

The State of Governance in the Functioning of Union Parishad in Bangladesh: A Study of Three UPs in Rajshahi District

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Abstract: The term ‘governance’ has multidimensional approaches. It is the vehicle of achieving the goals and objectives of any institution. In Bangladesh, Union Parishad is the most effective and responsible service providing institution that works at grass-roots level. The main objective of this research is to explore the current state of compliance of the necessary rules and regulations by the UPs in ensuring socio-economic development of the rural people. It is an empirical research mainly based on primary data which have been collected through questionnaire survey from eminent persons and elected representatives of three selected UPs of Rajshahi district. The central finding of the study is that the state of governance of the selected UPs is not strong enough. In spite of having a good policy framework for governing socio-economic development of the rural people, a huge gap remains in the UPs between policies and practices.

Keywords: Governance, Local government, Policy and Practice, Union Parishad, Stakeholders, Public Representatives

Introduction

The Union Parishad (UP) is one of the most vital local governance institutions of Bangladesh that remains very closer to the rural people. It plays a very significant role in planning and implementing development programs, resolution of disputes or providing judicial redress to local disputes at grass-roots level (Hussain, 2003: 5). But, presently UPs are known to be weak in terms of implementation capacity of development programs and are also subjected to excessive control by the central government which inhibits their autonomy. However, they are well-placed to identify and respond to local priorities, and have the potential to be made more accountable to their electorates (Barwell, Ian et al, 1998). The term ‘governance’ means the act or manner of governing, of exercising control or authority over the actions of subjects, a system of regulations. In substance, it refers to the effectiveness, performance and quality of the political and administrative system (Hussain, 2003: 5). Good local governance has been defined as the meaningful authority developed to local units of governance that are accessible to the local electorate, who enjoy full political rights and liberty (Blair, 2000: 31). As a local governance institution of Bangladesh, the UP has been functioning as an indivisible organ of governing rural affairs to safeguard democratic values and to secure economic and social justice. Different researches reveal that the local government bodies of the country, particularly the UPs are facing difficulties in delivering expected welfare services to the general people at grass-roots level. Most of these problems are closely related with

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governance. All those problems created image problem for the UPs that has resulted in poor credibility of the UP in public eyes and people consider UPs inefficient, corrupt, and unresponsive to their needs (Khan, nd: 22). Looking at the practical necessities, there is no alternative but to strengthen UP. The UP might play a catalytic role in local level development if it could overcome these governance problems. This study concentrates in the exploration of major barriers existing in the way of effective functioning of the UPs.

Materials and Methods

The nature of the study is empirical mainly based on primary data. A mixed method approach (both qualitative and quantitative data) has been used in the study with focus on three UPs of Rajshahi district. In the study, total 180 respondents were interviewed using structured pre-formulated questionnaire. Among the respondents, 150 (50 from each UP) were the stakeholders and 30 were the public representatives (3 Chairmen, 21 members and 6 reserved women members). Stakeholders are the eminent persons and professionals of the UPs who were selected purposively, whereas public representatives were the elected Chairmen and Members who were holding official position in three selected UPs. The period of primary data collection was November and December 2017. Data have also been collected from the secondary sources which includes relevant publications, journals, books, research reports, newspapers, Local Government Acts, Orders and Circulars, etc.

General Characteristics of the Respondents

The general characteristics of the respondents are summarized in Table 1 which indicates that 86% stakeholders and 70% representatives are male while only 14% stakeholders and 30% representatives are female. The age distribution of the sample indicates that respondents came from different age groups. Table shows that only 26% (6% and 20%) stakeholders belong to the young group of <25 and 25-34 respectively, 64% (26% and 38%) belong to the middle age group of 35-44 and 45-54 respectively and only 10% (6% and 4%) came from higher age group of 55-64, and 65 and above, respectively. On the other hand, only 7% representatives belong to young group 25-34 while 76% (36% and 40%) belong to the middle age group of 35-44 and 45-54 respectively. Only 17% representatives came from higher age group of 55-64. The majority of the respondents (96% stakeholders and 83% representatives) had attended school. A sizable proportion (42%) of the stakeholders had completed post graduation, with 24% having completed graduation. Only 10% and 12% stakeholders had passed secondary and higher secondary level certificate respectively whereas 8% completed primary education and 4% were illiterate. On the other side, nearly one sixth (17%) of the representatives were illiterate. They could sign only. 10% and 46% of the representatives had completed primary and secondary level of education respectively, with 7% and 10% having passed the higher secondary and graduate level of education respectively. The rest (10%) of the representatives had Master's degree. With respect to the occupation, job or service holders constituted more than one third of the stakeholders (38%). 18% of the stakeholders were engaged in business while 9% were farmers, 6% were labors, 12%

were students, 12% were unemployed or retired persons and the rest of the stakeholders came from other category.

