh.

Local NGOs: After independence in 1971 Bangladesh was regarded as the poorest country; now some 40 countries are poorer than Bangladesh in terms of per capita income and human development (Gunter 2008). The contribution of some NGOs has been highly applauded in this progress (Hossain & Sengupta 2009). As such, the Grameen Bank and its founder were awarded the Nobel Peace Price as recognition of their contribution to poor women for alleviating their poverty.

By analysing the context of rural Bangladesh, revealing distrustful actors and inactive interest groups, it is easily comprehensible that the government and elected officials will not usher the rural people to the upper stage of participation. People need someone to mobilise and usher them to the table where the decisions that affect them are made. Local NGOs are considered for this role for three reasons.

Firstly, there are a number of NGOs present in every Upazila working for the vulnerable sections of the society. Statistics indicated more than twenty-two thousand NGOs are working all over the country (Haque 2002; Lewis 2004). Most of these NGOs are working at rural level and thus they know the norms and culture of the rural people (Sultana & Abeyasekera 2008). Thus, these NGOs, which are considered as non-functional civil society groups (Parnini 2006; Tasnim 2007), will be effectively developed as active civil society groups by participating in local development programs. Moreover, the potential of existing NGO groups (voluntary groups) could be effectively utilised for pro-people policy formulation (Ahmad 2003).

Secondly, NGOs already have good relations with aid agencies, which will help quick message transaction between them. At present seventeen percent of donations in Bangladesh are being channelled through NGOs every year (Lewis 2004). Nonetheless, NGOs are working well with government organisations in the country. Above all, today it is widely believed that NGOs provide better targeted aid as they are closer to the poor, and thus international development agencies are increasingly seeing NGOs as central to development and poverty alleviation (Koch et al. 2009; Riddell 2007). Therefore, NGOs need to be included in projects for poverty eradication in rural Bangladesh.

Thirdly, NGOs have long experience in organising rural people, and also increasing the awareness of local people about civic rights and governance (Ahmad 2003; Sultana & Abeyasekera 2008). For example, a Bangladesh NGO named Nijera Kori has organised, empowered through training, and led the local community to pressurise local government bodies to distribute government *khas* (government owned unused land) land among the landless (Haque 2002). There are many other success stories about the NGOs in rural Bangladesh, which could be usefully applied to local development programs. At the same time poor people also have trust in NGOs (see Section 8.2.4). Though, at present, NGOs are not directly leading, they are helping to develop leadership. Thus in Bangladesh NGOs can be seen as a 'bridging tool' to fill the 'missing link' (Chapter 7) between local government and the poor local people.

Though this study found that NGOs are not directly involved in local development programs, indirectly they are helping in organising, empowering local people in alternate leadership development in rural Bangladesh (Haque 2002). This study also found that without leadership, community awareness or spirit can not work. Local NGOs can provide both services: on the one hand, they can develop awareness, and on the other hand, they can lead the society to protest against any corruption or irregularity. However, while some research recognises NGOs as civil society (Lewis 2004; Lewis & Hossain 2008), some others do not believe that NGOs in Bangladesh are working as civil society (Parnini 2006; Tasnim 2007). Moreover, some NGOs in Bangladesh are not even above the controversy of corruption and malpractice (Devine 2003; Mallick 2002). There are some NGOs at rural levels involved in unethical activities individually (Fruttero & Gauri 2005; Haque 2002; Siddiquee & Faroqi 2009). Therefore, this research suggests a consortium which will check and balance any such malpractice by individual NGOs. This proposed system may not be a panacea to get corruption free development outcomes, but this is just exploring a possibility to minimise corruption by ensuring effective and authentic people's participation.

Beyond the debate, there is no argument that local NGOs have developed civil society groups in rural Bangladesh. Through the NGO consortium, it will be possible to organise all civil society groups together and mobilise them in aid assisted programs. These NGO consortiums would be trained to evaluate users' satisfaction, which will help to reduce the cost for consultants to monitor and evaluate ongoing programs. Funds that will be saved in not using monitoring and evaluation teams by the implementing agency can be used for the training of the members of people's schools. This training also can include elected representatives and local government officials (Holzer & Kloby 2005) for providing knowledge about participatory governance.

People's School: All the local NGOs will first form a consortium, which will then select a 'People's School' of five-seven local people. As most of the NGOs provide training for developing awareness of civil rights to the local people, and they have access to the grassroots, they are the best organs to search for enlightened people. This 'People's School' will join in the Upazila Parishad and jointly will report to the NGO consortium about any decision. In this way the 'People's School', in fact, will work as a 'Citizen Committee' (Gibson, Lacy & Dougherty 2005; Williamson & Fung 2004) or a 'Partnership Management Committee' (Bovaird & Löffler 2002, p. 18), which will inform authorities about people's concerns and also will inform donors about the issues through the NGO consortium (also see Table 2.4).

Through this research it is found that true or effective participation is not happening in the local development programs. Firstly there is a dearth of social capital which is not helping the formation of social networks or trust (Section 9.3.3.2). On the other hand, there is a missing route in the participation process, which can not be identified by outsiders like the international aid agencies or the central government (Chapter 7). Thus, though most of the researchers are recommending more empowerment of the elected representatives for effective performance of Upazila Parishad, this will not empower local people. We observed it during the fully functioned Parishad in 1985-91 (Ahmad 1991). Therefore, a People's School may address this lack. On the one hand, it will work as a civil society group (Section 9.3.3.1). On the other hand it will inform the development agencies about any imperfection via the NGO consortium. The donors will then pressurise the central government to fill the gap. A small part of the aid should be used to pay an honorarium to these school members.

Donors have already established the link with NGOs (Ahmad 2003; Lewis 2004), so there is nothing new to do, just a restructuring of the system. First a local NGO-consortium needs to be formed, which will then select a People's School whose members should be selected from potential NGO members who have training in governance and the spirit and morality for the development. Local NGOs know the ins and outs of the local people (Bhatnagar & Williams 1992; Sultana & Abeyasekera 2008), so they are the best selectors. This school will be elected for a one year term, and will work as a civil society group to heal the missing link as they will be selected from among the local people. They will join in the Parishad as observers with no voting power. This will avoid a clashing situation with elected representatives as they do not like alternate leadership (Jabbra & Dwivedi 2004; Lewis & Hossain 2008). But for monitoring and evaluation, they will be an integral part of local management committees (SMC / HBMC) or implementation committees (PIC) and should have signing power in the final report. This will also help to avoid teleopathic evaluation (see Section 9.3.2.3) because this will establish a link between local beneficiaries and donors. Any wrong evaluation will be reported to the

development agencies, and agencies will force the central government to rectify the anomalies. In this way international development agencies also will fulfil their duty as they emphasised need for their greater involvement and control over aid assisted programs for effective outcomes (Azmat, Alam & Coghill 2009; Hunt 2004).

However, involvement of NGOs for electing the People's School is not the only option of this research. As many government officials and elected representatives (Section 8.2.4) do not like involvement of NGOs in local development activities (Stiles 2002b), a People's School can be elected by villagers without any help from NGOs. But in that case the local MP and influential elites would not get opportunity to elect their own loyal people (which they have been practising in electing vital members in local Management Committees see Section 7.3.2.5). Thus it may be justifiable to bestow the responsibility of electing the People's School to a local NGO consortium. However, to evade any clash, NGO staff will be barred from inclusion in the People's Schools.

Above all, this new system should be established by the promulgation of laws. In a similar environment, in Kerala, India, where the poor are not included in civil society, dominated by elites, in a highly stratified society, the then government in 1996 introduced a 'People's Campaign for Decentralised Planning' through a new law, which is functioning effectively (Heller, Harilal & Chaudhuri 2007). Therefore, a 'People's School' with a complete legal framework would be considered as an effective tool to ensure effective participation in rural Bangladesh.

Interactions, in this way, between a People's School, local people and other Management Committees (Chapter 3) would help to strengthen the congregational element of local government bodies in rural Bangladesh. In addition to elected public representatives in local government councils (Upazila Parishads), a People's School and local Management Committees would ensure broader engagement of local people. This civic engagement thus aims towards developing a 'virtuous circle' (Putnam 1993, p. 117) to lock in good governance in rural Bangladesh.

9.6   Methodological Issues

Use of an appropriate research method has appeared as an important issue in conducting this research in rural Bangladesh. Particularly when the problem is embedded in the socio-cultural context, a quantitative method such as survey would not have been a good approach (Manesh et al. 2008; Newby et al. 1998; Van der Reis 2000). In-depth insights, particularly contextual

findings and missing links in the participatory process, could not be brought out without interviews and empirical observations. Local rural people, especially poor people, were found to be shy and worried when talking individually, but these people were found to be enthusiastic when they joined in group interviews. However, during the time of a care-taker government, that is, an unelected and so non-political government, and particularly when an anti-corruption drive was taking place, rural people were found to be very open to discussing the corrupt activities committed by the government officials, elected representatives and even MPs. This environment also influenced the face-to-face interviews with government officials and elected representatives. Everyone talked openly and straightforwardly about any sort of problem and corruption. Even confidential matters were also disclosed during the face-to-face and group interviews.

However, wealthy individuals were found to dominate over the poor participants, and males were found to dominate over females during interviews. So the interviewer had to be careful to allow participation by all participants. Government officials were found very unwilling to partake in cross-interviews (sitting face-to-face with local users and leaders), and even when they did join in such interviews, finished the interviews quickly (for the sake of official work – which may have been true or may have been false).

9.7 Contribution of the Study

The findings of this research study contribute both theoretically and empirically. Theoretically they contribute to the present body of literature on participatory good governance. The present status of good governance, and more importantly, the process of people's participation in local government development programs, has been exposed through this research. It also affirms the value of good governance in developing societies, the vagueness of decentralisation and reforms, the 'teleopathy' (see Section 9.3.2.3) in development evaluation, the impact of civil society and social capital for ensuring good governance.

On the other hand, this research identified the faults in the process of direct people's participation, which would help the central Government of Bangladesh and development partners to find remedies for those leakages. The research has also found an appropriate way to empower rural people in poor socio-economic nations.

Moreover, this research study has provided grounds for the theory that continuous participation of people can not bring empowerment of the people unless there is sufficient social capital and a civil society. Community spirit and knowledge of civic rights are important to form a civil

society group in such a society, but leadership was found the single most important factor to bring people into the participatory process to ensure accountability, transparency and legitimacy of local government functions i.e. establishing good local governance.

9.8 Implications of the Research

Several implications follow from the findings of this research study. Firstly, the present system of ensuring people's participation in Bangladesh local government projects would have to be reviewed to make the process forceful. Whatever the government and donors have been doing since the 1990s has failed to reach the target people because of 'missing links' in the process. On the one hand these 'missing links' have created distance between the expected beneficiaries and the local governments. On the other hand, they drained aid into the pockets of wrongdoers. To make local development effective, participation process needs to be effective: that is, it needs to join the missing links.

Secondly, in a highly distrustful and eclectic society, legal frameworks need to be robust for confirming participation. Moreover, a legal instrument is also essential for making complaints and indicating a local body to act on with any complaint.

Thirdly, in the background of a traditional bureaucratic governing process, adoption of Public Value Management or at least New Public Management would be seen as a contribution to decentralisation and change the attitude of the traditional bureaucrats, making them responsible for delivering local services.

Fourthly, in delivering physical services, such as construction of buildings, evaluation should be extended to the outcomes not just the output. A very strong and beautiful building which is unused or under-used is not desirable for a poor nation. The government and aid agencies need to be careful in the selection and evaluation of a local program. And they should measure outcomes by assessing beneficiaries' satisfaction over the use of outputs.

Finally, in the context of a weak civil society, international aid agencies and the sponsoring government should be careful in forming management committees. Especially, in a highly corrupted society, donors should be careful to reach the target people.

The recommended model for people's participation (see Section 9.5.2) aims to address these issues.

9.9 Further Research

This research study sets the ground for many further research studies. Top of all, the recommended system of effective people's participation could be tested in the field. If rural societies, like those in Bangladesh, do not change their present system of people's participation in pursuing good governance, they will face another 'lost decade' (Squire 1991) in the near future. Several initiatives by the government and the development agencies for poverty eradication will also not get momentum if these countries fail to overcome bad governance and to achieve pro-people development. Formation of an NGO consortium and selection of a People's School can be tested as a pilot project by the international development agencies before establishing them in the wider field.

A further research could be conducted to explore the validity of the proposed conceptual framework. The relation of civil society and social capital with good governance can be further tested in other developing countries, even in the context of developed societies.

A broad based research could be conducted to test validity of this study in a broader context. More local government institutions in different geographical areas and developing countries could be selected for such a wide ranging test. Other development programs, like the construction and use of rural roads, and irrigation channels, also could be included in further research.

For sustainable development in developing countries, participation of women and the poorer sections of the society are highly encouraged by international development agencies and social workers (ADB 2004a; Hossain & Matin 2007; Sultana & Abeyasekera 2008). But this research did not try to assess the effectiveness of participation by women or poorer groups separately. Rather this research focused on participation of expected beneficiaries as a whole. Thus research could be conducted further to explore the effectiveness of participation by women and poorer people in rural development programs in developing countries.

9.10 Conclusion

This concluding chapter has further discussed the findings of this research study. These discussions helped to answer each of the research questions set out at the beginning. These answers pointed to the main barriers to people's participation for establishing good governance and thus effective development. The exposed barriers finally helped to develop a robust people's participation model. This chapter also summarises the implications and contribution of this research, and indicates further research areas.

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This research study explores the fact that, although rural people are participating in development programs, this participation has not, however, been enough to ensure good governance. In fact, the meaning and mechanism of the notion of good governance through effective people's participation that has been imported from the Western, developed democratic countries, through international aid agencies, remains somewhat unclear and ambiguous to the governments of developing countries. Nevertheless, neither the international development agencies nor the recipient governments are aware about the present quality of governance at its existing level of participation, therefore the recipient authority has failed to set a clear target for achieving good governance.

The findings of this study further imply that the western democratic type of participatory local governance demanded by development agencies is irrelevant to local systems of social organisation and is, therefore, not achievable in Bangladesh. This confirms that participation varies with the variations of culture and socio-economic conditions of a particular society. Different local government bodies in different countries with various socio-economic circumstances may well need different models for people's participation. The presence of civil society and social capital should be considered as the most influential factors for planning strategies in achieving good governance in a particular society. Without developing social capital, especially trust in leadership, people's participation would not be effective in developing societies. Adequate legal frameworks are also essential to develop trust among different actors and make the participation process perfect.

Moreover, this study found that the congregational element in local governance needs to be added as an additional and important element to foster people's participation in local developments, and to bring services close to people. In the same way, new approaches to public administration, as described in New Public Management and Public Value Mangement, need to be introduced in Bangladesh bureaucracy to force government and elected officials to move closer to the local people.

There is a dearth of in-depth research on people's participation process in Bangladesh local government affairs in achieving good governance and thereby effective development. This thesis has achieved its prime objective of conceptualising the knowledge of participatory governance, exploring the possible barriers to local people's participation, and proposing a model for improving participation in achieving good governance and effective development.

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ADMINISTRATIVE (INCLUDING UPAZILA) MAP OF BANGLADESH
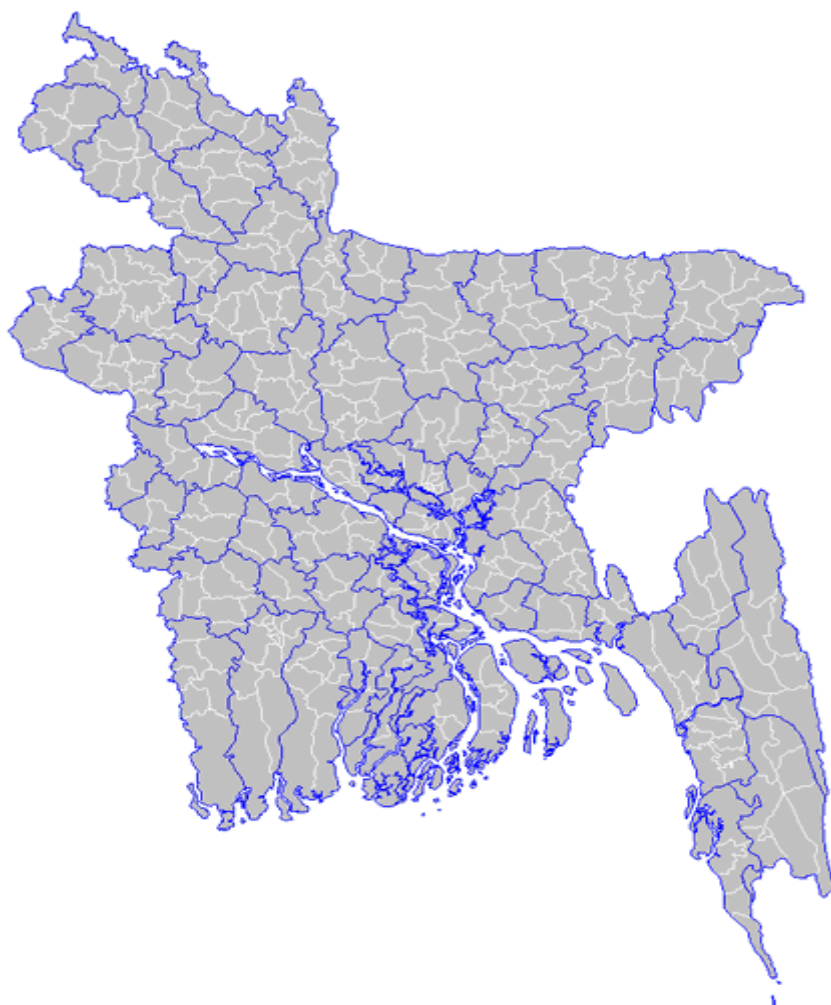
Name of Six Divisions, Name of 64 Zila (District) and Number of Upazilas – white line in the map and right hand side of the names of Districts mentioned below:

1. Dhaka Division	**2. Rajshahi Division**	**3. Barisal Division**	**5. Khulna Division**
Dhaka District -5(Upazila)	Bogra District-12(Upazila)	Barguna District-5(Upazila)	Bagerhat District-9(Upazila)
Faridpur District -8	Dinajpur District -13	Barisal District -10	Chuadanga District-4
Gazipur District -5	Gaibandha District -7	Bhola District -7	Jessore District -8
Gopalganj District -5	Joypurhat District -5	Jhalokati District -4	Jhenaidah District -6
Jamalpur District -7	Kurigram District -9	Patuakhali District -6	Khulna District -9
Kishorganj District-13	Lalmonirhat District -5	Pirojpur District -6	Kushtia District -6
Madaripur District -4	Naogaon District -11		Magura District -4
Manikganj District -7	Natore District -6	**4. Chittagong Division**	Meherpur District -3
Munshiganj District -6	Nawabganj District -5	Bandarban District -7	Narail District -3
Mymensing District-12	Nilphamari District -6	Brahmanbaria District -8	Satkhira District -7
Narayanganj District-5	Pabna District -9	Chandpur District -8	
Narsingdi District -6	Panchagar District -5	Chittagong -14	**6. Sylhet Division**
Netrokona District -10	Rajshahi District -9	Comilla District -13	Habiganj District -8
Rajbari District -5	Rangpur District -8	Cox's Bazar District -7	Maulvibazar District -7
Shariatpur District -6	Sirajganj District -9	Feni District -6	Sunamganj District -10
Sherpur District -5	Thakurgaon District -5	Khagrachari District -8	Sylhet District -11
Tangail District -12		Laksmipur District -5	
		Noakhali District -9	
		Rangamati District -10	

Source: Bangladesh online (Banglapedia 2008)

Organisational Structure of Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperative

