

Annual Development Programme (ADP) Grants for Upazila Parishads:

Role of Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) in the Planning and Implementation Process

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Dedicated to
My wife Lita
And our two children
Tabassum and Saadi

Abstract

Upazila Parishad (UZP), literally meaning Sub-district Council, is the middle tier of local government for Bangladesh in the rural setting. After a long period of non existence Upazila Parishads are now functional under elected leadership in 484 upazilas. The UZP consists of an elected Chairman, two Vice Chairmen and Chairmen and Mayors of concerned Paurasavas (municipalities) as ex officio members. Officials of 18 nation building departments at the upazila level who are largely accountable to their respective department heads, are required to be present in the UZP meetings in non member, non voting capacity and are liable for implementing its decisions. Among them UNO, an officer of the Bangladesh Civil Service Administration Cadre, is designated as the Principal Executive Officer. The responsibilities of UNO include ensuring compliance with rules and regulations and maintenance of financial discipline. The research was aimed at exploring the role of UNO in the planning and implementation of development projects under UZP.

UZP is largely dependent on block grants received on quarterly basis from the government in order to remain operational. However, the grants come up with strict conditions and the UNO is mainly liable for the compliance part. Planning and implementation of development projects under block grants were argued to be affected by three variables – legal aspects, political aspects and institutional and operational aspects. Likewise, it was further argued, the role of UNO in planning and implementation was also to be affected by the same factors.

In addressing the research question a total of 33 UNOs were surveyed. Besides, 10 elected representatives and 3 government officials supplemented the survey findings. Empirical evidences found that a positive correlation exists between the level of adherence to the legal jurisdictions by the elected representatives and the quality of planning and implementation. As far as political aspect is concerned it was found that clientele considerations have a negative influence on planning and implementation. Besides, two of the institutional and operational aspects, unawareness of officials and lack of coordination between officials and the UNO have negative effects on planning and implementation.

The responsibilities of UNO in the planning and implementation of block grant supported projects resemble that of a facilitator. UNO is to provide secretarial assistance to the UZP and

step in whenever there is a violation of rules. Such legal provisions fit the UNO in the mould of a classical bureaucrat. However, practical considerations might be forcing the UNO to play the role of a political bureaucrat. The legal provisions are sometimes unable to address local peculiarities. Elected representatives also expect the UNO to be more flexible with the rules. The legal requirements for being a classical bureaucrat do not deny a political role to the UNO in the UZP. In fact, UNO is an important part of the political process in the UZP and is able to influence planning and implementation process even better than some of the elected representatives. UNO is deriving his or her strength from the bureaucratic expertise and the involvement in retained and regulatory functions.

Empirical evidences found that increased involvement of UNO is likely to result in betterment of planning and implementation. However, increased influence of political factors on the UNO negatively influences the planning and implementation process. In other words, political factors dissuade the UNO from playing his or her due role in the UZP. This role obviously pertains to classical role. On the other hand, in a dense legal setting playing of a political role by the UNO is not undesirable. In fact, UNOs are not found to be opposed to such a role. In case of handling conflicts with the elected representatives UNOs have showed their preference for a compromise solution, which indicates a deviation from the classical role. Nonetheless, venturing into a political role by the UNO is unlikely to result in positive outcomes for planning and implementation if the narrow political considerations are not guarded against.

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List of Abbreviations

AC (Land)	Assistant Commissioner (Land)
ACR	Annual Confidential Report
ADP	Annual Development Programme
APR	Annual Performance Report
BCS	Bangladesh Civil Service
BDT	Bangladeshi Taka
BRDB	Bangladesh Rural Development Board
CO	Circle Officer
CO (Dev.)	Circle Officer (Development)
CSP	Civil Service of Pakistan
DC	Deputy Commissioner
DM	District Magistrate
DOE	Department of Environment
FVC	Female Vice Chairman
MLSS	Member of Lower Subordinate Services
MP	Member of the Parliament
OC	Officer-in-Charge
PC	Project Committee
SDO	Sub Divisional Officer
TDC	Thana Development Committee
TDCC	Thana Development Coordination Committee
TNO	Thana Nirbahi Officer
TTDC	Thana Training and Development Centre
UDCC	Upazila Development Coordination Committee
UE	Upazila Engineer
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
UP	Union Parishad
UPC	Union Parishad Chairman
UZP	Upazila Parishad
UZPC	Upazila Parishad Chairman
VC	Vice Chairman

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Article 59 and 60 of the Constitution of Bangladesh provide for Local Government in every administrative unit¹ of the Republic with the authority to manage its financial affairs (GOB, 2011a: 19-20). Such provision had been in existence since the adoption of the Constitution in 1972 (GOB, 2006: 19-20). However, it was dropped in the Fourth Amendment of 1975 (GOB, 1975: 23) and reinstated in its original shape in the Twelfth Amendment of 1991 (GOB, 2011a: 119). Thus, article 59 and 60 remained repealed for a period of 16 years (M Islam, 2008: 332). Currently, Union is recognized as the lowest administrative unit of local governance in rural setting. Upazila², which consists of a number of Unions, was recognized as an administrative unit through the enactment of the Upazila Parishad Act,

¹ For administrative convenience Bangladesh is divided into seven divisions. Each division is divided into a number of districts. There are a total of 64 districts in the country. Each district is divided into a number of Upazilas (literally meaning sub-districts). There are 485 upazilas in the country. Each division is headed by a Divisional Commissioner. Each District Administration is headed by a Deputy Commissioner (DC) who is also known as District Magistrate (DM) or Collector for judicial and revenue functions respectively. The DC reports to his or her concerned Divisional Commissioner for administrative, judicial and revenue functions. Each Upazila Administration is headed by an Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), literally meaning Sub-district Executive Officer. UNO has administrative, judicial and revenue functions for which he or she reports to the concerned DC. The entire setup of the field administration, starting from the UNO upto the Divisional Commissioner, is accountable to the Cabinet Secretary who heads the Cabinet Division. The Cabinet Secretary reports to the Prime Minister. Nonetheless, according to the Constitution, the term “administrative unit” relates only to the units of local governance, which differ from the field administration setup as discussed above. Administrative units of local governance can be of two categories. In the urban setting Paurasava (literally meaning municipality) refers to a local government institution for a small urban area located inside the periphery of an upazila. City Corporation refers to a large urban area located inside the periphery of a district. In the rural setting Zila Parishad (literally meaning District Council) refers to a local government institution for a district. However, the jurisdiction of Zila Parishad does not include the City Corporation(s) or the Paurasavas. Upazila Parishad refers to the local government institution for an upazila. However, the jurisdiction of Upazila Parishad does not include the Paurasava areas. Union Parishad (literally meaning Union Council) refers to the smallest unit of local governance. Within the periphery of an upazila there are a number of Unions. There may or may not be any Paurasava(s). Bangladesh has nine City Corporations, 310 Paurasavas, 485 Upazila Parishads (six of those are yet to have an elected setup) and 4,504 Union Parishads (Local Government Division, 2012a; Cabinet Division, 2012; The Daily Manabzamin, 27 June 2012). However, there are no local government institutions in the cantonment areas.

² An Upazila has two setups for governance. Upazila Proshashon (Upazila Administration) is headed by the UNO. Administrative, judicial and revenue jurisdictions of Upazila Proshashon may partially or totally include the Paurasava areas within the periphery of the upazila if there is any. On the other hand, Upazila Parishad (UZP) is the local government unit for an upazila, which is headed by the UZP Chairman. UNO is a part of the UZP also in the capacity of Principal Executive Officer. The jurisdiction of UZP excludes the Paurasava(s) and the cantonment areas if there is any.

1998, making it obligatory for the government to install an elected Local Government body there. Nevertheless, Upazila Parishad (UZP), the Local Government body at Upazila level, was introduced way back in the 1980s when the constitutional obligation was not in existence. Elections to the first two UZPs were held in 1985 and 1990 respectively. UZPs, installed through the first elections, could complete their tenure. Since then there has been a long period of non-existence of elected representatives at Upazila level, which includes a period of non compliance with constitutional obligations from 1998 to 2008. Upazila Parishad elections, held in January 2009, installed the first ever Local Governments at Upazila level fulfilling the constitutional provisions. The set up of the Parishad is different from all other Local Government bodies of the country as it has three elected representatives instead of one. The Chairman and two Vice Chairmen, one of them being a female, have been elected by the electorates of each Upazila of the country. Members of the UZP also include the Chairmen of the Union Parishads and the Mayor(s) of Paurasava(s) located within the Upazila area. Besides, a specified number of female Members, elected by the female Members and the Councilors of all Union Parishads and Paurasava(s) within the Upazila area, are also assigned to be members of UZP. Furthermore, the upazila level officials of specified designation, belonging to the 12 ministries or divisions of the government, part of whose functions have been transferred to the UZP, are also required to be present at its meetings.

As per Article 59 (2) of the Constitution, a Local Government body can be bestowed with the function of preparation and implementation of plans relating to economic development. However, this is very much related to the sourcing of funds for the bodies. In case of UZPs, block grants, allocated from the Annual Development Programme (ADP)³ of the government, have so far been the major source of fund for planning and implementation of development projects. In case of the utilization of block grants, UZP is not only authorized to approve the projects proposed by the Chairmen of the Union Parishads within its jurisdiction but also to carry out the major part of the implementation process.

UZP differs from the other forms of Local Government in Bangladesh as all of the upazila level government officials with transferred functions maintain a dual reporting structure. Other than being accountable to the UZP for the transferred subjects, they are largely accountable to their respective government agencies. Among the government officials the

³ Annual Development Programmes (ADP) refer to a list of development projects to be implemented in different sectors and the allocations for them for a particular fiscal year. ADP is formulated on the basis of the development budget, approved by the Parliament, for a particular fiscal year.

role of Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) is most important as he or she has been designated as the Principal Executive Officer of the UZP. As a member of the Bangladesh Civil Service (Administration) cadre UNO is of the rank of Senior Assistant Secretary of the Government. Officers posted at 484 Upazilas⁴ of Bangladesh as UNOs have six to eleven years of service experience⁵. Although UNO is assigned to be the Principal Executive Officer of the UZP and bestowed with the responsibility of providing secretarial assistance to it, he or she is accountable to the Cabinet Division for the retained and regulatory functions like conducting mobile courts⁶, disposal of certificate cases⁷, supervision of land administration and management of disasters. Nonetheless the role of UNO in the UZP, which does not exclude development activities, remains significant as he or she is authorized to do much more than merely providing secretarial assistance. This research aims to explore the role of the UNOs in the planning and implementation of projects undertaken by block grants allocated from the Annual Development Programme budget of the Government to the Upazila Parishads.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The current UZPs, constituted under the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 have wide differences with the Parishads constituted in the 80s. Upazila Parishad Chairmen, elected through the first two elections to the UZPs, were expected to provide a rural support base for the then regime. Their allegiances were secured through the granting of a number of facilities and privileges that locally elected representatives rarely enjoyed in the past (UNDP Bangladesh, 2010: 24). For the first time in the country's history of rural local government, field administration was put under political control (Siddiquee, 1997: 100). However, the elected representatives of the current UZPs might still have the setup of the 1980s in their mind. They have also closely experienced the functioning of the other Local Government bodies of

⁴ According to the official website of the Cabinet Division, Bangladesh, total number of upazilas in the country is 485 (Cabinet Division, 2012). However, the Local Government Division allocated block grants to 484 Upazila Parishads as of 16 May, 2012 (Local Government Division, 2012c). This is due the fact that the newly declared upazila (Taltoli of Barguna district) is yet to have an administrative setup.

⁵ Currently the officers posted as UNOs belong to 20th, 21st, 22nd and 24th batches of BCS (Administration) Cadre. Among them the officers of the 20th batch are the senior most who joined the civil service in 2001. Officers of the 24th batch are the junior most who joined the civil service in 2005.

⁶ Officers of the BCS (Administration) Cadre might be empowered by the Government to detect some low level crimes on the spot and administer limited degree of punishment to the offenders in the form of fine and/or jail sentence of a maximum of two years on the basis of confession of the latter. This exercise is referred to as the mobile court, the procedure of which is guided by the Mobile Court Act, 2009.

⁷ In order to recover the dues of the government from any individual or organization certificate cases can be filed with the Court of Certificate Officer. In the capacity of Certificate Officer UNO is entitled to recover the dues related to agricultural loans and also land related dues in case of absence of Assistant Commissioner (Land) in the upazila. The process is covered by the Public Demand Recovery Act, 1913.

the country⁸ where the Chairmen or Mayors have comparatively higher autonomy and better control over the government officials. In this context acclimatization with the current setup of the UZP, where the three elected representatives have a much subdued role, is vital for everyone concerned.

UZP has a number of actors whose views on a particular issue might be in contradiction with each other. The Chairman, Vice Chairman and the female Vice Chairman – the three of them may have different political orientations, making the option of reaching a consensus difficult. Besides, the Member of the Parliament (MP), elected from the concerned upazila area, acts as the Adviser to the UZP whose advice is binding upon it. Therefore, a decision requires not only an approval of the UZP but also the consent of the concerned MP.

The two Vice Chairmen, despite being elected by the same electorate as that of the Chairman, do not have any role that could distinguish them from the Chairmen and the female Members representing different Unions or Wards in the UZP, in the decision making process. The amendments to the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998, which came into effect on December 1, 2011, empower the Vice Chairmen to be the chiefs of all the *Committees*⁹ (GOB, 2011b). However, the decisions of the committees are still not binding upon the UZP.

Government officials with transferred functions at the UZP, have retained and regulatory functions at their disposal. For such functions they are responsible to their respective departmental heads at the district level. However, confusion exists among everyone concerned as two clearly defined and comprehensive lists, one of transferred and the other of retained and regulatory functions, for each of the upazila level officers and legal provisions stating that the responsibilities of the former have been shifted to the UZP from the respective line ministries and divisions, have not been charted out as yet. In this scenario the government is carrying out a wide array of development programmes at the upazila level without the involvement of UZP. Consequently the elected representatives of UZP have

⁸ City Corporation and Paurasava are the two local government institutions in the urban setting. Apart from Upazila Parishad at the middle tier, there are Union Parishads at the bottom tier and Zila Parishads at the highest tier of local governance in the rural setting. Only in case of Upazila Parishads the popularly elected Chairman is accompanied by two popularly elected Vice Chairmen who represent the same constituency as that of the Chairman. In all other cases, apart from the Chairman or Mayor, each of the other members of the institution represents a constituency of smaller size.

⁹ Section 29 of the reinstated Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 specified the obligation of the Parishad to construct 14 *Standing Committees*. The amendments of December 1, 2011 termed such committees as *Committees* only and increased their number from 14 to 17. However, to avoid confusion in referring to the other committees at the upazila level the term *Standing Committees* will be used throughout the rest of the text.

expressed their resentment. Furthermore, media reports indicate that the elected representatives are not satisfied with the current situation prevailing in the Parishad. Two organizations representing the elected representatives of the UZP, namely Bangladesh Upazila Parishad Chairmen, Vice Chairmen Oikya Parishad and Upazila Parishad Association blame the bureaucracy for ineffectiveness of UZP (The Daily Bangladesh Protidin, 14 October 2011). The elected representatives are also blaming the lawmakers for meddling into the affairs of UZP (The Daily Star, 19 November 2009). It has been alleged that the UNOs do not coordinate with the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen for accomplishing any work of the Upazila (The Daily Star, 22 August 2010). Furthermore, UNOs are allegedly running all the important functions of UZP on the advice of the MPs (The Daily Independent, 8 December 2010). The Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of the UZPs are pressing the government for a set of demands, which among others, includes giving them the authority to prepare the Annual Confidential Report (ACR)¹⁰ of all officials at the upazila level and the provision for making them Presidents of all upazila level committees (The Daily New Age, 27 October 2011).

Despite the fact that the UZPs have been assigned to collect taxes from a number of sources, internal revenue generation has remained limited so far. In this backdrop ADP block grants from the government is important for keeping the UZP functioning and for generation of its capacity for managing development activities. However, the presence of a number of actors of diverse orientation in the UZP and the constraints that have been placed in reaching any decision have made the implementation of any development programme difficult.

UNO has a role to play in all stages of planning and implementation of block grant supported development programmes. The responsibilities include maintenance of financial discipline and ensuring compliance of rules and regulations. This is accompanied by financial liability as the Chairman of the UZP and the UNO are jointly authorized to release funds. UNO is authorized to give opinions on selection and approval of projects and supervise the implementation process. Tender evaluation committee is headed by the UNO. Furthermore, UNO has been assigned to act as a “safety valve” on behalf of the government as he or she is authorized to inform the Local Government Division about any unusual circumstances and

¹⁰ The performances of all the first class and second class government officials are measured usually on an annual basis by their concerned supervisors through a specified form. This form is known as the Annual Confidential Report (ACR).

even request the UZP to reconsider its decision if it is believed to be disrupting the lives, health and security of the people (GOB, 2010: 59; UNDP, 2010). Therefore, it can be argued that as it may happen to the planning and implementation of development projects as a whole, UNO's role in it is also be affected by legal, political, institutional and operational factors.

1.2 Research Question

The research problem, as discussed above, shows that the existing setup of the UZP is inexperienced and its structure is unmatched vis-à-vis the other local government institutions of Bangladesh. The elected representatives have limited discretionary power in disposal of business. The government officials are mainly accountable to their respective higher authorities and have some of their functions transferred to the UZP. Government grants rather than locally raised resources enable the UZP to carry out planning and implementation of development activities. The elected representatives are not satisfied with the situation. In this scenario UNO, an official largely accountable to the government, has some responsibility at every stage of planning and implementation process involving the utilization of block grants received from the Government. Thus, taking this context into account, the following research question can be posed for discussion:

What role does the UNO play in planning and implementation of projects undertaken by Annual Development Programme (ADP) block grants given to the Upazila Parishad?

The role of UNO in the planning and implementation of development projects in the UZP closely resembles that of a facilitator – defined to be a person who helps somebody to do something more easily by discussing problems, giving advice etc. rather than telling them what to do (Hornby, 2005: 545). The UNO is assigned to provide secretarial assistance to the UZP and step up in protecting government interests as needs be.

1.3 Operational Definitions of Major Concepts

Upazila Parishad indicates the Parishads installed by elections held in January 2009 or afterwards. **UNO** refers to an official of the BCS (Administration) Cadre who is currently serving as such in any of the 484 upazilas of the country where an elected Parishad is in charge and who has the experience of being present in at least three Upazila Parishad

meetings held every month. The word **Role** carries its lexical meanings – the function or position that somebody has or is expected to have in an organization and the degree to which somebody is involved in a situation or activity and the effect that they have on it (Hornby, 2005: 1317). **Role of UNO** includes the functions that he or she has in the Upazila Parishad regarding the utilization of block grants, the degree of his or her involvement in the planning and implementation process and the effect of UNO's involvement on the planning and implementation process. **Block grants** refer to the monetary grant sourced from the Annual Development Programme (ADP), which is allocated to the Upazila Parishads by the Local Government Division on quarterly basis for spending in development activities within a specified guideline. **Planning and Implementation process** incorporates selection, approval, implementation and monitoring of development projects undertaken by the block grants given to the Upazila Parishad.

1.4 Objectives and Scope

In addressing the research question related to the role of the UNO in planning and implementation of block grant supported development projects, discharging of his or her legally specified responsibilities can to be assessed in the light of legal, political, institutional and operational contexts. Such contexts determine the extent to which the UNO gets involved in discharging his or her specified responsibilities. Thus, the research has set the following *objectives*:

- To identify the legal, political, institutional and operational factors that influence the role of UNOs in the planning and implementation of block grant supported projects
- To explore the responses of the UNOs to the legal, political, institutional and operational contexts in relation to planning and implementation of block grant supported projects

The *scope* of the research is determined by a number of factors. In the first place, role of UNO has been analyzed mainly from the perspective of themselves and partly from the perspectives of the elected representatives, officials of the transferred departments and the supervising authority. Secondly, perspectives of the elected representatives and the officials of the transferred departments have been covered on the basis of information collected from three conveniently selected upazilas only. The time of collecting primary information ranged

from March 2012 to May 2012. Thirdly, different government agencies are implementing projects in the upazila with ADP budget under direct supervision of their respective higher authorities. Such projects remain outside the purview of this research. Fourthly, the research does not cover the planning and implementation of projects under *Test Relief, Food for Work, Employment Generation Program for the Poorest* or similar programmes undertaken outside the purview of the UZP despite the fact that the related committees for such implementing programmes incorporate elected representatives of the UZP. Fifthly, part of the ADP block grants is used for construction, reconstruction, renovation and maintenance of buildings of Upazila Parishad Complex. Such use of block grants has been kept outside the purview of the research. Finally, the research is based on the assumption that the contribution of revenue surplus, local donations and other sources to the development fund of UZP is insignificant and therefore the development activities are dependent on block grants provided by the government from the ADP budget.

1.5 Significance of the Research

A number of researches were carried out on the UZPs installed in the 1980s. However, the findings of those studies may not hold good for the current UZPs. Throughout the 1980s Bangladesh was being run by presidential form of government. Since 1991, through the 12th amendment of the Constitution, the country is being run by parliamentary form of government. In the 1980s MPs did not have any role in the UZPs whereas in the current settings, MPs, being Advisers to the UZPs, can even impose their decisions. Unlike the 1980s the current UZPs have two elected Vice Chairmen. The Chairman does not have sweeping power what he or she had in the 80s. Moreover, the setup of the 80s was accompanied by the establishment of criminal courts at the upazila level, which drew considerable attention of the rural people. The changed circumstances, therefore, justify a new research.

The current UZPs lack experience in carrying out development activities. Apparently the Government has assigned the UNOs to assist the elected representatives of these local government institutions in discharging their designated responsibilities. The government has tried to ensure better utilization of public finance to the UZPs through the UNOs. In fact, the responsibilities of the UNOs in the current UZPs differ widely from their predecessors in the 1980s. It is, therefore, worthwhile to explore whether or how far the UNOs have been able to

ensure proper utilization of resources by the UZPs. Since the installation of the UZPs in 2009 no study has looked into the role of UNO in particular.