Table 1: General Characteristics of the Respondents

Characteristics	Stakeholders (N=150)		Representatives (N=30)	
	Frequency	(%)	Frequency	(%)
Sex of the respondents				
Male	129	86%	21	70%
Female	21	14%	09	30%
Age of the respondents (years)				
<25	09	06%	00	00%
25-34	30	20%	02	07%
35-44	39	26%	11	36%
45-54	57	38%	12	40%
55-64	09	06%	05	17%
65>	06	04%	00	00%
Respondent's education completed				
Illiterate/can sign only	06	04%	05	17%
Primary	12	08%	03	10%
Secondary	15	10%	14	46%
Higher Secondary	18	12%	02	07%
Graduate	36	24%	03	10%
Post Graduate	63	42%	03	10%
Occupation of the Respondents				
Farmer	13	09%	06	20%
Labor	09	06%	00	00%
Businessman	27	18%	12	40%
Service holder	57	38%	06	20%
Student	19	12%	00	00%
Unemployed	12	08%	02	07%
Others	13	09%	04	13%

[Source: Field Survey 2017]

On the other hand, before elected as a UP Chairman or Member, 40% of the representatives were engaged in business while 7% were unemployed. Only 20% was farmers and similar proportion were private service holders including that of teaching. The rest of the representatives (13%) came from other professions.

Study Area

Currently, there are 4553 (Population Census of Bangladesh, 2011 & Statistical Year Book, 2015) Union Parishads in Bangladesh out of which 71 Unions are situated in Rajshahi district. Following purposive sampling technique, three Unions of Rajshahi district namely Yusufpur, Harian, and Belpukuria were selected for this study. Yusufpur is a Union of Charghat Upazila which is located in between 24°14' and 24°22' north

latitudes and in between 88°46' and 88°52' east longitudes. Its total area is 4,593 acres and total population is 29,750 (male 15,228 and female 14,522). Its literacy rate is 47.67% (Banglapedia, 2011). Harian is a Union of Paba Upazila which is located in between 24°18' and 24°31' north latitudes and in between 88°28' and 88°43' east longitudes. Its total area is 14,204 acres and total population is 46,809 (male 24,717 and female 22,092). Its literacy rate is 47.18% (Banglapedia, 2011). Belpukuria is a Union of Puthia Upazila which is located in between 24°20' and 24°31' north latitudes and in between 88°42' and 88°56' east longitudes. Its total area is 6,958 acres and total population is 33,120 (male 17,388 and female 15,732). Its literacy rate is 47.77% (Banglapedia, 2011).

Union Parishad in Bangladesh

The Constitution of Bangladesh laid down a framework concerning local government bodies like UP (The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2011: Article 59 & 60). Article 59 (1) provided that "Local government in every administrative unit of the Republic shall be entrusted to bodies, composed of persons elected in accordance with law." Article 59 (2) and 60 spells the broad functions of local government as: a) the work of public officers, and the maintenance of public order, b) the preparation and implementation of plan relating to public services and economic development, c) impose taxes for local purpose to prepare their budgets and to maintain funds.

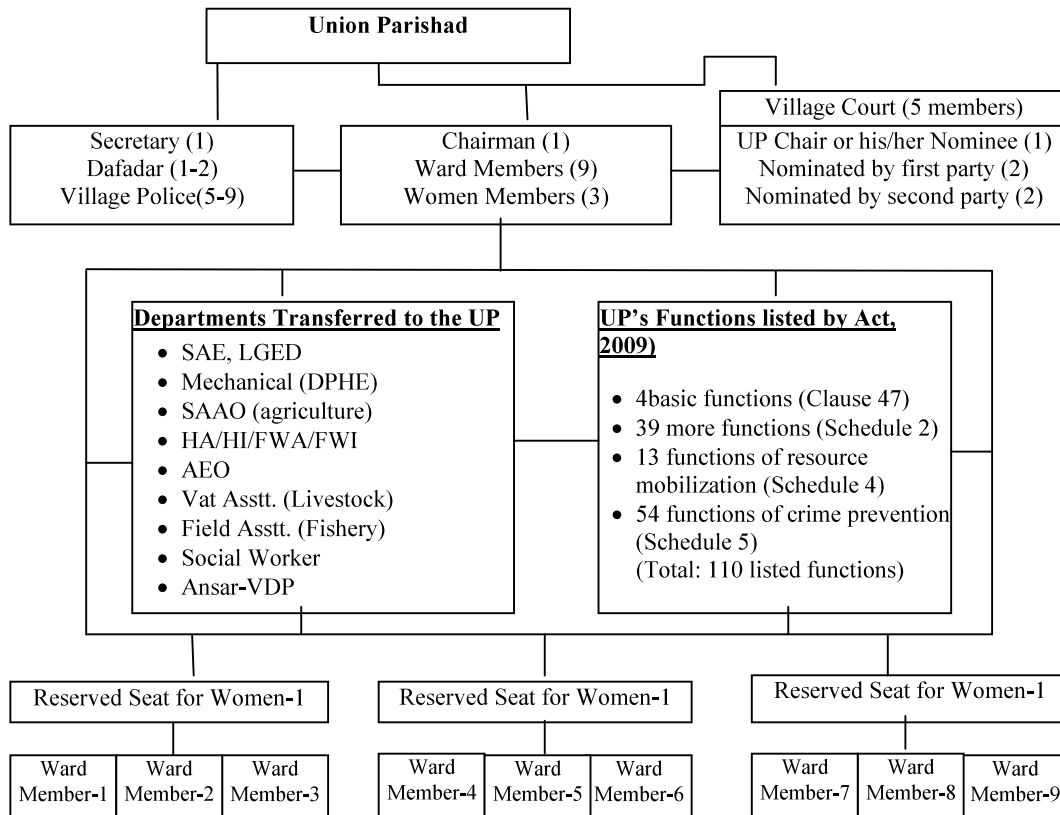
There are, at present, two types of local government institutions in Bangladesh: one for the rural areas and the other for the urban areas. For the Chittagong Hill Tracts, there is another special type of local government.