Local Government Division

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                              ┌─────────────┐
                              │  Secretary  │
                              └──────┬──────┘
                    ┌────────┐       │
                    │   PS   ├───────┤
                    └────────┘       │
   ┌──────────────┬─────────────────┼──────────────────┬──────────────────┐
┌──────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐ ┌─────────────────────┐
│ JS(Admin)│ │ JS (Water Supply)│ │ JS (Development) │ │ DG (Monitoring wing)│
└──────────┘ └──────────────────┘ └──────────────────┘ └─────────────────────┘
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DS Admin	DS Upazila	DS Audit	DS Law	DS Public health & WASA	DS Development	DS Municipality	Director Inspection	DC Planning	DS Monitoring & Evaluation
4xSAS	2xSAS	2xSAS	2xSAS	3xSAS	2xSAS	3xSAS	1xSAS	3xSAC	6xSAS
1xAO									Statistics Unit
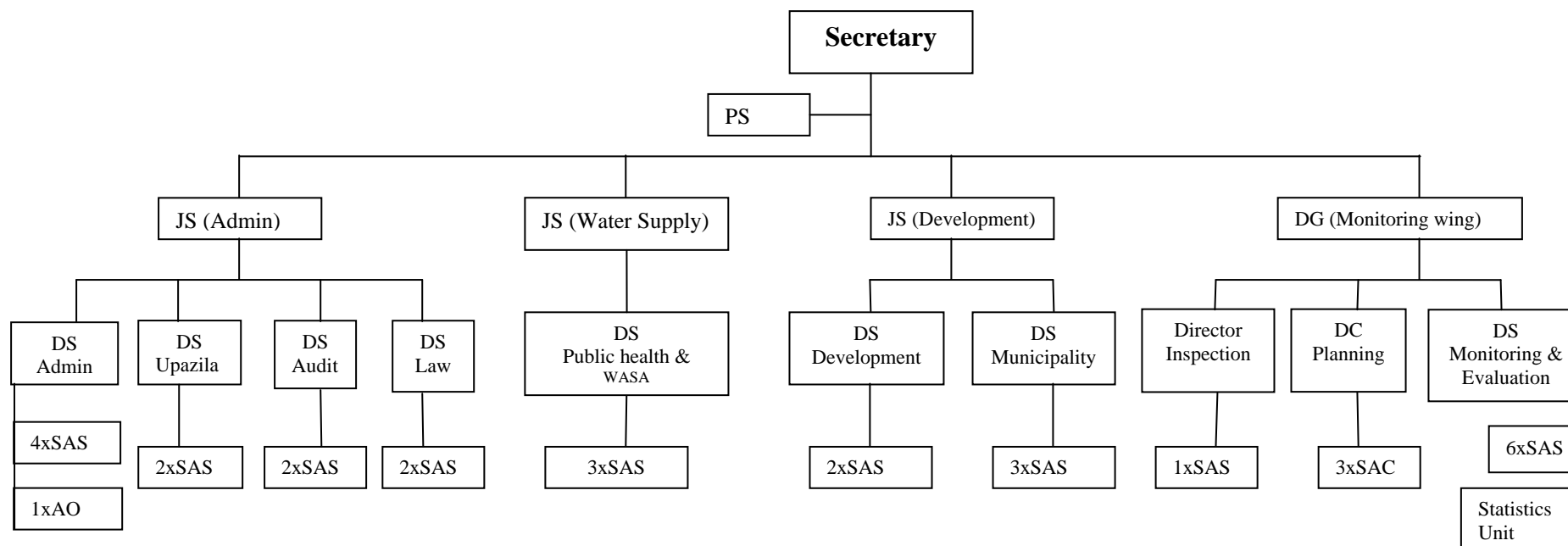
Total Manpower - 183

JS = Joint Secretary, DG = Director General, DS = Deputy Secretary, DC = Deputy Chief
SAS = Senior Assistant Secretary, SAC = Senior Assistant Chief, AO = Accounts Officer

Sources: Ministry of LGRD&C, 2009, http://www.lgd.gov.bd/html/about.html

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT (LGED)

Chief Engineer

LGED HQ Level: (Manpower: 146)

Additional Chief Engineer (Maintenance)		Additional Chief Engineer (Implementation)		Additional Chief Engineer (Urban Management)	Additional Chief Engineer (Planning)	
Superintending Engineer (Training & Quality Control)	Superintending Engineer (Maintenance)	Superintending Engineer (Project Monitoring & Evaluation)	Superintending Engineer (Admin)	Superintending Engineer (Urban Management)	Superintending Engineer (Water Resource Management)	Superintending Engineer (Planning & Design)

LGED Regions: (Manpower: 70)

Superintending Engineer (Rangpur Circle)	Superintending Engineer (Rajshahi Circle)	Superintending Engineer (Khulna Circle)	Superintending Engineer (Faridpur Circle)	Superintending Engineer (Barisal Circle)	Superintending Engineer (Dhaka Circle)	Superintending Engineer (Mymensingh Circle)	Superintending Engineer (Sylhet Circle)	Superintending Engineer (Comilla Circle)	Superintending Engineer (Chittagong Circle)

LGED District Level: (Manpower: 854)
64 Executive Engineers
(64 District)

LGED Upazila Level: (Manpower: 9059)
482 Upazila Engineer
(482 Upazila)

Source: LGED, 2009, (http://www.lged.gov.bd/about/org.php)

Appendix 3

<u>**Extract from Interview 1.1.1.**</u>
Suapur Growth Centre, Dhamrai
Businessmen: 10, represent with symbol A…J

What do you know about the development program in your local growth centre? When did it happen? Were you conducting business at that time?
A: This development happened around 5 years ago, and then it was the largest bazaar in the Upazila. There were several shades for everyone. Though it was not well organised, there was different corner for different trades. We had a big open space in the middle of the bazaar.
B: Our business community was greater at that time. Every Tuesday and Friday, locals gathered here with their farm goods.
C: Those who are present here [in this focus group] had a shop/plot in this bazaar at that time.
So, now every one of you hasn't a shop in this bazaar?
C: No, some of us are doing temporary business and some are permanent, some are moving to the new bazaar.
Interviewer: Have you any shop in this market?
C: Not now, I had one but now I am a Member of the Union Parishad.
Interviewer: So, do you have any function in the development of the local Bazaar?
C: Yeah….
Interviewer: I mean, are you a member of the Bazaar Management Committee?
[they were looking each other]
Interviewer: Is there any Hat-Bazaar Management Committee, or not? Have you heard about Hat-Bazaar Management Committee?
B: No, there is none. We have not heard about that.
D: We have not heard about any Hat-Bazaar Management Committee, but we have heard about Banik Samity (Local Businessmen's Committee).
Then, how did this development happen in this bazaar?
C: It's indeed not a development. Hang on, [someone stopped the former one] at that time we had a Banik Samity (Businessmen's Committee) in this Bazaar. One day, the local Chairman and Upazila Engineer called us here; there was an old hall room here, in this UP conference room. …Then they declared that the Government has decided to develop this bazaar. We all were very happy with the announcement, because we thought our business will get momentum as their words lavishly assured us.
Interviewer: Ok, can you explain a bit in detail?
C: They announced that they will make a hard coat road instead of this earthen road. For the businessmen they will provide a concrete platform. And we will stay permanently as we were. They requested us to move temporarily to facilitate the construction works. The chairman and the Engineer also asked us for a fund, what they called the Matching fund, but we declined.
Apart from this, do you know anything about the planning or budgeting of the program? Did you try to know anything more about the planning or budgeting?
D: They hung a signboard, where they pointed out some information like the starting and closing date of the project, estimated budget, who is the sponsor etc.
E: We did not try to know more, because it was a government job and we could not bring about any change in it. Some government officials are assigned to do the task and they will do it without listening to us.
Interviewer: Ok, I think you want to say something (pointing another person)
F: Yes, they (Engineering department) hung a signboard for this work in English. I asked a school master about the meaning, who translated it for me, and there was inadequate information.
Interviewer: Do you (pointing to C) want to say something?
C: When they asked for a subscription (contribution to Matching fund), they told us to pay 10 lakh (1000,000) taka altogether, but we refused to pay that lot of money. Our profit was around 100 taka per day at that time.
G: At the beginning we were very happy to hear the news of development. We were hopeful that this bazaar will get a hard base, concrete roads, sheds and so many other advantages,

which will boost our business in the future. With that hope, we demolished our shops, moved outside of the market periphery, some of us donated land; we lent our godowns, guarded the construction materials, and sometimes extended hands for the quick implementation of works. But, eventually, we found all was fruitless to us. We are frustrated in the development.

Interviewer: Ok, do you want to say more?

B: We could have resisted this type of development if we knew the planning details earlier.

H: We want to know all about the planning and budget from our representatives or officials. But none of them provide any information. When I asked for a work-schedule from the supplier he replied that is with the Engineer; then I went to Upazila Engineer office and collected a copy by paying a bribe to an office staff member when an Assistant Engineer refused to supply me a spare copy.

I: Sometimes I wish I had the authority; I would demolish all this fruitless development [a young businessman's aggressive outburst].

What do you mean by fruitless? Why are you frustrated?

I: Sluggishness! Long breath of frustration! You mean any benefit we earn from this development?

Interviewer: Why not?

I: At the end of the work we found no room vacant for our shops. Some of us got a narrow passage to reconstruct his shop, but most of us are still doing business outside of the periphery.

Interviewer: Can you please explain a bit?

I: The big shaded areas are remaining unused and gathering dust, sometimes used for cycle stands or dumping wastes. Nobody uses the high platforms, which are too hot during summer, and damage the freshness of vegetables through quick drying.

C: Yes, now, we don't have sufficient space to store our goods. They totally ignored the importance of permanent shops. Locals come here only two days to sell their farm goods, but rest of the week permanent shopkeepers do their business here.

I: Engineers have no idea that temporary traders sell their farm goods and buy cloths, medicines or groceries from these permanent shops.

J: This market is in the gateway of the village, and whenever people return from the city they halt here for a cup of tea or to smoke a cigarette.

I: Most of the big businessmen shifted their shops from here to the new market [close to this growth centre] and we are thinking positively, because nowadays we don't get sufficient customers.

H: Just after completion of the works, there was no dust/ mud over the roads, but now it is back to its previous state as the narrow drains are filled up with wastes.

I think, you have also some duty to keep your market clean. Isn't that true?

H: This is not our duty; we are paying tax to the government leaseholder to look after the cleanness of the bazaar, but his employees are not doing their job.

Did you complain against any anomalies to anyone?

D: We did, but no one paid attention to our complaint. Our present chairman had a shop in the market, and he led us in protesting against the work. We went to the UNO, but he told us it is done by the donors, so he cannot change the design. We went to the MP, he assured us that we would get a shop, but he declined to change the design.

C: I asked the chairman mentioning the low quality work; he answered me the design is not in his hand that is with the Upazila Engineer; when I asked the Engineer he told me the design was prepared by the headquarters at Dhaka. So, everybody is evading the question.

I: Local leaders or bureaucrats are not accountable to us. Actually they were never accountable to us for their jobs. We can change a chairman after five years, i.e. through election. But where is a good candidate? Those who are good are penniless. They have no capacity to spend money for election. Even if a good person got elected, he would become changed after holding that chair.

H: Actually, [silent] well, none care about us; neither the public leaders nor the officials; they only seek a way to get illegal money to make their wallet thick.

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A: What can a chairman do [someone protested]? He needs a lot of money for his everyday functions. Moreover, he cannot control the government officials- who are the actual machinery.

I: But he cannot ignore his responsibility [countered the previous one]. When we asked him [chairman] about the low quality works/ unplanned works he pointed to local engineers as the scapegoat. …chairman did not care about perfection of the work; he only cared about the amount of money involved in the activities, because more money means more percentage [percentage of bribe for final report].

So, don't you think this program could be performed productively?

C: Of course; we are doing business in this bazaar for generations after generations, we know how many farmers come with their vegetables, how many come with fish or meat. If the officials discussed the planning with us before it was implemented, we could provide them with effective suggestions.

H: This bazaar is almost abandoned. All the big merchants are moving to the new market.

I: We need a court at Upazila level or some commission who will listen to us; because, officials and Chairmen engage in corruption by supporting each other. So when we bring any complaint against any Chairman he is always acquitted from that charge after an incomplete investigation done by the UNO. They are birds of the same feather.

You could do it before, like you could put suggestions to your Chairman or to the UNO?

B: To whom will we go? If we go to the Chairman, he would advise us to tell it to the Engineer. If you refer it to the Engineer he mentions district and higher officials. We have no entrance to those offices. When we asked the UNO, he blamed us for not informing him before; but, we could not guess earlier that the bazaar has been planned in this way. Actually we could not predict the outcome until the completion of the total works.

That means you want to participate directly in the development programs?

H: Of course we wanted to participate all along in the program but nobody called us. We elected our leader to speak for us, but he serves the purpose of officials.

I: You know, the development outcome/ consequences of the development works affect us. This type of work is being selected for our benefit, but we don't have any voice. Our present chairman was the biggest merchant in this market. He went to the MP to change the planning, but the MP listened to the Contractor because that Contractor was a donor for that MP's election. Now, the Chairman has shifted his business to the new market, and we are all trying to follow him; because, nowadays we don't get enough customers.

But, you are a large number of businessmen; how can you all sit at a decision making table? You can take part through your Chairman or member.

A: Not all Chairmen have a business in local bazaar; unless he is a businessman he will not understand the problem of conducting business. Our previous chairman, who was in position during that development works, was not a businessman, and our present chairman was his contender, so he did not look into our facilities, rather he looked into the amount of money that was used in the construction. He obviously was benefiting from these works.

Don't you have a local Market Management Committee, which is responsible to look after the concerns of the businessmen?

D: We never have heard about MMC. We had a Banik Samity (Businessmen Council), which has also been abolished due to poor business. The Government built a MMC office that is now used by the leaseholder as his office room. This leaseholder is an outsider and wealthy and a muscleman.

Then, how do you want to participate in development programs? Do you think you all have the capacity to understand the planning?

D: May be we don't understand the calculation part of the planning, but we can understand the raw planning. We are all from farmers' families; we are familiar with land surveys. Some of us, who understand the planning, can be included in the decision making committee. So, then that group will explain the details to us.

C: We want to nominate a committee among the business community who will participate with the officials. We don't care about financial involvement, but we are concerned about the outcome that affects our business.

I: Of course, this is our money. Local officials are here to serve us but they behave like our master. They don't care about our facilities, they only care about the amount of invested money, from which they will get their percentage [share of bribe supply by the contractor by dint of low quality work].

Do you want to say anything at the end?

C: Will you write all of this to the government, so that we will get back our previous position? If you have any chance please report it to the government, so we may get some remedy.

I: If government would allow us to break all these sheds, we would do it voluntarily. We cannot break this because of fear that government may file a case against us.

Note: Most of these businessmen was looking well dressed i.e. rich. Most of them were also educated, and found very open to discuss about corruption. Like I [symbolic name] found very vocal against corruption.

What do you know about the development program in your local Primary School? When did it happen? Were any of your children studying at that time in this school?

GF1: Yes, most of our children are / were studying in this school. [Earlier] we had an old building, now we have got a new building. Our children have been attending in the new rooms for lecturing for the last four years.

GM1: One contractor came here to look after the construction works. And after completion, our MP and high officials came here to inaugurate the building. We also joined in that event.

GF1: We do not know much about the details of the project though most of our children are studying here.

[Sir, can I ask one question? How are Australian schools? Varied discussion, then finally come back to the point]

How were you informed? Say: who told you that a development program had been scheduled or would be scheduled for this school?

GF1: I have been informed by a teacher of this school. He told me that the government has selected this school for improving the structure of the building.

GM1: Nobody informed me. I saw that a contractor is supervising the construction work.

How many of you have been informed by the teachers 1, by SMC members /president: 1, first seen yourself: 4 others: 1

GF2: This school is very old, has been established almost thirty years ago, but nobody comes here to supervise the educational environment. Teachers even do not come regularly. Nobody comes here to see whether the school is operating smoothly or not because of its remoteness.

GM2: During rainy season the school faces many problems, because the connecting roads are not well developed. We need a hard-coat/made road to access the school.

How much did you know about the planning or budgeting or funding? Did you see any signboard or work schedule? Did any officials or your representative tell you about planning or budgeting?

GF1: We know nothing about the planning or budgeting. The school teachers and managing committee (SMC) knows about that. We even didn't see any signboard for the work.

GF2: I heard something a kind of that, I am not sure, that the contractor did not work properly. But, this is obvious: those contractors are always dodgy. They are thieves. They steal public money. They share the illegal money with the officials.

Were you involved or asked to be involved in the development program? Like: did you contribute anything like money or land for this development?

GF1: No, nobody asked us to be involved in the project.

GF2: A [guardian] member of the SMC asked me to go with him into the Engineer's office to collect the work schedule. One of my cousins is working in that office, so I just went with him, and we collected that paper. But that paper was written in English, so we didn't understand anything from that. Then I lost my interest, but that member went to the Headmistress to understand it and he told me that the supplied items were not the quality as per the schedule.

GF3: The school is established on the land that was owned by my forefathers, but the president of the SMC doesn't want to include me in the committee. He always selects others because he is involved in the opposite political party. So, I don't come to get involved in school activities.

GF4: My house is adjacent to the school field; if we didn't keep an eye on the construction materials, they could be stolen. But the contractor has never spent a penny for me, not even offered me a cup of tea. Rather his people took rest in my house.

How is this development affecting you and your child who is studying at this school? Suppose: whether this development facilitates a better studying environment than in the past or if it creates any problem for your child.

GF2: Certainly, students and teachers are happy, because they had a new building. But, I am in doubt how long the building will exist.

GM2: This building will not last for the next ten years. All materials were very low quality. Even the chairs and tables are starting to break. Most of the students, now, sit on the mat.

GM1: Rain water even leaks from roof when it rains. Doors and windows do not work properly.

GF4: After evening, local druggies come here for gambling. Nobody cares about the school room. It is government property, it is built for us, teachers are getting their salary with our money, but they don't come regularly. A BRAC (NGO) school opened nearby; I sent my younger child to that school. That is well organised. Teachers are regular; the guardians' meeting is regular and all other systems are also good.

So, do you think the involvement of a local NGO for school development can bring a better outcome?

GF4: Undoubtedly, the BRAC School is far better than this one, but they don't take more than 30 students for one class. So we all don't get scope to transfer our children to that school. [However], in the government school, the government is providing wheat for each student; though the SMC kept taka 10 for the school-fund.

GM2: BRAC School is not a concrete one, but it is very neat and clean. If this work was looked after by the BRAC manager, the result would have been better.

Do you think the development could be done differently? Like: a different way of planning or budgeting or monitoring could bring more facilities to the students?

GF2: Only a building is not enough; we need a good teacher too –who will be attentive to the students, will be regular, and most of all a talent.

GF3: Even education officers do not pay visits very often.

GF1: We had a very good headmaster before this school got registered by the government. We had a very informal relation with our headmaster. He always discussed problems related to the school with us, and we also took part, with our resources, to help him to overcome the problem.

GF2: Most of us, who are present here, were his student. He was very learned and sincere. He knew all of us by name and even our guardians also.

So you think quality of education will get priority over quality of the building.

GM2: We want both. We need good class rooms, but above that we need a good quality of education to build our children.

GM1: This school is for our children, we are worried about the future of our kids; we always want the best for the school that will improve the educational environment.

GF1: You know, the blackboard that was supplied by the contractor is beyond use. We could do better than that.

How it could be done? I mean what is your plan to do that?

GF2: I think government can give money to the school, either to the Headmaster or to the SMC, and we all [together] could make a better school [including] building and furniture.

But, you don't have technical knowledge to implement such project.

GF2: The engineers are not doing the job now. They also employed a contractor to do the job.

GF4: No one needs technical expertise to do all these tasks. We also will hire a contractor to do that. But, the contractor could not be that crooked if we had the authority to supervise the work.

Now, in the current system, SMC has authority to supervise the work.

GF4: That is only in black and white. Engineers do not consult with the SMC for planning or budgeting or for anything.

GF3: I am in doubt that the SMC's president is honest, we do not have faith in the present headmaster either; we want direct involvement.

GF1: The SMC would not be that bad, because they are locals. They are accountable to us. We can meet them anytime. Actually the SMC's president is a very simple/ plain man; he cannot establish his voice with any authority.

But you are a big number; you elected SMC members to make decisions on your behalf. Is that not right?

GF3: No, there was no election for SMC. The then MP told Mr. [not mentioned] he will be SMC president, and from then on he is president. After that he [the president] selected other members for the committee. The SMC is not honest, they were controlled by the MP and kept money from the subsidy fund (fund that subsidised by the government for the 'food for education' program) illegally.

Did you or any one of you complain to anybody against any unfairness? Say: to your MP or high Officials?

GF3: We don't know when high officials pay their visit. District officials should call local people to be present during their inspections. So the local people will get scope to lodge any complaint.

GF4: We cannot reach our MP, he is always surrounded by the high officials and local leaders including SMC's president.

What do you think about people's participation? Do you think local guardians also will participate in local development programs in addition to SMC?

GF3: Yes, we think so [everyone was looking each other –suppose they never heard it]

How do you want to be involved? Suppose you are a big number and it is difficult to involve everyone – in this case what may be a way to participate?

GF4: We don't want to involve in routine works; that will be done by the SMC and officials. But, we think our involvement with the major decision making process will bring a win-win situation.

GF3: Yes the government is spending money for our children; the SMC also wants to alleviate the educational environment. So our synergic action could bring a better result.

How do you rate the performance of the SMC? Are they effectively representing your aspiration to run the school?

GF1: They are not bad, but they are helpless. They cannot fight against the officials or contractor. The contractor is the MP's man. None dares to fight against him.

If this work was being done again, how could this be done in a better way?

GF4: I think the government should be more transparent; we don't know about the selection process; we don't know about the planning; we know nothing about the budget; so how do we comment about the quality of the program.

GF2: We can do better than the officials or contractors. We cannot say anything against the contractor or officials; they are not accountable to us.

GF1: We are also busy; we have our own job everyday. But officials can visit regularly; this is their job. If the contractors turn a bit honest they can achieve better results. But no one but the God can turn them in the correct way.