So far the internal resource mobilization for the UZPs remains low. Nevertheless, the UZPs are in need of developing the capacity for undertaking development projects. Block grants extend the major part of the responsibility of planning and implementation of projects to the UZP. In fact, UZP gets enough leeway in undertaking development activities according to customized needs of the locality despite the fact that the projects are to be undertaken and implemented as per a given guideline. Block grants give the UZP the opportunity to mobilize the political process within itself. The elected representatives can interact with each other within the framework of UZP and decide the priorities of the electorates. Block grant supported development can be a test case for the UZPs. This research in an indirect way is likely to reveal some of the dynamics of block grant supported development by the UZPs. The policymaking level of the government may party find answers to three questions: Is it worthwhile to continue or enhance such grants? Can more planning and implementation activities of the government be devolved to the UZPs? What are the obstacles on way of smooth running of the UZPs?

1.6 Chapter Outline

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. The introductory chapter is followed by a detailed description of methodology that has been followed in collecting and analyzing data for the purpose of the research. The third chapter gives an overview of the Upazila Parishads and the provisions related to block grants given to them. The fourth chapter reviews the relevant parts of the literatures on UZPs and prepares the background for developing an analytical framework. The fifth chapter discusses some relevant theories and finally develops an analytical framework for the research on the basis of the review of literature and the theoretical discussions. The sixth chapter analyzes the data and draws inferences. Finally, the seventh and last chapter draws conclusions from the entire research.

The introductory chapter ends here. The next chapter details out the methodology followed in carrying out this research.

2.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter details out the sources and the ways of collecting primary and secondary information needed for addressing the research question and the two objectives as stated in the previous chapter. A detailed account of content analysis, self administered questionnaire, structured interviews and observations employed in data collection has been furnished. It is followed by an assessment of reliability and validity of this particular research. The technique for analyzing and interpreting primary data gathered from the questionnaire has also been discussed. Lastly, the limitations of the research have been discussed.

2.1 Research Methods

It is argued that the use of one single method in social research is not always enough to respond to the research needs rather a combination of methods is more useful to bring the desired level of methodological sophistication (Aminuzzaman, 2011a: 53). For this particular research data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Secondary data was collected through content analysis. Primary data, on the other hand, was collected through self administered questionnaire, structured interviews and observations. Findings of the questionnaire are expected to be validated by the findings of the structured interviews, observations and content analysis.

2.1.1 Content Analysis

Content analysis is the critical and objective review of the published or printed facts, figures, opinions, observations and generalizations in the light of its content value (Wilkinson 1952: 16 cited in Aminuzzaman, 2011a: 54). Such analysis, among others, attempts to describe trends in communication content, trace the development of scholarship and portray attitudes, interests and values of population groups (Aminuzzaman, 2011a: 55). Secondary literature on the concept, legislations and different issues of local governance, researches conducted on the Upazila Parishads of the past and present, and studies on administrative, cultural and political aspects in relation to Upazila Parishads incorporate content analysis for this research. Books, journals, CDs, newspaper articles and websites of well known organizations were consulted for conducting the analysis. In fact, content analysis provides a better understanding of the research question and helps development of an analytical framework, which are discussed in the subsequent chapters.

2.1.2 Self Administered Questionnaire

Major part of the primary data used in addressing the research question comes from the UNOs. Since the UNOs are posted at the upazila level, the best way to collect data from them was through self administered questionnaire. It allowed the UNOs to fill up the questionnaire without the presence of the researcher. In the first place, a draft questionnaire for the UNOs was prepared and put to *pre-testing*. A number of limitations were identified as it was administered to five current and former UNOs. The limitations were ironed out in the finalized version of the questionnaire. The final questionnaire, as seen in **appendix I**, was prepared following several *principles*. First, it ensured confidentiality of the respondents. As the respondents are government officials, they were unlikely to talk about the internal dynamics of the UZPs or the limitations of government policies. For this reason the questionnaire did not ask for their name or exact place of posting. Secondly, the questionnaire was made as short as possible and it included mainly close ended questions. Only three open ended questions were included so as to make the questionnaire convenient for the respondents for filling up. Thirdly, two versions of the questionnaire, one in Bangla and the other in English, were used. Potential respondents were to be supplied with the version of their choice. Fourthly, the questionnaire carries a brief description of its purpose and the particulars of the researcher. This was done in order to gain confidence of the respondents that the obtained data would be used for academic purposes only. Finally, the potential respondents who chose to receive the questionnaire through postal services were supplied with return envelopes so that they found it convenient to return.

Officers of BCS (Administration) cadre who had been working as UNOs for at least four months and had the experience of being present in at least three meetings of the UZP were deemed to be *qualified respondents*. In that sense the *target population* was less than 445¹¹. *Purposive sampling method* was adopted in selecting the respondents. In this method the researcher tries to make the sample as representative as possible (Aminuzzaman, 2011a: 108). The researcher purposely chooses persons who possess some appropriate characteristics required of the sample members and are easily available (Neaz Ahmed, 2010: 99).

¹¹ As of 11 March, 2012, 445 upazilas had officials posted as UNOs (MOPA, 2012). Apparently the rest of the upazilas had the UNOs of some adjacent upazilas serving as in charges. Among the 445 officials everyone did not have at least four months of experience as UNO. Statistics on service length as UNO, however, is not available.

The *sample size* of the questionnaire survey was 33. Initially a total of 50 UNOs were contacted over phone by the researcher. They were appraised of the research and on being assured of their cooperation, a questionnaire was sent to each of them either through e-mail or postal service or both as per their wishes. These potential 50 respondents were selected as per the convenience of the researcher after being assured of their status as qualified respondents for this research. However, after taking the non responses into account a further 15 respondents were selected in the same way, contacted over the phone and questionnaires were mailed to them. Finally, complete response was received from 33. Out of these 33 responses 14 were received through e mails and the rest through the postal service. Responses received within the one month of sending the questionnaire could be considered for analysis.

Pursuing the objectives of purposive sampling the chosen sample of 33 was made more or less *representative* of the population in terms of three criteria: division-wise representation of the upazilas, remoteness of the upazilas compared to the district headquarters and the service length of the respondents as UNO. In terms of place of posting 8 of the respondents are from Dhaka division, 10 from Chittagong, 4 each from Rajshahi and Khulna, 2 each from Sylhet and Rangpur and 3 from Barisal. Among the 33 respondents, 3 are posted in the district headquarters, 25 are posted at an upazila deemed by themselves as easily accessible from district headquarters and the rest 5 are posted in upazilas, as they feel, remotely accessible from headquarters. In terms of experience, 24 had the experience of less than one year as UNO, 5 had more than one but less than two years of such experience while the rest 4 has two or more years of experience.

2.1.3 Structured Interviews

The researcher personally went to two upazilas – Netrokona Sadar of Netrokona and Companigonj of Sylhet and interviewed 12 persons in total. Out of the 12 interviewees 7 were elected representatives and 5 were government officials. Elected representatives include 2 Upazila Parishad Chairmen, 2 Vice Chairmen, 1 female Vice Chairman and 2 Union Parishad Chairmen. On the other hand, the 5 government officials interviewed include 1 Deputy Commissioner (in charge), 2 UNOs and 2 Upazila Engineers. The respondents were selected on the basis of their availability and willingness to respond. The interviews were conducted in order to verify and supplement the information received from the questionnaire survey.

At a later stage the researcher conducted structured interviews of three more Union Parishad Chairmen of Austagram upazila of Kishoregonj district. There were a couple of reasons for having a second phase of interviews. First, all of the seven elected representatives interviewed so far were known to be associated with the ruling party. The three newly chosen respondents were known to be associated with opposition political parties¹². They were expected to bring in new insights about the role of UNO. Secondly, Austagram is a very remote upazila, the local conditions of which are likely to be different from the other two.

Thus, a total of 10 elected representatives were selected for structured interview as seen in **table 2.1**. Among these 10 interviewees 1 had the experience of serving as Upazila Parishad Chairman in the past while 3 of the Union Parishad Chairmen had the experience of serving in the same position in the previous term. The rest were serving as elected representatives for the first time.

Table 2.1: Profile of the respondents for structured interview

Category of Respondents	Designation of Respondents	Number
Elected representatives	UZP Chairman	2
	Vice Chairman	2
	Female Vice Chairman	1
	UP Chairman	5
Government officials at the Upazila level	UNO	2
	Upazila Engineer	2
Government official at the district level	Deputy Commissioner (in charge)	1

The structured interviews were to serve three important purposes. First of all, the interviews allowed the evaluation of the role of UNO from the perspectives of elected representatives, upazila level officials and the supervisory authority at the district level. Secondly, it was expected that the qualitative data obtained from the respondents other than the UNOs would help obtain a more or less balanced view about the role of the latter. Thirdly, the three

¹² The candidates of the local government elections in Bangladesh, as per law, are to contest without any party nomination. However, in reality almost all of the elected representatives of the UZP in the three selected upazilas were found to have some affiliation with one political party or another.

upazilas where the respondents were chosen from, have diverse demographic, geographical and administrative settings as seen in **table 2.2**. Netrokona Sadar upazila surrounds the district headquarters. Companigonj is located at a short distance from the district headquarters at Sylhet while Austagram is a remote upazila of Kishoregonj district. It was expected that the variation of the role of UNO with the workplace, if any, would be reflected. Finally, the two UNOs interviewed were outside the sample of 33 respondents of the questionnaire survey. They were expected to supplement and crosscheck the information received from the self administered questionnaire. Questionnaires for the interviews are furnished in **appendices II, III and IV**.

Table 2.2: Profiles of the three upzilas where from the interview respondents have been selected

Criteria	Netrokona Sadar, Netrokona	Companigonj, Sylhet	Austagram, Kishoregonj
Area (Sq. km)	326.67	278	300
Population	273,000	114,000	146,000
Number of UPs	12	6	8
Number of villages	344	131	173
Distance from district HQ	Surrounds district HQ	Easily accessible from district HQ	Remote from district HQ
Landscape	Mainly agricultural land. People are largely dependent on agriculture.	Mainly agricultural land. Also locates a quarry, which concerns livelihood of many people.	Low lying land, which remains under water for major part of the year. The land yields only one crop a year.

Sources: BBS (2011); Banglapedia (2004) and Primary

Note: Population data are of the year 2001. Area and population figures of Netrokona Sadar upazila exclude Netrokona Paurasava area. Data on the number of UPs, distance from district HQ and landscape have been collected from primary sources.

2.1.4 Observations

Non participant observation was not a deliberately chosen research method for this particular research. However, some points were observed during the conversation of the researcher with the potential respondents of the questionnaire survey, which were considered in the final analysis. Moreover, some observations of the researcher during the visit to Netrokona Sadar upazila and Companigonj upazila of Sylhet district have also been taken into consideration.

2.2 Reliability and Validity

Reliability is the extent to which a measurement procedure yields the same answer however and whenever it is carried out (Miller, 1986: 19 cited in Ehsan, 2008: 12). In other words, a measurement scale that provides consistent results over time is reliable (McDaniel and Gates, 2002: 295). On the other hand, *validity* is the degree to which the allotted instruments convincingly measure, explore or describe the phenomenon in hand (Judd, Smith and Kidder, 1991: 29 cited in Ehsan, 2008: 12). It addresses the issue of whether the researcher was trying to measure what was actually measured (McDaniel and Gates, 2002: 299). Given the scope of the research, effort was made to ensure as much reliable and valid results as possible.

The qualifying criteria for the potential respondents of the self administered questionnaire was set in a way that the actual respondents produce more or less reliable data. All the respondents have at least six years of service experience and at least four months of working experience as UNO. It ensured that the respondents' knowledge and perception about the UZPs did not vary widely. Secondly, the sample was purposively made representative on two counts. It took the less experienced as well as the more experienced UNOs as respondents. It also chose the UNOs from remote as well as easily accessible upazilas. Besides, the sample represents all the seven divisions. However, the ratio of experienced and less experienced UNOs in the actual population is unknown and therefore marked variation in the mix of two in any future sample is likely to produce different results. On the other hand, the sample of 10 elected representatives is not representative enough as they there are wide variations in their education level, socio economic status and experience in serving elected bodies. Thirdly, the results refer to a particular context. Results might differ if there is any major change in UZP legislations including changes in privileges and responsibilities of the elected representatives or the UNO. Even a change in the list of UNO's retained and regulatory duties might bring in

different results. Besides, a change in the political scenario, the pre-election context for instance, might change the role of UNO in the planning and implementation.

The major challenge in ensuring validity of the findings was to guard against the personal biases of the respondents. To that end in view no direct question was posed to the UNOs about their relation with the elected representatives. Besides, there was no direct question to the UNOs asking them whether their role has any influence on the quality of planning and implementation. Secondly, the responses of the UNOs were crosschecked with those of the elected representatives and the other government officials. Thirdly, three open ended questions were added in the questionnaire for the UNOs so as to find out any legal, political, institutional or operational constraints that might not have been covered by the close ended questions. Nonetheless, the validity of the results might be compromised by the fact that the UNOs are involved in development related or social safety net programmes similar to those covered by the block grants to the UZPs. Although such programmes are outside the jurisdiction of the UZP, the elected representatives of UZP are involved in those. It is likely that UNO's experience in dealing with those programmes, Test Relief or Food for Work, for instance, might influence their response about block grant supported projects.

2.3 Scales of Measurement and the Analysis Techniques

The data obtained from the close ended questions of the questionnaire for the UNOs belong to the nominal and ordinal scales of measurement. However, the discussion of the next higher level of scale, namely interval scale, is also pertinent for analysis. *Nominal scales* partitions data into mutually exclusive categories. The numbers assigned to the variables have no mathematical meaning beyond describing the characteristic or attribute under consideration. The questions with only *yes* or *no* answers generate nominal data. Use of statistics in case of nominal data is limited. As for example, percentage is used to analyze such category of data. *Ordinal scales*, on the other hand, strictly indicate rank order. The numbers do not indicate absolute quantities, nor do they imply that the intervals between the numbers are equal. Data obtained from the answers to the questions where some statements were assessed on a five point scale with two extreme points defined, belong to the ordinal category. Use of statistics in this case as well is limited. As for example, correlation tests can be used to analyze ordinal data. In case of interval scales numbers are scaled at equal distances, but there is no absolute zero point. Such scales are amenable to computation of arithmetic operations like arithmetic

means (Aminuzzaman, 2011a: 138-139; McDaniel and Gates, 2002: 291-292). In case of the given research arithmetic means were computed from the data obtained from the 5 point scales on the assumption that the intervals between any of the two adjacent points are equal.

The analysis of the ordinal data involves the use of a measure of association, that is, ***Pearson's correlation coefficient (r)***. This coefficient is used to describe the relationships or associations between variables. It provides the direction of relationship, either positive or negative, and the intensity of relationship, ranging from (-1 .0) to (+1.0). When two variables move in the same direction they are considered to have a positive relationship. On the other hand, if two variables move in the opposite directions they are considered to have a negative or inverse relationship. The sign of the coefficient represents the direction of the relationship. The value of the coefficient describes the strength of the relationship. The closer it gets to 1.0, whether positive or negative, the stronger the relationship. In general correlations of .01 to .30 are considered small, correlations of .30 to .70 are considered moderate, correlations of .70 to .90 are considered large and correlations of .90 to 1.00 are considered very large (Aminuzzaman, 2011a: 149).

The analysis of ordinal data has also involved some simplification technique. The questionnaire for the UNOs had a series of close ended questions where the respondents were asked to evaluate a particular statement on a 5 point scale, of which the two extreme end points were defined. As for example, some of the scales were as follows.

Not applicable at all =1 to Always applicable =5, Not at all =1 to Very much =5, Least influential =1 to Most influential =5

For convenience of analysis sum of answers 1 and 2 were banded together and defined as “Disagreement”, “Non influential” etc. On the other hand, sum of answers 4 and 5 were banded together and defined as “Agreement” or “Influential” etc. Answers 3 were defined as “Undecided.” The results were expressed in terms of percentages. This was done on the basis of an assumption that the respondents choosing 1 or 2, or on the other end, 4 or 5, took a position, which make them stand out from the ones choosing 3, indicating an undecided state of mind.

2.4 Limitations of the Research

The role of UNO has been assessed on the basis of opinions of 33 UNOs and 10 elected representatives. Despite the fact that quantitative analysis could be conducted on the primary data collected from the UNOs, no such analysis was possible on the basis of the data collected from the few of elected representatives. Responses of the elected representatives were likely to vary in accordance with their political orientation, political experiences, educational and professional background and so on. Therefore, selection of varied categories and increased number of such respondents would have given a more balanced assessment of the role of UNOs. However, time and budgetary constraints didn't permit inclusion of an increased number of elected representatives in the primary data collection process.

The total number of respondents of the questionnaire survey is 33. It was likely that the responses might be varying with the service experiences of the respondents and also with their place of work. However, there is insufficient number of respondents with more than one year of service experience as UNO. Likewise, there is insufficient number of respondents whose place of work is not easily accessible from district headquarters. Therefore, the variation of UNO's role with these two factors, if any, could not be assessed.

The discussion on research methods ends here. The following chapter gives an overview of the Upazila Parishad and the provisions of block grants. Information provided in the chapter is drawn from content analysis.

3.0 UPAZILA PARISHAD AND BLOCK GRANTS: AN OVERVIEW

This chapter gives an introduction to the Upazila Parishad and the provisions related to the utilization of block grants. The discussion includes an overview of the historical context under which the local government institutions particularly Upazila Parishad developed. It lists out the legislation through which the UZP is now operational. Then the composition and functions of UZP as an organization and the jurisdictions of the elected representatives have been discussed. A discussion on transferred, retained and regulatory functions identifies some legal loopholes. A brief discussion on the decision making process at the UZP follows. Description of the provisions related to block grants includes the financial issues for the UZP in general, the prescribed way of utilizing the grants and the associated responsibilities of the UNO.

3.1 Historical Background

The history of local government in Bangladesh can be traced back to the British period. However, it was not before the take over by the military regime in Pakistan period when a local government unit at erstwhile thana level was established. This thana level local government organization ultimately came to be known as Upazila. Pattern of governance at this level, nonetheless, failed to take a concrete shape even in Bangladesh period.

3.1.1 British Period

The enactment of the Bengal Village Choukidari Act, 1870 marked the beginning of local governance in the rural areas of Bengal. The Act created a primary unit of local government, called Union, consisting of several villages. The Union was presided over by a five man committee called *Panchyat*. The *Panchyat* was not an elected body. Its members were nominated by the District Magistrate (DM). *Panchyat* was responsible for maintaining law and order in the villages through the *choukidars* (watchmen). It had the power to assess and collect taxes for this purpose.

Bengal Local Self Government Act, 1885 created three tiers of local bodies in rural Bengal: Union Committee for a union, Local Board for a sub-division and District Board for a district. Two thirds of the members of these bodies were elected by informal elections while

the rest were nominated by the government. Union Committee did not have any financial power and it ran parallel with the Panchyat. Union Committee had some municipal functions like education, sanitation and communication. Local Board at the sub-divisional level acted as a coordinating body for the Union Committees. It was chaired by the Sub Divisional Officer (SDO). It did not have any independent authority or source of income. District Board, which had wide financial and executive power, was headed by the DM (Wahhab, 2002: 50-52).

The Bengal Village Self Governance Act, 1919 replaced the three tiers of local governance with two tiers – Union Board and District Board. The two Boards were partially representative as two thirds of the members were elected. Union Board replaced the Choukidari Panchyats and Union Committees. It had the power to raise taxes. Its President and Vice President were elected by the members from among themselves (Siddiquee, 1997: 75-76).

As per the recommendations of the Decentralization Commission in 1907, *Circles*, each consisting of two or three thanas¹³, were introduced in the selected sub-divisions of Bengal in 1911. The *Circle* was headed by the Circle Officer (CO) who was a junior member of the civil service. The main function of CO was to guide the local bodies at the union level. The Circle system became universal in Bengal and remained operational till 1961 when thana was converted into a development circle (Wahhab, 2002: 52).

3.1.2 Pakistan Period

In 1959 the military government of General Ayub Khan introduced four tiers of administration in the rural areas under the Basic Democracy framework. These were Divisional Council, District Council, Thana Council and Union Council. Among them only Union council was representative in nature. All other Councils were headed by the members of the Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP). Introduction of Thana Council was an important innovation of Basic Democracy policy. Thana, which was being used a police outpost so far, was converted into a development circle in 1961. Establishment of Thana Training and Development Centre (TDCC) in 1963 provided an establishment, which brought the officers

¹³ Thana refers to a unit of police administration. In 1792 the districts were divided into a number of police jurisdictions called thana. Initially thana was purely a police jurisdiction headed by a junior police officer namely the Officer-in-Charge (OC). With the introduction of Circle system after 1961 thana became the main centre of development activities (Banglapedia, 2004).

of nation building departments into one campus. The officers were made members of the Thana Council. As the Vice Chairman of the Thana Council Circle Officer (Dev.) was made responsible for coordination of these government departments and the Union Councils. As coordinator of development activities CO (Dev.) did not have any direct control over the other thana level officers. He could only cajole, persuade and influence them (Wahhab, 2002: 56-57; Nizam Ahmed, 2009: 38-40).

3.1.3 Bangladesh Period

After the independence in 1971 the first regime (1971-1975) abolished all the existing local government bodies and introduced three tiers of local government system. Union Panchyat replaced Union Councils, which consisted of members nominated by the government. Thana Council was replaced by Thana Development Committee (TDC), which consisted of officers of different nation building departments with CO (Dev.) as the administrative head. In 1973 Union Panchyat was renamed as Union Parishad (UP). Chairman, Vice Chairman and other members of the UP were elected by an election held in 1973. Other bodies continued to run under appointed officials.

The second regime (1975-1981) continued with almost a similar pattern of local government setup of three tiers, namely Union Parishad, Thana Parishad and District Parishad. Union Parishad (UP) was made entirely representative with a Chairman and nine members. The post of Vice Chairman was abolished. Elections to the UPs were held in 1977. Thana Parishad matched the Thana Council of Basic Democracy format. SDO continued to be its Chairman while CO (Dev.) acted as Vice Chairman. However, in 1978 Thana Development Committees (TDC)s were created parallel to the Thana Parishads. Chairmen of the UPs were made ex-officio members and one of them used to get elected by themselves as the Chairman. Government made special allocations to the TDCs to finance development activities undertaken by it. However, TDC had to depend on Thana Parishad for getting its programme approved (Siddiquee, 1997: 84-89; Nizam Ahmed, 2009: 50-51).

The third regime (1982-1990) introduced Upazila Parishad (UZP) in the place of Thana Parishad. The erstwhile Thana was renamed as Upazila in 1982 (UNDP, 2010: 19). This was the first time that an elected office replaced bureaucracy at local level. Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), a member of the civil service, was made Chief Executive Officer of the UZP. UNO as well as other government officials were made accountable to the elected Chairman.