The UP is the lowest unit of the rural-local government in Bangladesh which is made up of nine wards. The UP shall consist of a Chairman and twelve members including three members exclusively reserved for women. The Chairman and members are elected by direct election based on adult franchise every five years. The Chairman and member candidates must be Bangladeshi citizens having their names in the electoral roll of the respective Union or ward. The term of a UP is five years, commencing from the day of its first meeting after its formation. Within one month of first meeting after formation of a Parishad, a panel of three Chairmen are to be elected by the members from amongst themselves. One panel Chairman must be from reserved women members. Each UP has a full time secretary appointed by the deputy commissioner. There are one to two dafadars and five to nine chowkidars/mahalladers to maintain law and order of the UP.

There are 110 functions of the UP listed in Local Government (Union Parishad) Act, 2009. Clause 47 of the Act listed four basic functions and the same clause elaborated basic functions in schedule-2 with 39 more functions. Schedule 4 listed 13 functions of resource mobilization Schedule 5 listed 54 functions of crime preventions. But in real situation UPs perform four basic functions, such as, (a) traditional community driven functions, (b) the functions for which they receive resources, (c) the functions different project implements in the UPs, and (d) traditional dispute resolution of formal and

informal nature (Rahman and Ahmed, 2015). The current organogram of the Union Parishad has been presented in figure 1.

Figure 1: Current Organogram of the Union Parishad



[Source: Developed by the researchers based on Ahmed, T. 2015: 13.]

The State of Governance in the Functioning of UP

Governance is one of the important actors of building nation, development, and progress. It plays a vital role in making close relationship between service provider and service receiver. It is a very important and useful tool of decentralized governance. As an actor of decentralized governance, the UP is capable to carry all types of loads regarding essential service delivery in a modernized pattern with more responsibilities, more power, more capacity, and freer environment to exercise its own role (Absar, 2006: 8). In accordance with the Local Government (Union Parishad) Act, 2009, the UP is now assigned with many important and emergency duties. This section is an evaluation of the opinions of the respondents regarding the state of governance of the selected UPs in their assigned responsibilities.

Maintenance of Law and Order

The UP is entrusted with the responsibilities of maintaining law and order situation and rendering assistance to the administration in the maintenance of law and order (The Local Government (Union Parishad) Act 2009: Article, 48) . In every UP, a number of village polices i.e. Chaukidars and Dafadars are involved in maintaining public security and village defense. The UP Chairman seeks assistance from the law enforcing agencies in maintenance of law and order, reduction of crimes, resistance of smuggling, etc. The Chairman has also the power of resolving petty disputes, conflicts, land disputes, communal clashes, etc through arbitration and negotiation. The UP will take initiatives for preventing disorder and smuggling and offensive and dangerous businesses (Siddiqui, 2005: 160). A Standing Committee regarding protection of the law and order works in every UP to maintain peace and reduce crimes from the villages. The UP Chairman acts as the ex-officio chairperson of this Standing Committee.

The study assessed the measures of the UP to maintain law and order situation (Table 2). While asked, most of the stakeholders (93%) and representatives (97%) replied that Standing Committee of maintaining law and order did not work actively. 92% and 70% representatives respectively from stakeholders and representatives replied that their UPs did not discuss law and order issues in the monthly meeting. Most of the respondents (96% stakeholders and 87% representatives) thought that UP was successful in resolving disputes neutrally through conducting village *Shalish*. Though village court is the nearest centre of resolving petty disputes of the rural people, 92% stakeholders and 93% representatives stated that village courts did not play their due role in resolving disputes.