<u>**Extract from Interview: 1.2.1.**</u>
Hoibatpur Growth centre, Jessore
Businessmen, 12 male represent as A…K,

What do you know about the development program in your local growth centre? When did it happen? Were you conducting business at that time?

A: [An apparently rich person replied:] Yes, most of us present here today were in business during the development period. One day the local Member and the Chairman called us to his UP office and discussed that this market has been selected by the government for development. They said that this market will be renovated with a concrete floor, drains, and shades for temporary traders. They pointed out that we might have to face temporary suffering because we need to move outside of the market periphery during construction.

B: During our discussion they told us that we will get back our shop at the previous location.

How were you informed? Say: who told you that a development program had been scheduled or would be scheduled for this growth centre?

A: As I mentioned earlier, we were informed by our chairman and member, but finally we were informed by the Upazila Engineer when he came with foreigners to visit us and told us that this market will be developed and we all will get a concrete structure. During their visit they asked us about our present problems and business conditions. Most of the questions were answered by our chairman and by our Member.

B: The chairman consulted with those businessmen who had big shops within the bazaar periphery.

How much did you know about the planning or budgeting or funding? Did you see any signboard or work schedule? Did any officials or your representative tell you about planning or budgeting?

C: Yes, they hung a signboard [in a banyan tree in the middle of the market], but that was in English. One doctor [homeopathy doctor], explained [because we don't understand the English] to us that it mentioned the area, time, gross budget, sponsor, funding authority etc. Except for that signboard, nobody disclosed to us any details planning and budgeting.

D: We asked the local member about the budget, and he replied that the budget is about 4 million taka. But, he did not know about the break up of the budget.

A: Actually we were not much interested about the budget; we were more interested in the planning, which will strengthen our businesses.

D: They hung a signboard that was in English, same as their schedule [though very costly to get hold of one from Upazila office] of works.

E: I asked our chairman about the planning details; he told me that the matter was a concern for the Engineer, not him. He told me to ask the contractor for that. So I asked the contractor but he said that is with the engineer. I never saw a plan of the development work.

F: The contractor with a SE (Sub- Assistant Engineer) came to the market and measured the government land. After completion of the land marking (market periphery) they told me to move to outside the mark until their works were finished. But, they made a vegetable-shed after I was moved, and they never gave me back my land. Even now I am still located in my own land outside the market periphery.

C: Local Nayeb (land official) told us they will acquire this land because market land means government land.

[*Someone told the interviewer personally that he paid a bribe to the AC Land (Assistant Commissioner of land) via the Chairman to get a possession within the market periphery i.e. a government plot. But, not everyone has that capacity to pay a bribe. The money was taka 20 thousand*]

E: I asked our Ward Member to bring a copy of the work-schedule but he failed. He went to Upazila and had a cup of tea with the officials, and that's it. Our ward member is a good for nothing.

Were you involved or were you asked to be involved in the development program? Like: did you contribute anything like money or land for this development?

A: No, not in that way, but I have heard that our Chairman has paid a lot of money for this development work. And to do that, he asked us to pay a subscription according to the size of our business.

E: We paid the subscription with a hope in mind that after completion of the development he would give me a stall. But we found no room for us after completion of the work.

C: The Engineer also requested that we evacuate our previous positions with an assurance that we will get back our possession. We complied with his request, but now he told that he has no authority to get back our possessions. He told us to contact the local Nayeb and AC Land for our possession.

How is this development affecting your business? Suppose: whether this development better facilitates you to conduct your business than in the past or whether it creates any problem for your business. Does its use increase your business profit?

E: If we knew earlier that the development will bring suffering to us we would not move from our previous positions. If it happened now, we rather would go to the Taskforce (an anti-corruption body that is formed recently) to redress the injustice.

A: What could you do, that is government land? The Government has every authority to do anything it wants to do.

E: It spoiled our business; earlier I had a big shop at the middle of the market, and I used to get a big turn over. But, now I only have a small shop outside the periphery. People do not want to visit this side. I am thinking to move to a new market.

G: We do not need that big meat or fish shed. All these are a misuse of the space and of money. But, nobody listens to us.

A: One thing is good: that we got a concrete road and floor. Before this development it was very difficult to do shopping during rainy season because of mud and clay.

H: People come only for two days to sell their farm products, but, apart from that we need permanent shops for the rest of the time. People come here everyday, every time to buy their day-to-day groceries, medicines, blacksmith products, and to drink tea or have a cigarette etc.

G: We don't need those high platforms to do our business. They occupied all the important locations and left no space for our permanent shops. Permanent shops are the heart of a market, which supplies goods for everyday life to the locals. But this is ignored by the engineers.

H: The Government built an office room for local management committee but that remains closed all the time; because the MMC means the local Chairman and the UP Members of the respective ward, and they sit in their own office adjacent to the market.

I: When foreigners come they come with the local engineer and chairman so we cannot say anything against them.

B: We had a sanitary latrine, now we have got a few more, that's the benefit and we have got some drains to drain out water. That's all.

Do you think the development could be done differently? Like: a different way of planning or budgeting or monitoring could bring more facilities to the local businessmen?

D: Of course, the officials could sit with us to do planning. We jointly could build a better structure to develop our business.

H: But if they would sit with us they could not engage in corruption. They used very low quality bricks and cement-sand ration to do the concrete floor. You have seen that it has already been damaged.

C: These are government works, there are officials to do that, but they don't think about us or the use of it. They always think about their share.

I: Only God can change these people. This system will not be changed until the 'day of final judgement'. We will be always ignored because of our poverty. Officials only care about reach and powerful people.

Did you or any one of you complain to anybody against any unfairness? Say: to your MP or high Officials?

A: First we asked our chairman, and he pointed to our engineer-who knows everything. But, the engineer said everything has been done by the project office with consultation to foreigners.

H: Actually everyone passes the buck.

J: Where will we go to complain? We can go to the UNO or at best to the DC (Deputy Commissioner- Head of the District Administration), but all these bureaucrats favour the Chairmen. They don't listen to us.

K: When foreigners come they come with the local engineer and chairman so we cannot say anything against them.

J: If I protest against the anomalies then the Chairman will impose higher tax on me.

What do you think about people's participation? Do you think local businessmen will participate in local development programs?

A: There are government officials and engineers who will look into any government works. We only can help them to accomplish the job.

J: What's wrong if we participate? We can work like a team. We know our problem better than the engineers and contractors. This project could be done differently if the officials asked us to participate.

B: But, we haven't much idea about the planning and estimation of such a big project. We don't want to participate in government functions. We selected our chairman and members who are enough to participate on our behalf.

I: We are poor businessmen, we don't know much about government laws to handle government functions. We may be framed for any anomalies and sent to jail. Allah [God] will see everything, not we.

If local officials or representatives ask you to participate, would you think of participation? How would you want to be involved? Suppose you are a big number and it is difficult to involve everyone – in this case what may be a way to participate?

D: Actually we are participating. We are sacrificing our business during the development time and we moved from our previous position though it had been leased from the government for the whole year.

J: We respected our officials and leaders, but they deceived us.

If this work would be done again, how could it be done in a better way? Do you think involvement of the local NGO could bring a better outcome?

J: First they [officials] should look into our requirements. They should identify our problems, which are hindering our business. We are here to do business; they should look into matters which will facilitate our business. Then they should plan to solve those problems. Otherwise, all their works would not be used by the locals. And, eventually, what they did in this market damaged our business.

B: Local NGOs are busy with their interest [micro-credit] business. They always support chairmen and officials to continue their business. They will not come forward to encounter government officials.

J: If this work could be done by the NGO, then we might get a better outcome. Because they are not like engineers; they discuss with us before implementing any works.

C: We don't need an NGO, we don't need any engineer, and we can do better if the government would delegate the fund into our hands [everyone laughing, someone whispering good daydreams].

Your responses are indicating that you have something to say about the local programs, but no body is there to listen to it. Is that all correct?

C: You are correct. We may be poor, we may have little academic knowledge, but we also have a voice regarding the activities that affect us. Unfortunately, none is there to listen to us.

A: Our Chairman always tries to speak on our behalf, but the officials don't pay attention to his voice. He is also not much educated, and has no mechanism to make the officials accountable for their job. He needs more authority too.

E: Our Chairman does not speak for us; he speaks for his own behalf.

B: Okay, stop it here [it seemed he dislike any comment against the chairman].

What do you know about the development program in your local Primary School? When did it happen?

GF1: Yes, we have seen the program when the construction work got started. We heard that a new classroom will be constructed.

How were you informed? Say: who told you that a development program had been scheduled or would be scheduled for this school?

GM1: We saw it with our own eyes, because most of us come here everyday to bring our children to school. Our children also told us that a new building is getting constructed in their school periphery.

GM2: I have heard from a school teacher who is my neighbour in fact. He told me the government has selected the school to have two extra rooms and will provide two additional teachers.

How many of you have heard from teachers?

:2 [raised their hands]; How many from SMC members /president? :1 [raised their hands]

How many have first seen for yourself? :5 [raised their hands]; Others (heard from students or neighbours etc) :0 [raised their hands]

How much did you know about the planning or budgeting or funding? Did you see any signboard or work schedule? Did any officials or your representative tell you about planning or budgeting?

GM1: No, we know nothing.

GF1: No, there was no signboard. Actually we did not try to know anything about it. Because it is a government work, and a contractor was selected by the Upazila to build a building and supply furniture.

GF2: Actually this is a government job, so government officials are looking into it. We are not interested to bother government officials. At best our headmistress can be involved with that.

GM1: We want education for our children, and the government is providing it free; we are happy for that. There is a school managing committee which is also looking at the development works of the school.

GF1: The officials do not disclose the planning and budget to us lest we know about their corruption.

Were you involved or asked to be involved in the development program? Like: did you contribute anything like money or land for this development?

GF2: No, we did not.

GF3: When this school was built, my forefather donated land for this school.

GF1: We heard that most of our ancestors paid money to raise a fund for this school when it started some fifty years ago. My grandfather was a voluntary teacher in this school at that time. Actually at the beginning this school was running better because everyone felt this is our school, but now it is marked as a government school.

GF4: I feel it is still our school. I helped a lot during the construction work; like when construction work was going on I guarded the construction materials, like sand, cement and rods. Of course it was easy to me because my house is close to the school.

GM2: They also used my tube well for water they needed for the construction works.

How is this development affecting you and your child who is studying at this school? Suppose: whether this development facilitates a better studying environment than in the past or if it creates any problem for your child.

[Laughing; they were looking at each other].

GF2: Actually, we never thought about it. We never think that we need to think about it. There are school teachers who will think about it.

GM1: We had sufficient classrooms; we did not need more class rooms. We need more furniture or electric fans in the classroom.

GM3: Our children cannot eat anything during lunch time, because school time is 10am to 4pm. And the government doesn't supply funds to provide them tiffins.

GF4: Of course new classrooms help the students for better environment. Moreover, students are happy with the new furniture.

Do you think the development could be done differently? Like: a different way of planning or budgeting or monitoring could bring more facilities to the students?

GM2: Instead of constructing new classrooms they could provide more furniture and electric fans.

GF3: This new building could be done adjacent to the old building so that the playground could be kept untouched and bigger.

I mean; forget about the government job. Just think this is your job and you've got the funds to build a new building. How would you have done this job?

GF2: I think we could not have done this, because we don't have sufficient technical knowledge about building-planning and architecture.

GF5: We don't want to handle government money. If the government asks for our help, we are ready to provide that, but we are not interested to handle government money.

GF6: There are many rules and regulations to handle government projects and the need to maintain a lot of ledger (accounting book) books.

What do you think about people's participation? Do you think local guardians will participate in school development programs?

GF2: This is a government school, what can we bring (further result) in terms of involvement with the development programs. We don't want to participate.

GF1: This could pave our way to go to jail. We are not supposed to perform jobs together. We can only help the officials to perform a job.

If your local officials or representatives ask you to participate, would you think of participation? How do you want to be involved? Suppose you are a big number and it is difficult to involve everyone – in this case what may be a way to participate?

GF3: If officials or our MP/chairmen ask us to participate, we will join with them, and our job will be scheduled by them. We don't know how we will join; rather we will do the job that they will seek from us.

GF4: We have our own job also, we cannot join in regularly. But if they ask for a little help we can do that rather than cope with huge demands.

GM1: I am ready to provide an electric fan for the classroom, but the managing committee will withdraw the same amount of money from school fund mentioning that they bought that fan, and they will take that money into their own pocket.

If this work is being done again, how this could be done in a better way? Do you think the involvement of a local NGO can bring a better outcome?

GF1: NGOs are busy with their micro credit business and they always support the officials and Chairman. I think, they will not do anything better than this.

GF4: One thing is good with NGO- they are easy going. I think NGO managers are not that bureaucratic. I think if they have any information they will provide that to us.

How do you rate the performance of the SMC? Are they effectively representing your aspiration to run the school?

GF2: We don't know much about their activities. We know there is a School managing committee that is looking into the matters of the school and that's all.

Extract from Interview: 1.3.1.
Shalbahan Growth Centre, Tentulia
Businessmen, 12 male, represent as A…L,

How much do you know about the development of this market?
A: These infrastructures have been developed in different phases: the first phase commenced during 1999 when 'they' built different shades, roads and toilets. In the second phase 'they' built a Ladies' Market, drains and an office room for the businessmen.
Interviewer: What do you mean by 'they'?
A: 'They' means government, and related public officials; particularly Upazila Engineer and the contractor. Our Chairman also helped them.
Did they inform you before commencing development works?
A: One day our chairman, engineer and Tahshilder (a staff member of the land office) came to our bazaar and told us they want to develop this market e g, permanent shades to protect our goods, hard coat roads across the market, toilets etc. They also requested that we move temporarily to facilitate their construction works.
B: They did not come to all of us; they only came to those shopkeepers whose shops needed to be moved.
C: I have been informed by the local UP Member who has also a pharmacy on the bazaar outskirts. He told me the government will develop this bazaar in a way that there will be no clay during rainy season, and we will be provided with permanent shades to keep our goods safely.
D: I have heard it from the Tahsilder [local land official]. Actually, he threatened to me move outside the bazaar periphery otherwise my lease will be cancelled.
A: This is government land and the government can do what ever she likes. If we protest against that our business will be hampered.
B: During their construction work they hung a signboard that showed the starting and finishing date of their works.
How much do you know about their planning and budgeting?
A: The Upazila office appointed a contractor to pursue the works, and they completed the work according to the government plan. We don't have any access to their planning and budgeting.
B: We knew the money comes from foreign funds. Sometimes foreigners also visited here to see the development works.
Did you ask those foreigners anything about the program, like planning, budgeting or anything else? Or did those foreigners disclose anything to you about their planning or budgeting?
D: When foreigners visit here all Upazila officials like UNO, police officer, District officers, Engineers surround them, so we don't get a chance to come close to them.
B: Sometimes those foreigners asked us about our satisfaction over the development works. We told them we were very happy, as prompted by the engineer, because I didn't understand their language.
Were any of you involved or asked to be involved in the development works?
A: This is a government program and the government is paying local bureaucrats to look after these activities. This is their [officials] job to conduct; our involvement may cause annoyance to them.
B: What is our job in the government program? This is government land, we have gotten lease of our plot, so we cannot say no if the government wants to develop this bazaar. Where is our scope to participate? We are poor businessmen. If the government orders us to participate, we are ready to do that.
At least you could ask your chairman to be involved in the planning process?
A: Our chairman told us about the planning that is done in the Dhaka office, which cannot be changed by the local engineers.
B: Our Chairman is not that dodgy like other Chairmen, but he needs some money to distribute for his own purposes and paying for services to us like arbitration.

C: Actually, officials don't pay any attention to the Chairman. All funds come from the top through the officials, so all Chairmen obey the order of the officials. Our previous chairman was very strong, and he knew how to handle the officials.

How is this development affecting you? How do you use the outcome of the development?

E: We do not use these concrete floors because they dry up my vegetables quickly (vegetables seller).

F: We do not use that meat-shed because there is no slaughter house/room to cut meats. Moreover, that is a government shed: if I sit there today, tomorrow someone else will sit there. So I prefer a fixed possession.

D: We don't need such a big meat shed. We need a slaughter house to run the blood out, because that creates a bad odour, and make the environment uncongenial.

B: This bazaar is famous for bamboo business; earlier there was much space inside the market periphery to keep the bamboo in, but now we don't have enough space to stack bamboo. So everyone keeps it in the road-side and that makes for traffic jams.

Interviewer: What about that Ladies' corner [it was looking abandoned]?

D: No women come here to open a shop. When there is no female shopping corner in the city how do they expect a female shopkeeper in this rural area. So all the shops in the 'Ladies' Corner' are either closed or run by their husbands who can 'manage' the chairman.

G: Those long vegetable sheds are useless. Now shopkeepers are using those sheds for permanent structures. They built shops adjacent to the sheds and are using the high floors for their porch.

H: We have been doing business here from the time of our forefathers; we know what we need to facilitate our business. We need more space for permanent shops. We don't need those types of vegetable sheds that are useless. We don't need that many fish and meat sheds; rather we would prefer more spaces to allow our local cow-carts to enter inside the bazaar to transport goods.

I: we also need more open spaces to keep bamboo and other voluminous goods.

A: we also need more drains to run out stagnant water. The present drains are all clogged with wastes, and those are very narrow, which is not enough to run off all the water from the bazaar.

B: It is a government market and the government supplied the money to build it; of course the government can do what ever it likes, but we have been doing business here for a long time. If the engineer listens to us before his planning that could bring better outcomes.

Don't you have a market management committee, or any other association?

D: No. They made a committee office but nobody sits there. Actually Market Committee means the Chairman and his Member (UP Ward Member). The member has a pharmacy in the bazaar. Whenever we face any problem related to the bazaar, we ask the chairman to solve it. And he takes the initiative to overcome the problem.

A: the UP office is adjacent to the market, so the chairman knows everything about the market.

B: The tax collector has an office in the bazaar. He does not come very often.

Interviewer: How is a tax collector appointed?

A: Every year the UNO office calls for auctions for the tax collecting for the local bazaars. The highest bidder is appointed for tax collection. Apart from tax collection the tax collector is also assigned to responsibility for the cleanliness of the market area.

Do you have any idea about people's participation in local development programs?

A: We don't understand. Could you please explain?

[The interviewer explained about direct engagement; and then asked: Could you think of something like that?]

A: We cannot think about it. Nobody even asks us to think in that way. It may be possible in a developed country because they are rich. But it is not possible in our poor country.

B: This is the government's job; what is our business in their works? And they will not allow us to join in the government functions.

Don't you think if you participate in the planning that could bring better results?
B: That's correct; they could ask some of us. Before planning they could have asked us about the problems of doing business in this bazaar.
C: The government developed the market in a way that actually brought more disadvantages than advantages to the businessmen. There is not sufficient space to build more permanent shops. This problem could have been litigated through a discussion before establishing the project.
Will you participate if asked to?
A: No, it could invite problems for us. We do not want to touch government money, because we do not know how to handle a project.
B: We have our own business, and the government appointed its officials to do this kind of job. So, they will do the job; we don't want to participate.

Interviewer: But, you told us that your involvement could have brought a better result?
B: We just want to speak about our problem and needs; we don't want to be involved in budgeting or monitoring or other such business.
If you were asked to conduct these development works how you would do that?
B: We would sit together for planning, and then we would find out our needs and we could solve those problems. But, the government will never allow us to do it in this way. God made them officials, and they know better than us, so they don't need to discuss anything with us.
Do you think the works could be better if local NGOs were involved in this work?
A: May be, we don't know.
B: Only God knows which the better way is. NGOs have no function with bazaars, they only know about micro-credit and other social functions; they don't know anything about our bazaar.

<u>**Extract from Interview: 1.3.2.**</u>
Bhajanpur Govt. Primary School, Tentulia
Student Guardian -5 male represent as GF1…GF5, 6 female represent as GM1…GM6

What do you know about the development program in your local Primary School? When did it happen? Were any of your children studying at that time in this school?

GF1: Our headmistress told us that the government has selected a project to build two new classrooms with new furniture.

GF2: Our SMC president, who was ex-chairman, told us to join a meeting when Upazila officials came to inaugurate the construction. Most of us came on that day, and knew about the works. Chairman [President] told us about the project and told us to attend that program, so we did.

GM1: Our teachers also told us.

GM2: We also saw this with our own eyes.

How many of you have heard from your chairman: 6 [raised hands]; From teacher: 3 [raised hands]; first seen: 1 [raised hands]; others:1 [raised hands].

How much did you know about the planning or budgeting or funding? Did you see any signboard or work schedule? Did any officials or your representative tell you about planning or budgeting?

GF2: We only know about construction of two classrooms and furniture. This is a government function; we do not have any chance to know details about the planning and budgeting. We selected a president who is looking into it.