The first elections of the UZPs were held in 1985. However, the UZPs became operational after the promulgation of an Ordinance in 1982. UNOs served as acting Chairman until the takeover by the elected Chairmen in 1985. The first UZPs could not complete its tenure. The second elections to the UZPs were held in 1990. However, Upazila Parishad was dissolved by the next regime (1991-1996) in 1991 citing gross mismanagement and corruption (Panday and Asaduzzaman, 2011: 158-160). Soon after its dissolution Upazila was renamed as Thana and after the enactment of Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 Thana was once again renamed as Upazila (UNDP, 2010: 19). Designation of UNO also changed from UNO to Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) and again back to UNO in 1998. From 1991 to 2008 Thana / Upazila Development Coordination Committee (TDCC / UDCC) remained functional as a loose coordinating unit. TNO / UNO served as the member secretary while one among the UP Chairmen served as Chairman on rotational basis. Although the next regime (1996-2001) reintroduced Upazila Parishad, no elections were held in its tenure. The caretaker regime (2007-2008) abolished the Act of 1998 and introduced Local Government (Upazila Parishad) Ordinance, 2008 and thereby set up the background for holding elections to the UZPs. The elections were held at the beginning of the current regime in 2009.

While UZP failed to take a concrete shape as a local government institution in rural areas, Union Parishads always remained representative. Elections to the UPs were held almost regularly. After the first two elections in 1973 and 1977, subsequent elections were held in 1983-84, 1988, 1992, 1997, 2003 and lastly in 2011¹⁴ (Asaduzzaman, 2009: 98). It seems that the policymakers did not look at the UPs with hostility as they did in case of UZPs. In fact, UZPs, it may be argued, did not put up much of threat to the narrow interests of the ruling class.

3.1.4 Policy Changes and the Implications

Aminuzzaman (2011: 199) observes that policies relating to local government in Bangladesh kept changing with the changes of government. In general the motive behind such changes was to create loyalty and to legitimize and broaden the base of the power holders in the government. Consequently, the local government bodies, it has been further observed, failed to act as effective tiers of government. Similar conclusions can be drawn by looking at the checkered history of UZPs. It is seen from the historical trends that there has been no

¹⁴ The eighth elections to the Union Parishads of Bangladesh were held in two phases from 29 March to 3 April 2011 and from 31 May to 5 July 2011.

consistent pattern of local government structure at the Upazila or Thana level. This particular tier of administration has mostly remained under the control of bureaucracy. Thus, UZP lacks the experience, which is required for running its day to day affairs. Compared to UZPs, Union Parishads are the oldest local government institutions of the country with wide acceptability to the rural community (CPD, 2003: 280). On the other hand, jurisdiction and role of the official representing the government at the upazila level kept changing with changes in policy. Local political leaders and the people have seen frequent rise and fall in the influence of UNO in running the upazila affairs. For the UNOs themselves, it may be argued, adaptation with the working environment became difficult.

3.2 Constitutional Provisions and Evolvement of UZP

Even after the emergence of Bangladesh the provisions of local government in the Constitution have not remained the same since its adoption. As seen in **Appendix V**, articles 59 and 60, which carry the essence of local governance, have not been a constant feature of the Constitution. Article 11 also partly and indirectly embodies the concept of local governance. Although article 9 in the original Constitution, adopted on November 4, 1972, did not have any provisions related to local government, the fifth amendment incorporated something as such, which was later on dropped through the 15th amendment. Thus, it is seen that the policymakers have never been able to maintain a consensus on the necessity and form of local government institutions for Bangladesh.

In the Constitution Local Government has been described as part of Executive organ of the State alongside the President, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, the Defense Services and the Attorney General (GOB, 2011). However, the Constitutional provisions of Local Government have left it to the lawmakers to determine the details. Structure, functions and tiers of Local Government are to be determined by the Parliament (M. Islam, 2008: 332). Although the Constitution provides for Local Government in every “administrative unit” of the Republic, the task of defining “administrative unit” has largely been left to the Parliament. Article 152(1) identifies a district or any other area to be decided by the Parliament as “administrative unit” for the fulfillment of the provisions of Article 59 and 60 (T. Ahmed, 1999: 50). Moreover, it has been pointed out that Bengali and English versions of the Constitution regarding the provisions of local government conflict with each other. The English version mentioned “local government” and “local government institutions” while the

Bengali version interpreted them as “shtaaniyo shashon” (local administration) and “shtaaniyo shashon protisthan” (local administrative institutions) respectively. Such conflicting interpretation, it has been argued, is a persistent threat for development of sound policies for local governance in Bangladesh (M.M. Khan, 2011: 3). Thus, until the declaration of Upazila as an administrative unit through the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 the government was not obliged to set up local government unit at this level.

3.3 Governing Legislations

Elections to the currently installed Upazila Parishads were held under the Local Government (Upazila Parishad) Ordinance, 2008. The Ordinance declared the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 null and void. However, the Ordinance lapsed as the ninth and current Jatiyo Sangsad did not pass it. Rather the Sangsad reinstated the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 and declared the Ordinance of 2008 null and void. Nonetheless, the UZPs and their activities under the Ordinance of 2008 were given legitimacy in the reinstated Act. Thus, the **Upazila Parishad Act, 1998** (henceforth referred to as the Act) is currently the key legislation governing the affairs of UZPs. The Act has been amended twice since its reinstatement.

As per section 63 of the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 the government is authorized to enact **Rules** in order to attain the objectives of the former. The Rules may cover the authority and functions of the Chairman, Vice Chairmen and the Members, procedures for implementation of Parishad activities, maintenance of funds, signing contracts on behalf of the UZP etc. Among the Rules enacted so far, three of those relate to the implementation of block grant supported development projects. *Upazila Parishader Karjokrom Bastobayon Bidhimala, 2010* (henceforth referred to as the Implementation Rules, 2010) details out the procedure for holding UZP meetings and implementation of its decisions. *Upazila Parishader Chairman, Vice Chairmen (Dayitto, Kartabya O Arthik Subidha) Bidhimala, 2010* (henceforth referred to as Duties and Responsibilities Rules, 2010) specifies the responsibilities and duties of Chairman, Vice Chairman and female Vice Chairman of UZP. *Upazila Parishad (Chukti Sompadon) Bidhimala, 2010* (henceforth referred to as Contract Signing Rules, 2010) discusses the procedure for invitation and approval of tenders for procurement of any goods and services for implementation of any work under the UZP.

3.4 Composition, Functions and Manpower of Upazila Parishad

As per the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998, the UZP is composed of an elected Chairman and two Vice Chairmen, one of whom is elected out of women only candidates. The Chairman and Vice Chairmen are directly elected by the voters of the concerned upazila. Chairman of every Union Parishad, located within the periphery of the upazila, are ex-officio members of the UZP. Similarly the Mayor of any Paurasava, located within the periphery of the upazila also is regarded as ex-officio member. Furthermore, the UZP also incorporates specified number of female members indirectly elected from the reserved seats.

As per section 6 (4) of the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 a number equivalent to one third of the total number of Union Parishads and Paurasavas inside the periphery of a particular upazila is to be reserved for women as members in the UZP. They are to be elected from the female Members and Councilors of those Union Parishads and Paurasavas by themselves. However, polls to these reserved seats have not been held so far and thereby the UZPs remain incomplete (The Daily Star, 24 December 2011). Nonetheless the UZPs do not lose legality owing to the absence of the reserved female members. As per section 6 (7) of the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 a UZP is deemed legal if elections to 75% of the total seats including those of Chairman and Vice Chairmen are held (GOB, 2010: 6). Thus, banking on this legal provision, the UZPs of the country are running without the members of the reserved seats for women.

Section 28 of the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 makes it mandatory for the *officials* responsible for any subject that could be discussed or settled in the UZP, to be present in the meetings. However, officials are non voting members of UZP and they are entitled to give their opinions, participate in the discussions and assist the UZP in any other way. UNO, as per section 33 of the Act is designated as the Principal Executive Officer. In this capacity UNO is to provide secretarial assistance to the UZP, implement decisions of the UZP and maintain financial discipline (GOB, 2010; GOB 2011b). .

The second schedule of the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 provides a list of 18 *functions* of the UZP. Steffense, Land & Monem (2011) have classified these functions into five categories: planning, budgeting, implementation and coordination; law and order; service delivery; welfare and other. Functions of the first category include long term planning and

implementation of programmes of the departments whose functions have been transferred to the UZP. Regarding law and order the UZP can review the law and order situation and mobilize public opinion against different criminal activities. The UZP is entitled to deliver services in the areas of education, health, water resource management, agriculture, livestock and fisheries, rural infrastructure, cooperatives and income generation. Block grants received from the government can largely be spent in these areas. UZP has been entitled to undertake programmes related to women and children, youth, sports and cultural activities. Lastly, the government retains the right to assign any other function to the UZP (GOB, 2010). Detailed list of the functions of UZP has been placed in **Appendix VI**. Furthermore, Implementation Rules, 2010 authorizes the UZP to review the activities of *regulatory departments* on quarterly basis. However, it is not known as to which departments are to be called the *regulatory* ones.

Interestingly the Table of Organization and Equipment for the UZP contains three functions, which are in addition to the list of 18 as mentioned above. The list of three has been placed in **Appendix VII**. The most notable among these is the coordination of all activities related to disaster management. Nonetheless, there has not been any amendment to the Act so far for adding new items to the list of functions for the UZP. Nor there has been any communication from the Local Government Division on adding new responsibilities for UZP.

Except for the officials and staff involved in dealing with the transferred subjects UZP has a small number of *staff* of its own. The approved Table of Organization and Equipment includes one Typist cum Computer Operator, two Members of Lower Subordinate Services (MLSS)¹⁵ and one Driver. In addition, 10 UZPs, located in the low lying areas, are also assigned one Operator of Water Vessel each (Local Govt. Division, 2011). The latest amendment to the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 in December 2011 added section 34(3), which created a post of Assistant Accounts Officer for each UZP, who is to be employed by the Government. However, the details of the responsibilities of this post are not known yet (GOB, 2011b).

¹⁵ A Member of the Lower Subordinate Services is assigned to do some menial works like cleaning of furniture, serving refreshments, carrying files from one desk to another etc.

3.5 Transferred, Retained and Regulatory Functions

After the installation of the current UZP, some of the functions of 18 upazila level offices have been transferred to the UZP. These 18 offices have their allegiances to 12 ministries or divisions of the government. Functions that have been placed under the jurisdiction of the UZP are known as *transferred functions*. **Appendix VIII** gives a list of 18 Officers who head the upazila level offices having transferred functions. Obviously, these 18 offices still have some other functions that have not been transferred to the UZP in this way. These are known as *retained and regulatory functions*. *Charter of Duties* (GOB, 2010: 59-78, GOB, 2011b) lists out functions of 13 out of those 18 Officers and also those of their subordinate employees. As the Charter was issued in 2010 and has not been updated so far, it does not include the functions of five more upazila level officers, part of whose functions have newly been transferred to UZP by the latest amendment in December 2011. Thus, it is not known so far what constitutes the transferred functions of Upazila Rural Development Officer, Upazila Cooperative Officer, Upazila Secondary Education Officer and Upazila level officers of Department of Environment and Bangladesh Forest Department.

Ideally there should have been two separate lists, one of transferred functions and the other of retained and regulatory functions, for each of the upazila level officials. In reality however, the *Charter of Duties* provides a single list of responsibilities for each of the officials and their subordinates. In a subsequent circular it was stated that those are to be regarded as the “subjects transferred by the government to the Upazila Parishad” (Local Govt. Division, 2010). Nevertheless, there are functions in the lists, which are essentially retained or regulatory in nature. A sample list of such functions mentioned in the *Charter of Duties* and the reasons for considering them as retained or regulatory in nature have been furnished in **Appendix IX**. Apparently, the lists, except for that of the UNO, contain a mix of transferred, regulatory and retained responsibilities of the concerned officials, not just the transferred ones only. *Secondly*, the latest amendment of December 2011 placed the upazila level officers of the Department of Environment and the Bangladesh Forest Department and their functions to the UZP. However, it is found that Department of Environment does not have its representation up to upazila level so far (DOE, 2012). Moreover, Bangladesh Forest Department organizes its field level units under Forest Management Wing and Social Forestry Wing, none of whom have their representation up to upazila level (Bangladesh Forest Department, 2012). *Finally*, there are offices at the upazila level that do not have any

function transferred to the UZP. Although the Local Government (Upazila Parishad and Upazila Administration and Reorganization) Ordinance, 1982 provided a list of such functions, as seen in **Appendix X**, no such list is available in the legislations applicable for currently installed UZPs. Some of the upazila level officials like Assistant Commissioner (Land), Officer(s) in Charge of the concerned thana(s), Upazila Food Controller, Upazila Election Officer, Upazila Ansar and VDP Officer and the Sub Registrar do not have any of their functions transferred to the UZP.

As the representative of the Government UNO has a number of retained and regulatory functions. Such functions include duties related to executive magistracy, land management, recovery of public demands, law and order, protocol, public examinations, elections, national statistics, inspection of educational institutions and supervision of subordinate officials. On the other hand, the retained functions of the other transferred departments may incorporate a whole range of development activities as those include “the running of development activities for achieving the objectives of the national government” (GOB, 2010: 77). Such provision allows the government to carry out development programmes at the upazila level using the manpower and logistics of the transferred departments where the UZP remains bypassed. Apparently this has created confusion and dissatisfaction among the elected representatives of the UZP. As per media reports some Upazila Parishad Chairmen alleged that a number of development activities are being run in their respective Upazilas by the UNO-led committees, formed by the concerned ministries (The Daily Star, 3 December 2011). However, it has been reported that the national level committee for upazila affairs decided to reorganize the upazila level committees, except for those dealing with financial and technical matters, assigning the Chairmanship to the UZP Chairman. However, the decisions from the concerned Ministries or Divisions are still pending (The Daily Manbuzamin, 24 December 2011).

3.6 Jurisdictions of Elected Representatives

As per the Duties and Responsibilities Rules, 2010 the *Chairman* is entitled to administer routine administrative works, chair every meeting of the Parishad and take measures for implementation of decisions, supervise and discipline the officers and staff of the UZP, sign contracts on behalf of the UZP and issue licenses and permits. Chairman is also permitted to supervise and monitor the responsibilities of Vice Chairmen. He or she is entitled to write

Annual Performance Report (APR)¹⁶ of the officials responsible for transferred subjects. Besides, all files and documents related to transferred subjects are to be placed before the Chairman for approval through the UNO (GOB, 2010).

As per the Duties and Responsibilities Rules, 2010 the *Vice Chairman* is entitled to preside over the meetings of a number of standing committees or serve as acting Chairman subject to the relevant provisions of the Act. He is responsible for placing proposals or making recommendations related to education, inter union road building and maintenance, small irrigation projects, crime prevention, environment, youth and sports and agriculture and forestry before the UZP. The *female Vice Chairman* is also entitled to preside over meetings of a number of standing committees or serve as acting Chairman subject to the provisions of the Act. She is responsible for placing proposals or making recommendations on health, nutrition, family planning, maternal health, mother and child welfare, water supply and sanitation, fisheries and livestock, small and cottage industry, self employment and poverty alleviation, preventive measures against repression of women and children, dowry and child marriage, supervision of cooperatives and voluntary organizations, social welfare and philanthropic activities (ibid). However, none of the Vice Chairmen have any responsibility regarding filing or documentations. Nor do they have any control over the officers or staff of the UZP or the transferred departments.

In addition to all these functions the government retains the right to assign any function to the Chairman, Vice Chairman or female Vice Chairman subject to provisions of the Act. In fact, the government has involved the elected representatives of the UZP in a number of committees related to the operations of different social safety net programmes as seen in **Appendix XI**.

3.7 Process of Disposal of Business

Implementation Rules, 2010 detail out the way of disposing business by the UZP. A business is to be disposed of either in the UZP meeting or in any meeting of the standing committees. Certain preconditions are to be fulfilled prior to holding the meetings. Decisions are to be taken in a specified way. Finally, a prescribed way of documentation is to be followed.

¹⁶ Although the law authorizes the UZP Chairman to write the Annual Performance Reports of the officials of the transferred departments, it is not known so far whether or how these reports are to be accounted for in assessing the overall performance of the officials. Currently, the officials are assessed by their superior authority at the district level through the Annual Confidential Reports only.

3.7.1 Scope of Parishad Meetings

Rule 5 of the Implementation Rules, 2010 identifies five categories of subjects that are to be disposed of on a mandatory basis in the UZP meetings. These categories are: financial, development related, operational, coordinative and miscellaneous. All subjects related to Parishad funds, budgets, statement of income and expenditure, approval decisions relating to working quality and estimates, investment of UZP funds and audit matters pertain to the *financial matters* that must be disposed of in UZP meetings. *Development related* subjects that may come into Parishad agenda include approval of development projects or proposals and estimates, preparing and updating of yearly development plan, five year plan and plan book, monthly review and monitoring of development works and the development projects transferred to the UZP by the government. *Operational matters* to be included in the agenda are the ones related to the officers and staff of the UZP or the transferred departments and the discussion on the recommendations of the standing committees and those of the Vice Chairmen. Review of performance of transferred departments, activities of NGOs and those of the regulatory departments of the government are the *coordinative* subjects that are to be settled in the UZP meetings. Besides, any subject taken into consideration by the UZP for implementation of the Act is to be placed before it. However, any *other activity* of the UZP, which is not included in the list of five categories as stated above, can be disposed of in the meetings of the UZP or in any of the standing committees (GOB, 2010).

3.7.2 Preconditions for Parishad Meetings

According to the Implementation Rules, 2010 the UZP meetings should be held at least once in a month. For general meetings prior notice should be issued at least seven days before the scheduled date. Copy of the notice should be sent to the concerned MP and the DC. Necessary papers for the meeting must be sent to the members at least 72 hours before the scheduled date. Preparation of working paper is a must as no issue outside it can be raised in the meeting. Nonetheless, it is not known who is responsible for and how the agenda for the meeting is to be decided. Except for adjourned meetings, quorum will require the presence of at least half of the members. The meeting also requires the presence of the Heads of all the transferred departments (ibid).

3.7.3 Decision Making Process

The meeting is to start with the review of the resolution of the last meeting. No new issue can be raised or decision taken when the said resolution is under consideration. As far as

practicable the UZP will take decisions on the basis of consensus. However, in case of difference of opinions the issue is to be settled on the basis of majority vote. Each member has one vote. However, the Chairman is entitled to a casting vote. If decision cannot be reached on any issue of the agenda then the issue must be placed on the agenda of the next meeting. Files relating to any issue of the transferred subjects should be placed before the Chairman for decision through the UNO who is entitled to give his or her comments or opinions about it (ibid).

3.7.4 Documentation Requirements

The proceedings of the UZP require extensive documentation. UNO, who is responsible for providing secretarial assistance, is to take up the initiatives for such documentations. Before the meeting working paper is to be prepared and notices attached with relevant papers need to be sent to the invitees. During the meeting signing of the attendance register by everyone present is to be ensured. One officer of the UZP is to be assigned to take down the meeting minutes. Besides, note of dissent, if there is any, is to be noted down. After the meeting resolution is to be prepared and approved. The meeting resolutions and other relevant documents should be kept for permanent preservation. Besides, UNO also needs to prepare monitoring report on the implementation of decisions taken by the UZP (ibid). Thus, such requirements for extensive paperwork, it may be argued, raise the importance of bureaucracy to the elected representatives.

3.8 Financial Issues for Upazila Parishad

Almost all of the local government reform efforts of Bangladesh mostly addressed the secondary issues like number and level of tiers, relationship between tiers, distribution of functions among the tiers and the government while substantive or core issues like devolution of authority have been ignored. In this way the issue of resource mobilization, management and utilization remained outside the purview of the reform agenda (CPD, 2001: 13). Salehuddin Ahmed (2006: 55) has argued that a vibrant system of local government could be established when its share of public expenditure approaches around 12% per annum. Nevertheless, the resources allocated to the local government institutions are very limited (Akash 2009 cited in Aminuzzaman, 2011b: 199). It has been observed that a large share of ADP allocation goes to such programmes, which are implemented directly by the ministries and their line agencies. Only a small share of ADP is channeled through block grants to the

local governments. Local government's share in ADP does not exceed 2% (Fox and Menon, 2008: 10).

3.9 Sources of Fund for Upazila Parishad

Sections 35 and 44 of the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 specify nine sources of fund for the UZP. This includes the proceeds from the taxes, fees and other demands as fixed by the UZP. The government can designate the income from leasing out specified markets, water bodies and ferry ghat¹⁷ to contribute to the fund of UZP. The UZP itself is also authorized to impose taxes and fees on business organizations, industries, movie theatres, entertainment programmes and different professions. Besides, UZP is authorized to utilize the income from its properties and the proceeds from its investment. However, the major sources of fund have their origin in the government. The government is authorized to sanction grants to the UZP or to channel its other sources of income (GOB, 2010:14, 17, 27).

According to the Guideline for the Usage of Upazila Parishad Development Fund, UZP fund is to have two parts: Revenue Fund and Development Fund. **Revenue Fund** is to be raised from the house rents, proceeds from taxes and tolls, lease money received from renting market places, 2% of Land Development Tax¹⁸, 1% of Land Transfer Tax¹⁹, income from the properties of the UZP, personal donations, profit from investment and other funds coming from the government or otherwise. On the other hand, **Development Fund** includes revenue surplus - the excess amount received after defraying of revenue expenditures of the UZP. Moreover, block grants under ADP, local donation, funds received for development projects outside the purview of ADP and funds received from any organization for project implementation also come under the category of Development Fund (GOB, 2010: 96).

3.10 Block Grants for Upazila Parishad: An Overview

In the context of the US it has been known that the federal government provides either *categorical grants* or *block grants* to the states and the local governments. Preference for a particular mode of grant by the government reflects a political process. Categorical grants

¹⁷ Ferry ghat refers to a designated place on the bank of a river where the water vessels crossing the river embark and disembark. Ferry ghat area is government property, which is leased out to private concerns by an appropriate body.

¹⁸ Land owners including the private and public owners, are required to pay taxes for land ownership every year to the concerned Assistant Commissioner (Land). This is known as Land Development Tax.