Table 2: Measures of the UP to Maintain Law and Order Situation

Measures of the UP to Maintain Law and Order Situation	Stakeholders (N=150)				Representatives (N=30)			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Standing Committee for protecting law and order works actively	10	7%	140	93%	1	3%	29	97%
UP discusses law and order issues regularly in the monthly meeting	12	8%	138	92%	9	30%	21	70%
UP resolves disputes neutrally through village Shalish	144	96%	6	4%	26	87%	4	13%
Village courts are very active	12	8%	138	92%	2	7%	28	93%

[Source: Field Survey 2017]

Infrastructure Development and Maintenance

Development and maintenance of infrastructure are the two basic functions of the UP. The UP plans and implements different infrastructure development projects to intensify the economic development of the Union and thereby the whole region by establishing links with the villages, haats and bazars, river ports, etc within the Union through all-weather roads. It undertakes and implements drainage and embankment activities to

revitalize the canals so that flood and monsoon may not damage crops just before the harvest time. Regular monitoring and maintenance of drains, embankments, and canals are ensured by the UP as well. It also takes necessary steps to preserve public assets, such as, public paths, government buildings, open spaces, parks, playgrounds, cemeteries, burning ghats, meeting places, roads, pools, etc and inform the concerned authorities about these matters (Siddiqui, 2005: 159). A Standing Committee works in the UP with regard to rural infrastructure development, preservation and maintenance (The Local Government (Union Parishad) Act 2009: Article, 45).

In practice (Table 3), only 3% stakeholders and 10% representatives stated that concerned Standing Committee worked actively. While asked, only 20% and 60% respectively from stakeholders and representatives replied that the UP took proper steps to maintain public property. About monitoring infrastructure development activities, 25% stakeholders and 73% representatives opined that UP regularly monitored infrastructure development activities. The UP is supposed to plan and implement infrastructure development projects on the basis of views and opinions of its stakeholders. But most of the stakeholders (60%) and 47% representatives did not think that UP communicated with the general people in this regard.

Table 3: Measures of the UP in Developing and Maintaining Infrastructure

Measures of the UP in Developing and Maintaining Infrastructure	Stakeholders (N=150)				Representatives (N=30)			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Concerned Standing Committee works actively	4	3%	146	97%	3	10%	27	90%
Take proper steps to maintain public property	30	20%	120	80%	18	60%	12	40%
UP regularly monitors infrastructure development activities	37	25%	113	75%	42	73%	8	27%
UP communicates with the village people and seek their assistance	60	40%	90	60%	16	53%	14	47%

[Source: Field Survey 2017]

Violence against Women and Children

Violence against women and children is a persistent problem and constant preoccupation of our societies especially in the rural areas. It generally takes place in different forms like physical violence, sexual violence, trafficking, abduction, dowry related violence, forced to prostitution, vicarious violence, etc. The Local Government Division of the Ministry of LGRD & Cooperatives issued a circular in 1989 containing the provision of forming a prevention committee of violence against women and children in each UP having seven members including UP Chairman and members (Local Government Division, 1989). The prevention committee has to take steps to prevent violence against women and children through seeking cooperation from the law enforcing agencies,

formation of ward-wise prevention committee, receiving complaints and taking steps, rehabilitating the victims, raising consciousness among the people, arranging meetings, seminars, rally and cultural programs, etc. The UP prevention committee also sets a signboard in the UP from which the victim women and children can be informed as to where they can get proper assistance (NILG, 2012: 208-209).

The study explored practical steps of the UP to fight oppression and violence against women and children (Table 4). 94% of the stakeholders and 90% of the representatives reported that the prevention committee did not work actively with only 6% stakeholders and 10% representatives having responded positively in that case. 56% and 30% representatives respectively from stakeholders and representatives replied that their UPs did not receive complaints related to violence against women and children cordially and took no steps. Most of the stakeholder (90%) and 100% representatives said that UP did not take steps to aware people regarding violence against women and children. Even, the UPs did not have any program to rehabilitate the victimized women and children that was stated by 98% stakeholders and 80% representatives.

Table 4: Measures of the UP to Prevent Violence against Women and Children

Measures of the UP to Prevent Violence Against Women and Children	Stakeholders (N=150)				Representatives (N=30)			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Violence prevention committees of villages work actively	9	6%	141	94%	3	10%	27	90%
UP receives such complaints cordially and takes proper steps	66	44%	84	56%	21	70%	9	30%
Take steps for creating awareness	15	10%	135	90%	0	0%	30	100%
Cooperate in rehabilitation of the victims	3	2%	147	98%	8	20%	24	80%

[Source: Field Survey 2017]

Economic Development Planning of the UP

The UP has the responsibility to plan and implement economic and social development schemes like agriculture, fisheries, cottage industries, education, health, poverty alleviation, etc at the local level (The Local Government (Union Parishad) Act 2009: Article, 47(1) ga & gha). In this regard, it would prepare a Five-Year Plan with the cooperation of UP Members, NGOs, civil society members, local elites, stakeholders, representatives of public organizations, etc. The UP will ensure participation of the stakeholders including women in planning and implementation of the Five-Year Plan. To prepare a participatory bottom up planning, the UP will arrange Ward Shava regularly so that the general people can attend spontaneously in development planning. It will also inform the general people details about the economic development panning of the UP (The Local Government (Union Parishad) Act 2009: Article, 3-7).