GF1: The Headmistress of the school is also the wife of the SMC's chairman –who was the previous UP chairman. They both are working very well to run the school. So we are not interested to know about the planning and budgeting of the project.

GF2: I think our chairman [president] knew the details of the budgeting and planning. If he found any anomalies he would have told us; like he told us about the low quality furniture.

GF3: Our chairman was always sticking with the contractor during the construction work, so the contractor would have not been given any chance to do shoddy work.

Were you involved or asked to be involved in the development program? Like: did you contribute anything like money or land for this development?

GF2: Nobody asked us to be involved but if our chairman tells us to pay a voluntary service we all are ready to do that.

Why will you do that if your chairman asks?

GF2: Because, our chairman is a good person, and always tries to help us with everything; we trust in his activities. What he does, he does for our wellbeing.

How is this development affecting you and your child who is studying at this school? Suppose: whether this development facilitates a better studying environment than in the past or if it creates any problem for your child.

GM3: We did not find any change, we still haven't get teachers for the new sections (classrooms), but our headmistress appointed two teachers unofficially, and we pay their salary from our children's 'food for education' program. We also pay something for tiffins.

Do you think the development could be done differently? Like: a different way of planning or budgeting or monitoring could bring more facilities to the students?

GF1: The local MP and officials came on the day of inauguration of the new building. We chanted repeatedly for good quality furniture. Actually our chairman told us to demand that, and we did so. The contractor changed all of the bad furniture.

What do you think about people's participation? Do you think local guardians will participate in local development programs?

GM4: We selected our representatives and our headmistress, and both are very good. We think they are sufficient to look into the school matters.

GM3: In SMC we have guardian representatives as well.

Are the guardian representatives being elected by you?

GF2: No they are selected by the chairman [president], and we trust our chairman. He was the best UP chairman for the last 20 years. All developments in this locality have been conducted during his time. Now he has left the chairmanship to his younger brother.

If you want to participate or if your local officials or representatives ask you to participate, would you think of participation?

GM5: We have our own job. This is a government job and our chairman and teacher are sufficient to see to those jobs.

GF5: But we cannot come here everyday. We have our farm to look after.

GM3: When our headmistress faces any problem she calls us and we support her. So we don't need any further involvement.

But at least you know better than others because your children are studying here. And teachers do not permanently stay here. Isn't that true?

GM5: That's correct. But most of us are not that educated. We know that teachers will think better about what is needed for our children and that is fine.

GM6: Our children are very young to determine right or wrong. Teachers are staying at the school for a long time. So I think the teachers know better than us about the school matters.

GM3: Especially our headmistress has been working here for a long time. She knows every pore and corner of the school; she alone is sufficient to choose the best option.

If this work was being done again, how could this be done in a better way? Do you think the involvement of a local NGO can bring a better outcome?

GF2: No one could do better than this. This is the maximum output that we can expect from a contractor. The contractors and the officials always steal something from government funds so we do not expect a hundred percent job through a government program. But what we have obtained regarding this school building is sufficient.

GF1: NGOs are running their own school. I think they are busy with their own business; they will not be interested in being involved in government schools.

How do you rate the performance of the SMC? Are they effectively representing your aspiration to run the school?

GF2: Yes we are happy. The performance of the SMC is nice. There is no cause to be unhappy with their activities.

GM2: We are getting everything from them that we expected. They are very cooperative and sincere about the school affairs.

<u>**Extract from Interview: 2.1.**</u>
Union: Suapur, Dhamrai (age 52, SSC, first time)

Would you kindly say something about the overall implementation process of local development programs? Like: selection, planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation of a development program.
We have two types of programs: one is fully controlled by Union Parishad, another one controlled by the Upazila Parishad. For the former one I sit with all UP Members, when we receive a lump-sum grant from the Ministry, to select our projects. These projects usually involve the very least amount of funds, like: building mud roads, tree plantation etc. For the latter programs, we all (Upazila Development Coordination Committee –UDCC-members) sit in the meeting and select our projects for all Unions. Usually these are big projects, like: road construction, market construction, sinking deep tube well for drinking water etc. In both cases funds come from the Ministry and are monitored by both public representatives and officials.

Could you please tell something about the development of the local Growth Centre and Primary School in your Union?
As the President of the Local Bazaar Management Committee, I know details about the growth centre. But I know almost nothing about the development of the Primary school, because there is a different management committee for each individual school. For the development of the growth centre, the Upazila engineer sends a proposal to Dhaka (headquarters) to include the bazaar in the project. When the project is approved, headquarters send the fund to the Upazila. At that stage, the Upazila office calls for a tender to select a contractor to do the works. The local land office helps for demarcation of the land of the bazaar. Then the businessmen are asked to move temporarily when the actual works start. Foreigners and high officials visit several times during construction.

Who are involved in the development projects, and in what capacity? Say: involvement of local officials or representatives or committees or beneficiaries or others for any part of the project life.
During my tenure in the previous year, no bazaar was included in the development project. So I have no detailed idea about the functions of the all concerned persons. But during the construction of Suapur bazaar I had a grocery shop in the market, and I have seen the development works.
From that experience I can tell you about all of these.
Sub-assistant engineers of the Upazila office did the main job. They frequently came to the project site to look after the works done by the contractor. The local Ward member and the Chairman also stayed constantly during the project as the Union Parishad office is adjacent to the market. The Nayeb (a staff member of the land office) also helped to find out the periphery and entitlement of the shops. The Upazila engineer and the Assistant Commissioner of land also often visited the project area.
This market developed during the time of the previous Chairman, and I protested against this work. They occupied all the space for sheds, but kept no places for permanent shops. So now I started a new market near to this one according to our [businessmen] choice.

What was the wrong with the development of the market?
The project plan was faulty. The engineers used all the free spaces for the construction of the high platforms, which, they thought, would be used by the crop growers when they come to market days (twice in a week) to sell their products. But the farmers/growers do not use that platform because of the difficulty to unload and load the goods. Moreover, they constructed big fish and meat sheds, which are mostly unused because of the small number of fish and meat merchants. To build all these platforms and sheds, they had not kept sufficient spaces for the permanent shops. So permanent shop owners like me were compelled to move to the new market for the sake of our business.
I requested the then Chairman to reschedule the plan, but he didn't pay attention to my request.
Interviewer: Where is that chairman now? Didn't he get a business in the market?

No, he has no shop in the local market; he has a business in Dhaka (capital city). He failed to win against me as a chairman in last year UP election. Actually, He does not care whether he will be elected for the second time or not, because what he earned during the last five years is enough for the rest of his life.

What about your strategy? Do you inform local people or involve them in the development projects? How do you do that or what is the common practice for doing that or does it happen anytime?

I try to involve all of the Ward Members and Female Ward Members in all of my projects. But, I don't ask local people to be involved in the development programs. People have elected us to look after all the 'positives and negatives' that affect them, so I don't find any further need to ask every person about their opinion.

Moreover, the officials also do not disclose all the information and budget details to us; so how will we inform people about planning or budget when we are not sufficiently informed. Public representatives should have more controlling authority over the officials and funds. If we had enough controlling power over project fund, we could have taken a decision according to the people's choice.

Do you think people should be informed about the planning and budget of the programs? If people want to know details are you ready to be accountable?

If people want to know anything about the project I am ready to disclose it to them, but that depends on the extent of the information that I have been given by the officials or higher offices. Very often, we cannot understand the calculation and planning sketches of the engineers. We just believe what they say to us.

All people are not good also. There are some people –my rivals –who always say things against me; whether I am disclosing details of the fund or not. My rival/ opponent always go to the bureaucrats and make them annoyed against me to show the people that he is more powerful and has broad capacity to handle officials. The people prefer that leader who can maintain a good relation with high officials, and this relation, the locals think, helps to bring fund for local development projects.

What is your idea about people's participation? Like: involvement of public representatives or more committees or direct involvement of local people or anticipated beneficiaries.

People are already participating through their representatives at the moment, but we need more power over the local bureaucrats. And we need direct funding so that we can implement development programs according to our choice. Suppose the local UNO does not have any inspection or any arbitration power over us, but the DC (senior to UNO) has inspection power, so we comply with all the decisions made by him/her.

Same as with the engineers; if I had a bad relation with the engineer, he would not bring any project to me in future. So we always keep the engineers satisfied by following their instructions. Even, sometimes, the contractors are also very powerful. These contractors have very good relations with the officials and the MPs. To annoy a contractor means to annoy the officials.

Have you prepared any priority list of local programs that needs to be implemented in coming years?

Yes, that is mentioned in the book, and UNO and DC also told me to prepare such a list during their inspection time. But, practically it is impossible. If we prepare a priority list, we cannot follow that, because funds for implementing such projects are not in our hands. I know, though I haven't written it down, what I need urgently, but I need money to do it. What is the use of preparing a priority list if I cannot implement it? So considering the reality we do not prepare any list.

How do you know which project is urgent and whether the people consider it urgent too?

Look, my Union is not a big area. If you drive around it on a motor cycle it will take 2 to 3 hours to complete the visit. By seeing with your own eyes, you can easily assess the urgency.

Do you think that sharing knowledge or views with locals can help to select priority programs or that the direct involvement of locals can bring different results? If so then how will people be involved?

I already have said it, that local people are actually participating in local programs through their elected representatives. If we go to ask every person of my Union it will bring extra trouble, because many men mean many minds. And it is not possible to ask all individuals, since it will then take a long time to implement a project. Especially in our society, there are some people who always try to spoil any good initiative. They oppose just for the sake of opposing or from motivates of rivalry; they don't care about the development of the area, they care about their supremacy / leadership over others.

If people complain against any representatives (UP Members) or officials for their mishandling of the project how do you mitigate it or what steps are then taken by you?

We need more controlling power over officials, and then we will be able to investigate into any complaint against them.

How do you know that people are satisfied after completion of any development program?

You know about rural Bangladesh, where wants are unlimited. There are lots of things we need to do at village level. People are always happy whatever is done for them. They never come forward to complain against anything or anybody even if they have found any anomalies.

Did you complain about any anomalies to anybody during your Chairmanship or as a citizen? What was the result?

I did; especially during the construction works of the growth centre during the tenure of past chairman when I was just a businessman, I complained to the MP. But, I didn't get any justice or remedy. Nobody cares about the complaint by a powerless person.

If the project would be done again do you think you would use a different way to implement it; especially to involve locals to bring about a better outcome and use?

Yes, we can discuss with the businessmen before implementing development project in the growth centre. Local people have detailed knowledge on the local bazaar; using their knowledge for making a decision is very helpful. I would sit together with the businessmen before implementing any construction work in the local market. But we need to avoid those people being involved who spoil any good initiative.

In your opinion what are the barriers to making people's participation effective? For example, do you think there is participation, but it could be more effective if some barriers could be surmounted?

There is no barrier, but, as I said already, there are some people who create problems for the sake of opposing. People are happy if we can donate money for them. You know, presently we are getting 750 taka, but we spent almost 15 thousand in a month, the government should increase this honorarium.

Where can we get that amount of money from? We need to expand our area for tax collection. But the main industrial areas are within the jurisdiction of the Paurashava (Municipality). What is the use of making two local government bodies in this rural area? The chairman had collected tax and he bought a Pajero jeep for 52 lakhs, and now he is moving around in that jeep –that's his job. In my opinion the tax collection area should be increased. Pourashava (urban city council) from Upazila level should be withdrawn, because that squeezes the revenue collection of Upazila Parishad.

Do you think NGO can help to make development effective if they work with government officials?

I don't think so. NGOs are just doing business by exploiting poor people. They are more corrupted than government bureaucrats.

Extract from Interview: 2.2.
Union: Hoibatpur, Jessore (age 32, grade eight)

Would you kindly say something about the overall implementation process of local development programs? Like: selection, planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation processes of the Growth centre and Primary school?

When government completed the construction of the new Union Parishad building, the market in front of this building was looking very miserable. Then Upazila Engineer told me he will pursue the Project Director (for growth centre development) to include this market in the next phase of the Project if I can provide 10% of the funds (about 4 lakhs taka, 1 lakh=100,000) as a 'Matching fund'. As I assured him about that, he prepared a project proposal, and I put my signature on that proposal. At the same time senior Engineers from Dhaka and from the district level along with our MP came here to inaugurate this UP building, which opened an opportunity for us to request the senior officials to approve a project for the development of this market. Finally it was included in the project, and we got a beautiful market.

Interviewer: What about the primary school?

It is almost same as growth centre. There was a wretched school building in the present position where you are seeing new buildings. I personally requested the UNO and Education officer to include this school in the development project. They requested that of high officials, and our MP also pursued the matter to the Minister, which ultimately helped to get the project. Once it is selected for development, the Engineer appointed a contractor to construct the building. Presently, according to the government decision, we selected a SMC (school management committee) for the school which is managing those school affairs. The UNO and Education officer asked me to help the Headmistress to form the committee. We sat with local honourable people and formed a committee, which was finally approved by the MP.

Who are involved in local development projects, and in what capacity? Say: involvement of local officials or representatives or committees or beneficiaries or others for any part of the project life.

My office and I were always involved with the project works. My Choukiders (village police that run by UP) were constantly guarding the construction sites. The Upazila engineer office was also involved fulltime.

I asked the business community to pay a 10% matching fund, but they refused, not because they are poor, they are suspicious about our activities, though we are not 'dodgy'. Then I managed the payment from my UP revenue fund.

Interviewer: How do you use the revenue fund for development works?

A circulation issued by the Ministry of LGED has pointed out that Parishad's revenue fund could be used for local development. As the local growth centre is a development work within my jurisdiction so I used that fund when no businessman agreed to contribute to a Matching Fund.

Did you inform local people or involve them in the development project? How did you do that or what is the common practice for doing that or does it happen anytime? Do you think people knew about the planning and budget of the programs? If people want to know details are you ready or accountable?

I always keep local people involved in my development works. For the projects which are funded by the Union Parishad or Upazila Parishad, we formed a PIC (Project Implementation Committee) with locals to conduct them. But sometimes, inviting people [for any decision] means inviting trouble, because all people are not cooperative. Every time or every case I found some people who oppose for the sake of opposing. They are very suspicious. So, sometimes, though I want to involve people in my decision making, I cannot do that. If I need help from any local person I ask that individual to provide it. If he does not perform that willingly, I ask local officials to look into the matter, and they [officials] obtain it anyway. Sometimes local MP or political leaders are useful to moderate any conflict. For example, during the construction of the growth centre, a few persons were not vacating the spaces for the construction of the shades. I then asked the UNO to look at the issue, and finally it was done.

What is your idea about people's participation? Like: involvement of public representatives or more committees or direct involvement of local people or anticipated beneficiaries.

People have elected us to represent them in any government meetings, and we are doing that accordingly. You see, people always gather in front of my office for some sort of assistance. I also visit every corner of my Union, so I know what they running for. People are mostly loyal and obedient, but there are exceptions as well. I don't want more independent management committees like SMC; because of SMC we the chairmen have lost our authority over the local school. But we know which teacher is good and who is not. I think, peoples' participation means our (elected chairman) participation. It is not possible to involve all people with a project.

Then how do you measure whether people are happy with the development programs? How do you know that people are satisfied?

Our people are very simple. They are happy with a very small achievement. Suppose, in the case of the market, Locals are happy because earlier this market did not have a brick soled/floor, and concrete shade. Those who are not happy with our work they can go to a new market. We will not make any obstacles for them. If any person was unsatisfied, we would have received a complaint against any anomalies. I always investigate complaints which lodged by the local people.

If people complain against any representatives (UP Members) or officials for their mishandling of the project how do you mitigate it or what steps are then taken by you?

As I told you, I always investigate into the matter of complaint. When any complaint is submitted against an official, I informed the UNO for remedy. We have no authority to investigate any official. I wish I could control the officials if I had enough funds to conduct my projects. The officials are ruling over us because they have control over the funds. It is regrettable that officials are here to serve us but we have no control to make them accountable to us.

Do you think the direct involvement of locals can bring better results? What about local NGOs, do you think involvement of them will bring better result?

I don't think so, because local people have no knowledge about the development projects, and they don't have the technical knowledge to handle government funds. People directly elect us to work on their behalf, so we are sufficiently able to represent locals in any decision making process. Actually, lack of people's participation is not the cause of the failure to achieve better results; it is the lack of a controlling authority, by elected representatives, over local officials. Very few officials are honest and sincere in their duties. If I had controlling power over officials, I could do better works. The local NGOs have no affiliation with development programs. They don't even aware of government system of work. They only know about microcredit. Though they are sponsoring some primary schools but those are not running very well. The students whose parents are credit borrower from BRAC, they got admission in that school.

If the project would be done again do you think you would use a different way to implement it, especially to involve locals to bring about a better outcome and use?

No, involving locals could not bring any better results while the funds are controlled by the officials. We need more power, both to handle the funds and, at the same time, to control the officials.

In your opinion what are the barriers to making people's participation effective? For example, do you think there is participation, but it could be more effective if some barriers could be surmounted?

I think the main barrier is the funds that are controlled by the officials. The fund should be delegated to the Union Parishad if the project is for Union areas. The officials are the main barrier as they don't listen to us. They perform the development works according to their discretion. They should be accountable to the local elected representatives.

Would you kindly say something about the overall implementation process of local development programs; like: selection, planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation of the development of growth centres and primary schools?

This growth centre was developed during the time of previous Chairmen, so I cannot say much about the details of the process. As you already have heard [during preliminary discussion before formal interview], our MP promised the development of the market during his election canvassing; he pursued the Chief Engineer (of LGED) to select this market for development and it has been selected through official process by the Engineer.

The then UP chairman was my elder brother, and he asked the local businessmen to move from their previously allocated position, i.e., the plots in their possession, and businessmen also helped him accordingly. I think that is the beginning, then the Upazila Engineer came here to prepare the sketch for the market; Land officials came here to find out which were the government properties. We know the total budget, but we do not know about the distribution of the budget for different activities.

As you know my family has been holding the Chairmanship for the last 20 years; I mean my father was a chairman then my elder brother and now I am here; any member of our family knows somehow about any affairs within the Union. Moreover, my elder brother, the former chairman has in-depth knowledge about every inch of land of our Upazila. So, people of this area come everyday to him for solutions whenever they face any problem with their lands. In this way, I know the businessmen once came to the then chairman for restoring their possession with the market periphery. It was not possible for him, because those possessions, by that time, were occupied for building various sheds by the government (LGED).

I found that foreigners and high officials came here once and again to monitor and evaluate the project works. While they (high officials and foreigners) paid visits here all the local officials and political leaders surrounded them. We cleaned all the areas before their visit. They were very interested to know about the project from the chairman. I can remember everything because they eat their lunch at our home after they completed their visit in the market.

Like the growth centre the government primary school also was selected by the project headquarters and the Upazila engineering office implemented it at the rural level with the help of SMC (school management committee). The ATEO (assistant Upazila/ Thana education officer) with the help of the Headmistress formed a SMC, which was finally approved by the District officer.

Who are involved in local development projects, and in what capacity? Say: involvement of local officials or representatives or committees or beneficiaries or others for any part of the project life.

As I was saying, the engineers' office took the lead and the local chairman is their main helping hand.

We don't have any formal market management committee, but the UP chairman is working as the president of the committee and the Banik Samity (Association of Businessmen) is helping him to make any decision related to the bazaar. According to the law, all land within bazaar periphery belongs to the government. For that reason, businessmen are compelled to cooperate with any government decision e.g. move from the original possession for the construction of new sheds or construction of ladies' corner etc.

If they don't cooperate they may lose their possession of the government land. The local land office also plays a vital role to manage all issues related to land.

In the primary school the scenario is much different because of dual project implementation authority. While the engineer's office is concerned to conduct physical works the education office is monitoring the works. So the contractor is much more careful in providing services. Moreover the headmistress and guardians are constantly watching the activities of the contractor. In this sense there is more participation of the beneficiaries in the development of primary schools.

Do you inform local people or involve them in the development project? How did you do that or what is the common practice for doing that or does it happen anytime? Do you think people knew about the planning and budget of the programs? If people want to know details are you ready or accountable?

Though we, UP chairmen, preside over the UDCC meeting, most of the projects are proposed by the concerned Upazila officers. The main reason is that the required funds are channelled from the respective ministries; say, this fund [for the growth centre] comes from the ministry of local government; similarly the fund for primary school comes from the education ministry, and likewise. Moreover, we are not certain whether we will get the expected fund if we select a project. However, the selection of projects by the officials is logical and relevant in most cases. Personally I am happy with the activities undertaken by the local officials. If there is any Upazila chairman, like the present MP, he supports development projects for his own locality. The lion's share of the development fund is used for their own area. But a bureaucrat is an outsider; he has no bias on locality. So we are receiving an equal share of the development fund.

What is your idea about people's participation? Like: involvement of public representatives or more committees or direct involvement of local people or anticipated beneficiaries.

People are the source of all power [of an elected representative]. I always ask people for their needs; at least I don't make any decision without asking my members (Ward Member- 9 Ward members for each Union and 3 female members). We usually prepare a Project Committee (project implementation Committee) at the beginning of the project works.