¹⁹ Every act of exchange of land requires registration by the concerned Sub Registrar who performs the task in exchange of a specified amount of tax payable to the government. This is known as Land Transfer Tax.

come up with specific requirements and therefore the local governments do not have much discretion in using those. Such grants are argued to establish federal control leading to the compliance with uniform standards across the local bodies. Block grants, on the other hand, come with lower strings attached. These have been argued to allow the local governments to enjoy increased discretion (H. A. Khan, 1997: 32). In case of UZPs of Bangladesh, however, completely opposite arguments are tendered. According to (CPD, 2001: 15-16), block grants for local governments come up with strict instructions that they must be used in certain sectors as specified by the government. Such pre-determined sector allocation, it has been argued, seriously limits the scope of local level planning and the flexibility of local bodies to use financial resources for satisfying the needs of the community. It has been further argued that it runs contrary to the concept of functional autonomy of local governments.

3.10.1 Necessity of Block Grants

Despite the attachment of strict conditions, block grants may be viewed as a necessity for the UZPs. It has been learned that apart from block grants, other sources of external finance for local government bodies of Bangladesh are far too limited. Furthermore, ambiguities exist in the legal mandate and institutional access of local governments to draw and use external resources. On the other hand, local resources are hardly enough to respond to the growing demand and expectations of the local community (Aminuzzaman, 2012).

3.10.2 Background of Block Grant Allocations

As the Upazila system was introduced in the early 1980s, a set of instructions for utilizing block grants received from ADP was formulated. Even after the abolition of UZP in 1991 block grants to the Thana / Upazila Development Coordination Committees (TDCC / UDCC) continued. Therefore, a new set of instructions came up in 1994 and another in 2004. After the installation of the current UZPs the instructions issued in 2004 was amended in 2010 taking the elected leadership into account (Local Govt. Division, 2004; GOB, 2010:89-106).

3.10.3 Objectives of Block Grant Allocations

The instructions for utilization of block grants outlines a number of objectives, which are to be achieved through the utilization of the grants as instructed. The objectives include ensuring participation of people in local development and administration, utilization of local expertise, implementation of projects of public interest, establishing transparency and

accountability in utilization of public resources and attaining capacity for long term and midterm project planning by the UZP (GOB, 2010: 89-94).

3.10.4 Allocation Criteria and Amount of Grants

Local Government Division of the Government allocates the block grants that it receives under the Annual Development Programme, to the UZPs in two stages. In the *first stage* 15% of the allocation is reserved for construction, reconstruction, repair and maintenance of the Upazila Complex infrastructure, 3% is allocated for training purposes, 2% for contingency situations and the rest 80% is allocated to “general and others” sector. In the *second stage* the allocation for “general and others” sector is divided among the UZPs. A weight of 35% is assigned to population, another 35% to area and the rest 30% is common for all Upazilas. In this way an Upazila with larger area or larger population or both gets an increased share compared to the small sized and less populated ones (GOB, 2010: 96; Local Govt. Division, 2012b).

Local Government Division allocates block grants to the UZPs on quarterly basis. In FY 2011-12, a total of BDT 390 crore²⁰ was distributed among 484 Upazilas and Tejgaon Development Circle²¹ of Dhaka district as shown in **table 3.1**. In the last quarter of 2011-12 one Upazila receives an average of BDT²² 17.32 lakh. In that quarter the maximum amount worth BDT 30.3 lakh²³ went to Shyamnagar Upazila of Satkhira district while the minimum amount worth BDT 13.52 lakh went to Fultala Upazila of Khulna district.

3.11 Process of Utilization of Block Grants

The guideline allows the UZP to undertake some specific types of projects only. Once a particular project is undertaken its implementation will take different paths depending on its size and valuation.

²⁰ 1 crore = 10 million

²¹ Tejgaon Development Circle is an administrative unit inside Dhaka district, which consists of 17 unions and not declared as an upazila. The area is located adjacent to the two city corporations of Dhaka but is not a part of it. The area is administered by a government official designated as Circle Officer (Development).

²² As of 19 July 2012 the exchange rates for 1 USD were equal to BDT 81.75 and 81.77 for buying and selling respectively (Bangladesh Bank, 2012).

²³ 1 lakh = 100,000

Table 3.1: Allocations of ADP block grants at a glance

ADP block grant for FY 2011-12	BDT 390,00,00,000
Allocation for the 4 th Quarter of 2011-12	BDT 84,00,00,000
Number of Upazilas	485*
Average allocation for one Upazila in 4 th Quarter of 2011-12	BDT 17,32,000
Minimum allocation for one Upazila in 4 th Quarter of 2011-12	BDT 13,52,000
Maximum allocation for one Upazila in 4 th Quarter of 2011-12	BDT 30,30,000

* The total grant is allocated among 484 upazilas and Tejgaon Development Circle

Source: Local Govt. Division (2012c)

3.11.1 Prescribed Types of Projects

UZPs have the option of approaching project planning with block grants in two ways. The first option involves undertaking of *programme based development projects*. In this way the entire grant allocation for a particular fiscal year or a major part of it is spent on a specific programme pertaining to a specified category of projects. For instance, the entire yearly allocation can be spent on setting up of sanitary latrines, construction of school infrastructure or improvement of water supply. It is argued that such projects would result in visible and concrete development, ensure quality of work, reduce wastage and contribute toward the improvement of quality of life. The second option for the UZP involves undertaking of projects through *sector wise allocations*. The guideline specifies a maximum and minimum allowable percentage of the total grant for allocation to each of the 10 project sectors as seen in **table 3.2** on the following page.

Table 3.2: Criteria for sector wise allocation of yearly block grant

Sectors	Suggested Allocation	
	Minimum allocation	Maximum allocation
Agriculture and small scale irrigation	10%	15%
Fisheries and livestock	5%	10%
Small and cottage industries	5%	7%
Transportation and communication	15%	25%
Housing and physical planning	5%	7%
Public health	10%	15%
Development of education	10%	15%
Health and social welfare	10%	15%
Sports and culture	5%	10%
Miscellaneous	5%	8%

Source: GOB (2010: 98)

The guideline also furnishes a **negative list** of 22 items, which is to be avoided in selection of projects. Some of the items prevent crossing of jurisdictions like expenditure on retained matters or expenditure in municipal areas and mixing of development fund with national level allocations. Some items refer to revenue expenditures like defraying of salary or allowances, payment of taxes or utility bills and recruitment of employees. Spending on certain types of infrastructures like gates, boundary walls, prayer houses, club or association buildings, tennis ground, cafeteria, restaurant, shopping center and kindergarten schools have been prohibited. Purchase of generator, land, furniture, luxury items, vehicle, computer and accessories have also been prohibited. Moreover, undertaking of income generating projects for UZP and granting of loans to any individual, family or institution have been included in the negative list (GOB, 2010: 106).

3.11.2 Planning and Implementation Stages

Planning and implementation of projects follows a number of stages as shown in **figure 3.1**. The projects that are to be taken by the UZP must be a part of the Upazila Development Plan. Inter union projects or programme based projects are to be prepared by the Upazila Engineer or the concerned Department official, On the other hand, in case of intra union projects the concerned UP Chairman is to seat with the UP members and the local elites and select projects in their presence.

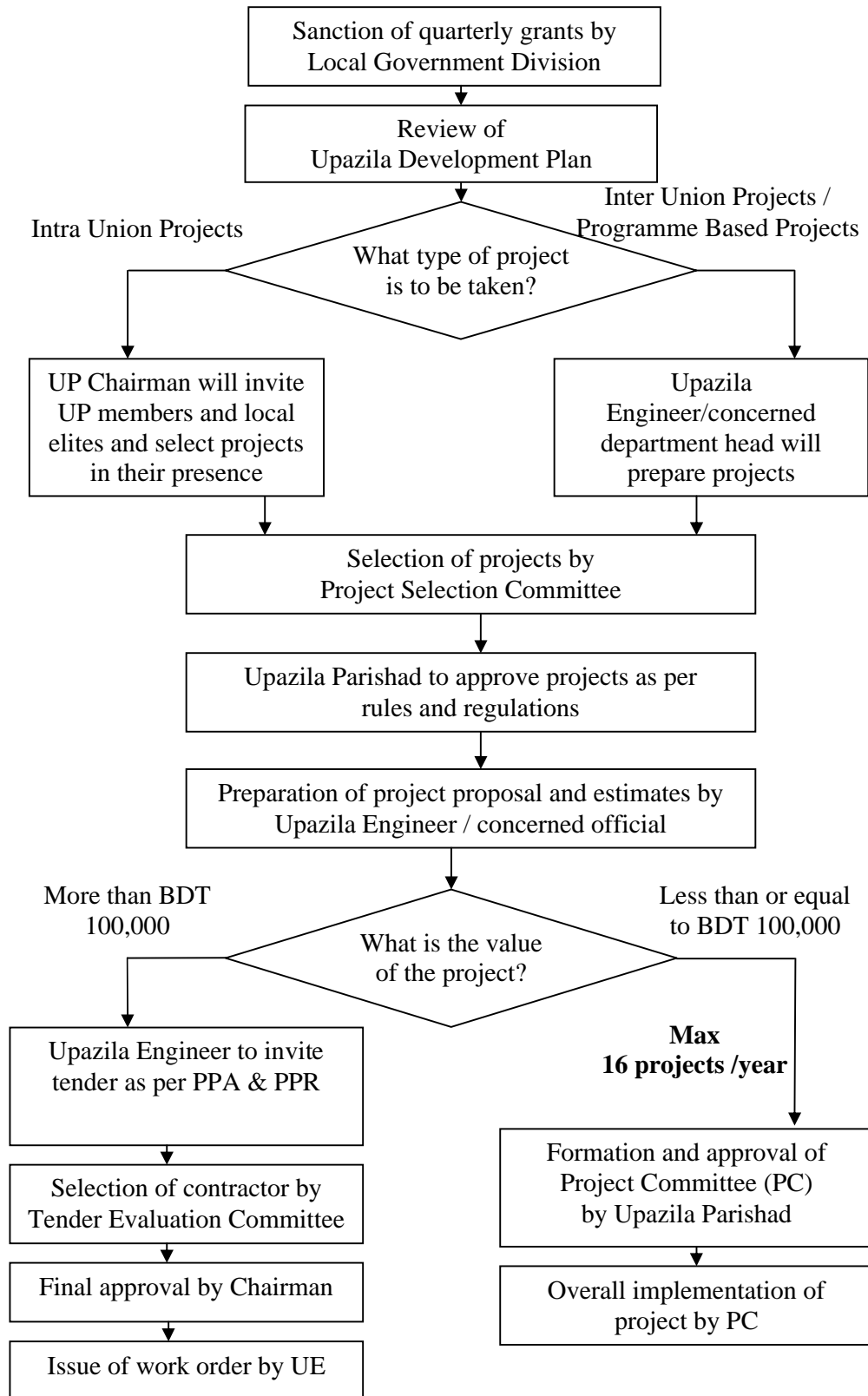
In the next stage the selected projects are placed before a ten member project selection committee headed by the UZP Chairman, which also incorporates the UNO, Upazila Agriculture Officer, Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer, Upazila Livestock Officer, Public Health Engineer, Project Implementation Officer, Upazila Education Officer and the Chairman of the Concerned Union Parishad. Upazila Engineer is to act as the member secretary. Attendance of two third members is required for quorum. The Selection Committee selects projects and places those before the UZP. The final approval authority lies with the UZP, which approves the projects on basis of rules and regulations. Later on Upazila Engineer or the concerned Department official prepares project proposals and project estimates.

Total value of the project determines its implementation authority. For any project valued over BDT 100,000 requires formation of a committee for inviting tender. UNO acts as the Convener of the Committee while Upazila Engineer acts as the member secretary. Provisions of Public Procurement Act, 2006 and Public Procurement Rules, 2008²⁴ are to be followed in selection of the contractor. Upazila Engineer is to be held responsible for proper implementation of the project.

On the other hand, any project worth less than BDT 100,000 is to be implemented by a Project Committee (PC). UZP approves all PCs. Number of members in a committee is limited to 7 to 9. Eligible members for the Project Committee includes Vice Chairmen of UZP, UP Chairmen, concerned female member of the reserved seat, concerned member of the ward, Officer of the concerned Department, school teacher, social worker and other elites. The local elected representative serves as the Chairman of the Committee. The PC is accountable to the UZP for all expenditures. In a particular fiscal year a maximum of 16 projects can be implemented by the PCs (GOB, 2010: 100-101).

²⁴ Public Procurement Act, 2006 and Public Procurement Rules, 2008 are the governing legislations for any purchase of goods and services involving public money.

Figure 3.1: Steps in selection and implementation of projects using block grants



3.12 Block Grant Utilization: Responsibilities of UNO

UNO is involved in every stage of the planning and implementation of development projects through the utilization of block grants as seen in **table 3.3** on the following page. In the project selection stage UNO acts as a member of the Project Selection Committee. Later on at the approval stage UNO can participate in the UZP meeting and give his or her opinion. During the implementation stage UNO acts as the Convener of the Tender Evaluation Committee for projects valued over BDT 100,000. UNO can also stay abreast of the activities of the Project Committees as these Committees require approval of the UZP for their formation as well as legitimization of the expenditure defrayed by them. UNO is also responsible for supervision of projects. On overall counts UNO is responsible for maintaining financial discipline and ensuring compliance of rules and regulations in project selection and implementation. UNO is jointly responsible with the Chairman of UZP for release of funds.

3.13 Utilization of Block Grants: Need for Documentation

Proper utilization of block grants requires active involvement of the Upazila level officials through extensive documentation process. Upazila plan is a prerequisite for initiating projects with block grants. Preparation of plan, except for the stage of its approval, is a bureaucratic exercise. At a later stage Upazila Engineer or the concerned Upazila Official is responsible for preparing project proposals and project estimates. For implementation of projects worth over BDT 100,000 the concerned Tender Evaluation Committee is to follow Public Procurement Act, 2006 and Public Procurement Rules, 2008. The Committee does not involve any elected representative. On the other hand, Upazila Engineer is to preserve the accounts of all transactions made by the Project Committees.

Table 3.3: Responsibilities of UNO in project selection and implementation

Stage	Jurisdiction / Responsibility	Concerned Legislation
Project selection	Member of Project Selection Committee	Instructions for the Usage of Upazila Parishad Development Fund
Project approval	Giving opinion on the agenda of UZP meeting	Charter of Duties of UNO
Project implementation	Convener of Tender Evaluation Committee for evaluation of projects valued above BDT 100,000	Instructions for the Usage of Upazila Parishad Development Fund
	Participation in approval of Project Committee for implementing projects valued less than BDT 100,000	Do
	Extracting accountability of Project Committees as part of UZP	Do
	Inspection of projects, giving directions for correction and placement of the issue(s) in UZP meeting	Do
	Joint responsibility with UZP Chairman for fund release	Forwarding letter accompanying the Instructions for the Usage of Upazila Parishad Development Fund
Overall	Ensuring compliance of govt rules and drawing attention of the govt for any deviation	Charter of Duties of UNO
	Assessing propriety of expenditure in the light of rules and regulations	Do
	Entitled to an opinion on any file of transferred subject, which is to be placed before the Chairman for approval	Implementation Rules, 2010
	Coordination of the works of the officials of transferred departments	Charter of Duties of UNO
	Overall supervision of records preservation by UZP	Implementation Rules, 2010

3.14 Inferences

An overview of the history related to the development of UZP shows that the policies on composition and functions of local government institutions shifted rapidly. As a result UZP could not grow up as a matured organization. The legal provisions that set up the current UZPs are in many cases ambiguous. Confusion exists as to what has been transferred to the UZP and what remains with the government. Such confusion is likely to generate conflicts between the elected representatives and the upazila level government officials. Composition wise, UZP is still an incomplete organization without the presence of female members of the reserved seats. Function wise, the members of UZP have the opportunity to influence bureaucratic functions outside the realm of the UZP. The requirements for extensive documentation, on the other hand, make the role of bureaucrats important.

Regarding project selection and implementation through block grants it has been observed that the implementation of large size projects require compliance with public procurement legislations. Involvement of non officials is limited in these cases. On the other hand, implementation of smaller size projects through Project Committees requires lesser degree of accountability. Compliance with any complex legislation is not required. Project Committees allow involvement of a large number of non officials. However, the provision of implementing maximum 16 projects in a fiscal year through Project Committees is to act as a safety valve against any misuse of resources. On the other hand, UNO is found to hold a unique position in the UZP as he or she is entitled to have a role at every stage of the planning and implementation process and is responsible for ensuring compliance of rules and regulations.

A detailed study of the operations of the UZPs of the past and the present will enable a better understanding of UNO's role. The next chapter provides a review of relevant literature on the Upazila systems of the past and the present.

4.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the findings of a number of studies that were carried out on the UZPs of the past and the present. For convenience of discussion the literatures under review can be chronologically divided into four stages. The first stage concerns the study of the transitional period in the early 1980s when the UNOs were serving as acting Chairmen of the newly formed UZPs and the elections to the same were yet to be held. The second stage refers to the studies on the UZPs under elected Chairmen. The third stage refers to the period of 1991 to 2008 when UZP was running as a coordinating body without elected Chairman. The fourth and last stage incorporates the study of the currently functioning UZPs.

4.1 Upazila Parishads under the UNOs (1982-1985)

In the backdrop of the introduction of the UZP in 1982, Nizam Ahmed (2009) conducted a study in 1985 when the Upazila system was already in place but elections to the newly constructed UZPs were yet to be held. UNO was serving as the acting Chairman of the UZP. It was observed that the introduction of UZP increased autonomy of upazila level officials who were able to exercise increased discretion in their works compared to the past. Nevertheless, the officials fitted the mould of classical bureaucrats rather than that of political ones. In the capacity of Chairman UNO distributed resources among the UPs on the basis of population, which was done apparently to avoid conflicts. Nevertheless, policymaking did not remain a bureaucratic exercise. UNO, as it was believed by the politicians and the upazila level officials alike did not maintain a neutral stance. Different departments competed with each other for resources while the political leaders built rapport with the officials to secure projects for their constituencies. In the UZP meetings policy decisions were taken on the basis of consensus rather than on the basis of support from the majority, which resulted in marginalization of some voices.

The same study also pointed out that the politicians, that is, the UP Chairmen and the bureaucrats did not possess positive attitude about each other. Bureaucrats in general believed that the politicians were corrupt and inefficient. They also found them interfering in their work. Politicians, on the other hand, found the bureaucrats to be corrupt and inefficient. They found the bureaucrats to be unsympathetic to local needs and unable to distinguish between interference and legitimate client demands. Conflicts between UNO and the politicians

sometimes resulted in boycott of the UZP meetings by the latter. Very often the Deputy Commissioner was found to be in the mediating role. Despite such antagonistic feelings toward each other, politicians and the bureaucrats exercised self restraint as they believed that an exposed conflict might result in withdrawal of resources from the government. On the other hand, conflict was not confined between the politicians and the bureaucrats only. Upazila level officials especially the specialists nurtured a negative attitude toward the generalist UNO.

4.2 Upazila Parishads under Elected Chairmen (1985-1990)

On the basis of the study on the results and processes of decentralization in Bangladesh in the 1980s, Siddiquee (1997) argued that the aims of decentralized governance viz better response to local needs, increased popular participation, efficient delivery of services to the people and enhanced accountability did not materialize. Rather the introduction of Upazila system resulted in significant increase in the level of corruption and misuse of public resources. One way or the other, the rural elites, government bureaucracy and power elites in the government benefited from the system. On the other hand, the vast majority of the people gained little in terms of influence over the local affairs or better access to socio economic benefits. Moreover, it was observed that conflicts generated among different actors. Conflicts surfaced between the Chairman of UZP and the MP as the latter had very little control over allocation and utilization of resources. Moreover, relation between the Chairman and the UNO was not based on trust. Rather the relation between the two was characterized by mutual suspicion and hostility. In fact, the installation of elected Chairmen in the UZPs curtailed the freedom of the UNOs. Besides, social differences existed between the two. For these reasons UNOs did not take their subordination to the Chairmen with grace.

Based on the evidences of the 1980s Wahhab (2002) observed that the Chairmen and the members of the UZP came from upper strata of the community and the rural poor remained outside its jurisdiction. The UZPs remained absolutely dependent on government grants as the political leaders showed reluctance in raising revenues properly. Moreover, the instructions for using the government grants were frequently violated. People's participation in the UZP activities remained almost absent. The rural elites who had close relations with the elected representatives and the bureaucrats, influenced selection and implementation of

development projects. Thus, the projects helped mainly the well-to-do people and not the poor masses.

T. Ahmed (2012) argued that decentralization measures introduced in the 1960s and in 1980s permitted massive extension of central bureaucratic control in the rural areas. Local government institutions provided the means of cementing relations between the centrally and locally dominant classes. The central state extended its authority in the rural areas. In return the locally dominant classes of the rural society were given protection of the state in pursuing their social, economic and political goals. Drawing reference from the West Bengal state of India, it was observed that a land redistribution programme as well as other redistributive and employment generation programmes ensured participation of greater number of people from the lower strata in the decentralized institutions. As a result the Government of West Bengal had to satisfy a wider section of society including the rural petty bourgeoisie and the poor alike. On the other hand, in Bangladesh the ruling elite was able to protect its power by banking on a small minority of local petty bourgeoisie and lumpen elements as the vast majority of people were not organized enough to put effective demands on the government.

Alam, Huque & Westergaard (1994) observed that the upazila system of the 1980s was not a case of complete devolution. UZPs lacked three types of power namely policymaking power, financial power and the power over personnel, which are needed for the establishment of completely autonomous bodies. The government retained considerable control over policymaking as the UZP was allowed to make decisions within the guidelines for the usage of government grants. Financially, UZPs remained dependent on government grants. UZP had limited control over personnel matters as the officials of the government were looking after the functions transferred to it. Evidences from the field level brought out the political and institutional perspectives to the fore. It was found that the relation between the Chairman of UZP and the UNO in some cases were strained or very bad. Upazila level officials felt insecure in challenging the decision of the political leaders in the UZP meetings. Nonetheless, UNO and Upazila Engineer were able to get the projects of their choice approved by the UZP. On the other hand, alliances between the Chairman and some of the UP Chairmen resulted in disproportionate allocation of larger number of projects for some unions. The undertaken projects were mostly infrastructure related. Even projects undertaken in education, health or social welfare sectors largely encompassed housing, physical planning

or repair and maintenance of buildings. Despite the dependence on government grants for remaining functional, the UZPs did not get the allocations on time.