Table 5 shows respondent's opinions about the process of the UP in making economic development planning. 48% stakeholders and 23% representatives admitted that economic development planning was done according to personal will of the UP Chairman and members. Only 96% stakeholders and 40% representatives stated that public opinions are not given emphasize in making development plan. 90% stakeholders and 50% representatives believed that their UPs did not coordinate with the NGOs in making economic development planning whereas, 92% stakeholders and 93% representatives viewed that the UP representatives gave importance on their own parties and areas in this respect. 92% and 60% respectively from stakeholders and representatives mentioned that their UP consulted with local political and influential persons in the preparation of development plan. UP should inform general people about its economic planning. But, it is not supported by 56% stakeholders and 47% representatives.

Table 5: UP's Process of Economic Development Planning

UP's Process of Economic Development Planning	Stakeholders (N=150)				Representatives (N=30)			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Economic development planning is done according to the will of UP Chairman and members	72	48%	78	52%	7	23%	23	77%
On the basis of public opinion	6	4%	144	96%	18	60%	12	40%
Coordination with NGOs	15	10%	135	90%	15	50%	15	50%
Emphasis is given on UP member's own party and area	138	92%	12	8%	28	93%	2	7%
Consultation with the local political persons	138	92%	12	8%	18	60%	12	40%
General people are informed about economic planning	66	44%	84	56%	16	53%	14	47%

[Source: Field Survey 2017]

Budgeting

As per legal framework, UP will arrange ward-wise open budget meeting to finalize budget for the next fiscal year. Draft plan of the budget has to be presented in the open budget meeting where different classes of people will participate. The approved final budget has to be presented in the shape of a book before the people of the UP and the final budget has to be circulated in the Union notice board as well. UP will arrange an evaluation meeting in the UP at the middle of the year regarding the progress of implementation of the approved budget (NILG, 2012: 158).

In practice (Table 6), most of the respondents (93% stakeholders and 73% representatives) stated that UP did not arrange budget meeting in the ward. 84% and 40% respectively from stakeholders and representatives opined that the UP did not seek public opinion to finalize budget. Even 90% stakeholders and 57% representatives believed that UP did not present approved budget before the general people whereas 92% stakeholders

and 80% representatives stated that UP did not publish final budget in a book or in the notice board as well. Only 3% and

Table 6: Budget Functions of the UP

UP's Initiatives to Plan and Implement Budget	Stakeholders (N=150)				Representatives (N=30)			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Arrange ward-wise budget meeting regularly	11	7%	139	93%	8	27%	22	73%
Seek public opinion to finalize budget	24	16%	126	84%	18	60%	12	40%
Presents final/approved budget before the general people	15	10%	135	90%	13	43%	17	57%
Publish budget in a book or in the notice board	12	8%	138	92%	6	20%	24	80%
Arrange half-yearly evaluation meeting on the progress of budget implementation in the ward	5	3%	145	97%	20	67%	10	33%
Inspire people to attend budget meeting	90	60%	60	40%	21	70%	9	30%

[Source: Field Survey 2017]

67% respectively from stakeholders and representatives said that UP arranged half yearly evaluation meeting on the progress of budget implementation in the ward. Besides, UP's initiatives to encourage general people to participate in the budget meeting is supported by 60% stakeholders and 70% representatives.

Environmental Conservation

UP has the responsibility to take necessary steps to conserve environment in its jurisdiction. In this regard, a UP is assigned to take certain steps like creation of environmental awareness among the people; undertaking sustainable and environment-friendly development plan; preservation of bio-diversity, water bodies and forest; plantation of trees in the open place and road sides; inspiring people to dispose household waste in the fixed place; protection of environment from any kind of pollution; proper maintenance of drainage, etc (NILG, 2012: 217).

Field data reveals (table 7) that 90% stakeholders and 97% representatives thought their UPs did not take steps to create environmental consciousness among the people. 92% stakeholders and 97% representatives said that their UP did not take environment-friendly and sustainable development plan. All the respondents mentioned that their UP did not have activity to manage waste properly. 80% stakeholders and 100% representatives stated that the UP inspires the general people in building and using sanitary latrines.