The UNO, the engineer and I sit together and form a committee, which we send to the MP for the approval. These committees look after and monitor the implementing programs. For major construction works the UNO proposes me to be president of the committee.

However, selection of a project is mostly dependent on the line official and the UNO, because they have the authority to send the annual development list to the concerned ministries. A few years before we also prepared an annual development list but now we do not prepare any annual development list because nobody cares about it. We cannot maintain the priority because we don't have sufficient funds to accomplish those projects.

Do you think the direct involvement of locals can bring different results? If so then how will people be involved?

People have no scope to be involved directly in the government projects. And in fact people also have no interest in government projects. Actually people of this area are very simple and the majority of them are illiterate. They are very afraid to involve themselves in government activities. The bureaucrats are taking advantage of people's simplicity to commit corruption. [*If you not disclose it: The present UNO is a habitual bribe-taker. He doesn't sign any bill (payment for project works) without 1% (1% money of the payment as bribe), so that means 3% for the Engineer and 5-10% for higher Engineers (high in the hierarchy posted at District and Central levels) to release a fund in time for the finished works.*]

If any contractor doesn't want to pay this percentage, those officials will uncover faults in his works and ultimately the contractor will suffer in terms of funds. So, all contractors are paying bribes at different levels. In return for paying percentages (bribe), the contractors are also themselves providing minimum works and services to keep their own share of the funds.

Interviewer: What about a local HBMC (Market Management Committee)? Don't they provide a final completion report? Couldn't they withhold the report for unsatisfactory works or services?

I have also licences to do contract works with LGED and PWD (public works department). From my experience, I can say that the officials do not ask for a report from the MMC, they only collect it from the chairman; similarly from the president of the SMC for school works. None of the chairmen dare to go against the officials. To go against the officers (Upazila officials) means you (a chairman) will get less projects and services from the government, because they maintain all official correspondences with the central office. A chairman doesn't correspond directly with the high offices or with the central ones. Moreover, all chairmen are

not the same. The chairmen also need money for election and for everyday public functions. For example, I spent 1 millions taka during the last election, which will be much more during the next election. This money is spent mostly for activists who work for me to motivate (buy/ pursue) voters. Moreover I need at least 500 taka everyday to donate for someone's wedding or for purchasing cloths or for something else otherwise I will lose my popularity. So, chairmen also need some unseen earnings. Every person in Bangladesh knows all these facts. Where will the rural people go for remedy? People believe being an officer means he will take a percentage (money as bribe) from all government projects. So they do not want to know details of the budget and don't want to be involved in any projects. They are simply happy to see the marginal outcome if it doesn't cause further difficulties. Honestly, businessmen are not happy with the construction of big sheds in the market. If you go to the Tentulia (Upazila headquarters) you will see a so-called developed growth centre which is fully abandoned, because those big sheds created obstructions for doing business.

Did you complain about any anomalies to anybody? What was the result?

Why would I go (for lodging a complaint)? Do you think government doesn't know who is involved in corruption? How will the government charge one (officer) while there is no document? Who will come to investigate he will take another percentage (bribe). It is a chain of corruption; though there are a few exceptions (honest bureaucrats), like the present Education officer, he doesn't take his percentage. But that is only on his own part; he cannot even prevent his subordinates from taking bribes.

If the project would be done again do you think you would use a different way to implement it, especially to involve locals to bring about a better outcome and use?

I would construct less sheds and more shops to facilitate everyday business, which also would help to get more taxes. The locals see no point of use in getting involved in these activities; they have no headaches at the misuse of government money. The local businessmen will be happier to see a better drainage system, which currently causes enormous problems in business during rainy season.

In your opinion what are the barriers to making people's participation effective? For example, if you think there is participation, but it could be more effective if some barriers could be surmounted.

I think these types of projects should be done locally. The ministry should provide funds to the Union Parishad and UP will conduct the projects. At the same time the revenue income of the UP needs to be increased. UP needs more share of local revenue collection from Hat-Bazaar (village markets). Suppose now UP gets only 15% and Upazila 45; we could keep all the money for the Union; no need to send anything to the central. These amounts of money we could use for local projects. Though the government recently started to provide funds directly to the Union, this is very limited –scanty. We need direct funds for major projects as well, and thus, people will get better services.

Would you kindly say something about the overall implementation process of local development programs; like: selection, planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation of a development program.

The selection of projects depends on the area of development. Suppose if it is agriculture related then the agriculture officer takes the leading position; similarly in the case of schools the Education officer (UDO) takes the initiative. However, concerned UP chairmen are consulted to finalise a selection for all cases. Nevertheless, the respective ministry is the final authority to select a project if it is funded by the ministry. On the other hand, the PD (project director) is the final authority if a project is selected through the national project (a project that is centrally regulated). The projects are implemented by the Upazila Development fund; UDCC is the final authority to select a project. Once a project has been selected by the ministry, they (ministry) send a GO (government order) to the accounts department to release the fund. If there is any construction work involved in the project, the Upazila engineering Office is responsible to prepare a schedule of works. And then an open tender is called to select a contractor. Then the contractor provides the service according to the schedule. My engineers (Upazila Sub-assistant Engineers), including me, constantly monitor the activities of the contractor. At the end of the works we asked the sponsored committee, such as SMC for school and MMC for the growth centre, to provide a final evaluation report. The final payment to the contractor is done on the basis of that final report.

Who are involved in local development projects, and in what capacity? Say: involvement of local officials or representatives or committees or beneficiaries or others for any part of the project life.

As I was saying, a government project means the local government officials are responsible for accomplishment of the task. The local UP chairman and Members (ward members) always help to get the job done. The local management committees are also directly monitor the project activities. For the programmes which are not included in any project (centrally organised countrywide projects) we form a PIC (project implementation committee) to conduct development works –from commencement to evaluation.

Was there any tool used to inform local people or involve them in the development project? How did you do that or what is the common practice for that or does it happen anytime? Do you think people knew about the planning and budget of the programs?

For every development work we hang a signboard at the site. If the project is funded by donors, we usually write it in English for the convenient of Donors when they visit the project area. Local people are very cautious about their rights today. They constantly monitor our activities and protest against any anomalies. Unlike a decade ago, people now challenge our function if they find any anomalies. Sometimes we need to use official power to control people when they don't follow our orders. The locals also do not honour us as they did previously.

If people want to know details about the program, are you ready or able to provide them? For instance, if anyone asks for a work schedule or a financial break-up for the program.

We cannot provide details about the project to all the people. We usually inform the local representative about it, and it's their responsibility (representatives) to inform the mass of people. The overall information about the project is depicted in the signboard.

What is your idea about people's participation? Like: involvement of public representatives or direct involvement of local people or anticipated beneficiaries. Do you think the direct involvement of locals can bring different results? If so then how will people be involved?

At the Upazila level, people participate in government projects through their elected representatives. The UP chairmen do preside over the UDCC meeting by rotation. Moreover, the MP is the advisor of the UDCC. In this sense all decisions are made by the people. The government officials are just maintaining the files and official procedures.

Do you think people are satisfied with the development programs? How do you know that people are satisfied?

For every project we complete a base line survey, which includes the present socio economic condition of the anticipated beneficiaries and expected benefits from the implementable project. We conduct a similar survey again after six months of completion of the project. If we find any increase in the people's socio-economic condition, we regard the project as a significant one. The Suapur Growth-centre was not developed during my period (period of posting), so, I cannot say the significance level. But, from my experience in previous postings, I can say that in most cases the significance level is very high, I mean, the development has increased the scale of economies of the businessmen.

However, sometimes, the MP has formed a project committee with his own people and forced us to handover the development works to that committee. Consequently we had no control over the project. In that case the satisfaction level can be varied.

If the project would be done again do you think you would use a different way to implement it? Especially to involve locals for a better outcome and use?

As I was saying, people are still participating in all development programs, and without their certificate we could not make the final payment to the contractor. So, people and their representatives should be more dutiful/ sincere in looking after the development works and to provide a certificate. Actually no people want to provide free service to the government. If local businessmen were cautious enough the construction of those sheds could be stronger. The contractors always try to dodge us –providing less quality materials for construction, so it could be controlled only with constant supervision. Only local people can constantly supervise it; it is not possible for us while we have some other official works to perform as well.

Note: (11 years job experience, here for 2 years)

This official changed interview schedule for three times. Even when he was agreed for interview, he was showing very annoyed and particularly he was evading questions as Suapur growth centre did not developed during his time.

<u>**Extract from Interview: 3.2**</u>
Mid-level government engineer, Upazila 2

Would you kindly say something about the overall implementation process of local development programs especially about the growth centre?

For the growth centre My PD (project director of the growth centre development project) asked me to select one growth centre –as they would develop one growth centre from every Upazila in this phase. Then I sat with the every UP chairman individually to find out appropriate growth centres that needed to be improved. Actually my objective was to select a chairman who was ready to provide a 10% matching fund, because we need to fill-up hundreds of pages including an assurance of providing 'matching funds' to include a growth centre in the final project. I found Hoibatpur is very suitable growth centre because it was situated on the side of the regional highway, and the chairman agreed to raise 'matching funds' for the project. Then I conducted a baseline survey and filled-up the forms to send to the PD office. It then took one year to arrange funds. The donors were funded for this project. Before receiving the first instalment of funds, a consulting firm came here to do the base line survey. They had thousands of questions to fill-up their forms. My SAEs (sub assistant engineer) and I worked shoulder to shoulder, days and nights with those consultants to provide detailed information. My PD was very happy to see our contribution and hard labour. I contacted businessmen to convince them to move their permanent shops to outside the market periphery during the construction works. The Upazila Market Management Committee (UMMC) i.e. the A/C land (Assistant Commissioner of land) and the UNO also helped me a lot to identify the government lands within the market, and to force the businessmen to shift their shops during the development works. After demarcation of the periphery we appointed a contractor through a tender to do the construction works.

Was there any tool used to inform local people or involve them in the development project?

The chairman who is also the president of the MMC by dint of his position, sat several times with businessmen before the construction works started. The motive for collecting 10% of the funds from the businessmen was also to share ownership with them and this involved them in the development programs.

I provided detailed schedules of the project to the Chairman, and it is the chairman's duty to inform his people. The chairman is a very popular leader and most of the businessmen were convinced to participate (willing to move) in the program. But, a few businessmen didn't move voluntarily. In those cases we asked the MP or the UNO or the political leaders to pursue them to collaborate with us. And that's work. I can remember 'The UNO Sir', in my presence, threatened one local person, who was unwilling to donate some land for the development of 'my' market with acquisition of his land. In fact, I encountered some of those people who are always ready to spoil any development initiative: they are actually the rival group of the present chairman. I am happy to see that the land office has yet not returned their (protesters) possessions [cancelled their lease of lands].

If people want to know details about the program, are you ready or able to provide them? Like if anyone asks for a work schedule or a financial break-up for the program.

Most of the businessmen are little educated. How will they understand development projects? To prepare a works schedule all technical terms cannot be translated into Bengali. So we are preferred to produce a schedule of works in English. Do you think people will understand anything without knowledge of English? Moreover, those businessmen are very busy; they have no time to be involved in other activities. However, according to the government rules we cannot involve locals with government projects; we need to follow government rules and regulations. I cannot even disclose entire information to ordinary people. You know rural people are always cynical; they are ready to find faults. My SAEs and I were there day after day through sun and rain to develop the market for their business, but most people don't appreciate it. They always calculate about money: how much we diddled them.

What is your idea about people's participation? Do you think the direct involvement of locals can bring different results?

We are involving UP chairmen; they are elected by the direct votes of the people. In that sense, people are participating through their representatives. Moreover to ensure the participation of the businessmen we are collecting 'matching funds' from them. Above all, we are working in this area and we know all the pros and cons better than local people and their representatives, thus we are the best section to identify and select any development project within this Upazila. People only support their side; they don't think about the country or even about their Upazila, but we, the government servants, are working for the development of the country.

Do you think people are satisfied with the development programs? How do you know that people are satisfied?

As you know we do base surveys at the beginning of the project, and we conduct another survey one year after of the completion of the works. Then we compare the figures between the two surveys. In the case of the growth centre development, both consulting firms, one from locals and one from donors, also conducted final evaluations and we found a high increase in profit margin, expansion of previous business and also an enlarged periphery of the market, which indicates that the development was significant. Furthermore, earlier the auction was 75,000 taka; from last year it is 1,50,000 taka, just double of government revenue income. All these parameters are showing the robustness of the socio-economic level of the local businessmen. Thus we can say people are satisfied.

If the project would be done again do you think you would use a different way to implement it?

The Hoibatpur bazaar is like my child. Whenever I see it, it provides immense pleasure to me. I stayed at the site day after day, through sun and storms. I think I did my best. However, I think I could do a bit better if I had the full control over the funds. It's funny that some non-technical people (indicating the UNO and Ministry people) evaluate our works before releasing the funds. Involvement of many people for fund-handling means the possibilities for anomalies increase. So we need more control of the fund to do this kind of project.

How do you elect/select members for UMMC (Upazila Market Management Committee)? What is their role in market development?

The UMMC is a formal committee whose member are officers and prescribed by the government. The UNO is the president, I am one member, a concerned UP chairman is another member and the A/C land is the member-secretary. Our role is overall observation of the markets within the Upazila.

Would you say a brief word about the development of the primary school?

For the Primary school the sponsoring organisation is the education department; we are just the service provider. When we receive a GO (government order), we appoint a contractor to construct a school building and to supply furniture. The SMC (managing committee) monitors the works and provides a final report after getting everything. We then hand over the building and furniture to the education department, and that's it.

Note: 24 years experience, here 1 yrs.

I asked him to visit a growth centre within the Upazila area, but he was not interested to show those growth centres. Just one year before he transferred from adjacent Upazila, and he was in charge to look after that project. So he forced me to interview and to observe that growth centre [Hoibotpur –at the outskirt of Chaugachha Upazila]. However, on the way to that growth centre we saw an abandoned growth centre [Suarakhi – see photo], what he attempted to hide from me.

<u>**Extract from Interview: 3.3.**</u>
Mid-level government engineer, Upazila 3

Would you kindly say something about the overall implementation process of local development programs especially selection, planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation of the growth-centre program?

For every phase of the project (growth-centre development project) we select one growth centre through the UDCC (Upazila development coordination committee) meeting. The chairmen who show interest to include their market (market within their jurisdiction) sit with the UNO and me to discuss details of the project. Then we (the MP, the Engineer and the UNO) select one growth-centre, and send all required documents (in prescribed forms) to include the growth-centre in the upcoming project. Once a growth-centre is selected for the project, my office, along with project consultants, conduct a base-line survey on the site. The concerned chairman raises the 10% of the funds as the 'matching fund'. We then call a tender to select a contractor to get the program done. The chairman and my SAEs, including me, constantly monitor all the activities of the growth-centre. The consulting firms, both the local and donors', evaluate the project works. Sometimes officers from IMED also come to evaluate the works.

What about involvement of local people with the project? Didn't the consultant tell you about this?

The local chairman and his Parishad (council members) were consulted constantly and they were involved in making all decisions regarding the growth centre. We also discussed the benefit of the project with the local businessmen. The MMC had no office so we built office room for them.

Was there any tool used to inform local people or involve them in the development project? How did you do that or what is the common practice for that or does it happen anytime? Do you think people knew about the planning and budget of the programs?

What is the use of informing local people? They are not doing anything for the project. We informed those businessmen who needed to move to facilitate the construction works. To inform the local people we hung a signboard showing details about the project like: total budget, commence and finishing date, sponsoring authority, name of the contractor etc.

If people want to know details about the program, are you ready or able to provide them? Like if anyone asks for a work schedule or a financial break-up for the program.

The schedule of work is an official document, which cannot be open to people before finalization of the tender. Nevertheless, if any person is interested he can collect a photocopy from my office or he can collect it from the contractor. We are always open for locals. We appreciate their suggestions if they have any. In Bangladesh, people are very curious about any activity. They always monitor our activities (i.e. the activities of the officials). People easily identify the corrupted officials, and they try to prevent this corruption. So in our project we always involve people's representatives throughout the project life.

Do you think the direct involvement of locals instead of their representatives can bring better results?

How we will do that? To do government jobs or to implement government programs we need to follow government instruction and rules. If we are not instructed to involve people directly we cannot do so, because we are government servants. Moreover, we have to consider that Bangladesh is a highly populated country, and we cannot involve all the people in any program. Involving of many people means it will spoil the programs because conflicting decisions may arise from various persons.

I think people representatives are perfectly representing their people, and they are perfectly representing to get a better result. These people representatives, like MPs or Chairmen, are not only engaged directly in the project they also help us to get more projects. Like our MP helped us to get more projects from central (selecting this Market for development) by pursuing [these] at the head office, so sometimes we follow his requests. He also helped us to overcome any problem to manage local people if they protest against any development works.

Nowadays, both the government and the donors are emphasising the involvement of local representatives in all government programs, and we are doing so. It helps both of us.

Do you think people are satisfied with the development programs? How do you know that people are satisfied?

To find out people's satisfaction we evaluate the project works from time to time. The consulting firms and the ministry also evaluate the development programs time and again. During our evaluation we discussed with people their satisfaction over the development works. If they have any objection or different opinion we try to minimise that. Sometimes we cannot change our decision especially that is not in our control. In a government system, it is hard to conclude a decision, but it is harder to change that decision. So, sometimes though we have the will we don't have any way to satisfy everyone.

If the project would be done again do you think you would use different way to implement it? Especially to involve locals for a better outcome and use?

I think there is something wrong in our way of developing growth centres. We need to motivate our businessmen to use all those sheds and platforms. The government is spending millions of taka, especially lending loans from donors, to develop a growth centre. But, local businessmen don't want to use it. They want to keep to their previous habits. They cannot come out of their old habits. The public representatives should motivate the local businessmen to use the development outcomes. In my opinion we can force the local businessmen to use these sheds otherwise they will not be allowed to do their business in the developed market. With the chairman I went to visit several houses, especially of those women who are doing homebound business with micro credits, to motivate businesswomen to start a business in the ladies corner. The UNO and I also arranged some loans from BRDB (Bangladesh rural development board) to motivate them to do business. They came to the market for business, but they didn't continue it. I think we can arrange some funds for women traders. You know, we are paying money to village women who are guarding roadside saplings. With the same policy we can provide some funds to continue business run by the women.

I think we need to enhance the activities of the local Market management Committee. We built an office room for them, and we also provided beautiful furniture. But, they are not using it properly. The government can delegate more power to us (engineers' office) to control these MMCs to activate them.

Note: Officer's service length 17 years, here 3 years

Would you please tell me details about the development of new school building?
Well, this activity starts when the government (the Project Directors office for the Primary-School Development Project) asks us to send a priority list where a new school building is needed to be constructed, both in terms of the wretchedness of the building and where there are excess students. During the UDCC meeting we ask all chairmen to prepare a priority list and also ask them to send it to us. After collecting all those lists my office prepares a priority list for school construction for the whole Upazila. However, the final authority to select a school in the national project, in different phases, is the PD office. Once a school is selected by the PD office they send a GO (government order) to the Upazila headquarters. The Upazila Engineer then calls a tender to select a contractor to construct the building and to supply the furniture. The SMC helps the conductor to get the works done, and finally receives the building and the furniture from him.

Who gets involved in these processes and in what capacities?
My office, with the help of the SMC, selects a suitable site for the new school building. The Engineers' office monitors the work of the contractor as the SMC also monitors the work because they are the anticipated beneficiary. The account for the program is handled jointly by the Engineer and the UNO, where the UNO is the final disbursing officer. These payments are done on the basis of the SMC's reports.

Apart from the SMC, do the locals have any involvement in this program?
No, the locals have no function in this project. If any help is needed from the locals the SMC asks it of them, and the SMC usually gets it.

Are you happy with the construction works and furniture which provided by the contractor?
After completion of the work I always visit the construction site, and ask my Headmaster to provide a final evaluation report. If the SMC is happy with the works they then provide a report.

How do you know that locals, i.e. the parents of the students, are happy with the works?
If local parents are not happy, then the SMC will not provide the final report, because two of the members of the SMC are being elected from among the students' parents. Nevertheless, if the SMC provides a final report where the work is of low quality, the guardians will challenge them.

Have you ever had any complaint from any local or from the SMC regarding any anomalies or low quality works?
During my job in last 10 years I never got any complaints. Actually we all, I mean the Engineers' office, the SMC and my office work together to get the best outcome. The UNO also helps us to coordinate the program. So no problem has arisen for this project.

Have you asked locals regarding their satisfaction?
No. actually I don't have enough time to sit with the guardians. My assistants (ATEO) visit a school once a month and they sit with the guardians. They (ATEO) never told me about any complaints. This is a government project; if there is any complaint the project office will investigate and the officers will be liable for any anomalies.