Morshed (1997) found out that the elected Chairmen of the UZPs did not possess a favourable attitude about the upazila level officials. Majority of them termed their relations with the officials as “usual” or “not so good”. More than one third of them reported to have faced manifold problems in working with them. They also found the officials unresponsive toward development works. On the other hand, the officials expressed negative attitude toward the decentralization initiatives and also about the elected representatives in the UZP. Almost three fourth of them were found to be not fully ready to work under the elected Chairman. A similar proportion of them were not interested to work in the upazilas. Almost half of them opined that political ambition of the Chairmen was responsible for conflicts between the two. In another dimension, problems of coordination were found to exist among the officials, which had its origin in inter cadre rivalry. The study concluded that the decentralization initiatives were taken in a hasty and fragmentary manner without bringing in necessary changes in the administrative system as considerable communication gap existed between the elected representatives and the officials.

4.3 Upazila as a Coordinating Unit (1991-2008)

P. Sarker (2011) looked into the role of UNO in maintaining coordination with other upazila level officials under the Upazila Development Coordination Committee (UDCC) framework. This framework was in place since 1991 to 2008 when Upazila worked as a coordinating unit and not as a local government body. The study, based on data collected in 2011, revealed that the level of coordination between the two was found to be moderate. Direct contact, supervision and trust were helpful in maintaining coordination. However, Standard Operating Procedure was found to be unhelpful in this regard. Factors like clear cut directives for coordination, lack of mutual trust, lack of informal contact and cadre distinction hampered UNO’s role in coordination.

4.4 Current Upazila Parishads (2009 Onwards)

One year after the installation of the current UZPs, UNDP (2010) carried out a study in 12 upazilas, which explored the issues related to operationalization of the UZP. It was found that the meetings of the UZPs are held regularly but the procedures followed generally do not

conform to the rules. Often the members are not informed of the date of meeting in advance. They are not supplied with the working papers or the proceedings of the previous meetings. In some cases meetings are held in the defunct UDCC format despite the presence of elected Chairman and Vice Chairmen. UZPs are not preparing annual budgets. In most cases standing committees have not been formed. Instructions on project implementation are not being complied with. Elected Chairmen and Vice Chairmen and even the officials of the transferred department are mostly unaware about their responsibilities. Moreover, no uniform pattern of relationship exists among the key actors – MP, Chairman and the UNO. Such relations are found to be confrontational, collusive or subordinating.

Steffense, Land & Monem (2011) formulated a manual for the introduction of Performance Based Development Grant in 14 upazilas on pilot basis under the Upazila Governance Project, which is being implemented by Bangladesh Government with support from a number of development partners. The manual addressed a number of pitfalls of the currently installed UZPs. According to the proposed manual the amount of grant that an UZP will be entitled to receive will depend largely on its performance, which is to be measured on the basis of 20 criteria. The criteria, among others, include functionality of the standing committees, holding of open budget meetings, active participation of women members, availability and quality of five-year plan, formulation of annual budget, performance in project implementation and disclosure of information to the people. It was expected that the UZPs, in their turn, would be encouraged to improve its performance so as to qualify for receiving increased amount of grant. The standing committees alongside the concerned departments would get involved in suggesting projects to the UZP meetings. Moreover, it was proposed that only large size inter union projects, each valued over BDT one million, are to be allowed. Such projects, it has been argued, would subject the UZP to increased accountability to the people. Furthermore, a small negative list for the projects to be undertaken was proposed, which was to give the UZP increased leeway in project selection.

4.5 Inferences

It can be inferred from the review of the relevant literature on the Upazila system of the past and the present that the planning and implementation of development projects might be affected by legal, political, institutional and operational factors. An Upazila level official, particularly the UNO, has specified responsibilities in the planning and implementation

process. Therefore, the role of UNO is likely to be affected by the aforementioned factors like the planning and implementation process itself.

At the initial stage of the introduction of the Upazila system UNO served as the acting Chairman of the UZP. Such arrangement placed the other upazila level officials under the UNO. This resulted in souring of the relations between the two. When UZP became fully functional UNO as well as other upazila level officials were placed under the elected Chairman. This might have prevented the officials, including the UNO, to play their due role. When UZP was reduced to a coordinating unit UNO was relying on informal contacts for maintaining coordination with other officials as there was lack of clear legal provisions. Thus, it is justified to analyze the current legal context as well to determine its impact on the planning and implementation process and also on the role of UNO.

During the initial stage of the introduction of UZP, UNO, being a rule bound bureaucrat, apparently tried to play a neutral role as the acting Chairman. Nonetheless, UNO became a part of the political process. Later on popularly elected Chairman took the helm of the UZP and sometimes acted on narrow political considerations, which had an impact on the role of UNO. Even when the UZP was reduced to a coordinating unit UNO might not have been able to play the role of a rule bound bureaucrat Therefore, it is justified to explore the political context of the current UZPs as well so as to ascertain its impact on the role of UNO.

Studies on the currently installed UZPs have exposed a number of institutional and operational setbacks. The fact that the UZP failed to formulate five-year plan and budget might be related to its incapacity. Lack of awareness among the elected representatives and the upazila officials is an institutional factor that might have negative impact upon the planning and implementation process. Likewise, the level of coordination with the officials could be related to the same. Therefore, institutional and operational factors need to be looked at to determine their probable impact on the role of UNO.

The review of relevant literature has justified the analysis of legal, political, institutional and operational aspects of the currently installed UZPs. The next chapter will look into these aspects in detail and will try to develop an analytical framework, which is to be used for finding answer to the research question.

5.0 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter starts with a discussion on legal, political, institutional and operational aspects that might influence the planning and implementation process in the UZP and also the role of an individual in it. Classical and political orientations of bureaucrats have been analyzed as the role of UNO in the UZP is likely to resemble any of the two. It looks into the political bureaucratic perspective from two angles – the way of dividing role between politicians and bureaucrats and the bureaucratic way of dealing with conflicts. Finally, an analytical framework has been developed in which legal, political and institutional and operational aspects have been linked to planning and implementation process. Since UNO is extensively involved in the planning and implementation process, his or her role also, will be affected by the same factors.

5.1 Legal Perspective

The key actors in the UZP include the Chairman and Vice Chairmen who were elected by the inhabitants of the upazila. It also includes the UP Chairmen and the Mayors of Paurasavas who become ex-officio members. Besides, the upazila level officials, including the UNO, are to be considered as important actors despite their non voting and non member status. Finally, the concerned MP becomes a stakeholder because of his or her capacity as the Adviser to the UZP. The legal jurisdictions of all these actors give a particular shape to the UZP as an organization.

5.1.1 Chairman with Limited Discretionary Power

As per section 27(2) of the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 the Chairman is authorized to chair every meeting of UZP. Rule 4 (6) of the Implementation Rules, 2010 says that the Chairman cannot vote but is authorized to give casting vote. He or she is authorized to approve all files and documents dealing with transferred subjects as said in Rule 14. Funds of the UZP are to be jointly operated by the Chairman and the UNO as stipulated in Rule 18. Moreover, Rule 3 of Duties and Responsibilities Rules, 2010 authorizes the Chairman to run routine administrative work of the UZP and supervise UZP officials and employees. Although he or she cannot take any disciplinary action against the Officers responsible for transferred subjects, but can do the same against the Officers and employees of UZP. The Chairman is also authorized to sign all contracts on behalf of the UZP as per Contract Signing Rules,

2010. Despite the fact that the Chairman is now authorized to write Annual Performance Report of the Officials of the transferred departments, the task was initially assigned to the UZP per se both in the Ordinance of 2008 and in the Act of 1998 (GOB, 2010: 12; GOB, 2011b, BEC, 2008: 130).

5.1.2 Limited Functions of Vice Chairmen

The provisions of two Vice Chairmen, one of them elected exclusively out of female candidates, is unique given the composition of other local government bodies of Bangladesh. Union Parishad, Zila Parishad, Paurasava and City Corporations do not have any provision for Vice Chairmen or Deputy Mayors (GOB, 2012a; GOB, 2012b; GOB, 2012c; GOB, 2012d). Keeping the future perspective in mind T. Ahmed (2010: 58) has recommended abolishing the two posts of Vice Chairmen.

Local Government (Upazila Parishad) Ordinance, 2008, under which the UZP elections were held, did not mention anything about the responsibilities of the two Vice Chairmen except for the fact that they were authorized to preside over UZP meetings in a predetermined order in case of absence of the Chairman. Section 31(8) of the Ordinance assigned one vote each to UZP members except the Chairman. Votes of Vice Chairmen were to be counted equally with those of the UP Chairmen and Members. Section 36(3) of the Ordinance empowered the government to make rules for determining the responsibilities of Vice Chairmen. As no such Rules were enacted before the elections, the Vice Chairmen candidates contested the elections without having any idea about their future roles and responsibilities in the UZP. As the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 was reinstated the jurisdictions of the Vice Chairmen did not change. They are still entitled to one vote each. They can make non binding recommendations to the UZP. Furthermore, the Vice Chairmen are not automatic choices for chairing the standing committees as per section 29 of the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 or its preceding legislation, the Ordinance of 2008. In the recent amendment, which took effect on December 1, 2011, however, the standing committees were renamed as *committees* of two and half years' duration each and the Vice Chairmen have been assigned to chair the same (GOB, 2010; GOB, 2011b).

5.1.3 UP Chairmen with Voting Majority

The UP Chairmen are elected by the voters of their respective unions. In that sense they are accountable to the people of their respective unions only. They have no accountability to the entire population of the upazila. Nevertheless, the UP Chairmen in a body possess the voting majority in the UZP. It may be argued that such voting power allow the UP Chairmen to counter balance the whimsical act of the elected Chairman and Vice Chairmen. As per section 13A of the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 four fifth of the members of the UZP can initiate a no confidence motion against the Chairman, Vice Chairmen or any other member (GOB, 2011b).

It is pertinent to note here that the latest amendment to the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 in December 2011 introduced a new section 13A under which no confidence motions can be brought against the Chairman, Vice Chairmen, female members or any other member of the UZP if it can gain support of four fifth of the members. Such a motion can be brought on the grounds of violation of the Act, serious misconduct or physical or mental incapacity (GOB, 2011b). A provision like this raises the importance of the UP Chairmen in the UZP. Since its enactment there have been three reported incidents of no confidence motions against the UZP Chairmen (The Daily Manbzamin, 7 May 2012; 8 May 2012; 26 May 2012).

5.1.4 Advisory Capacity of Concerned MPs

The Ordinance of 2008 did not have any role for the MPs in the UZP. However, the reinstatement of Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 in 2009 changed the scenario. MPs, who represent the total or part of the area of any Upazila, will act as the Adviser to the UZP as stipulated in section 25 of the Act. The advice is mandatory for UZP. Moreover, the concerned MP(s) has/have to be made aware of any communication with the government by the UZP (GOB, 2010: 12, BEC, 2008: 57-151).

There are, however, arguments in favour of and against the role of MPs in the affairs of local government bodies. On one hand, it is argued that MP's involvement in local government affairs violates the principle of separation of power (CPD, 2003: 281). Furthermore, MPs are elected for national office and not for running local bodies and they would overstep their constitutionally mandated authority by having such responsibilities (Majumdar, 2010: 130). N. Islam (2010: 36-37) believes that MP's interest in local government affairs might have

arisen out of isolation paradox. The MP might be thinking that the local leader with control over local resources and having distributed patronages might have attained a built in advantage to compete in the next parliamentary elections. Such arguments may not be unfounded given the fact that the MPs do not have any such role in the affairs of Union Parishads, Paurasavas and City Corporations. Despite the fact that the concerned MPs have advisory role in the Zila Parishad, their advices are not mandatory upon it (GOB, 2012a; GOB, 2012b; GOB, 2012c; GOB, 2012d). On the other hand, Siddiqui (2005: 440-441) argued that MPs in the context of Bangladesh are expected to solve the general problem of people and improve their living standard. People are unable to perceive the differences between policymaking and implementation at the field level. Besides, MPs can use their knowledge about local affairs in effectively guiding the local body. As a public representative of the highest level they can play a check and balance role in offsetting the whims of some irresponsible local government representatives. MP's involvement may also be helpful in avoiding friction between local government representatives and the government officials. They can maintain liaison between local government and the national government. By maintaining good rapports with the local government bodies, MPs can better articulate the demands in the Parliament. Nevertheless, it has been suggested that MP's advice should not be mandatory upon the local government body.

MP's involvement in advisory capacity may also bring up jurisdictional problems. The problem is likely to occur in the upazilas, which are supposed to have more than one Adviser. Reportedly there are more than one hundred upazilas which are made up of areas falling in more than one parliamentary constituency. It is apprehended that MPs' advisory role in these cases is likely to create chaos (The Daily Star, 8 April 2009).

5.1.5 UNO as Representative of the Government

Status of UNO in the UZP has undergone changes a number of times. Section 51 of the Ordinance of 2008 authorized UNO to be the Chief Executive Officer. In that capacity UNO was to participate in the discussion of UZP without being able to exercise any voting right, give opinion on any issue on the agenda and even request the UZP to reconsider its decision if he or she deemed it to be harmful to public life, health and security. As the Act of 1998 was reinstated in 2009, UNO was assigned to be the Secretary of UZP and was to provide secretarial assistance to it as per section 33. However, the same section was amended in December 2011 and UNO has been assigned to be the Principal Executive Officer of UZP. In

this capacity UNO is authorized to implement decisions of UZP, maintain financial discipline and to discharge responsibilities as per Rules. Furthermore, as per the Charter of Duties UNO is to assist the UZP to perform all of its activities and take steps for implementing the decisions taken. If he or she finds any decision to be violating the law or to be against the interest of public life, health or security, he or she can request the UZP to reconsider it. If the UZP still decides to stick to that decision then UNO can inform the government by keeping the Chairman informed. Unless any decision is found within 15 days, UNO is to take steps for its implementation (BEC, 2008: 128; GOB, 2010: 14, 59; GOB 2011). It can be argued that the UNO has been placed in the UZP mainly for protecting the interests of the government rather than for providing secretarial assistance only.

5.1.6 Double Mandate

The composition of Upazila Parishad is characterized by *double mandate*. Although the Chairman, Vice Chairman and the female Vice Chairman are elected by the voters of the Upazila, Chairmen of the Union Parishads and the Mayors of Paurasavas represent the voters of their respective Unions and Paurasavas only. Likewise, each of the female Members and Councilors, holding reserved seats for women, is a representative of one particular ward only. *Double mandate*, it is argued, is justified on the grounds that it would help develop an organic relationship between UZP and the UPs. However, an arrangement as such prompts the UZP to allocate resources equally among the concerned UPs rather than trying to discover a formula (Nizam Ahmed, 2009: 65-66). Thus, the possibility of making rational choices in resource allocation is ruled out.

5.1.7 Duality of Control

According to Upazila Parishad Act, 1998, officials and works of 12 government ministries or division at the Upazila level have been transferred to the UZP. However, all such officials are subject to *duality of control*. Alongside being responsible to their respective department heads at the district level, they have also been made accountable to the UZP. As per section 24 of the Act, the Chairman of the UZP has been authorized to write Annual Performance Report of the officials of the transferred departments while their respective higher authorities will prepare the Annual Confidential Reports (GOB, 2011). As the upazila level officials have career loyalty to the central ministries / departments and operational loyalty to the UZP, it is argued, they are likely to emphasize the former. In this way it becomes difficult to hold government officials accountable to the UZP (Nizam Ahmed, 2009: 67-68). In this regard it

is observed that in City Corporations and Paurasavas, local government bodies in urban setting, have government employees deputed there as Chief Executive Officer and or Secretary who have no responsibility outside the concerned local government body (GOB, 2012c; GOB, 2012d).

5.1.8 Resemblance of UZP with Matrix Organization

Composition of UZP resembles a *matrix organization*, a structure with both vertical and horizontal lines of authority. The Chairman of the UZP and in case of his or her absence, either of the two Vice Chairmen, can be assumed to be in the role of project manager in a matrix organization. All the government officials belong to different departments. Posting, transfer, promotion and disciplinary matters are taken care of by the respective departments. Their responsibilities to the UZP are in addition to their normal responsibilities. UNO as well as the other officials assist the UZP with their professional expertise. On the other hand, Chairmen / Mayors and the female Members / Councilors of the Union Parishads / Paurasavas, who are members of the UZP, are accountable to the people of their respective constituencies. They are supposed to represent the interests of their respective constituencies in the UZP.

A matrix organization is said to be advantageous as it facilitates the use of specialized skills and knowledge, improves coordination of functional activities and emphasizes end results. However, such organization requires clarity of roles and responsibilities of the manager and the team members. Moreover, leadership capability of the manager is said to be important as his or her influence should be based on knowledge and information rather than on rank (Wehrich, Cannice and Koontz, 2008: 190-192). Ensuring such conditions for the UZP remains a challenge. Apparently ambiguities exist in the legal provisions concerning UZP. The governing legislations do not clearly define the functional jurisdictions of the UZP.

5.2 Political and Cultural Perspective

As it has been evident in the discussions of the previous chapters, narrow political considerations came into play at the macro level in formulation of policies for UZP. Similar considerations influence the micro level policymaking when the actors of UZP got involved in planning and implementation of development projects. At the same time national culture may also have a role to play in shaping up the planning and implementation dynamics.

5.2.1 Patron Clientelism and Political Process

Patron clientelism is referred to as an asymmetrical and unequal relationship in which a number of people as clients are dependent on a powerful patron for security, protection or valuable services. In return the clients provide political support to the patron and act as his or her vote bank (Alavi 1976 cited in Khan, Islam and Haque 2008: 215). Such relationships are informal, often opposed to official rules and grounded in economic and political inequality (Khan et al, 2008: 27). In the context of Bangladesh it has been observed that the leader provides money and other material resources to the followers in order to secure their political support. The leaders themselves feel pressed to acquire increasing amount of resources for keeping the clients satisfied and thereby corruption becomes a major way of accessing resources (ibid: 215). However, A. A. Khan (2011: 111-112) observes that the theory of patron clientelism has some limitations in Bangladesh context as corruption takes place not only for the patronization of clients but also for to the interests of the patrons themselves.

Jahan (2005: 198) delves deep into the origin of patron clientelism in Bangladeshi society. It has been observed that owing to the absence of administrative penetration in Bengal, power clustered around local standpoints. Local leaders built up their influence and power by maintaining a network of clients. Many of the clients belong to the lower classes. Poor members of an extended family develop ties with the richer members of the same family rather than with the members of the same class. Clients, on their part, seek either self promotion or simply survival through their association with the patrons.

Patron clientelism, according to Majumdar (2009: 255), is responsible for the election of controversial candidates in the local government polls. Marginal people have to depend on their patrons for accessing various resources and also for getting security. Political parties do not hesitate to throw their support behind the controversial candidates. Even the civil society refrains from being vocal against such candidates. In the same context Rahman (2008: 19) argues that the feudal or semi feudal nature of Bangladesh society does not allow distressed people to put up their own candidates for elections nor does it enable them to safely vote for anyone other than their patron's choices.

Kochanek (1993: 339, 353) observes that patron client relationships affect policy formulation as policies reflect the ideas of leaders and not the interests of classes or organized groups.

Broad policy goals are manipulated to suit the needs of the individuals. Policies, designed to achieve development and growth, become loaded down with expectations, exemptions and special restrictions designed to benefit individual clients. Policy implementation, it has been further observed (ibid: 351), becomes very difficult as it enjoys little support from people. Favored individuals easily secure particularistic concessions and exemptions to any law or rule from the decision makers.

Patron clientelism even thwarts the decentralization initiatives, as argued by A. E. Sarker (2003). The state, acting as patron, forms a reciprocal relationship with the dominant socio economic groups like rural elites, traders and industrialists who work as its clients. The state initiates decentralization reform initiatives for creating political support base and also for attaining legitimacy for itself. Local councils, dominated by rural elites, are turned into conduits for patronage distribution. Consequently the issue of devolution disappears from the state agenda. Regarding local governance reforms of Bangladesh, it has been observed that all the reforms undertaken since 1793 have been aimed at establishing centre's control over the peripheries, suppressing anti establishment movements or at creating support base for the centre at the grassroots level (Tofail 1987 cited in Salehuddin Ahmed, 2006: 62).

Sadiq Ahmed (2009: 140) observes that the policymakers of Bangladesh pay more attention to securing power base than to addressing the development challenges. Short term policy gains get priority over long term policy considerations. Policy compromises are made to secure the support of political power brokers like the elites, political hooligans or the bureaucrats. Consequently the issues like sustainability of development efforts fail to receive due attentions as they cannot promise quick returns.

Factionalism is a manifestation of patron clientelism as various patron client groups engage in conflicts with each other (Khan et al, 2008: 27). Jahan (2005: 199) observes that factionalism is prevalent among all social groups and classes. Despite the fact that all the patrons belong to the dominant classes, they are divided along factional lines. Thus factionalism helps maintain inter class patron client network of organizations.

Patron clientelism also affects the relationships between political leaders and bureaucrats. Sobhan (2007: 152, 157) observes that in the political context of Bangladesh politicization of bureaucracy does not mean using bureaucrats to serve a particular ideology. Rather it means

the use of bureaucrats to promote private agendas of politicians. Bureaucrats need to be compatible with the MP or local political leadership. When a party is in power the party workers use their political access to seek official patronage for enhancing their material fortunes. In this role the ruling party workers develop a relationship of either collusion or conflict with the bureaucracy when their particular interests cannot be satisfied. It has also been observed that many politicians use musclemen as a political resource in seeking access to public resources (ibid: 152).

Evidences of patron clientelism can be traced in the findings of some of the researches conducted on the UZPs of the 1980s. Based on the evidences available at the *macro level* Siddiquee (1997: 254, 258) concluded that Upazila system was introduced in the 1980s by the military regime as part of its strategy to muster support of the rural elites, create a patron client relationship with them and thereby to serve its political goals of attaining legitimization and consolidation of power. The Chairmen of UZPs were accorded a status equivalent to a Deputy Secretary in the civil service and a Major in the army so that they could be lured to join the political party that was being formed by the regime. The Chairmen on their part cooperated with the government in organizing the national elections and helped it to win.

At the *micro level* it has been observed that kinship ties, social connections, political linkages and patron client relationships determined who got what from the UZP. Among the poor who belonged to the party of the Chairman of UZP or actively supported him during the elections got preferential treatment from him (ibid: 213, 256). The Chairmen extended their patronage network as tenders and work orders were distributed to the relatives, friends and political allies, haat bazaars and water bodies were leased out to the chosen parties and membership of different committees were accorded to their own lobbies (ibid: 204, 210, 226). Wahhab (2002: 146) observed that in case of distribution of projects or fund, the union where the UZP Chairman hails from, got a larger share. Similarly the unions, which were represented by influential Chairmen, got a larger share compared to others. Besides, the introduction of Upazila system intensified competition for public resources and services and thereby created a space for the touts and middlemen. Ordinary people found it hard to get their desired services and goods from the UZP as touts and middlemen emerged as main channels for accessing the same (Siddiquee, 1997: 235, 240).