Table 7: Measures of the UP in Conservation of Environment

Measures of the UP in protecting environment	Stakeholders (N=150)				Representatives (N=30)			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Creation of environmental awareness among the people	15	10%	135	90%	1	3%	29	97%
Take environment-friendly development plan	12	8%	138	92%	1	3%	29	97%
Proper waste management activities	0	0%	300	100%	0	0%	30	100%
Encourage people to construct and proper usage of sanitary latrines	126	84%	24	16%	30	100%	0	0%

[Source: Field Survey 2017]

Water Supply and Sanitation

Clean and safe water supply and sanitation among the inhabitants are the two important functions of the UP. To supply safe water and sanitation, the UP is entrusted some responsibilities, such as, formation of a standing committee of sanitation, water supply and drainage and to ensure safe water through this committee; necessary assistance and inspiring the people to construct sanitary latrine and to ensure its proper usage; supervision and suitable management of the rivers and the forests to keep the UP area clean; proper maintenance and preservation of ponds and other water bodies for supplying water; taking steps to prevent pollution of drinking water; formation of ward-wise arsenic control committee; conduct regular arsenic survey; ensure construction of sufficient sanitary latrines in the ward and encourage its proper usage; providing sufficient latrines in the important places of the UP like schools, bus stations and open places; taking steps to protect drinking water sources from pollution, etc (NILG, 2012: 238-239).

Table 8 shows the measures of the UP regarding water supply and sanitation. 96% stakeholders and 77% representatives did not think that their UPs had ward-wise active Arsenic control Committee. Even, 88% stakeholders and 80% representatives believed that Union Sanitation and Water Supply Committee did not work properly. Regarding steps of the UP to inspire people to build and use sanitary latrines, most of the respondents (88% stakeholders and 80% representatives) replied in the positive. However, 80% stakeholders and 90% representatives replied that their UP did not install community latrines, 88% stakeholders and 73% representatives said that their UP did not supply tube well among them as well.

Table 8: Measures of the UP in Water Supply and Sanitation

Measures of the UP in Water Supply and Sanitation	Stakeholders (N=150)				Representatives (N=30)			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Ward-wise Arsenic Control Committee works actively	6	4%	144	96%	7	23%	23	77%
Union Sanitation and Water Supply Committee works properly	18	12%	132	88%	6	20%	24	80%
Inspiring people to build and use sanitary latrines	102	68%	48	32%	24	80%	6	20%
Installation of community latrines	30	20%	120	80%	3	10%	27	90%
Supplying tube well among the villagers	18	12%	132	88%	8	27%	22	73%

[Source: Field Survey 2017]

Women Participation in Development

UP plans and implements development schemes in the field of agriculture, forestry, fisheries, live stock, education, health, cottage industries, communications, irrigation and flood protection with a view to improving the economic and social condition of the people (Siddiqui, 2005: 154). It is the duty of the UP to ensure women participation in planning and implementation of development projects. Women representation should be ensured in all the committees to design and materialize development schemes as well.

The study assessed the level of initiatives of the UP to ensure women participation in development projects (Table 9). When asked if the UP considered women's opinions at the time of designing development schemes, almost cent percent of the respondents (100% stakeholders and 97% representatives) stated that UP did not do this. The vast majority of the respondents (92% stakeholders and 90% representatives) expressed that the UP did not invite women in the meeting to plan and implement development projects. Only 12% stakeholders and 80% representatives thought that women representations were ensured by the UP in the concerned committees of development projects.

Table 9: Women Participation in Development Projects

Measures of the UP in Ensuring Women Participation in Projects	Stakeholders (N=150)				Representatives (N=30)			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Women's opinions are taken during planning of development of projects	0	0%	150	100%	1	3%	29	97%
Women are invited in the concerned meetings	12	8%	138	92%	3	10%	27	90%
Women representation are ensured in the committees	18	12%	132	88%	24	80%	6	20%

[Source: Field Survey 2017]

Standing Committee Formation

According to the Local Government (Union Parishad) Act, 2009, each UP will constitute 13 standing committees for the smooth functioning of different activities of the UP. A Standing Committee will elect one of its members as its Chairman, and another member as its Vice Chairman. The UP Members from reserved seats will make up one third of the total number of members in each of the standing committees. The UP members from reserved seats will be the Chairman of the standing committees according to the ratio 1:3. However, only the Chairman of the UP will be Chairman of the Standing Committee on law and order (The Local Government (Union Parishad) Act 2009: Article, 45 (3). The total members of a Standing Committee will be five to seven.

When asked, 96% of the stakeholders and only 30% of the representatives claimed that Members of the Standing Committees were selected by the UP Chairman and members themselves (Table 10). Besides, half of the stakeholders and only 7% representatives thought that committee members were appointed from the ruling party. 100% stakeholders and 93% representatives did not believe that appointments of the Standing Committee members were done on the basis of professional qualification. 94% stakeholders and 90% representatives stated that Standing Committees did not perform their assigned activities properly. Rabbani (2012) stated that though for making the UP more active and efficient, it is a usual practice in the UP governance that Standing Committees are not formed and they do not function properly (Rabbani, 2012: 61). Another study also reveals that most of the Standing Committees are not functional even though 4 or 5 have been formed on paper. Maximum UP Chairmen and Members don't know how many Standing Committees should exist at the UP level and what their roles should be. Even the Chairmen and the Secretaries are not all aware of the 13 Committees (Haque, 2009: 61).