Did any officials from the PD office come to visit the Demran Primary school?
I don't know. I have to ask my concerned ATEO. [She asked the ATEO, and then replied]. No, none paid any visit yet, but it could happen anytime. However, because of its remoteness no officials may be interested to visit there.
Look, the SMC is sufficient to look after the school affairs. There is proper participation of all levels of people.

How is a SMC formed?
Through election [open election]. The students' guardians vote for the members of different categories to form a SMC. It's then approved by the District Commissioner. If there is any complaint against the SMC or against any member of the committee, we can investigate into that and we can recommend resolving the committee.

So, you think people are actually getting involved with all the development issues of the school?

I think so. Moreover, every headmaster does conduct guardians' meeting in each month, and personally communicates with the parents of those drop-out students. These activities are also helping locals to get involved in the school affairs and participate in decision making about the school.

Note; experience 10 years, here 5 months

She is very new in this Upazila, and was very reluctant to talk about participation. She looked very angry when I was talking about direct participation.

<u>**Extract from Interview: 4.2.**</u>
Mid-level government official, Upazila 2

Would you please tell me details about the development of new school building?
I think you better go to the engineer, he knows better than me. He plays a substantial role in the program generally and for construction of the new building particularly.
Ok, but I just want to know how much you know about this program.
Through a national project, the government (ministry of primary and mass education) has decided to build two new class rooms including new furniture and two new teachers. For this program, the government has been working phase by phase since 2002. However, for the initial phases, the government has tried to include those schools which were very old and where there was sufficient land to build new buildings. On the basis of these two conditions, we the Upazila Education Committee (the UNO, the engineer and me) sat together to prepare a priority list with the consultation of the then MP.
Don't you discuss with the UP chairmen or other public representatives to select a school for priority construction?
We don't need that, because during our regular inspection (ATEO and EO) throughout the year, we collect all information about the schools. On the basis of those inspection reports, we can easily detect a school which needs rooms or teachers. Moreover, there is no guarantee that our list will stand in the PD office. When we send a list, the PD office selects schools one after another in different phases. Once a school gets selected, they send an official order to the Upazila. The Upazila Engineers' office then appoints a contractor to do the job.
Don't you have any function during the construction programs?
No, we don't. All functions are performed by the Upazila Engineer and his collaborator –the contractor. I think you have seen the worst quality of the building and furniture they provided. This engineer is the worst (corrupted) one I have ever seen in my life. They constructed such a building that will not last for five years; it started cracking at once. The plaster is falling out from the wall, and the furniture is damaged virtually before being used.
Don't you complain against the contractor to the engineer or any other body?
I complained several times to the engineer about the construction qualities. He doesn't pay any attention to my complaint. He doesn't even think I am also an officer like him. I brought this issue to the UNO's notice, but nothing happened.
What is the SMC's responsibility regarding this?
At the end of the construction work and furniture supply, the engineer's office asks for a final report. 'My' headmistresses ask me about their act regarding the report. I instruct them to go with the SMC, and provide a report if the service is satisfactory.
How do you handle the report if the works are unsatisfactory?
I cannot fight alone and for long. The UNO requests me to provide a certificate. They all are the birds of same feather. If I don't comply with the request of the UNO, the contractor then goes to the MP. He (the MP) asked me to issue a final report in favour the Contractor about the work that was done by the contractor, and we did so. But, this time we are not providing that report because it is the time of a Caretaker government.
What is the deference in this time?
The contractor and the engineer are being very faithful to me this time. They are ready to replace the furniture, and repair the damaged construction. Let's see how much they provide this time. I asked my headmaster/headmistress not to provide report until we all are satisfied with the services they are rendering.
Don't you think if there was involvement of local student guardians they could support you to stand firmly not to provide any report?
Maybe or maybe not, because most locals are loyal to the MP or other corrupt political leaders. You know in the most primary schools the local MP was told to select him [someone] as the President of MSC so that he is in that chair. When the MP told him to provide a final assessment report to the Contractor, he signed the report that was prepared by the Engineer's office. So, there is little chance for them [SMC including locals] to follow my suggestions. I

don't have any mechanism to control student guardians to go against the contractor or against the engineer.

Why do you bother yourself if the beneficiaries don't worry about it?

Most of the locals are illiterate; they have no sense of good or bad. Especially for government projects they don't come forward to help the officials. They are not aware about their rights or about their obligation to take care of public institutions. They think they have no function to perform in the government programs.

So what is the remedy to get rid of this kind of anomaly?

The only solution is the delegation of power: if I had an authority to control the funds for the school related programs that can bring a change in the engineer's attitude towards the education department. Moreover, we need to get out of the local MP's grip. These two changes would bring remedies to all these anomalies. Finally, the God: He may withdraw his curse over this country when everyone will be sincere to perform one's duty.

Note: experience 5 years; here 2 years

This young officer was found very vocal against corruption, particularly against the engineering department. He was found very frustrated for getting no remedies over the anomalies in school construction. To answer the questions, every time, he pointed to the engineers as wrongdoers.

<u>**Extract from Interview: 4.3.**</u>
Mid-level government official, Upazila 3

Would you tell me about people's participation in school programs?

Well, we have a strong people's participation mechanism in primary schools in the country. Government has introduced the formation of School Management Committees for every primary school to manage all the activities related to primary education at the local level. And now SMCs have been formed across the country. Obviously, people are participating through these SMCs, because people have elected these committees by their direct vote. So, the SMC's decision means the people's decision.

Do you think all the members of the SMC are directly elected or all the SMCs are directly elected?

Although there are some exceptions, mostly all SMCs are elected by the student's guardians. In some localities people bestow their voting right to the local leaders or to the headmasters to select a committee, and they do it accordingly. Whatever the method of forming SMC, an elected body has to have some activities to involve local people in its activities. A few of these activities are: mothers' assembly, backyard meetings, home visits etc. Through these activities local people get a clear picture about their primary school.

How do local people or SMC get involved when any development works are done for the school?

Every year the government provides a lump sum fund for every primary school. The concerned SMC then takes the initiative with a program pre-approved by the Upazila headquarters. The SMC is the ultimate authority to implement the program. The SMC may ask locals to help them to conduct those activities. The students' guardians also do that because the outcomes eventually help their children.

If a program is selected by the UDCC or the ministry, how does that facilitate local people or SMC to get involved with that?

These types of activities start with a selection process. I asked my ATEOs to select schools that need emergency repairs or new building construction. At their end, they select the schools and prepare a list, which we then send to the district office. On the basis of fund allocation, the Upazila Engineer then conducts the construction work. The SMCs do help them according to the demand of the situation. The local people also get involved if any help is sought by the SMC or Engineer. We visit the construction sites time and time again to monitor the development programs, because we need to provide progress reports to the district office. Finally, the SMC takes delivery of the furniture and new classrooms. Thus, you see, the SMC means the people's committee are being involved all across the program.

How do you determine whether the local people are contented with the development outcome?

Our people, by the grace of almighty, are very simple, and very happy with little achievement. Whatever they receive from the government they are satisfied. Don't think that much about people; also think of us. We the government officials are working at the grassroots level to help the locals. We came here through a highly competitive selection process. Don't you think our knowledge is greater than that of the ordinary people? We know what is good for the people, for the Upazila, for the country. We are taking a salary from the government that is people's money. We are not here to betray those people.

In today's governance discourse, we always talked about the people's participation; that's why I am asking you about the people.

Look this is not Australia; this is Bangladesh where people come forward to get involved even if you don't ask for any participation. They watch our activities rigorously. If they smell any rat they find out what is in the bag. Don't think they know nothing. They are good to the good person; bad to the corrupt person. We are tired of these people and their representatives. I think we don't need to involve people; rather we need to get rid of the idea of these people and their representatives having involvement in government programs.

Note: Experience 26 yrs, here 3 years.

This officer found deadly against people's participation, and he did not agreed to talk about that anymore.

Would you kindly say something about the overall implementation process of local development programs? Like: selection, planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation of a development program.

At Upazila level, almost all -99 percent -development programs are implemented by the government funds. So, we select projects [for that year] on the availability of the allotted funds. Moreover, there is competition between chairmen as to who will get higher funds [than other chairman]. So we always try to evenly distribute all funds among the 11 chairmen [11 unions within the Dhamrai Upazila]. Above all, the MP [advisor of the UDCC], selects the projects that will be finally selected for implementation. We are implementing these types of projects every year, but the special type of projects, like growth centre development, are being implemented by us through a national mega project. In that case [latter case] we select the project on a priority basis and implement it through the Upazila engineering department. We are comfortable with the latter types of projects, because these projects are funded by the foreign donors, and we obtained sufficient funds to implement them. On the other hand, we need to maintain many formalities [written documents] in implementing the annual projects. In that case, we need to form a PIC (project implementation committee) which constructs and monitors the project-implementation process.

How do you select a PIC?

We form a PIC by the local people who have a stake in the project. The president [that selected for] of the PIC is usually the UP chairman or the UP Member which depends on the volume of works and volume of funds. A contractor who is being selected through the tender process is responsible to carry out the order of the PIC. However, there was no democratic way/official procedure to select a Contractor or Project Implementation Committee during the term of the political [elected] government. The MP forced me to select a contractor inclines or similarly minded to his party. In other cases, the local UP chairman or a Member [UP member] gets selected as the president of the PIC if that chairman is in the good books of the MP. Thanks God this time we are not controlled by the MP who has poked his nose into all government programs; he even selects a SMC member. When political government will come in power, these MPs, whether they will be in the position of Advisor or not, will interfere in our development works, otherwise they will make obstacles for us to get funds from the central [ministry].

Do you prepare any annual priority projects list in consultation with the locals that is supposed to be implemented within that fiscal year?

We don't prepare the scheme because we cannot maintain it. If we had sufficient funds we could maintain the scheme. On the same grounds we never expect such a scheme [priority lists] from the Union [UP] (reason for failing to maintain is dearth of funds and MP's interference).

Moreover, we receive all funds at the eleventh hour of the fiscal year, so we don't have enough time to consult with locals. [Nonetheless], we are not certain whether we will get the expected funds if we select a project. So we always select a project in the UDCC meeting, which then we send to the MP for final approval.

For the development budget, the government sends a lump sum grant for all 24 heads like agriculture, public health etc. Then the UDCC distributes all the money among the Unions. However, it is indicated in the government manual that if the UDCC thinks any emergency work is required within the Upazila we can use substantial funds for that but not more than 32 lakhs (recently 50 lakhs). The revenue budget that we collect from the local resources we can only use for repairing offices, houses and vehicles at the Upazila level. Recently a circular (office order circulated) declared the decision to distribute that money for the salary of the Chaukider (village police) and the UP-Secretary.

Was there any tool used to inform local people or involve them in the development project?

You know, the UDCC meeting is presided over by a chairman by rotation, so the people representatives are the final authority to select a project. We the officials are maintaining the files and official procedures. Moreover, the local MP who is working as the adviser of the UDCC is also a public representative, and we cannot do anything without his approval. In this way, the UP chairmen and Ward members, and MPs are well representing the local people for the local programs. Not only that, the Matching fund that is provided by local businessmen for market, donation of land for school, and guarding materials by local people during development works constitute some kind of direct participation. I think if the present UP Chairmen and his Members (Member of UP) work properly that is sufficient to ensure people's participation.

If people want to know details about the program, are you ready or able to provide them detailed plan and budget?

You know the public service is being changing day by day. Several public service reform steps have changed the relations between public representatives and government bureaucrats. The same changes have happened in the attitude of the public and officials as well. The public now have more access to the government programs. At the same time, we share detailed planning and budgeting with public representatives. Now, it is their [representatives] duty to further disseminate the information to the mass of the people, but they are not performing their duty. They think if they disclose everything that will make it harder to do their work, and may also be their corruption. You know Most of the representatives are corrupt; low [almost illiterate] educated and corrupt. We always try to control their capacity for malpractice.

So, what do you think about people's participation? How can we make it effective?

Well, we are not policy-maker. We follow the policies and instructions that are taken by the government. Once we worked under Upazila Chairmen; if the government brings back Upazila Chairmen to power we again will work with them. But it is very difficult to deal with them because they don't have sufficient knowledge about official procedures and manner.

In my experience, I do not think public representatives do work or are interested to involve the mass of the people. They don't perform any service properly that is delegated to them. Such as: TR [test relief] works for vulnerable groups or for adults, distributing food for works etc. If we don't monitor them, they appropriate all funds. In my opinion, every Upazila should get more controlling power over the Union Parishad, and should be provided the capacity to collect more revenue. Upazila should be delegated with more service providing capacity and revenue collection capacity. The lump sum grant to the UP should be suspended and all the money should come to the Upazila because Upazila is central to development initiatives, so Upazila should get more power to involve local people not only people representatives.

Would you kindly say why there has been no election for the Upazila chairmen for the last few years?

Frankly, this is nothing but egoism in local politics. When there will be Upazila chairmen, MPs will lose control over local government programs. Now MPs are distributing relief and projects according to their choice and they are gaining peoples' support. When Upazila chairmen will come, these things will be done by them [chairmen]. So MPs will be detached from locals. That's why MPs don't want an Upazila election.

In your opinion what are the main barriers for people's participation?

Look this is about a governance system in third world countries –even more at rural level. Hence there are manifold problems. The main problem, in my thinking, is the concern about it. I am in doubt, whether the government is concerned about people's participation. As a government of third world countries the government has many other big problems like poverty. We the government bureaucrats are trying to increase the span of income generation for the rural people. Suppose we worked hard to develop a growth centre to develop business at the farmers' door level; the public representatives, however, are not working as well to boost the business in the growth centres.

We cannot do much to get a solution. You need to consider our socio-cultural environment at rural levels. Once a chairman gets elected, he is becoming a part of the government –the administration; he is no longer a part of the people. On the other hand, people are also not accepting him as their own. There is no trust in each other.

So you see there are multifaceted barriers. However, in my opinion this participation is sufficient for Bangladesh. We don't need more people's participation for government programs. Involvements of locals will create more obstruction in these activities.

Interviewer: How?

At the rural levels, simple and good local people do not want to be involved in the government activities; only those who are cynical/suspicious/pessimistic will come forward to be involved, and they, naturally, will put negative opinions on all decisions. Thus, all projects will suffer from unnecessary hurdles to accomplish them in a timely manner.

Do you think local NGOs can help to provide services at local levels?

Sometimes we get better results if it is done by the NGO instead of Union Parishad. However, except established NGOs, others are very crooked. NGO and we [government] implemented some successful projects like 'sanitation program' and 'nutrition program'. So I think NGOs can help us to provide services.

Note: Job experience 12 years, here 2 years

She was found very busy with too many official meetings. She told the interviewer that on an average she needs to conduct nine meeting everyday. This interview schedule changed for two times, and finally settled it after office hour.

<u>**Extract from Interview: 5.2.**</u>
Executive -level government official, Upazila 2

Would you kindly say something about the overall implementation process of local development programs? Like: selection, planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation of a development program.

How do I explain: theoretically or practically?

What is the difference between theory and practice?

Well, theoretically we have to maintain a lengthy procedure to implement a project. Suppose that to select a project, every UP (union Parishad) should send their project priority list – prepared in consultation with locals –at the beginning of the fiscal year. Then we have to prepare a priority list for the whole Upazila for that year and once the budget comes [from the ministry] we have to select projects from that list for implementation. On the other hand, practically, we don't follow any such procedure [of selection] for implementing a project. It will be a long history [statement] if I describe everything for implementation of all projects. Could you please come to the central [research] question that you want to know from me?

The major question that I want to know from you is about the people's participation in local development programs. Specifically I want to know how locals are participating in local development projects.

The straight answer to your question is: truly, there is no people's participation in local development programs. There was no real participation of people at rural level in the past, it will never happen in the near future in the existing system. There are barriers from two directions for this. Firstly, [the barrier is] the government system. The government asks us to ensure the participation of people via elected representatives; not via direct participation of people. So, we include local representatives in the project. These big shots are not willing to engage locals in their programs. Secondly, [other barrier is] our socio-cultural environment. People's representatives are not representing locals, willingly or unwillingly, due to our existent environment [socio-cultural].

Where is the remedy?

Well, firstly government should know what is people's participation is. The government and donors think we the bureaucrats are the barrier for participation, but this is wrong. If we can work under the public representatives centrally, why cannot we do that at local government level? We are ready to work under public representatives. During Ershad [previous president] period [1985-1990] we worked under Upazila Chairmen; those were elected public representatives. We can work a thousand years under the Upazila chairmen, but that will not ensure participation.

Why?

The main reason is that those Upazila chairmen were not accountable to the people, and the system was not transparent. I mean there were no mechanisms to make those representatives answerable to the locals for their deeds.

Local people will change the chairman in next election. Is not it a mechanism of accountability?

Do you think a chairman is elected for his honesty or integrity? In rural Bangladesh a person gets elected by dint of his money not by virtue of honesty. The candidate who has ability to distribute more money he gets more votes [elected] by the local people. This issue of concern is also influencing the local representatives to be corrupted –more money more votes. But the government, the donors, and the eminent citizens of the country, those have no contact with the rural Bangladesh; they think we the officials are corrupted and the main barrier to people's participation. And because of that thinking they are reducing our [officials] controlling power over the local representatives. Suppose, earlier we had inspection power in the UP office, now the government has wound it up. Though I am still practising it, and no chairman disagreed with not conducting the inspection, because whenever I did inspection I found anomalies in their financial management and office management.

I am not saying that all officials are honest and all public representatives are corrupt. But, if you go to the people and ask them confidentially everyone will reply to you that a chairman

means he is a thief, steals wheat and tin, which are handed over to them for distributing among the poor, or to special needy groups [for the program named 'food for works'].

Unless we have power to control these public representatives, we cannot ensure peoples participation. We need more power to control them. People come to us to complain against Union Parishad Chairmen or Members, but we don't have any arbitration capacity, we can only request the Chairmen to keep themselves apart from any wrong doings. As you know, earlier we had inspection authority over Union Parishad, but recently that probation was also withdrawn by the government. If we had more controlling authority over the public leaders, we could force them to follow government rules to involve people with local development programs.

I have no experience [working] under the Upazila chairman, but I can presume it will be no difference whether working with a MP or an Upazila chairman. You know, all anomalies in our works are triggered by the MPs. They forced us to select a wrong project, to select a corrupt contractor; even he selected a PIC from his own men [same political party]. These people [representatives] are elected by the mass people but they fire people while keeping the rifle on our shoulders [working against the people while hiding behind the officials]. We need to get rid of these local representatives. If you go back to the history, [you will see] all the great achievements at the local levels have been earned by the government bureaucrats, because they had full control over the public representatives. But now, we cannot do anything good because of the interference of public representatives. They always seek their interest; they don't want the development of the locality. If you ask chairmen they are more interested to do work like roads and culverts, because they can steal more funds from these types of programs.

Do you think a NGO can be an alternative option? I mean, do you think the local NGOs can help to make development effective?

I am not sure of it. The NGOs are also corrupt. The only thing they (NGOs) are doing better is depolarising the power at the local level. The people united by the 'samity' [association of microcredit borrowers] are now a big source of power. And specially most of the women members in the Union Parishad are coming from these Samities (associations). The other positive side of the NGOs is that they are apolitical in selecting poor people [to relieve], while the MPs forced us to distribute relief materials only to their political fellows, whether they deserve it or not. But NGOs also have limitations. They impose their views over the borrowers. And people cannot say anything against them because of their liabilities –they borrowed money from them. In this sense, in my view, rural Bangladesh is not still ready to implement your theory of participation.

So, where is the solution? How can we make development effective for the people?

Well, I don't think it is a problem at all or there is any barrier for people's participation. People are participating, they participated in the past, and they will participate in the future. It is time –the pace, which will change everything according to the demand of the people. Earlier a single revenue officer in a single office conducted all development programs at the Thana [presently Upazila] level, now 24 offices are working at the same level. Nothing has been changed in one day; it is time. It needs a long time when people will be more empowered, more aware about their rights; the situation will be changed automatically. We should wait until that time. Think, you are doing a research on this subject. In past no one thought it could be an issue to do research on. So this is also an initiative to develop awareness in the society.

But, this issue has been discussed by the donors for last two decades. Don't you think it is a long time to achieve an effective participation?

That is another issue. There is question about the integrity of the donors. In my experience, most of the donors are doing business. They don't want real development in our country. Regarding growth centres 60 percent of this development has flopped. But according to donors it is very viable. They appoint foreign consultants who have no contact with our culture. Their assessment is mainly based on the economic expenditure. They come to the engineer's office to look into the financial expenditure. The engineers prepare their survey

[base/final survey] while they are sitting in their office - on the basis of data provided by the UP office and land office. And foreigners are copying that survey, nothing else.

Why do you think the development of the growth centres has 60% flopped?