5.2.2 Dimensions of Culture and Behaviour of UZP Actors

Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) have identified four dimensions of national culture, namely Power Distance, Individualism and Collectivism, Masculinity and Femininity and Uncertainty Avoidance. These dimensions can be related to the prevailing political culture of Bangladesh.

Power Distance has been defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. Among 74 countries and regions of the world, Bangladesh, with high Power Distance Index value, has been ranked in the range of 12 to 14. In that sense high power distance prevails in the national culture of Bangladesh. In the political context high power distance is manifested in the considerable dependence of followers on the leaders. This is also reflected in the privileges of the powerful in the society and fewer checks and balances against power abuse (ibid: 39-72).

Individualism relates to the societies where the ties between individuals are loose – everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. **Collectivism**, the opposite of Individualism, refers to societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong cohesive in-groups, giving people a lifetime protection in exchange of unquestioning loyalty. Bangladesh, with a low score of Individualism Index, has been placed in the range of 56 to 61 among 74 countries and regions. In the political context this may be argued to be reflected in the non existence of personal opinion, which is predetermined by the group. Collectivism is also manifested in particularism where relationship prevails over task (ibid: 73-114).

Masculinity is reflected in the characteristics of being assertive, tough and being focused on material success. **Femininity**, on the other hand, reflects a rather tender approach of dealing with the objectives. Bangladesh with a moderately high score of 55 in the masculinity index has been ranked 30th among 74 countries and regions. In the political context this is seen in the conflict resolution process as those are resolved through contest rather than through compromise and negotiation. (ibid: 115-162).

Uncertainty Avoidance is reflected in the preference of people for a structure in their organizations, institutions and relationships that makes events clearly interpretable and predictable. Bangladesh with a high score of 60 in the Uncertainty Avoidance Index has been placed in the range of 45 to 47 among 74 countries and regions. In the political scenario this may be argued to be seen in the preference of civil servants for structured environments (ibid: 163-204).

Khan et al (2008: 176, 180, 185, 187, 188) conducted a research on the organizational culture of the political parties of Bangladesh. The research concluded that the parties are excessively dominated by individual leaders and lower level leaders are not involved in the decision making process. Political activists on their part rely on personal leadership rather than on institutions. Intra party conflicts are resolved through mutual accommodation of rival factions through the intervention of party high-ups. No institutional and democratic mechanisms exist for conflict resolution. Moreover, communication among different levels of the party organizations is irregular and infrequent. Furthermore, political parties are said to harbour hoodlums.

Thus, the organizational culture of the political parties reflects high power distance among the leaders and workers, which is manifested by concentration of power in the hand of the leaders and lack of democratic practices. Political workers nurture collectivist values as they rely on party high-ups for decisions rather than raise their own voices. Absence of democratic mechanism for conflict resolution and reliance on hoodlums reflect preference for masculinity in political decision making.

Dimensions of national culture might influence the role of bureaucrats as well. Aminuzzaman (1993) conducted a study on the public sector managers of the rank of Deputy Secretary and above to ascertain their behaviour in terms of the four dimensions of national culture. It was found that the average Bangladeshi manager recorded fairly high score on Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance Index. On the other hand, their score was moderate on Masculinity Index and relatively low on Individualism Index. It was revealed further that younger managers, belonging to the age group of less than 39 years, tend to maintain a higher degree of Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance. Since the UNOs belong to this age group, they might similarly display high Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance. They might be showing unconditional loyalty to the Deputy Commissioner and relying on his or

her guidance in case of any untoward situation in the UZP. Moreover, the UNOs might be relying more on rules and regulations rather than any other considerations in discharging their responsibilities in the UZP.

5.2.3 Decision Making Dynamics in UZP

Dye (1998: 14-38) has spelt out nine models for policy analysis. Among those a few are relevant for the decision making dynamics in Upazila Parishad. Group Model, Elite Model and Incrementalism Model can be related to the policymaking dynamics in the UZP.

According to *Group Model* politics is the struggle among groups to influence public policy. At any given time public policy refers to the equilibrium reached in the group struggle. The equilibrium is determined by the relative influence of any interest groups. A change in the relative influence of any group is expected to result in changes in public policy. In the UZP different actors can be viewed as the representatives of different groups. The Chairman, Vice Chairmen, UP Chairmen, MP and even the officials may belong to different groups and have their own opinions about a particular policy. Local political leaders or elites also may form the part of any group or be a separate group altogether. The actors may form permanent or temporary alliances with others and try to influence the policy outcome. The result of the group struggle may be reflected in the quality of planning and implementation process. Bias in favour of particular individuals or organizations may be reflected in their influence on policymaking.

The *Elite Model* looks at policy as a manifestation of preferences of the elites. It is assumed that the people are apathetic and ill informed about public policy while elites shape the mass opinion on policy questions. In case of UZPs project proposals come from UP Chairmen who are, as per law, required to seat with the UP members and local elites and reach a decision on their preferred projects. There is no legal provision for making broad based contact with the masses before taking any policy decision. People on their part remain unaware about policymaking and come to know about it during the implementation stage. Thus, projects, undertaken by the UZP might in general reflect elite preferences.

Incrementalism Model views policy as a continuation of past activities with only incremental modifications. According to this model the policymakers generally accept the legitimacy of the established programmes and tacitly agree to continue with the previous

policies. In case of UZPs Incrementalism can be observed at the macro as well as micro level. At the macro level the policy for utilization of block grants has remained almost unchanged since the 1980s. At the micro level the practice followed under the UDCC framework is still in existence in some places. The allocation is divided on the basis of population and area among the UPs as was the practice up to 2008.

5.2.4 Power Equation at the Upazila Parishad

Some observations of a UNDP study (UNDP, 2010: 32, 33, 37, 50, 51, 52) are relevant in constructing the power equation in the UZPs. The study reflects on the roles of the Chairman, Vice Chairmen, concerned MP, UP Chairmen and the bureaucrats. *The Chairman* has limited authority to do anything independently of the UZP. He or she is not above the UZP but rather accountable to it. UZP can remove him or her subject to the approval of the government. *The Vice Chairmen* do not have any operational responsibility. They are even disadvantaged compared to the UP Chairmen as the latter have some executive power at the union level. The female Vice Chairman is even more disadvantaged. In some cases they are reported to have feelings of being marginalized as they are less assertive than their male colleagues. *The local MP* has more power than any other actors in UZP. Nothing can happen without the concurrence of MP. In some reported cases the dominance of MP is so strong that the other members turn out to be mere onlookers in the UZP meetings. In these cases decisions are hardly taken on majority votes. Decisions are taken even before the start of the meetings. It has been argued that MP dominates the meeting by virtue of his or her expertise and effective coordination with stakeholders. Monitoring of development work by the MP helps conflict management, proper decision making, reduction of system loss and improvement of quality of work. *The UP Chairmen* as a group have an important role as they constitute a majority in the UZP. Their opinion carries more weight than that of the others. Since they have executive powers they can help or retard any project under the UZP. *UNO* acts as the chief central government representative who, it has been argued, owes no accountability at the upazila level. *Upazila level officials*, whose tasks have been transferred to the UZP, are in better position of influencing the process of preparing and finalizing projects. Being part of the project selection committee they can scrutinize all union based projects. Inter union projects are prepared solely by the Upazila Engineer.

5.3 Institutional and Operational Perspective

Local government organizations, in particular UZPs, are part of the executive organ of the State. Local Government Division of the Government gives policy decisions and supervises the activities UZPs across the country. Besides, the Offices of the Deputy Commissioner and Divisional Commissioner have limited supervisory capacity on the UZPs. The new setup of the UZPs justifies the need for training and awareness building among all the stakeholders. Besides, the issue of coordination becomes important alongside the aforementioned factors in planning and implementation process.

5.3.1 Role of Policymaking Level of the Government

The policy decisions on the UZPs have their origin from two bodies. The Local Government Division retains the power of disciplining the errant UZPs. It is also authorized to clarify the legal issues as and when needed. Besides, there is a National Level Committee for issuing instructions on UZPs. Section 50, 51, 52 and 53 of the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 empower the government to be the supervising authority over the UZP. The government retains the authority to suspend the activities of UZP as per section 51 if those are found to be against the law or public interest. The government can even declare an UZP null and void owing to its incapability, activities against popular interests or misuse of power followed by an inquiry (GOB, 2010: 17-18). Most importantly any clarification on the legal provisions may originate from the Local Government Division or from the National Level Committee as mentioned above. According to section 24(3) of the Act the Committee, headed by the Cabinet Secretary and consisting of Secretaries of 13 ministries or divisions, is authorized to issue instructions or advices regarding the functions transferred to the UZP (GOB, 2010: 12, 77; The Daily Manabzamin, 8 May 2012). Regarding financial matters the Local government Division retains the right to assess the implementation status of block grants given to the UZPs and is even authorized to suspend fund release if needs be (GOB, 2010: 105).

When the UZPs started functioning in early 2009 detailed legal provisions for running the day to day affairs were yet to be developed. It was not before 2010 when the different Rules including the Charter of Duties under the Upazila Parishad Act, 1996 were formulated. The Act itself has been amended twice since its reinstatement bringing in changes in the status of the privileges of the elected representatives and the government officials. Besides, the Local Government Division is issuing instructions on the functioning of the UZPs till today. Thus,

it can be argued that the UZPs are still heavily dependent on the government for legislative matters.

5.3.2 Provisions for Inspection

The Chairman of UZP is authorized to inspect projects at any stage. he or she is also authorized to order for corrective measures in case of any irregularity. The UNO as well is authorized to inspect projects and order for corrective measures. He or she is required to inform the Chairman of UZP about the findings on inspection. Besides, Deputy Commissioner and Divisional Commissioner have also been given the authority to visit projects and inform the higher authorities if needs be (GOB, 2010: 104-105). Compared to the responsibilities regarding the other local government institutions within the jurisdictions of the district, the Deputy Commissioner has limited authority on the UZPs. He or she has been made responsible for coordination of development activities of local government institutions within the district, supervision, monitoring and evaluation of overall activities of local government institutions through the Deputy Director Local Government and for drawing the attention of Local Government Division about the problems and prospects of such institutions. These provisions, however, will not govern if they clash with any Act or Rules (GOB, 2011c: 21-22).

5.3.3 Coordination of Government Officials

Coordination in UZP is needed primarily at two levels – between government officials and the political leaders and among the political leaders themselves. UNDP (2010: 40) study observes that relationship between UZP and UPs is not hierarchic but collegial. Bargaining and compromise may provide the means of overcoming conflict and disagreements. On the other hand, relationship between UZP and transferred departments is hierarchic. UZP can hold the department officials to account. These officials, however, provide the major source of expert advice to the UZP. In another dimension UNO is responsible for the coordination among the officers (GOB, 2010: 59). P. Sarkar (2011) has found moderate level of coordination between the UNO and other Upazila officials.

5.3.4 Awareness and Participation of People

Participation of the people in policymaking and implementation due to local government setup at the Upazila level did not increase as observed by Siddiquee (1997: 202). It has been

observed in the context of the introduction of Upazila system in the 80s that the vast majority of rural population had not been helped by the Upazila programme to participate in local administration and development despite the delegation of considerable authority and resources at lower levels. This rather led to an expansion in the number of intermediaries who emerged as the main channel of accessing government administration in rural areas.

The legal provisions for the currently installed UZPs allow limited degree of participation of local people. The UP Chairmen are only required to consult the UP members and the local elites before sending project proposals to the UZP. The implementation stage also does not involve people of the locality. However, there are provisions for informing the local people about the activities of the UZP. Every UZP is required to publish and distribute annual reports detailing out the undertaken projects. A signboard spelling out the details of the project is required to be placed at the project site (GOB, 2010: 99, 105). Furthermore, the recent amendment to the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 introduced section 68A, which requires every UZP to publish a citizen charter disclosing the details of services provided by it. The section requires the government to produce a guideline for formulating the charter (GOB, 2011b).

5.4 Political – Bureaucratic Perspective

The relations between politicians and bureaucrats in UZP can be explained from three perspectives. Despite the fact that the bureaucrats are known to be rule bound, they may sometimes take up political roles in discharging their responsibilities. Secondly, in an organization politicians and bureaucrats divide their roles between them. Such division of role might be shaped up by legal, political, institutional and operational factors. Thirdly, conflicts develop between the two, which may have positive or negative repercussions on attainment of organizational objectives. The way the bureaucrats deal with conflicts might also be dependent on the same factors.

5.4.1 Classical Versus Political Orientation of Bureaucrats

Bureaucrats may have classical or political orientations. Classical bureaucrats believe that public issues should be resolved through adhering to some objective and standard criteria. They view themselves as non partisan, keep a distance from politics and are irritated by political interference. On the other hand, political bureaucrats consider political influence on policymaking as legitimate. Their everyday life is characterized by bargaining and

compromises. They rely more on public demands rather than on impersonal rules (Jamil, 2007: 70-71). In case of the UZPs bureaucratic responsibilities fits more into the classical model rather than the political one. The responsibilities of UNO in the UZP involve ensuring compliance of rules and maintenance of financial discipline. UNO is required to step in only when a transgression of legal provisions takes place. The procedure for planning and implementation of development projects also involves complex bureaucratic procedures, for which UNO is largely accountable to the government. Thus, the legal provisions do not leave any opportunity for the UNO to undertake a political role rather than a classical one.

5.4.2 Division of Roles between Politicians and Bureaucrats

James Svara's theory of political control of bureaucracy (Frederickson and Smith, 2003: 18-23) is relevant for exploring the division of roles between political leaders and the bureaucrats in UZPs of Bangladesh. Svara developed four models on the basis of his study on the council-manager form of city governments in the US. *Politics Administration Dichotomy model* calls for strict separation between politics and bureaucracy. Since the UZPs of Bangladesh entitles the political leaders to get involved in implementation and also entitles the bureaucrats to have a say in policymaking, the model is not applicable in Upazila context. *Mixture in Policy model* refers to absence of political control of bureaucracy. According to this model political leaders have their influence in limited number of administrative matters. On the other hand, bureaucrats have significant influence in policymaking. This model also is not applicable in UZP context as the bureaucrats are only allowed to take part in discussions and express their opinions regarding policy matters while the political leadership is entitled to have an extensive role in the implementation process. *Mixture in Administration model* involves frequent interference in bureaucracy by the political leadership. This is the opposite of Mixture in Policy Model. It reflects frequent interference of political leadership in day to day administrative decisions. This model more or less reflects the UZP context of Bangladesh as the elected leaders are calling for increased control over administrative affairs. Most importantly, they are calling for increasing the scope of UZPs. Lastly, *Elected Official Administrator as Co-equal model* represents a rather matured relations between the two. According to this model politicians limit themselves to setting policies and approving budgets while strong bureaucracy implement policies and deliver services to their standards of efficiency and fairness. This model also is not applicable in UZP context because of involvement of political leaders at the implementation stage.

5.4.3 Origin and Nature of Conflict between Politicians and Bureaucrats

Robins and Judge (2010: 520-529) have identified five stages of the conflict process. Although these stages refer to profit oriented private organizations, they have resemblance with conflict situations that might arise between the bureaucrats and the elected representatives in the UZP. The first stage of the conflict process is *incompatibility*, which refers to the presence of conditions that create opportunities for conflict. Sources of conflict may arise out of insufficient exchange of communication; faulty structure as evident in jurisdictional clarity, leadership styles or degree of dependence between groups and personal variables. The second stage of the process is *cognition and personalization*. In this stage the parties perceive the antecedent conditions of conflict and then become emotionally involved with it. In the third stage an individual comes up with *conflict handling intentions*, which can be of five types. One may decide to compete regardless of the impact on other parties, collaborate with a view to attaining a mutually beneficial outcome, avoid conflict, accommodate by placing the opponent's interests above his or her own or compromise by accepting incomplete satisfaction to both the parties' concerns. In the fourth stage the conflict becomes visible by the *behaviour of the parties*, which is reflected in their statements, actions and reactions. The fifth and final stage reflects the *outcomes of the conflict*. The outcome can be constructive when conflicts improve quality of decisions, stimulate creativity and innovation or generate interest among the group members.

In case of UZPs it may be argued that incompatibility among different actors arises because of their varied backgrounds. Upazila level officials are all professional bureaucrats. Chairman, Vice Chairmen and the MP may have different political orientations and varied cultural backgrounds. The UP Chairmen and female members of the reserved seats are union and ward level political leaders respectively. As political leaders they are likely to display varied leadership styles. In case of conflict with the political leaders the bureaucrats including the UNO may decide to compete, collaborate, avoid, accommodate or compromise. The result of such conflict may have positive or negative outcomes. Positive outcomes might be reflected in a compromise situation resulting in sustainable decisions whereas negative outcome may generate standoff situation and poor quality of planning and implementation.

Conflict between the elected representatives and the bureaucrats in the UZP is not uncommon. In one particular incident soon after the installation of the current UZPs the

government intervened so as to prevent occurrence of similar incidents in future. An unpleasant incident occurred in the District Development Coordination Committee meeting of Bagerhat district held in June 2009 (The Daily Star, 16 June 2009). It drew the attention of the government. A letter sent by the Local Government Division to the UZP Chairmen and the UNOs on October 11, 2009 termed the incident mentioned above and the others like this to be undignified for the bureaucrats and the political representatives. In this context the Chairmen and the UNOs were asked to “maintain their own specific limits in accordance with their duties and responsibilities and privileges” (GOB, 2010: 128). However, there have been reports of number of similar incidents in the subsequent period.

From a number of newspaper reports it can be inferred that conflicts between the two have their origin in the lack of jurisdictional clarity and dependency relations. In one incident conflict between the UZP Chairman and the UNO centred on the use of resources. In Biral upazila of Dinajpur district the Chairman assaulted the UNO and ransacked his office as the latter requested him to sign a letter of receipt during handing over of an abandoned vehicle of the UZP for his personal use (The Daily Star, 30 April 2010). In another incident conflicts occurred as the officials were discharging their retained responsibilities. In Durgapur upazila of Rajshahi district UNO and Project Implementation Officer (PIO) allegedly received threats from the UZP Chairman when they refused to release food grains finding gross irregularities in the Food for Work programmes undertaken in the Upazila (Banglanews24.com, 28 June 2012). Conflicts originated from the own functions of the UZP as well. In Pirgonj upazila of Rangpur district a committee led by the UNO and consisting of other officials were to select and recommend candidates for the post of Typist-cum-Computer Operator for the UZP. The final decision was to be taken by the UZP. However, the Chairman allegedly ransacked the office of the UNO when the latter refused to entertain the request of the former to qualify a particular candidate. The Chairman, on the other hand, denied the allegation and rather accused the UNO of claiming bribes (The Daily Manabzamin, 18 May 2012). In another incident conflicts occurred because of wrong perception of the elected representatives about their own jurisdiction. The UZP Chairmen of Rajshahi district boycotted district level meetings in protest of a statement by a concerned UNO. As one UZP Chairman alleged that the UNO is not inviting him to the agriculture related meetings held at the upazila level, the concerned UNO replied that there was no legal provision to invite the former (The Daily Manabzamin, 22 July 2012).

5.5 Framework for Analysis

The discussions so far reveal that the planning and implementation of development projects through ADP block grants might be influenced by legal, political, institutional and operational aspects. Thus, for developing a framework for analysis three independent variables can be identified. The first one is the legal aspects. It includes compliance of all the relevant parts of the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998, the related Rules, Circulars and Notifications and the instructions on the usage of UZP development fund. Although the legislations are universally applicable for all UZPs, level of compliance or adherence to the same is to vary. The second independent variable is the political aspects. It incorporates the decision making dynamics in the UZP and the influence of different actors in the planning and implementation process. The last independent variable is institutional and operational aspects. It incorporates the issues of training and orientation, awareness of the stakeholders, coordination and supervision. All three independent variables can be argued to influence the dependent variable – planning and implementation process. This variable incorporates the indicators through which the quality of planning and implementation can be assessed.

5.6.1 Independent Variables

The first independent variable is the *legal aspects*. UZP is an organization where none of the actors have extensive discretionary power. The Chairman cannot any unilateral decisions. He or she has to extract consensus of the UZP. The two Vice Chairmen can only recommend to the UZP through the decisions of the standing committees but the decisions of the committees are not binding upon it. The UP Chairmen, in a body hold majority of voting power and therefore they are, at least legally, capable of preventing decision making of the UZP. The MP's mandatory advice, on the other hand, might overturn the decision of the UZP. The bureaucrats in charge of different nation building departments have been made accountable to the UZP for their functions transferred to it. Thus, it may be argued that the Upazila Parishad Act was passed by the representatives of the people reflecting their wishes and therefore if the actors of UZP remain within such legal limits it will have positive influence on planning and implementation process. In other words, increased compliance with the legal limits by the actors of UZP will result in better planning and implementation as the existing checks and balances will rule out the negative influences. Role of UNO in the UZP will also be influenced by the legal factors as he or she plays an integral role in the planning and implementation process. Besides, UNOs may also identify legal bottlenecks in the Upazila

Parishad Act, corresponding rules or in various regulations relevant for planning and implementation by the UZP.

The second independent variable is the *political aspects*. The decision making process in the UZP might reflect undemocratic pattern. Decisions might be taken outside the meeting and without much of discussions. Increased prevalence of such practices might have increased negative influence on planning and implementation. Besides, patron clientelism might be reflected in project selection and implementation. Increased prevalence of such practices might result in decreased quality in planning and implementation. In another dimension the elected representatives, officials and even the local elites might try to influence decision making in their own ways. The internal political dynamics will determine their relative influence on policymaking and implementation process. It may be argued that increased influence of the bureaucrats, particularly the UNO, will result in better policy and implementation as they will rely on law rather than any other considerations. On the other hand, undue political pressure might dissuade the UNO from performing his or her due role, that is, to maintain financial discipline and ensure compliance with rules and regulations. This will result in deterioration in quality of planning and implementation.

The last of the independent variables is the *institutional and operational aspects*. Training and orientation of the UNO and other officials is likely to have a positive impact on planning and implementation. Likewise, increased coordination among the officials may also have similar effect. Awareness of political leaders and the people might have positive influences. Besides increased supervision by the higher officials may also have such influences. Thus, the existence of a better institutional and operational environment might have a positive influence on the planning and implementation process. It will similarly allow the UNO to positively influence the same.