Table 10: Selection Procedure and Performance of Standing Committee Members

Measures of the UP in Selecting Standing Committee Members and Their Performance	Stakeholders (N=150)				Representatives (N=30)			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Members are selected by the UP Chairmen and members	144	96%	6	4%	9	30%	21	70%
Appointed on the basis of party in power	75	50%	75	50%	2	7%	28	93%
Appointed on the basis of professional qualification	0	0%	150	100%	2	7%	28	93%
Standing Committees work actively	9	6%	141	94%	3	10%	27	90%

[Source: Field Survey 2017]

Preventing Sexual Harassment

UP has the duty to take proper steps to prevent sexual harassment. It makes concerned standing committee more active. The committee takes certain steps for the prevention of

sexual harassment in the UP area, such as, considering sexual harassment with much emphasis; strengthen and make effective of the UP committee of resisting oppression of women; inform the inhabitants about the negative impacts of the sexual harassment; formation of a Sexual Harassment Prevention Committee at the ward level; regular monitoring and discussions through monitoring cell; arranging ward-wise sports and cultural programs, establishing libraries and clubs for the proper recreation of the youths; arranging consciousness raising programs like rally, competitions, seminars, drama presentation, etc regarding negative effects of sexual harassment, etc (NILG, 2012: 211-212).

Table 11 demonstrates the steps of the UP to prevent sexual harassment. 100% respondents from each category stated that no committee worked in their UP to resist sexual harassment. Almost cent percent respondents (96% stakeholders and 97% representatives) thought that the UP did not inform its general people about the negative impacts and problems of sexual harassment. About recreational measures among the youths, 100% respondents from both categories said that their UP did not do so. 92% stakeholders and 93% representatives said that their UP did not have any consciousness raising activity against sexual harassment as well.

Table 11: Steps of UP to Prevent Sexual Harassment

Measures of the UP in Preventing Sexual Harassment	Stakeholders (N=150)				Representatives (N=30)			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Concerned committee works actively	0	0%	150	100%	0	0%	30	100%
UP informs general people about the negative impacts and problems of sexual harassment	6	4%	144	96%	1	3%	29	97%
Take recreational measures among the youth	0	0%	150	100%	0	0%	30	100%
Arrange consciousness raising programs against sexual harassment	12	8%	138	92%	2	7%	28	93%

[Source: Field Survey 2017]

Primary and Mass Education

UP has the responsibility to encourage and motivate people for the development of primary education and mass education. It will undertake initiatives for the eradication of illiteracy from the society. Members of both general seats and reserved seats of the UP will help to implement primary education and total literacy movement programs of the government.

Table 12: Steps of UP to Develop Primary and Mass Education

Measures of the UP to Develop Primary and Mass Education	Stakeholders (N=150)				Representatives (N=30)			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Concerned primary and mass education committee works actively	0	0%	150	100%	3	10%	27	90%
UP Chairman and Members regularly monitor the activities of primary and mass education	9	6%	141	94%	6	20%	24	80%
Take steps to remove constraints in the way of developing primary and mass education	48	32%	102	68%	15	50%	15	50%

[Source: Field Survey 2017]

Table 12 demonstrates the initiatives of the UP to develop primary and mass education. 100% stakeholders and 90% representatives replied that primary and mass education committee did not have any activity in their UP. When asked if UP Chairman and members regularly monitor the activities of primary and mass education, majority of the respondents (94% stakeholders and 80% representatives) replied in the negative. The UP did not take steps to remove constraints in the way of developing primary and mass education and that view was given by 68% stakeholders and 50% representatives.

Creation of Environment for Proper Mental Growth and Development

The UP is responsible to take proper steps for the mental growth and development of the people of its jurisdiction. For this purpose, the UP will develop games and sports facilities, establish libraries, celebrate national festivals and also encourage the people of the ward level to take up physical exercise and organize cultural functions and give assistance to those interested in such activities (Siddiqui, 2005: 159).

In practice (Table 13), most of the respondents (94% stakeholders and 80% representatives) did not believe that the UP worked for maintaining communal harmony among the citizens. 96% stakeholders and 77% representatives stated that the UP did not arrange recreational programs for creating favorable environment for proper mental growth and development of the inhabitants. 90% stakeholders and 97% representatives said that their UP did not have social development programs where citizens can participate. Only 28% stakeholders and 60% representatives claimed that UP discouraged drugs and other anti social activities.

Table 13: Steps of UP for Proper Mental Growth and Development

Measures of the UP in Creating Atmosphere for Proper Mental Growth and Development	Stakeholders (N=150)				Representatives (N=30)			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
UP works for maintaining communal harmony	12	8%	138	92%	4	13%	26	87%
Arranges different recreational programs	6	4%	144	96%	7	23%	23	77%
Ensure participation of the citizens in different social development programs	15	10%	135	90%	1	3%	29	97%
Discourages drugs and other illegal social activities	42	28%	108	72%	18	60%	12	40%

[Source: Field Survey 2017]

Disaster Management

The UP has the responsibility to make its people aware of natural calamities, such as fire, floods, droughts, tornados, earthquakes, tidal bores, etc. The UP members in the general seats will form Ward Disaster Management Committee with the eminent local personalities, the youths and other professionals of each ward. One of the UP members from the general seats will be the Chairman and one of the UP members from the reserved seats will be the advisor of that Committee (Siddiqui, 2005: 160).