Well, this is because development doesn't mean to develop new buildings, or new sheds; development means how the facilities are developed for the community. After the completion of the growth centre we found that the structures have not facilitated the users, rather created obstacles to the businessmen. On the way to Hoibatpur, you will see another growth centre named Suarakhi, which was developed around ten years ago, which is now almost abandoned, because the farmers don't feel it comfortable to use high platforms. Traditionally local farmers come to the markets to sell their products and to buy their necessaries like cloth, machineries, seeds, insecticides, fertilisers, medicines etc. To store these items traders need permanent shops/rooms. But the engineering department left no space for permanent shops. They followed the design sketched by the foreigners [donors], which is not fit for rural Bangladesh.

Why don't you put your objections before these constructions?

That's another subject of politics. Though officially I am the chief administrator of the Upazila, I have no authority to moderate the activities of other departments, especially when a project is being implemented nationwide or region-wide through a national project. For projects like the growth centre, the engineering department gets the full authority to implement the program; I am, as the president of the UMMC, a mere receiver of the outcomes.

Is it not that, as the president of the UMMC, you are the final authority for any development works in any growth centre?

Yes in that way I can interfere in any works done by the engineering department, but for the sake of a good relation among the government officials I don't interfere in others' works. I just keep myself within the advice if they ask for, and I keep a close eye on whether they are using the funds properly.

What about primary school development? Would you kindly talk about your responsibility as the president of the Upazila Education Committee?

Yes I am also the president of the UEdC (Upazila Education Committee). Actually as the UNO I have to preside over more than fifty different types of committees. Every day I have to preside over around ten meetings. I have no time to see every single school or growth centre. I only look into that institution where any problem arises. The engineering department is implementing and supplying furniture to the school and the education department is receiving the services. If the education department provides any satisfactory report I, as the chief accounting officer, sign a file for releasing the fund. If any anomalies appear [to me] then I investigate that for necessary action.

The last question: At the beginning you told that you don't maintain all government procedure, how do you manage high officials when they come to inspect the projects?

[Laughing]. [Off the record] *we maintain all documents as if we have conformed to all official procedures.*

Note: Note: Job experience 12 years, here 3 years

He loves talking, philosophical statements. Open to talk against corruptions. Interview was taken at night while he was walking after dinner.

<u>**Extract from Interview: 5.3.**</u>
Executive -level government official, Upazila 3

Would you kindly say how locals participate in rural development projects?
The local people get involved in different ways. Firstly, they participate through their elected representatives like chairman, members, female members etc. Moreover, for different projects we form different PICs. For mega [or nationwide] projects we formed different management committees to look after the development works. Like: We formed local Market Management Committee and SMC [School management Committee] to look after all development programs concerned with local market or school respectively. Until these committees provide any certificate we [UNO and Engineer] don't pay final bill to the contractors.

How did these committees form, and how often you sit with these committee members?
Government has specific instructions to form these committees. The categories of membership are also specified by the government manual. According to that instruction we elect or select members.

How do you elect/select members for the Hat-Bazaar management committee? What is their role in market development?
Everything is stated in the government manual. However, sometimes we don't get any person to be involved in UMMC (Upazila Market Management Committee), because all the members are not getting any benefit [honorarium] for doing that [his job]. Public do not pay voluntary service. They always ask for money against any service they provide. SMC is active because some authorities delegated to them regarding use of School funds. However, often we get complaints that the SMC steals wheat or money from government funds.

When did you call the last meeting of the UMMC?
Actually arranging a meeting depends on the member-secretary of the committee. The Upazila Engineer [actually A/C land but he doesn't know] is the member secretary of the UMMC. During my tenure, suppose the last two years, the Upazila engineer did not call any meeting of the Upazila Market management Committee. Thus we didn't review the activity of local Market management committee. Actually, we sit in a meeting when any issue arises regarding that subject.

If people complain against any representatives or officials for their mishandling of the project how do you mitigate it? Like the suppliers are not suppling perfect materials then who will look into it?
I have no mechanism to solve it. We [UDCC] can do an investigation [on the subject matter of the complaint] and send it to the concerned department at the district headquarters, but usually nobody at the district levels virtually look into the report. However, in any extreme case I can use my link with the Deputy Commissioner [chief District Administrator] or with the ministry personnel to resolve any serious case.

In your opinion what are the barriers for making people's participation effective? Like if you think there is participation, but it could be more effective if some barriers could be surmounted.
The first thing that we need to change is the system. Actually the present system itself is the main barrier. Some government officials are not performing their duties properly; in the same way, representatives are also not performing their duties properly. But, neither the UDCC nor I, as the head of the Upazila, have the authority to look after the activities of these officials or over the public representatives. Believe it or not, the UDCC has no control to take or initiate any action against the negligence of any member such as the Education officer for not doing a proper inspection of the construction works or services, Upazila Engineer for certifying bad services or construction works. The government should provide me more controlling authority, so that I can mitigate these anomalies.
Secondly, the problem of funds or, you can say, flow of funds at the bottom. The local representatives are always looking towards the government for funds. They are not interested to collect funds from their own resources. They are happy only with the taxes [collection of taxes] against trade licence, and that is not a great amount. They perceive collecting tax means losing popularity. And that is really a subject of concern. I think it [collecting tax at the

local levels] should be compulsory by the government, so all chairmen will be forced to collect funds from local resources, and that will force them to go close to the people.

You know, to the representatives, development means construction of physical infrastructures. They are not interested in providing services because it involves the mass of people. However, all chairmen are present on that day when decisions are made to distribute funds for Annual Development Programs among Unions [they might irregular in attending meeting]. None of the Chairmen consider the project, or population, they want equal distribution of funds for every Union. These Chairmen also do not perceive that government money means people's money; rather they claim it as their own money.

The local people also have some limitations. Most of them are very cynical –most of them are involved in different groups, which also create barriers between local representatives and the mass of people. You know, there are rivalries for chairmanship in every union: these rivals also visit my office and me very often and always complain against the existent chairmen. Sometimes, some officials also use these rivals against the chairman if that chairman doesn't comply with him. So if a chairman wants to work honestly he will fail because of these politics. Ultimately, the total system is getting spoiled and incapable of providing services.

Do you think NGOs can provide better services?

Never: they have any idea or expertise to conduct government programs. They are making poor people poorer; they are doing 'interest' [taking high interest] business. We are professionals in providing services. We are doing this for a long time. Unlike NGOs we don't support donors, we support our government. We full heartedly want the development of our government, but NGOs are traders –they show the negative side of our country to the world. In the name of helping people they are doing business.

Would you kindly talk about selection and implementation of a project?

To select a project for implementation, usually the UP chairmen prepare a priority list for their union, because they live close to the grassroots. At Upazila level we don't prepare any priority list, but we call a meeting of UDCC at the beginning of the year to select our projects that will be implemented in that year. However, we cannot select any project that will incur more than 30 lakhs. We got funds from the ministry of LG as annual development fund and we also receive funds from other development ministries like 'Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation, 'Water Development Ministry', 'Ministry of Agriculture' etc. Whenever or whatever we get funds, we the UDCC members, including officials, sit together to select a project. Then we form a PIC to monitor works, and call tender to select a contractor to provide services. The concerned departments also monitor the works, and finally provide a report at the end of receiving the outcome.

Do you think people are satisfied with the outcome of development programs? How do you know that people are satisfied?

I think people are satisfied, because people are providing final reports through the PIC as being satisfied. Actually in our country people are very happy with a little achievement. However, for government projects we collect people's opinions when we visit the development works. If people are not satisfied they complain on that issue. Once I get any complaint I form a committee to investigate that and withhold the payment until that issue is solved.

Do you think involving locals can yield a better outcome and use?

I am not fully agreed with this. You know, we form PIC and management committees with the locals, but sometimes these committees create problems for our works. As I said, no person wants to provide voluntary services, they ask for a share [benefit from supplying] from the contractor. They [PIC] provide unsatisfactory reports if the contractor doesn't pay them money even he provides a good service. In contrast, they [committees] provide a satisfactory report even the contractor provides a worse job but shares the fund. So I think involving more people means get a lesser quality service. In my opinion we the government officials are sufficient to get a project done.

Note: Job experience 10 years, here 2 years

Found very formal; did not talk much, just answer the question.

<div align="center">
<u>**Extract from Interview: 6.1.**</u>
Businessmen, chairman and officials (UMMC) joined together for interview,
Suapur, Dhamrai
</div>

Interviewer: Chairman Sahib [Mr. Chairman], would you please tell us about the development of the growth centre?

Chairman: you have seen the bazaar [growth centre]…is it the sample of development! The whole bazaar has been destroyed. We opposed it when the [construction] works have been started. But nobody listened to us; rather they threatened us that the government may cancel our lease [of the piece of land for making shop].

Interviewer: What is your opinion Engineer Sahib?

Engineer: I was not here [posting in this Upazila] at that time [when the project was going on]. But, I feel some alleviation of development than other markets. Such as there is no clay/ mud [clay often happens in every market], made internal roads, there are shades that can also be used.

Chairman: How will they [shades] be used? We cannot make our shop in those long shades. This area is good for producing vegetables, but we don't produce that many fishes or dairy products. But you built long fish shades, meat sheds… just misuse of spaces.

Businessman 1: There was no drain but there was no water logging during past time. Now you created drains but nobody cleans it so it makes a bad smell and water logging.

UNO: you should take some responsibility too. This idea is vague that everything will be done by the government and you only do the business.

Interviewer: [pointing to the businessmen]: Didn't they [officials] consult with you before commencing the task/works? Didn't they tell you where they would have construct sheds or drains or roads?

Chairman: They told nothing. They said that they will construct concrete rooms for every one, will construct made roads. Everyone will get better facilities to do business. At the end of the program I found there is no room for my shop in the bazaar; only big shades have occupied all spaces.

Businessman 2: I had a big shop at the heart of the bazaar before development and now I have got a narrow space/room to build a shop. Now there are roads and drains where there was my shop.

Engineer: Actually, it was a wrong selection for development as growth centre.

Chairman: That's correct [to say]. This place was the heart of the village. Everyone, whether to go to the city or on the way back sits here; had a cup of tea, a chat, bought his necessary goods and then went back home. Now there is no room for a tea stall. Where will people sit? What will they buy?

UNO: Actually the market area is very narrow; there is no more free space adjacent to the market periphery that can be included [expanding is not possible].

Interviewer: What's the remedy now? How could it be done in a better way?

Chairman: Now it is beyond rectification. If I had been allowed [get permission] I could demolish those shades and could build more shops. Rather I have started a new market near my house. We have to survive [earning from business]. You will see how beautifully it is running [busy business]. Many people are coming. I did the planning with the businessmen from the beginning. You will see in future everyone will move to new bazaar, no one will remain here.

Engineer: May be, this single growth centre was sufficient at that time. Now population is increasing; need a larger growth centre. The nature of business is also changing. The growth centres that we are developing now are including [providing] more facilities: such as men's and women's toilets, office of the MMC, lady's corner, water facilities etc. may be in future we will be able to provide more facilities.

Interviewer: But, cannot you do the planning in consultation with the businessmen?
Engineer: It could be good if we can. But, we need more time for that. We are instructed from the top [PD office] to select a growth centre, prepare a draft sketch of the market periphery, and collect data for a base line survey within one or two months. We have to do everything very fast. We collect all related data and fill-up lots of schedules /forms, and prepare a map at present and future plan /sketch. Nevertheless, all chairmen doesn't agree to pay 10% fund as matching fund, so we select that market where the concerned chairman agrees to collect and deposit/pay the matching fund.
Chairman: The ex-chairman was dishonest. He collected money from the businessmen and at the same time withdrew money from the UP fund.
UNO: Have anyone [present here] paid money [for matching fund]?
Businessman 1: [the ex-chairman] asked for but I didn't pay.
Businessman 3: We didn't have enough profit, how could we have been paid that much money.
Chairman: None of us is now thinking about this market. [We] established a new market. Let's everyone join in that market [to do a good business].

Interviewer: You can handover that new market to the engineering department for development.
Chairman: Am [you] I mad? [I will not allow] in my life.

Interviewer: Okay Chairman Sahib, how can it be done in a better way?
Chairman: They [engineer and ex-chairman] could include us with the project. This is our market; we know what to do what not to do.
Businessman 1: At least they could discuss with us about their planning, so we could provide a better planning, where both the groups could reach a win-win position.
UNO: We will send this observation to the ministry. Actually, I have never discussed the problem of the growth centre in this way.
Engineer: I also will think about it.
Chairman: Don't only think; do something for us. We are dying.

Interviewer: The country will get benefit from both of your synergic actions.

Note: Though there were 14 businessmen among all 20 participants (3 was also local UP members), but only a few talked during the interview. Local Union chairman dominated the meeting. Chairman and officials did not talk against each other. Finally the interview was found like an arbitration meeting and the UNO placed her verdict to solve any anomalies. Officials were found to be feeling uneasy in such an interview so they asked for make short.

A similar interview was attempted to arrange with student guardians in Demran Union but failed mainly for the busyness of officials.

Extract from Interview: 6.2.
Student guardians, SMC and Upazila Education Committee joined together for interview, Chougachha, Jessore

Interviewer: Education Officer Sahib, [Mr. Education Officer] please tell us briefly about the development of the school?
Education officer: Well, there was an old building in this position. Now we developed a new building. [The number of] students is increasing day by day. So government has taken a program to build new class rooms in every primary school in the country. As a part of that program we selected this school, on a priority basis, for development.

Interviewer: What do you think [local guardians of students and SMC members]? Are you all happy with this development?
Guardian father 1: We obtained a new building and more classrooms, yes, we are happy. But there is doubt about the longevity of the building. Only God knows how long it will continue.
President of the SMC: The furniture is already damaged before it was handed over. The blackboard cannot be written on.
Guardian Father 2: The rooms are very narrow; it doesn't have sufficient ventilation for good flow of air and light. Our children will suffer in these rooms.
Education officer: The design was prepared by the engineers and also constructed by the engineers. We cannot change anything but only receive it.

Interviewer: Engineer Sahib [Mr.] what is your comment?
Engineer: We have [at Upazila level] nothing to do with the small or large rooms of the building because it has been designed centrally. We followed the architectural design, which has been sent from the top [PD office]. And the quality depends on the contractor. We already asked him to do some supplementary works, and to change damaged furniture.
UNO: You [the SMC] will not accept anything if the contractor doesn't change it.
President-SMC: Yes Sir, we are now strong /rigid. No one from the top [MP] will force us this time. We will not provide the report unless we will be happy.
Engineer: Actually what could be done by the contractor? [You see] the price of rod [steel rods] and cement have been increased, how will he do the best quality job with this fund? You people do works in mutual understanding by helping each other.
Education officer: But some other [contractor] is working in our neighbouring Upazila. Their works are better than ours.
President-SMC: Yes I went there to see the work. Their building construction is better, the quality of windows and doors is better; the furniture is better too.
Engineer: May be I am not disagreeing with you, but [remember] all contractors are not the same.
UNO: I will look after this issue. Mr. President [of SMC] and the Headmistress will see me with a detailed report.
Engineer: No Sir; [I think] no need of that [report]. I will minimise [sit with both groups] the issue. We haven't paid him [the contractor] the final disbursement. He promised me he will do the supplementary works, and he will do it.

Interviewer: [dear] local guardians, do you help the SMC? You also have some duty for the improvement of your school.
Guardian mother 1: We do not know who the members of the SMC are, except the President and the Headmistress. They never called us and did not discuss any issue regarding the improvement of the quality of education or for the school. We are agreed to participate in any development work for the school because our children are studying here.
Guardian mother 2: Yes, our children stay in the school from 9am to till 4pm. It is needed to arrange some tiffin [refreshments] in the midday.
Education officer: Where will the government get that much money from? You can do something…

Guardian mother 2: I am ready to pay a subscription. If all guardians do agree, then we can arrange tiffins for our children.

UNO: It is a good proposal. I will talk to the local businessmen, if they can provide some funds for this.

Interviewer: You see it is the power of synergic works. If we all work together we can achieve a better result.

UNO: Not always, people of this area are very cooperative, and the president [SMC] too. They work together to get a better outcome. However, I have to go to office now…

Note: There were 21 participants, 5 male student guardians (1 was also local UP member) and 11 female guardians; however, among them only 3 female (1 was also local UP member) were found aware about the school affairs. Officials, particularly engineer dominated the meeting. However, members of the SMC were found very shy for speaking in front of officials.

A similar interview was attempted to arrange with businessmen at Hoibatpur, but failed mainly for the busyness of officials.

<u>**Extract from Interview : 7.1.**</u>
School Management Committee (SMC) –Upazila 1
[HM: head master, Pr: president, GM: guardian Member, EM: Member from Education inspirers]

Would you please tell me a brief about the function of SMC.
Pr: Our main function is to look at everything about the school, its education environment, attendance of teachers etc.
HM: Implementing all government instructions for the school e. g. distributing government subsidy fund among the students, meeting with guardians etc.
Pr: Yes, to ensure proper educational environment and to manage government funds.
What are those government funds?
Pr: Like: food for education fund, select deserve students for subsidy education, school maintenance fund etc.
What is this maintenance fund? What do you do with this fund?
Pr: This is for small repairs like: door or window repairing, or chair-bench repairing; or buying some stationery, or furniture etc.
How do you fix priorities, I mean how do you make a decision about what you will buy or repair?
Pr: Mainly it depends on the head master, because he knows everything about the wants of the school.
HM: We also sit together to make decisions.
Don't you discuss it with the guardians?
HM: There are two guardian representatives in the SMC. We call all the members for the meeting.
So, how many members in the SMC, and could you please tell me how is a SMC formed?
Pr: It is a five member committee…
HM: No, it is a seven member committee; these are:
One President
Two Guardian representatives
One teacher representative from local high school
One Donor (family member of land donor) Member
One Local elite educationist, and
Concerned Head Master/ Mistress as Member-secretary
Are they all elected?
Pr: Yes we all are elected. The election is conducted by the Upazila Education Officer. We submitted our nomination and all guardians came here to poll their vote. This is first time I have been elected as President.
EM: The local patron of learning is not a post for election; rather the person is selected by the UNO. And the headmaster works as the member-secretary by dint of the post.
Pr: The Election Day was a gala day in this locality. The locals, officials and our MP came to observe the election.
How do you make a decision? Especially when you conduct any major works, like building a new classroom, or buying furniture?
HM: The major works are always done by the government directly. The Ministry [of Primary and Mass Education] selects projects; then the Upazila Engineer's office calls a tender for major works, and they select a contractor to do the job.
So, you want to say, they don't ask you before selecting a project related to your school?
HM: No, our education Officer has information about the requirements of the schools. So, he selects the school for major works. The Assistant Education officer [ATEO] pays a visit to the school in every quarter in the year, so they collect all the information about the school.
Pr: ATEOs don't visit here regularly, rather they send an inspection sheet and we fill it up on their behalf. They then submit it to their bosses and submit TA (transport allowance) bill for inspecting schools.

Don't you need to pursue the officials to include a school in any project?

HM: Actually, in most cases we do not know anything about the selection process. When they select a school, and when they send a proposal to the Department [of Primary Education], these are not our concern. We know about the project when we get a letter from the Upazila office that our school has been included in a project.

Pr: A good relation with the MP, or the UNO or the Education Officer, of course, helps to select a school for major works.

So, what is your function once you know about the approval of the project?

HM: The Upazila Engineer comes to our school and tells us to help the contractor to get the works done. Sometimes, the Assistant Education Officer also tells us about the projects when they come to the school for inspection.

Is it any written instruction?

HM: No, just verbal.

So, how do you know about the planning and budgeting of the project?

HM: Usually, they don't disclose anything about the details of planning and budgeting. We only know what the contractor tells us about the planning and budgeting.

GM: They never invite us to join in their planning process, even if we want to do it voluntarily. They don't disclose their budget to us. It is really disgraceful/ ridiculous that they are here to serve us but they behave like our guardian. Sometimes they do not disclose their plan or what they intend to do for our benefit.

Then, what type of cooperation did you provide to the contractor?

GM: I came most days to see the construction works. Our local guardians provided voluntary guarding of the construction materials.

Pr: I requested the contractor to pay some subscription for the annual Milad (religious festival) of the school. He did not pay a penny. He doesn't care about us; he only satisfies the Upazila officials and the MP.

HM: He did not even come here to see the works. He sent his man on his behalf to look after the works. So we didn't get a chance to put any complaints.

Why you didn't complain to the high officials like consultants or the ministry people when they came to evaluate the project?

Pr: I did not see any consulting firm or ministry personnel visiting here to evaluate the development works.

HM: Even district officials do not come here to do any inspection.

Pr: What is the result of complaining against the contractor? All are birds of same feather, the engineers support the contractor and the contractors support the engineer, vies versa.

Don't you need to provide any report of the contractor's works?

Pr: No, we don't need to provide any certificate or report.

HM: That report is provided by the engineers' office or by Upazila education office. They don't ask us about the quality of the works.

So where is the remedy? How you will get a better service from the government?

Pr: Only Allah [God] can help us, if he changes the mind of these corrupted people then we will get better service.