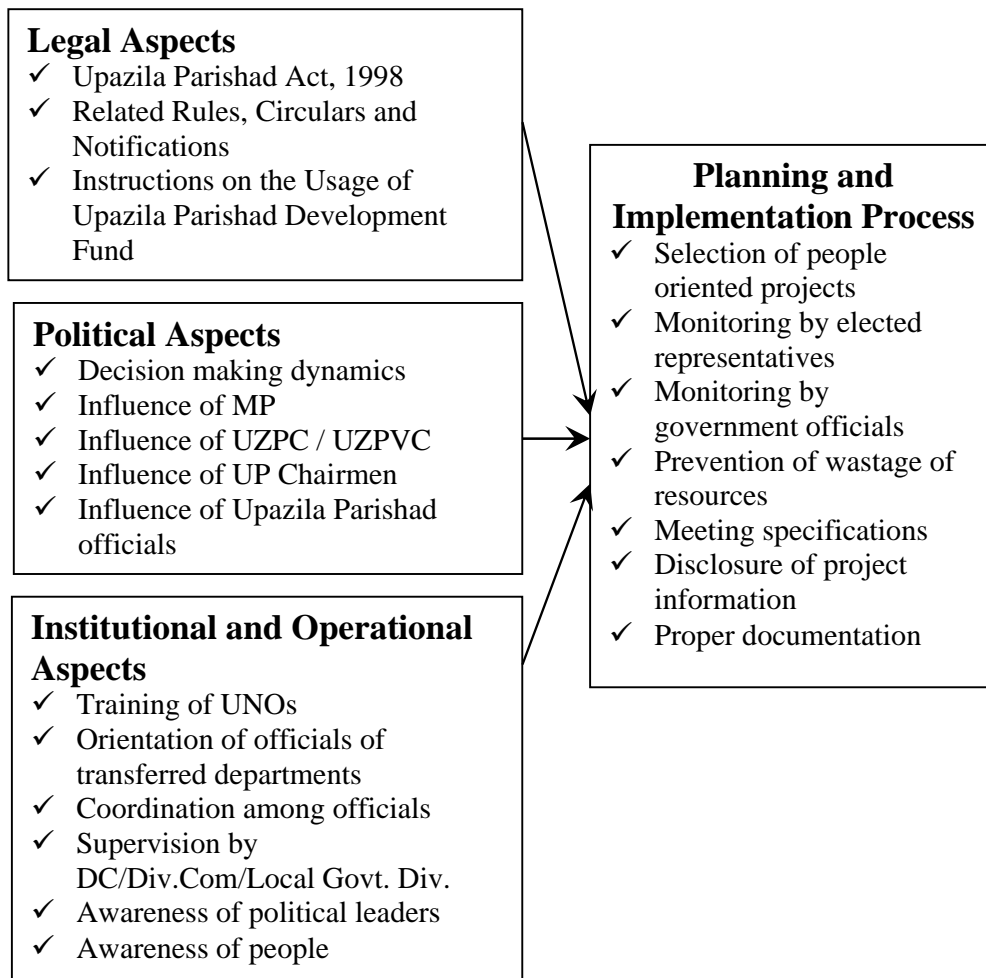
5.6.2 Dependent Variable

Irrespective of the way of decision making in the UZP, better planning will be evident if the selected projects are found to be people oriented. On the other hand, implementation quality will be reflected in monitoring by the elected representatives as well as the bureaucrats. Prevention of wastage of resources is another important way of assessing quality of planning and implementation. Besides, proper implementation requires meeting of specifications of the

undertaken project on the ground. Moreover, one specified condition for implementation of the undertaken projects is to ensure disclosure of relevant information to the people. When signboards with details of the implemented project are displayed at the site in one way it shows that the stated purpose has been served. Lastly, implementation requires proper documentation. Availability of relevant documents of the implemented projects is likely to indicate satisfactory level of implementation.

Figure 5.1 shows the tentative relations of the three independent variables, that is, legal aspects, political aspects, institutional and operational aspects with the dependent variable – planning and implementation process.

Figure 5.1: Relation between Independent and Dependent Variables



5.6.3 The Way of Assessing the Role of UNO

UNO is an integral part of the UZP framework. UNO has a role to play at every stage of the planning and implementation process. Therefore, like the planning and implementation process itself role of UNO also will be affected by legal, political, institutional and operational aspects. Being a key actor of the planning and implementation process, UNO is able to identify different legal, political, institutional and operational constraints affecting the planning and implementation process. Moreover, the discharging of the responsibilities of UNO will also be directly influenced by the same factors. Furthermore, UNO will be able to determine his or her relative influence in terms of others in the planning and implementation process.

The role of UNO can be assessed by answering four questions: Is the UNO displaying classical or political orientation in discharging his or her responsibilities? How far is the UNO able to influence the planning and decision making? How does the UNO handle conflicts with the elected representatives? What kind of influence does the UNO have on the planning and implementation process? The framework as discussed above will be helpful in answering these questions. In the first place, it is possible to identify whether the legal provisions, the political environment and the institutional and operational surroundings give enough support to the UNO to push for compliance of the rules in the UZP affairs. In case of lack of necessary support UNO might be forced to play a political role rather than a classical one. Secondly, UNO with his or her expertise is a part of the planning and decision making process alongside the other actors of UZP. The degree of influence that the UNO is able to exert might be related to the quality of planning and implementation. Thirdly, the chosen way of handling conflicts will be determined by the legal support, political environment and the institutional support. Finally, legal, political, institutional and operational aspects will determine the degree of involvement of UNO in the planning and implementation process. The degree of involvement in turn might be related to the quality of planning and implementation.

In this chapter a framework has been developed in order to address the research question. On the basis of the framework the questionnaire for the UNOs was developed. The next chapter furnishes the findings of the research, on the basis of which the role of UNO in planning and implementation has been analyzed.

6.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter analyzes the data obtained from the questionnaire survey and the structured interviews. The data has been analyzed in line with the analytical framework, which was developed in the previous chapter. The analysis is divided into two broad areas. The first part discusses the general findings from the primary data. Discussion in this part has been divided into legal, political, institutional and operational aspects and the assessment of planning and implementation process. The second part analyzes the role of UNO on the basis of these general findings. The analysis addresses the question whether the UNO displays classical or political orientation in discharging his or her duties. Then the involvement of UNO in the planning and implementation vis-à-vis other actors in the UZP has been discussed. The way of handling conflicts by the UNOs has been discussed. Finally the question of whether and how far the UNO is capable of influencing the quality of planning and implementation has been assessed.

6.1 General Findings

A total of 33 UNOs filled in a questionnaire, which asked questions on four broad areas: legal aspects, political aspects, institutional and operational aspects and the quality of planning and implementation. The questions cover the independent and dependent variables of the framework. The quantitative part of the collected data also helped testing of relations between the independent and dependent variables. The findings from the questionnaire to the UNOs have been crosschecked with the qualitative responses received from the elected representatives and other government officials including two UNOs.

6.1.1 Findings on the Legal Aspects

The concerned Member of the Parliament, Upazila Parishad Chairman, Vice Chairman and Union Parishad Chairmen have their legal jurisdictions specified in the legislations. However, the capability and the practical exercise of such jurisdictions vary across places. As the advice of the *concerned MP* is mandatory upon the UZP, theoretically it is therefore possible for him or her to overturn its decision. Practical situation also gave similar directions. More than three fourth (75.8%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that the MP is practically able to overturn the decision of the UZP. Nevertheless, 18.2% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, which means that legal jurisdiction only may not ensure

supremacy of the MP if he or she is not powerful politically. In legal terms the *Chairman of the UZP* does not have sweeping power in decision making. He or she is only entitled to a casting vote. Nonetheless, except for one third (33.3%) of the respondents, the rest either disagreed (45.5%) or remained undecided (21.2%) on the statement that the Chairman has limited power in disposing of the matters of Upazila Parishad. It means that the Chairman is not deriving his power from the legal provisions only. *Two Vice Chairmen* is entitled to one vote each in the UZP. They are also authorized to chair different Committees though the Committee decisions are not binding upon the UZP. However, respondents are almost equally divided (45.5% disagreed and 42.2% agreed) on the statement that the two Vice Chairmen cannot influence the decisions of UZP. This means that political power base might be supplementing the lack of legal power for the Vice Chairmen. *Union Parishad Chairmen* have the majority of the votes in the UZP and therefore on paper they are able to resist anything they do not like. In practical terms also majority (51.5%) of the respondents agreed that the UP Chairmen, in a body, can practically resist any decision they do not like. However, more than one fourth (27.3%) of them disagreed with the same statement. The probable reason might be that the UP Chairmen are not political competitors. Agreement on an issue of common interest is likely. However, differing political orientations might prevent such alliances in some cases.

The findings about the UP Chairmen have been substantiated by qualitative data. UNO Companigonj, Sylhet mentioned that when he requested the Chairmen to place proposals for projects worth at least Taka 6 to 7 lakh each, so as to enable implementation of visible inter union projects, they resisted the move in a body. They believed that a few large projects will always leave out a union or two. That means they have to engage in competition with each other and justify their proposals in the UZP. Instead of that they preferred distribution of the grant equally among themselves.

It was argued in developing the framework that the legal jurisdictions of all the elected representatives in totality create a check and balance situation. Increased *adherence to the legal jurisdictions by the elected representatives* is likely to result in better quality of planning. In an ideal situation neither the Chairman nor the Vice Chairmen is able to exercise sweeping powers. The UP Chairmen are always able to resist anything of their disliking in unison and the MP is able to overturn the decision of UZP. Such a situation is likely to result in better quality planning. Empirical evidences as seen in **table 6.1** show that the more

limited is the power of the UZP Chairman the better is the quality of planning. Besides, the more is the capability of UP Chairman to unite for a cause the better is the quality of planning. Furthermore, there is moderate level of correlation between adherence to the legal jurisdictions by the elected representatives and the quality of planning. This may be due to the fact the inability of the UZP Chairman to impose decisions create opportunity for others to participate in the decision making in a better way. Similarly the ability of UP Chairmen to unite resists adoption of any arbitrary decision.

Table: 6.1 Relationship between practical exercise of the jurisdictions of the elected representatives of UZP and the quality of planning

Pearson's r. n=33

Practical exercise of the legal jurisdiction of elected representatives of UZP	Quality of planning
Limited power of UZP Chairman	.349*
Inability of Vice Chairmen to influence the decisions of UZP	.151
Influence of MP in UZP decision	.102
Ability of UP Chairmen to resist a decision in a body	.409*
Adherence to the respective legal jurisdictions by the elected representatives	.371*

Notes:

* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed)

Adherence to the respective legal jurisdiction by the elected representatives has been computed from the average of the responses on the jurisdictions of UZP Chairman, Vice Chairmen, MP and UP Chairmen

The UNOs were asked to assess the *commitment of the government officials* by two questions. Overwhelming majority (84.9%) of the respondents disagreed that the UZP officials are not serious about their duties as they have limited accountability. Likewise they agreed (81.8%) with the statement that Upazila Engineer / concerned government official is serious about his or her duties for being accountable to the UZP. It shows that irrespective of any written provisions of accountability, the government officials have committed themselves to the UZP activities. This may be due to the fact that the presence of elected Chairman and

Vice Chairmen in the UZP have subjected themselves to scrutiny and despite the absence of any clear terms of accountability they are committing themselves to the UZP to stay out of criticism.

As the *provisions of using block grants* are very detailed, policymaking capability of the UZP in using such grants is limited. 87.9% of the respondents believe that projects can be taken only in a limited number of areas and therefore undertaken projects cannot fulfill local needs. Limitations of block grant related provisions have been pointed out by some of the respondents in qualitative terms:

- *The grant has to be spent in 10 sub sectors. No sub sector can be left out in a fiscal year. What to do if there is no genuine demand to undertake projects in a particular sub sector?*
- *Block grant cannot be used for the “purchase of computers or machine parts”. But computers used in educational institutions as teaching aid frequently need overhaul or replacement of accessories. It is not clear whether block grants can be used here.*

In this regard one UP Chairman of Austagram upazila pointed at local peculiarities that the legal provisions for block grants cannot address.

For major part of the year the land area in our upazila remains under water. Development work is only possible during the dry season. We cannot utilize the money during the rainy season. Major part of the development work, which starts in the dry season, requires repairing the damages caused by flood erosions. We do not need to undertake so many types of projects. Inter union projects too are practically impossible. Who can supervise projects that are spread over such a large area?

Such comments highlight the importance of assessing the local context. The provisions related to block grants are universally applicable to all the upazilas. However, the local context might necessitate special arrangements.

The UNOs were asked whether they faced any *legal constraints*. 60.6% of the respondents did not face any legal constraint in performing their duties. However, the rest 39.4% believed that they faced legal constraints while discharging their responsibilities. The legal constraints identified by them largely relate to the unawareness of the elected representatives and the people. This might have happened due to the fact that the stakeholders are unable to comprehend the legal context of this newly formed local government institution where the laws have been changed frequently.

- *UNO was initially designated as “Secretary” to the Upazila Parishad. Elected representatives expect the UNO to act like the Secretary of the UP who is not entitled to an opinion. Whenever UNO gives an opinion the politicians think that he is crossing his limits.*
- *UNO has a wide range of retained and regulatory functions. Most importantly UNO represents the government in the UZP as well as outside. However, the Charter of Duties does not give a comprehensive list of retained and regulatory functions and the popular perception is that UNO has been stripped of the powers and privileges that he or she was entitled to in the past. This prompts the politicians and their followers to undermine the status of UNO.*
- *Even after the installment of an elected Upazila Parishad, Upazila Administration has not ceased to exist. A number of services are still being delivered through the Office of the UNO. However, there have been no clear cut directives to recognize the existence of two separate entities under one roof. People in general perceive that the Chairman has a say in every decision originating from the Upazila Parishad Complex.*

In some cases legal constraints concern the advisory status of the concerned MP. One of the respondents identified the difficulty of incorporating the advice of the MP. Another respondent identified the problem associated with the jurisdiction of the MP, which may not match with that of the UZP.

- *It is not clear as to how the advice of the MP has to be taken in. So far he has not attended any of the UZP meetings. However, his decisions are made known by one or two of his political associates. Sometimes they hand over a chit with name and designation of the MP and the monogram of the Jatiyo Sangsad (National Parliament) on top, a few lines of handwritten advice and the claimed signature of him at the bottom. The chit does not have any memo number or issue date. Of course the MP confirms over phone about the sending over of his advice. But that particular piece of paper is in no way enough legal proof that his advice has been taken. Furthermore, notices and resolutions of the Upazila Parishad meetings are sent to his residence in the upazila area as he has no office in his constituency. Once it was made known that he did not receive the notice of a meeting where some important decisions were taken. Later on it was found out that one household help received the notice, which was not handed over to the MP.*

- *My workplace consists of 12 unions. One union falls under the constituency of a different MP. Whenever we are taking up projects in that particular union we are legally required to take the advice of the concerned MP. However, the concerned MP has so far taken no interest in one union, which is a part of his adjacent upazila where he is not very familiar. So far as I have learned his advice has never been taken in undertaking projects in that particular union.*

The **perception of the elected representatives** of the UZP is not very positive about the legal aspects. All of the 10 elected representatives interviewed believe that the provisions related to block grants are not conducive to local development. Their views can be summarized as follows:

- *Laws should not dictate the type, size and number of projects to be taken.*

- *Too many laws mean too much to do for the bureaucrats and too little to do for the elected representatives.*

It has been observed by the researcher during the interviews that the elected representatives might not be fully and clearly aware of the provisions of block grant utilization. Nevertheless, they are blaming the bureaucrats, including the UNOs for their unawareness. On the other

hand, it is the bureaucrats who are authorized to guide the planning and implementation process as per the legal provisions. Such role of bureaucrats might be making the elected representatives dissatisfied.

The existing legal context has some important *implications for the UNOs*. Elected representatives are drawing their power and authority not from the legal provisions only. UNOs need to understand the local political dynamics to play an effective role in the Parishad. UNOs' responsibilities in the UZP include ensuring compliance of legal provisions. On the other hand, politicians think that the existing legal provisions curtail their freedom. This may bring the two on a collusion course. Furthermore, the local context might require a different type of response from the UNOs. Strict adherence to the legal provisions might sometimes be counterproductive.

6.1.2 Findings on the Political Aspects

Political factors that affect the planning and implementation of block grant supported projects incorporate a wide range of issues. The decision making process in the UZP might be devoid of democratic norms and therefore result in poor planning and implementation. The decisions of UZP might be influenced by the considerations of patron clientelism. In some cases existence of conflicts between political leaders and the bureaucrats might have negative repercussions on the decisions of the UZP. Besides, some of the tendencies of the political leaders like the tendency to overemphasize physical infrastructures rather than not-so-visible yet important projects evade accountability and exerting pressure on the bureaucrats. Most importantly the political aspects describe the relative importance of different persons in planning and implementation.

Regarding the *decision making process* it was expected that it would involve undemocratic norms. However, almost half (48.5%) of the respondents disagreed that the decisions in the UZP are not taken on the basis of majority votes as they are adopted without any opposition from any member while one third (33.3%) of them agreed with the same. Again, almost half (48.5%) of the respondents disagreed that there is little debate in the UZP before taking any decision on projects, while 39.4% of them disagreed with the same. Such findings contradict the findings of the previous studies. This might be due to the fact that the newly elected UP Chairmen are showing interests in UZP affairs. However, the UNOs of Companigonj and Netrokona Sadar think that no quality debate takes place in the UZP. Debates in most cases

involve political rhetoric. Decisions are mostly taken beforehand and behind the scenes. UNO can learn about the internal matters much later.

Patron client relationship exists between the politicians and their followers. Views of both the bureaucrats and the elected representatives have been taken into consideration to judge such relationship. There were three questions for the UNOs, which were intended to assess the existence of patron client relationship in the political context of an upazila. In response to the first statement more than four fifth (84.5%) of the respondents agreed that the interests of the politicians rather than the interests of the masses get priority in project selection and implementation. Secondly, 78.8% of the respondents believe that political background of the UP Chairmen and particular interests of the elected representatives are the determinants of allocation of projects for a union. Lastly, similar proportion (78.8%) of the respondents agreed that project tenders are awarded to parties having linkages with political leaders in the UZP. In fact, the respondents have cited a number of instances where patron client relationship subdued other rational consideration. One respondent notes down the following incident where genuine public interest was sacrificed in the process of excluding a person who does not belong to the clientele group of the patron himself.

A high school is located beside a highway, which experiences heavy traffic round the day. A project was undertaken by the Upazila Parishad to construct a boundary wall separating the school and the highway as a way of ensuring security for the students. However, the project had to be dropped in the face of opposition from the MP who opined in the UZP meeting that the Chairman of the School Managing Committee is involved in the politics of opposition party.

Perception of the UNOs revealed negative ***correlations between clientelistic considerations and the quality of planning and implementation***. Answers to the two out of three questions as discussed above showed moderate level of negative correlations between clientelistic considerations and the quality of planning and implementation, which can be seen on the following page in **table 6.2**. Consideration of political identity in project selection and contractors with links with UZP members have been found to be negatively correlated with the quality of planning and implementation. On overall counts as well clientelistic considerations in the political process of UZP was found to be negatively correlated with the

quality of planning and implementation. This gives a clear indication that the UNOs blame the political leaders for poor quality of planning and implementation.

Table 6.2: Relationship between clientelistic considerations and the quality of planning and implementation

Pearson's r. n=33

Clientelistic considerations in the political process of UZP	Quality of planning and implementation
Prioritization of the interests of the political followers rather than the interests of the masses	-.097
Consideration of political identity in project allocation	-.349*
Contractors have links with UZP members	-.393*
Clientelistic considerations in the political process	-.386*

Notes:

* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed)

Quality of planning and implementation has been computed by averaging the responses to the eight questions.

Clientelistic considerations in the political process has been computed by averaging the responses to the three related questions.

Perspectives of the elected representatives have been taken into consideration to verify the responses of the UNOs. All of the 10 political representatives interviewed admit the existence of pressure from the political followers. However, none admits giving any undue favour. Justification for maintaining such relationships have been placed as 3 out of 10 respondents believe that their followers work for local people and therefore awarding them a favor or two is not wrong. Regarding the existence of malpractices related to project works all of the 10 interviewees admitted that project works under block grants are not always satisfactory. On the question of legal compliance only 2 out of 10 think that government policies should not

be violated as it may “create chaos” or “disadvantage the weak”. The rest however, desire flexible application of laws by bureaucrats. Thus, it is seen that the elected representatives do not find maintenance of patron client relationships completely unjustified. In fact, maintenance of such relationship is linked with their political existence.

Responses of five of the respondents bring out evidences of ***conflicts among political leaders***. Conflicts among the political entities in the upazila may have an impact on the running of UZP and also on the planning and implementation of projects. Comments of five respondents can be summarized as follows.

- *Chairman of the Upazila Parishad or Chairman of one or more of the Union Parishads are involved in political conflict with the political leaders of opposing views. They are politically disadvantaged and most of the times stay outside the upazila for security reasons. Their roles in the UZP are played by those who do not have popular mandate.*

- *In a particular upazila the MP, Upazila Parishad Chairman and Vice Chairman belong to different political camps. Local people believe that they are all potential candidates for the next national election. They vie for resources with each other and try to diminish each other’s influence. Public interests suffer because of such conflicts.*

The incidents as mentioned above show that muscle power can undermine popular will and expel an elected representative from a democratic setup. Besides, unhealthy political rivalry among the elected representatives may ultimately deprive the people of their legitimate rights. UNO, who is rather comfortable in a rational legal setup, is most likely to find such a situation uncomfortable for discharging his or her duties.