In practice (Table 14), all the stakeholders and representatives thought that Ward Disaster Management Committee did not take proper steps in disaster management. Most of the respondents (95% stakeholders and 57% representatives) said that the UP did not take steps to create awareness among the people. Only a small number of stakeholders (13%) and about half of the representatives (47%) opined that the UP took emergency steps during disaster like drinking water supply, distribution of medicine, saline, relief, etc. 97% stakeholders and 80% representatives did not believe that UP arranged conscious raising meetings, training and workshops in their areas regarding disaster management.

Table 14: Steps of UP in Disaster Management

Measures of the UP in Disaster Management	Stakeholders (N=150)				Representatives (N=30)			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Ward disaster management committee works properly	0	0%	150	100%	0	0%	30	100%
Making people aware about natural calamities	7	5%	143	95%	13	43%	17	57%
Taking emergency steps during disaster like drinking water supply, distribution of medicine, saline, relief, etc.	19	13%	131	87%	14	47%	16	53%
Arranging meetings, training and workshops	5	3%	145	97%	6	20%	24	80%

[Source: Field Survey 2017]

Social Problems Identification

Every UP has the responsibility to identify social problems on the basis of priority and public opinion and try to solve with the cooperation and active involvement of the stakeholders of the UP. While asked if the UP identified social problems through discussion with the local ward members, most of the respondents (64% stakeholders and 77% representatives) replied in the negative. 34% stakeholders and 70% representatives believed that UP identified social problems through exchanging views with the local eminent persons. 96% stakeholders and 87% representatives reported that UP did not consult with general people to find out social problems. Vast majority of the stakeholders (90%) opined that the pressure of local political leaders had an influence in identifying social problems (Table 15).

Table 15: Process of Problem Identification of the UP

Measures of the UP to Identify Social Problems	Stakeholders (N=150)				Representatives (N=30)			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Through discussion with the local ward members	54	36%	96	64%	7	23%	23	77%
Through exchanging views with the local respectable and eminent persons	51	34%	99	66%	21	70%	9	30%
Through meeting with the general people	6	4%	144	96%	4	13%	26	87%
Influenced by the pressure of local political leaders	135	90%	15	10%	0	0%	30	100%

[Source: Field Survey 2017]

Causes of Poor Governance in the Functioning of UP

The above discussions have identified some causes which hamper the process of governance in the functioning of the UP. These are as:

- lack of public awareness on different issues related to UP functions such as environment, participation in development, sanitation, etc;
- inactive village courts to resolve disputes;
- absence of institutionalized relationship and lack of cooperation among the UP and its residents;
- inactive Standing Committees of protecting law and order, preventing violence against women, etc;

- lack of coordination among the UP and other government agencies, and NGOs respective programs;
- lack of regular monitoring of public property and development activities;
- economic development planning without people participation;
- pressure from party and local political elites;
- financial insolvency in undertaking development programs;
- finalization of budget without public meeting or public opinion;
- absence of environment-friendly development schemes;
- lack of women's participation during planning and implementation of development of projects;
- lack of sufficient recreational measures among the youth for mental growth and development;
- lack of awareness raising programs to discourage drugs and other illegal social activities;
- problem identification without exchanging views with the local people.

Conclusions

Local governance is an effective process which brings positive changes among the local people according to their aspirations and ensures their participation in local politics and development. Governance is a process through which societies and organizations make their important decisions, determine whom they would involve in the process and whom they would render account. From the above discussion, it can be concluded that UP is a powerful institution and apparatus for good governance and at the same time good governance is a must for the successful functioning of a UP. So, there is a reciprocal relationship between good governance and the UP. The UP provides opportunities for its citizens to participate in decision-making process which in turn ensures accountability of the elected representatives and the government officials. It promotes institutional democratic culture and makes the democracy successful and meaningful. It is a defensible service delivery center which advances local development and thereby contributes to national prosperity. The study has identified manifold problems of the UP which are mainly the problems of good governance and have created image problem for the UPs that has resulted in a gap between the UP and its inhabitants. A significant number of the stakeholders stated that the UP was not accountable and responsible in performing its assigned duties and delivering basic services to the people properly. Similarly, most of the UP representatives said that they did not get due cooperation from the people in decision making and implementation process. This indicates the poor state of governance in the UP. So, it is essential to take effective and pragmatic steps to remove those governance problems to make the UP more capable and vibrant. Political

commitment and integrity is the most important influencing factors for establishing good governance in the UP. Elected representatives and the stakeholders of the UP and the members of the civil society have a great responsibility to ensure good governance and to keep this century old popular institution in the right track.

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