<u>**Extract from Interview: 7.2.**</u>
School Management Committee (SMC) –Upazila 2
[HM: head mistress, Pr: president, GM: guardian Member, DM: donor member]

Would you tell me about the recent development programs in you school, especially about the new classrooms?
Pr: Two new classrooms are just constructed by the government, and new furniture has also arrived.
HM: we also will get two new teachers for two new classrooms.
How much did you know about the selection, planning and budgeting of this program?
HM: we know nothing about the selection until we received a letter from the Upazila office [Upazila education office] that the school has been selected in the project for construction of new rooms. And they asked us to help the engineers' to select a site for new building.
Pr: I am the president of the SMC but they did not discuss planning, implementing, monitoring; only when they needed help to implement the project they did ask us for help. After completion of work they asked for a completion certificate that would be signed by the president and member-secretary.
So, what is your function with the project?
Pr: At the end of the project, the Engineer's office sent a letter to us to receive the materials and new building. And we received those materials though they were very low quality.
How do you know that was of very low quality?
Pr: Any one can judge the quality by seeing the goods and works.
GM: I bought the schedule from the Engineering office at Upazila Headquarter and compared all works with the materials supplied by the contractor; most of the items were misappropriated. The contractor came with police to threaten to file an extortion case against me unless I refrained from poking my nose into his business.
What is the source of his power?
GM: The hidden source of his power is because he regularly pays a donation to the ruling party fund and bribes to the bureaucrats.
What did you do then?
GM: All of my family members asked me to withdraw from this business, and I did so for the sake of my security.
Did you not complain about it to the Upazila officials?
HM: I told it to the Education Officer. He has no capacity/authority to do anything against the contractor or the Engineers.
Pr: They changed some of the furniture and repaired some windows of the new classroom. And that's all.
GM: We are helpless. The contractor is very powerful, because he is a moneyed man, and has a good relation with the MP. He can do anything with money. None dares to confront him.
Pr: What could the MP do about it? All contractors in the country are corrupt.
So, finally you provided the final report?
HM: Though the materials that they supplied are very low quality, but if the Education Officer forced me to provide a certificate I have to do that for the sake of my service.
GM: We went to head office [Upazila education office] and collected the schedule of work and compared the supplied furniture with the schedule. We did not issue any final report yet, but we could not do so if it was political reign [during the reign of the elected political government].
What about the President [of SMC]?
Pr: What could I do? If I did not do that he would have brought an order from the MP to provide a completion report to him.
What about the rest of the Members [of the SMC]?
HM: They are not entitled to sign the final report. Only the President and the Headmaster are assigned to provide the completion report.
GM: It could have been better if we all were entitled to provide a completion report.

If we do not provide a certificate they will prepare a false certificate, because no one is verifying it. The authority [official] who is responsible for verification is involved in corruption too.

What might be the remedy?

[What happens if a school is assigned any major works in Australia?]

I think……..[describing about the people's empowerment and guardian's awareness about any major activities in the local school. Also described the ombudsman and legal aspects in Australia].

GM: There is no remedy; only God can change these contractors and engineers into better men.

DM: Our Upazila court was better, even though we could not fight with the Contractor, because they could frame a case against us and we could not bear the expenses to continue it. But we had mental support [we might lodge a complaint].

Pr: The only solution is that the government can hand the fund over to us. If we are capable to do the minor works, what problem would we have with the major works?

But you did not have technical expertise like engineers. So how would you do the major construction works?

Pr: We don't need any technical knowhow for these types of works. We have a few guardians who are quite sound in small engineering works. We could have asked for their help. And I am sure they would have done that.

So, you want to involve local guardians with school affairs?

Pr: If it is necessary, we are ready to do that.

But local guardians are large in number; so how will you include them?

Pr: We only include those guardians who have expertise for that particular job. We can even consult with the engineer's office.

Do you have any other suggestion?

HM: We want flexibility of funding. For instance, the government could send the fund, and we will decide what we need to do on a priority basis. Look we need to fill the field with soil because it creates enormous problems during rainy season with water logging. We also need to repair the access road.

Apart from development works, what does the SMC do to develop the educational status of the school?

HM: We have some other functions like: Mother-assembly, guardian contact etc.

Do you follow all those programs?

HM: [Unwilling to reply]. We try to, but cannot follow the entire schedule. You know all the government activities such as preparation of the voter list, household census, and conducting elderly education, all these things are done by us at the root levels on the government behalf.

What do you do during mother-assembly?

HM: We call all the mothers of the students on a pre-arranged day, and discuss the problems of the school, what guardians have to do for the students at home etc.

Why only mothers?

HM: It is a government decision, but the reason is that the fathers are busy with their jobs. So they cannot come to school in the daytime. Rather most mothers are non-working and they are more caring about their children's education.

School Management Committee (SMC) –Upazila 3
[HM: headmistress, Pr: president, GM: guardian Member, DM: donor member]

Are all the members, who present here now, elected by the local people?
Pr: [hesitating] it is a village, a very small area, and we know each other; we form a committee in mutual consultation.
HM: Sometimes, some persons do not want to join in SMC, because it is voluntary work. We know, today everyone is busy with his own business.
DM: After a consultation with our 'MP Sir' and the present local UP chairman we selected our President [SMC president]. And then we selected other members through personal interactions.
HM: We have not yet got one member who will be nominated by the UNO.
Why?
HM: I think, they are very busy and don't have sufficient time to nominate one for every school. The 'UNO sir' asked me to send a list of names for probable members. And I sent it three months before. But he has yet to decide.
Pr: Usually he discusses it with the local chairman, or sometimes with the 'MP Sir', and then nominates a member.
How often you sit in a meeting?
HM: We don't need to sit in a meeting frequently. Actually the President needs to come to the school very often, because he needs to sign in the pay bills and other expenditure memos/vouchers.
Would you please let me know about the construction and use of new building?
Pr: We do not need a new class room; we need to extend the area of our class room to accommodate all students in a single room. So we do not use those rooms very often because we do not have more teachers.
HM: When they build the new rooms they said they will appoint two new teachers for that class, but they didn't do that yet.
Pr: We appointed two teachers unofficially, and we pay their salary from the students 'food for education' [subsidy] funds.
What about the quality of the construction works and furniture?
Pr: I bribed a staff member of the Upazila Engineer Office to collect a Schedule of the School project and then compared each supplied item with the scheduled one. All those supplied items were of lesser quality and we [all guardians together] forced the supplier to change it.
GM: Our Headmistress [also] from a renowned family of our locality; we all respect her and follow her decision. We refused to receive low quality furniture for the newly built classroom and compelled the contractor to supply quality products.
So when the contractor changed the furniture you received it and provided them a final report?
HM: We had no other option. Our Education Officer told us not to hassle with him [the contractor].
Pr: If we did not do that we would have been forced by the MP. Moreover, the contractors provided the same type of building and furniture all over the Upazila. The works of our neighbouring school are worse than ours.
HM: Though I am [headmaster] the Member-Secretary of the SMC, I am also a public servant; I cannot disobey my boss [UEO]. When he told me to receive it I did it.
Pr: In fact, we were very cautious from the beginning. We monitored each and every activity of the contractor during construction, so he couldn't dodge us like he did in other schools.
Don't you invite local people when you do any big function? Or allow the local people to participate with you to conduct any function?
Pr: Yes we do, especially when we arrange annual sports or we conduct cluster meeting [inspirational/ motivational meeting for the guardians to send their children to school] with the student guardians.

HM: For any major decision I make with the local guardians. Like to appoint [unofficially but for the benefit of the students] new teachers, or to raise fund for the tiffins [snacks to the students during lunch time] are made with the consensus of the local guardians.

Have you faced any problem to handle mass people?

Pr: Never, they always are very helpful, and want well for the school. Whenever I asked them to help me for the school they did it voluntarily. I haven't faced any problem to manage them.

Note: The Headmistress is wife of the President. The President was also retired UP chairman. All the members were found loyal to the President and wait for his signal to answer any question. However, it was exposed that the President and guardians had good relation.

<u>**Extract from Interview: 8.1.**</u>
Project Official, Rural Infrastructure Development Project, Local Government Engineering Department, Dhaka

Would you please provide details about the process of planning and selection of a rural development program?

First, we [department of local engineering, LGED- under the ministry of LGRD] select a development project to implement at the rural levels. We usually do it in different phases. Suppose, for a growth centre, we asked the Upazila Engineers to select one growth-centre in their own Upazilas. Then we would ask our Upazila engineers to conduct a base line survey on the selected site. The Upazila engineer with the help of Upazila administration selects a site and sends a baseline survey report to me. Once we received all reports from them, we would then prepare a primary Development Project Proposal [DPP] for the whole country or for a particular region following the guideline of the planning ministry.

We then send the DPP to the ministry [LGRD] to collect funds. The ministry first tries to collect fund from the government through ACNEC [National Economic Council meeting of the planning ministry]; if they fail then they send it to the ERD to collect funds from donors. [*Off the record, when we send the DPP to the ministry, we talk to the donors for funding. If we get any positive signal from any donor we then make liaison between the ERD and that donor. By this time we appoint a consulting firm unofficially to satisfy the donors. I am telling you everything because you are from that district where our founder chief engineer born: without his contribution we could not get this recognition. He established donors' faith towards us than the Ministry*]

When government and the donor sign a MoU [memorandum of understanding], the ministry [LGRD] asks us to send a final Project Proposal [PP]. On the basis of that PP the government allots funds to the LGED by appointing a Project Director [PD]. Then we actually start our main job.

We finalise the appointment of the consulting firm according to the guidelines of the ADB [donor]. We send a GO to the Upazila and transfer funds for that site in phases. The Upazila engineer then appoints a contractor at the local level to supply the service, and sends us progress reports time to time.

What is the mechanism used by you to ensure people's participation in the programs?

To ensure the participation, we collect ten percent of the total funds from the businessmen [expected beneficiaries] as the matching fund. The Upazila engineer with the help of the local MMC collects the fund. We also invite the local MMC [market management committee] and Banik Samity [association of businessmen, if any] to monitor our works. At the end of the project the MMC and UMMC provides a report of the quality of the works. On the basis of that final report we release the final fund.

How do you evaluate people's participation in your evaluation report? I mean, assessment process/tools/set of criteria to evaluate locals' involvement? Like any mechanism to assess beneficiaries' satisfaction.

That's actually done by a consulting firm. A consulting group is working at the local level to look into any anomalies between the progressed works and project proposal. This consulting firm selects on the prescribed categories fixed by the donors, and most of these have international standards. They constantly observe the work at the field levels and assess the people's participation, satisfaction and economic growth with the pace of progress of the project. [If they found] anything wrong they asked us to modify our plan and we do that [accordingly].

But this consulting firm is getting paid by the project fund I mean by the government isn't it?

That's correct; in that case an independent consulting firm can be appointed at the end of the project to evaluate the outcomes. But [*of the record: our mission is to satisfy the donors and the ministry*]. Until they [donor/ministry] are asking for anything like that [appointing independent consultant] we are not doing it instinctively.

If the project would be done again do you think you would use a different way to implement it, especially to involve locals to bring about a better outcome and use?

If you visit our site you would not say something like that. I admit that [previously] we made some mistakes [in implementation of this kind of projects], but now our plan is very sound. We included a lady's corner for the empowerment of the rural women; we included the MMC office for the empowerment of the local businessmen, and so many. You will be happy [to see that] all local businessmen are working together with our engineers and helping them to get a better outcome.

<u>**Extract from Interview: 8.2.**</u>
Project Official, Primary Education Development Project-II, Directorate of Primary Education, Dhaka

Would you please provide details about the process of planning and selection of a primary school development at the level?
Actually, I joined [to this project] late, so I don't know details of the selection process. But, as far as I know, after getting approval of the project from the ministry [Ministry of Primary and Mass education] we ask the Upazila education officer to select schools on a priority basis for development. The Upazila education committee sits to do that priority list and sends that list to us. On the basis of their report we then check all data and select a [deserving] school phase by phase. We then send a GO [government order], and release the fund in installations to the Upazila. The UEC [Upazila education committee] then asks the engineer to appoint a contractor to build a new building and to supply furniture. Once they complete the fund for the first installation we then send the second installation [of fund].
So you are implementing same kind of school I mean like a package development all-around the country?
Yes, that is designed by the LGED and approved by the ministry. It is a unique package with minimum cost and maximum benefit.
If a school doesn't need new building or need a big room, what they will do then?
See, this is a package program; everything is the same for all schools included in this project. There is no scope to change it whatever the local demand is.
Don't you think it is some sort of imposition on the locals?
You can say so, but you have to admit that this is sufficient for a poor country like Bangladesh [we must take what we are given].
You might be correct, but if no school uses it then it will be a misuse of money. However, forget it, would you kindly say something about the mechanism to ensure people's participation in the programs?
We put emphasis on people's participation through the SMC. We don't select a school if it doesn't have an elected SMC. Moreover, we release the final instalment of fund on the basis of the final report [provided by the concerned SMC]. You know, there are all levels of representation in a SMC, like: student guardians, land donors, local patrons of learning etc. i.e. there is perfect representation of people.
Like our government the donors are very serious in the participation issue. They told us time and again at the time of agreement [between the government and the donors] to ensure people's participation. We are continuously trying to introduce more instruments to increase locals' participation in school affairs. The Cluster meeting, the mothers' assembly, etc are some of the instruments that have been introduced recently.
How do you evaluate people's participation in your evaluation report? I mean, assessment process/tools/set of criteria to evaluate locals' involvement? Like any mechanism to assess beneficiaries' satisfaction.
Our education officers at Upazila or district levels are visiting the site frequently and send us reports. The staff members of my office are also visiting from one corner to other of the country to find faults. If we find any anomalies we bring it to the notice of the appropriate authority for rectification.
At the end of the project, a consulting firm do evaluate the program, so I think these mechanisms are sufficiently evaluating the level of people's participation and satisfaction.
If the project would be done again do you think you would use a different way to implement it, especially to involve locals to bring about a better outcome and use?
I think the project is progressing well. The government [ministry] and the donors are also very happy. That's why they provided funds for this second phase. There is sufficient people's participation, and that's why I don't see any correction needed in the ongoing implementation system.

<u>**Extract from Interview: 9.1.**</u>
Ministry Official, Strengthening Local Government Section, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperative, Dhaka

How do you value people's participation in the development program at Upazila level? Do you think locals have sufficient participation in local development programs?
You know there is no chairman in the Upazila Parishad since 1991, so that is causing trouble for people's participation at Upazila levels. However, the UDCC is active and UP chairmen are presiding over the UDCC meeting by rotation. And all the local projects are implemented through the UDCC. In this sense, people are still controlling the local development programs. Nevertheless, the present caretaker government is planning to elect an Upazila chairman. So we think within a short time everything will be okay. I mean Upazila Parishad will be fully active again in the near future and Upazila officials will again be placed under the Parishad.

May I know why there is no Upazila election since 1991?
It is a political decision. During Ershad [former president] period (1985-1990) it was his [president's] will to elect Upazila chairman and that was what happened. So if political parties want it again, it will happen anytime.

Do you think Upazila chairmen will be accountable and transparent to the locals in the present system of participation or you are going to introduce any new system?
The Upazila chairman cannot work alone. All the decisions are taken by the Parishad. So the Upazila chairman is accountable to the other UP chairmen. In the same way, the UP chairmen are accountable to the UP members, and UP members are accountable to the bottom I mean to the locals. So it is a chain of accountability, which is rooted within the local people. I think there is no problem with the present system.
On the other hand, for transparency, every decision for the Upazila is made in the UDCC meeting, so it is transparent, nothing fishy. The only problem is conducting regular elections [for Upazila], that we are expecting [to organise] at the end of this year. Furthermore, this time we are planning for a post of a male vice-chairman and a female vice-chairman for the Upazila Parishad, which will make the Upazila Parishad more accountable and transparent.

Do you have any evaluation process to see people's satisfaction over the development program? Could you please provide me a brief description about the present practice to evaluate people's involvement in local development programs?
Well, it is mandatory to form an implementation committee (IC) for every project. These ICs are formed by the local representatives along with the local people. So until they are [people] being satisfied they don't provide a final report. In addition during the visit of high officials like Monitoring officials of this ministry [Monitoring and Evaluation Cell of the Ministry] ADLG [assistant director of local government] from district or DDLG [deputy director of local government] from division or Research officer from IMED, they do ask people about their satisfaction and they incorporate that in their evaluation reports. Though our Monitoring staff members are monitoring and evaluation all projects that are being implemented by LGRD, recently we bestowed the inspection capacity of any officers of this ministry into any project. For the regional based or national projects, we appoint consultants to continuously observe the development works physically. They also conduct surveys among the locals to find out their satisfaction levels.

Do you have any plan or future plan to uphold the people's voice in local development programs, especially when international donor agencies are pushing for establishing good governance through greater people's participation?
We started community budgeting and planning in some unions in Sirajgonj and Tangail districts with the help of WB/donors. We found it very effective, so we are going to introduce it in other parts of the country. We are also providing training to the UP chairmen on the procedure of how they will conduct the meeting. In this system local union Parishad sit with the locals to plan their priority projects and allot a budget to those projects with people's consent. In the light of the progress in two districts, now we are providing a lump sum fund to the UP and they are selecting and implementing the projects with full participation. We are

also preparing LGSP [local governance support project], where all UP will come in a single operational system.

We are [also] increasing the remuneration for the UP chairmen, as they are getting more responsibility for local development implementation.

The present government also promised to form a LG commission, which will look after any anomalies at the local government bodies.

As a policy maker what is your suggestion for making people's participation effective in the Bangladesh context?

Not actually suggestions, these are what we are actually doing. The 1st issue: if we can bring more public representatives than bureaucrats to the decision making table, people participation will be effective. So we are introducing women vice chairmen at the Upazila Parishad and encouraging female members to come in the UP [functions]. When an Upazila chairman will be elected, the officers will again be sincere to provide services, and will be more participatory.

The 2nd issue is about fund. The local bodies are getting funds from the top. Now we are forcing them to increase funds from the local resources. UP chairmen should collect all taxes that they are assigned, and bureaucrats should inspect and monitor that.

How do you value people's participation in the development program at Upazila level? Do you think locals have sufficient participation in local development programs?
Not fully, however, it [people's participation] is being implemented partially.
How?
I think when Upazila chairman will come [elected] it will be fully started. But honestly we need to do something more for effective participation. There are many loopholes to avoid [involving] people in the current system.
Such as [can you put examples]?
When we visit any site, the local people complain against the local officials and contractors, but practically they don't get chance to complain in such a way [fearlessly] at their local levels. We do monitor all rural development projects time and again, and we prepare a report on the basis of our inspection, but nobody reads it. Everybody cares about the accuracy of financial expenditure but nothing about the people's participation or use of the [that] development works [outcomes]. We send one copy of the report to the concerned Ministry, one copy to the Prime minister's office, one copy to the Donor's office, but none of these important offices have time to go through the reports and take action accordingly.
What the locals will do if the coming Upazila chairmen follow the way [corrupt way] of present officials?
Well, people are the source of power [in a democratic system]. If the chairmen follow the same way, the people will change them in the next election. But presently they cannot change those corrupted officials. Moreover, they will get the chance to complain against the officials to their chairmen.
Presently they could complain to the MPs, so why don't they?
The MPs also support the officials to 'share' [illegally earned money] amicably. Otherwise if the MP is honest he would change that officer by transferring him to other places.
What will happen if the coming chairmen still 'share' with the officers?
It could be, but [agreed by shaking head] it could be.
Do you have any evaluation process to see people's satisfaction over the development program? Could you please provide me with a detailed description about the present practice to evaluate people's involvement in local development programs?
During our visit, we ask locals about their satisfaction, and we put details in our report. Moreover at the end of the project the respective department evaluates it themselves and submits a PCR [project completion report] to the concerned ministry where they produce all the data.
During your inspection and evaluation of growth centres what have you found regarding people's satisfaction or participation?
Altogether I have visited nine growth centres in last three years. In my opinion the initiative is good and the concept is for the wellbeing of the rural farmers, but there is no satisfactory participation of local businessmen. Some businessmen are not happy.
Why?
They [project people] misused lands by constructing big shades that are useless. People want to do more business, and for more business they need more lands and shops and godown [warehouses] within the market or adjacent to the market periphery. But they [people] are not getting sufficient land after those constructions.
What is your suggestion for making people's participation effective in the Bangladesh context?
Need more monitoring [over the projects]. The local MMC should be appointed to monitor the development works. Similarly, the Upazila committee should monitor frequently the works of the local management committees, but it is not happening.

Above all, we [IMED] need more manpower to visit and monitor ongoing projects, but we have not much manpower. You know, presently, I am looking after two sections at a time [one regular posting and in-charge of another].

Moreover, local businessmen should be included in the committee, rather than everything being done by the officers.

Note: –Fortunately, this official was also in-charge (part time) of the Primary school desk, which helped the interviewer to collect related official documents both for the primary school projects and growth centre projects.