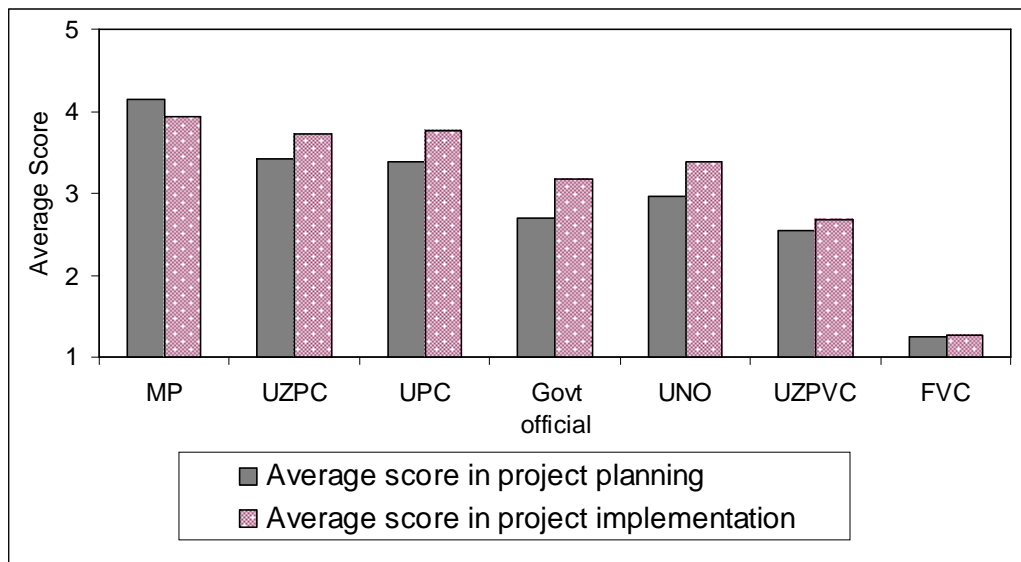
Interviews of the UNOs of two upazilas revealed ***preference of the elected representatives for infrastructure related projects***, in other words, visible projects. However, the UNOs believe that such projects increase the volume of work for the Upazila Engineer requiring intense supervision on his part. In their opinion elected representatives can sell such projects easily to the electorates. UNO Companigonj mentioned that projects like popularization of *Apple kul* (a kind of plum) among the farmers or increasing efficiency of primary school

teachers were strongly resisted by some of the elected representatives. This ultimately makes the compliance with the instructions related to project planning and implementation difficult.

According to the perception of the UNOs the government officials in the UZP are under *political pressure*. Two thirds (66.7%) of the respondents believe that the government officials do not feel comfortable to express their opinions in the UZP meetings. Three fourth (75.7%) of the respondents believe that government officials do not feel free to inspect the projects. Such views of UNOs may not be unfounded as the two Upazila Engineers said that they avoid “undesirable situations” in the meetings. However, they maintain regular contact with the UNO. Both opined that identifying irregularities of a contractor needs active support from the UNO and some of the politicians as well.

As the UNOs were asked to rank the *influence of different persons in planning and implementation* it was found that the two Vice Chairmen were left out of the equation. MP was considered to be the most influential person followed by Upazila Parishad Chairman and the Union Parishad Chairmen as seen in **figure 6.1**. Such findings more or less tally with the responses about the practical exercise of legal jurisdictions by the elected representatives as discussed in the previous subsection.

Figure 6.1: Relative Influence of Persons in Planning and Implementation of Block Grant Supported Projects



MP is the most influential person in both planning and implementation stages, although his influences diminish a bit in the implementation stage. However, 21.2% of the respondents reckoned *MP* as not influential in the planning stage and 15.2% regarded them as such in the implementation stage. Non influence of the *MP* might be determined by their political orientations or lack of support base in the particular upazila. *UZP Chairman* is the second most influential person whose influence increases in the implementation stage. However, political orientations might have caused the non influential status of some of the Chairmen in the planning stage (18.2%) and in implementation stage (15.2%). *Vice Chairman* is largely non influential in planning (48.5%) and in implementation (39.4%). *Female Vice Chairman* is the least influential among the elected representatives. This might be due to their inability to exercise political power in the Upazila affairs. *UP Chairmen* hold an important place next to *UZP Chairman* both in planning (51.5%) and in implementation (63.6%). Being a part of the project committees, *UP Chairmen* might be in a better position to influence implementation.

Concerned government official in most cases is an influential entity as only 36.4% regarded them as non influential in planning and 12.1%, in implementation process. Political leaders as well as *UNO* might be depending on their technical and professional knowledge. Compared to the concerned officials *UNO* think himself to be better placed to influence both planning and implementation as 27.3% regarded themselves as influential in planning while 48.5% had similar assessment of themselves in implementation. *UNO*'s influence in implementation might be higher as he is jointly responsible for fund release. It might also be related to the fact that the procedures in the *UZP* require a wide range of bureaucratic process. Owing to their inexperience the elected representatives might be relying on the *UNOs* for expertise. Moreover, *UNO*'s involvement in the disposal of retained and regulatory subjects might be raising his or her importance to the elected representatives. This can be supplemented by the opinion of a *UP Chairman* who justified the dominance of *UNO* in the *UZP* in the following way.

There are a large number of committees in the upazila where UZP Chairman, Vice Chairmen have no involvement. UNO is the most influential in those committees. In many cases we have to maintain good relations with him to get his favour when different relief materials are sent to upazila for distribution. I believe that nobody gets benefited by picking up a fight with him.

Political aspects have significant *implications for the UNO*. Role of the elected representatives in the UZP is being determined by their respective political power and not merely by their legal jurisdictions. Following of standard operating procedure for disposal of business becomes difficult in such a scenario. Political pressure has a negative influence on the quality of planning and implementation. On the other hand, despite being rule bound bureaucrats UNOs are still capable of influencing the planning and implementation process in the UZP. In fact, the rules that run the UZP affairs have allowed the UNO to gain such importance.

6.1.3 Findings on the Institutional and Operational Aspects

A number of institutional and operational issues are important in the planning of implementation of block grant supported projects. Sufficiency and timely arrival of grants is needed to chalk out and implement development projects. Moreover, a newly formed local government institution like the UZP requires orientation of officers and the political leaders alike. Furthermore, supervisory role of the higher authorities might also have an influence on the planning and implementation.

Among the respondents 97% of the respondents consider *block grants* to be insufficient to meet the development needs of the Upazila. 87.9% of the respondents opined that quarterly installments do not arrive on time. Such unpredictable nature of block grant disbursement implies that UNO and the other government officials do not get enough time to prepare for its proper utilization. The elected representatives, on the other hand, also do not have positive views about block grant scenario. All of the 10 elected representatives opined that block grants are necessary to make Upazila more experienced in project works. However, 5 out of 10 noted that a wide range of development activities are taking place in upazila where the UZP has no role.

Majority of the respondents (57.6%) did not receive any *training or orientation* regarding their responsibilities in the UZP. However, those of the respondents who received related training or orientation (42.4%) found the training to be not very helpful. In a scale of 5, where the options ranged from Not at all helpful =1 to Totally helpful =5, the average of the responses was 3.57.

For the newly installed UZPs *awareness of the elected representatives* about the upazila affairs is of utmost importance. However, 97% of the respondents believe that political leaders are not completely aware of the functions of the UZP. On the other hand, among the elected representatives interviewed all of the five Chairmen and Vice Chairmen had at least one orientation regarding the functions of Upazila Parishad. None of them admit any insufficiency in their orientation.

Coordination between UNO and upazila level officials can be considered to be important in bettering planning and implementation. An overwhelming 90.9% of the respondents deny that coordination between UNO and other officials is unsatisfactory. In fact, the respondents might be having a rather narrow view of coordination. It was learned from the two upazilas that the UNO does not have enough information to completely prevent duplication of projects. This implies that the information on development projects undertaken by different organizations in the upazila are not share with the UNO.

The *supervisory authority of the UNO*, that is, the DC and the Divisional Commissioner have a rather insignificant role in the upazila affairs. Majority (54.5%) of the respondents agreed that the DC, Divisional Commissioner or other higher officials do not show much interest in project inspection. In this regard DC (In charge) of Netrokona said that DC has very limited power in Upazila affairs. It is expected that the UNOs will take all the challenges as part of their job and would not look forward to the intervention of higher authorities too often. Thus, it is seen that unlike the past the UNOs can hardly rely on his or her supervisory authority for conflict mitigation.

Correlations could be found between two of the institutional and operational factors and the planning and implementation process. As seen in **table 6.3** unawareness of transferred officials and unsatisfactory level of coordination with other officials are negatively correlated with the planning and implementation process. Moderate level of negative correlation between unawareness of transferred officials and the planning and implementation process indicate that UNOs rely heavily on the upazila level officials in playing a role in the UZP. Similarly moderate level of negative correlation between upazila level officials and the UNO implies the importance of good rapport between the two in attaining the objectives of planning and implementation process.

Table 6.3: Relationship between institutional and operational factors and the planning and implementation process

Pearson's r. n=33

Institutional and operational factors	Quality of planning and implementation
Unawareness of transferred officials	-.424*
Unawareness of political leaders	-.141
Lack of supervising from higher officials	-.169
Unsatisfactory coordination with other upazila level officials	-.361*
Unawareness of people	-.063

Notes:

* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed)

Quality of planning and implementation has been computed by averaging the responses to the eight questions.

The institutional and operational context has some important *implications for the UNO*. UNOs are faced with a situation where they themselves, elected representatives and other govt officials all have inadequate orientations about UZP affairs. Such a situation is likely to generate conflicts. Besides, UNOs need to maintain good relations with other upazila level officials for betterment of planning and implementation.

6.1.4 Assessment of the Quality of Planning and Implementation

The respondents in general do not have a positive view about the planning and implementation quality. Majority (60.6%) of the respondents believe that the selected projects are people oriented. However, only 23.2% believe that wastage can be prevented. Almost two third (63.6%) also think that project specifications on paper are met on the ground. Only 39.4% think that implementation agencies are chosen as per rules. Although 87.9% disagree that elected representatives properly inspects the projects, 63.6% agree with the statement that UNO and other officials are supervising properly. 93.9% of the respondents noted that project related information is not properly displayed at the sites, which

means that UZP itself is largely to be blamed for unawareness of people. In a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 indicates highest quality, the average of the responses to the eight questions was 2.99. This indicates that the UNOs in general are not satisfied with the quality of planning and implementation. In fact, ensuring quality of planning and implementation is a joint responsibility of the elected representatives and the government officials. Apparently the UNOs are largely blaming the elected representatives for wastage of resources, wrong selection of implementation agencies or failure in inspecting the projects. In this regard the elected representatives also expressed negative notions about planning and implementation. All of the 10 elected representatives interviewed opined that at least in some cases projects are not of good quality. Majority (6 out of 10) also believe that wastage cannot be prevented. Nonetheless, the quality of planning and implementation may not be deemed unsatisfactory given the context of development activities in the rural setting. One of the two UNOs interviewed noted the following.

In case of Test Relief and Food for Work projects there is virtually no accountability of people in charge of project implementation. In case of UZP the situation is a bit different. Presence of a good number of actors with varied orientations ensures a system of check and balance. Large scale misappropriation of resources is difficult as it will always be protested by some party.

6.2 Analysis of the Role of UNO

Given the legally specified responsibilities UNO is supposed to play a role in the UZP, which more or less resembles that of a facilitator. UNO is assigned to ensure that the legal provisions are complied with and financial disciplines are maintained. UNO is to provide secretarial assistance to the UZP and can step into the planning and implementation process when the legal and financial regulations are not complied with. Apparently, such type of responsibilities fit the UNO in the mould of classical bureaucrat. However, the practical context may direct the UNO to play a different role. Secondly, irrespective of the classical responsibilities that UNO has, he or she is still a part of the political process in the UZP. The degree of UNO's involvement in the political process depends on a number of legal, political, institutional and operational factors. Thirdly, conflict handling techniques preferred by the UNO also are shaped up by similar factors. Lastly, the effect that UNO can have on the planning and implementation largely depends on political aspects.

6.2.1 Classical Versus Political Orientation of UNO

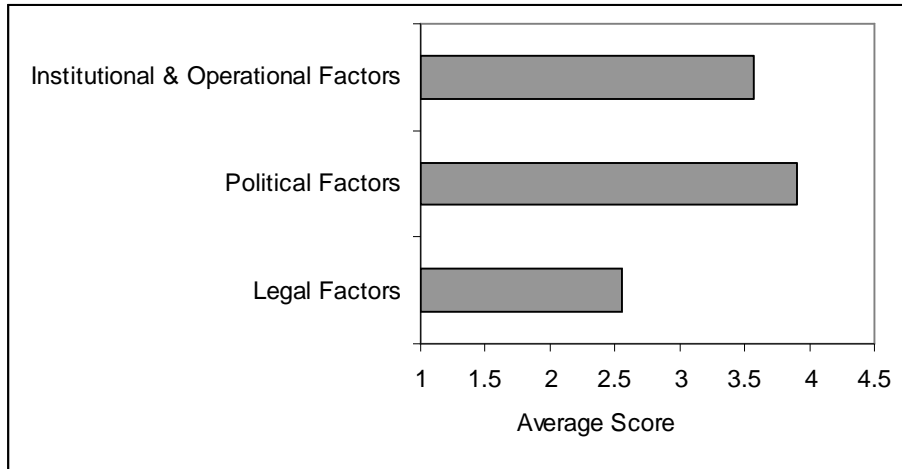
In the designated capacity of Principal Executive Officer of the UZP, UNO can assume the role of either a classical bureaucrat or a political one. In order to understand the classical or political orientation of the UNO a set of legal, political, institutional and operational factors need to be looked into.

Legal, institutional and cultural contexts can be discussed in order to place *arguments for classical orientation* of the UNO. *In the first place*, analysis of the legal context reveals that the responsibilities of UNO essentially involve compliance of rules and regulations. There is no scope for the UNO to go beyond the prescribed legal limits. In fact, the planning and implementation of block grant supported development involves plethora of rules, which are universally applicable. The process also requires extensive documentation. *Secondly*, analysis of the institutional and cultural context shows that the UNOs come from a traditional bureaucratic organization and they have at least six years of service experience in the traditional administration. In terms of organizational culture Aminuzzaman (1993) found the bureaucrats with similar service experience to be maintaining high power distance and displaying high uncertainty avoidance tendencies, which has been discussed in the previous chapter. UNOs working at the field level may similarly have classical orientation.

On the other hand, some empirical evidences make up the *arguments for political orientation* of the UNO. *In the first place*, UZP can be termed as an immature organization where the elected leaders are unaware of their responsibilities. In fact, the immaturity of the organization is such that its key actors are likely to feel uncomfortable in its rule bound environment. Interviews of the elected representatives clearly showed their resentment about the rule bound nature of the organization. *Secondly*, difficulties are evident as far as compliance of the legislations is concerned. Although the legal jurisdictions of the elected representatives have been set by the legislations, they are indeed drawing their power and influence from the political sources and not merely from the legal mandates. UNOs on their part find that the legal framework carries loopholes in which situation they have to apply their discretionary power. Besides, laws are sometimes unable to address the local peculiarities. The political leadership also demands flexible application of the laws. *Thirdly*, the political context is found to be more important for the UNOs than the legal and political ones. Almost two third (72.7%) of the UNOs felt that the legal factors were influencing their roles. More than half (57.6%) found institutional and operational factors to be influential.

However, they were mostly undecided (45.5%) or simply found the legal factors non influential (48.5%). Average scores of three factors also put the political factors above the other two as seen in **figure 6.2**. In fact, the legal context might have taken a backseat because of absence of pressure from the government side for complying with the legislations related to the UZP. *Fourthly*, the lack of institutional support also might be encouraging the UNOs to

Figure 6.2: Relative influence of different factors on the role of UNOs



opt for a political role. UNOs are hardly drawing any support from their higher authorities. They have enough leeway to decide the strategies on the ground in their own way. Besides, UNOs lack training. Even the trained UNOs rated the training they received poorly. Nonetheless, they did not find the institutional factors more important than the political ones. This might be due to the fact that they are depending more on their ready wit rather than the legal provisions in discharging their responsibilities. *Fifthly*, the UNOs clearly pointed at the political context to be the stumbling block as they found the clientelistic considerations responsible for poor quality of planning and implementation. *Sixthly*, the political environment itself might be creating a situation for the UNO to play a political role. UNOs have bureaucratic expertise, which might be raising their importance in the political process. Political leaders, on the other hand, might be relying on the UNO as the latter has retained and regulatory functions. *Lastly*, it is not unprecedented for the UNO to play a political role. Review of relevant literature suggested that the UNO played political roles in the absence of elected representatives in the UZP.

Thus, it is seen that the UNOs have the background of a classical bureaucrat. Even the legislations of the UZP and the designated responsibilities of UNO favour a classical role.

However, the practical considerations suggest the UNOs to play a political role. More often than not the rules do not address local context. Political leadership demands flexible application of law. Lack of institutional support, immaturity of UZP as local government body and the importance the UNOs have in the upazila context prompt them to go beyond the legal considerations.

6.2.2 UNO's Involvement in the Political Process

It has been argued that the UZP resembles a matrix organization. Except for the elected Chairman and the Vice Chairmen all other actors have their allegiance elsewhere. UNO also is mainly accountable to the government. In the UZP UNO comes with his or her bureaucratic expertise. Density of rules, need for documentation at every stage of the planning and implementation, involvement in retained and regulatory functions raise the importance of UNO in the UZP. The decision making process might resemble the context described in the group theory. All the political actors including the MP might have their own groups to have a say in the political process. UNO too is likely to be the part of a group. UNOs in general have rate their coordination with the upazila level officials highly, find them sincere in their duties and find all the government officials vulnerable to political pressures. This in turn indicates the likely alliance of UNO with the upazila level officials. Even in the political process itself UNO was found to be outshining some of the elected representatives. UNOs do not possess political muscle power and therefore they are most likely to have secured a strong position in the process of planning and implementation of block grant supported projects through their bureaucratic position and expertise. It is not surprising that the UNOs have a greater role to play in the implementation process rather than planning. It is because of the fact that the UNOs are jointly responsible for fund release and for the compliance of public procurement legislations.

It is very likely that the degree of involvement of UNO in the planning and implementation process might depend on his or her *personal initiative, sincerity and leadership capabilities*. As the researcher contacted the potential respondents and informed them about the subject of this research, 15 of them came up with instant responses like “UNO does not have any role in planning and implementation of block grant projects” or “I need to talk to the Upazila Engineer. He knows the best” Such responses indicate that all the officers posted as UNO may not have the necessary initiative. Such assumption is supported by the opinions of three UP Chairmen of Austagram upazila who opined that some of the officers posted at that

remote upazila show signs of disappointment and make a sincere effort to get transferred to another place. This reduces them to mere observers in the UZP affairs. The two Upazila Engineer also opined that their role becomes easier when a capable officer is posted. The two of the UP Chairmen said that they expect the UNO to listen to them, inspect their unions regularly and to take personal interests in drawing the attention of higher authorities whenever needed. However, all officers do not show the right level of initiative.

6.2.3 Conflict Handling by the UNOs

In order to determine the preferred strategies of the UNOs in dealing with conflict situations with the political leaders a set of four options were tendered before the respondents. The first one was to follow the rules and uphold public interests, which resembles the role of classical bureaucrats. The second option involved search for a solution, which was more or less acceptable to all the parties. This option in particular resembled the preference of a political bureaucrat. The third and fourth options, refraining from giving an opinion and supporting the opinion of the most powerful person indirectly indicated succumbing to political pressure. All of the respondents showed clear preference for the first option. However, such responses might merely indicate their preferences and not what they actually do. The second option, despite the fact that it indicated a deviation from the rule bound nature, was preferred by 88% of the respondents. This in an indirect way shows the readiness of the UNOs to take up a political role. The last two options were largely discarded as 69.7% showed clear dislike for the third one and 57.5% for the last one. However, in no way such findings show that the UNOs are free from political pressure. In fact, the same respondents have pointed out at the political considerations in the planning and implementation process.

6.2.4 Effect of UNO's Involvement on Planning and Implementation

In legal terms UNO's involvement in the planning process is rather limited. UNO is only required to make sure that the legal provisions are complied with. Nonetheless, UNOs have taken up an important role in the planning of block grant based development. Most importantly, a moderately positive correlation is found between UNO's influence in the planning process and the quality of planning as seen in **table 6.4**. This can be substantiated by the fact that increased involvement of UNO is likely to ensure increased adherence to the legal procedure and lesser preference for the narrow political considerations.

Table 6.4: Relationship between UNO's influence on planning and the quality of planning

Pearson's r. n=33

	Quality of planning
UNO's influence on planning process	.432*

Notes:

* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed)

In the same vein a moderately positive correlation was found between UNO's influence on planning and implementation and the quality of planning and implementation as shown in **table 6.5**. This finding is more expected than the previous one. In fact, the implementation process involves more of the complex bureaucratic procedure than planning. This raises the importance of UNO at this stage. Compliance with the public procurement legislations and the provisions for release of funds through joint signature of the UNO and the UZP Chairman make the UNO an unavoidable entity.

Table 6.5: Relationship between UNO's influence on planning and implementation and the quality of planning and implementation

Pearson's r. n=33

	Quality of planning and implementation
UNO's influence on planning and implementation	.414*

Notes:

* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed)

Quality of planning and implementation has been computed by averaging the responses to the eight questions.

Influence on planning and implementation has been computed by averaging the responses relating to influences of planning and influences of implementation.

The question becomes relevant whether the UNOs have been able to positively influence the planning and implementation process. In fact the UNOs have identified the political factors to be an obstacle in ensuring quality of planning and implementation. As seen in table 6.6 a negative and moderate level of correlation was found between the political influence on the

role of UNO and the planning and implementation. This indicates that the quality of planning and implementation suffers as the UNOs are subjected to increased political pressure. Therefore, a deviation from the rule bound nature of the UNO is not likely to ensure positive results unless the negative political influences are dispelled.

Table 6.6: Relationship between different factors and the quality of planning and implementation

Pearson's r. n=33

Type of factor influencing the role of UNO	Quality of planning and implementation
Legal	-.088
Political	-.413*
Institutional and operational	-.024

Notes:

* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed)

Quality of planning and implementation has been computed by averaging the responses to the eight questions.

The research tried to address the question on the role of UNO in the planning and implementation of block grant supported development projects. As per the legal provisions UNO is supposed to play a role in the UZP that closely resembles that of a facilitator. UNO is to provide secretarial support to the UZP and ensure compliance of rules and regulations. Such responsibilities fit the UNO in the mould of a classical bureaucrat. However, empirical evidences indicated that UNO might be playing the role of a political bureaucrat as the legal provisions cannot address the local needs or the demands from the political leadership. In the planning and implementation stages UNO is very much a part of the political process. There are indications that increased influence of the UNO is likely to result in better quality of planning and implementation. However, narrow political considerations stand in the way of attaining the same.

The chapter on findings and analysis ends here. The next chapter draws conclusions from the research.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

As a local government institution Upazila Parishad (UZP) lacks maturity. It is also dependent on the government for finance. In fact, block grants from the government have kept the political process inside the institution moving. In the capacity of Principal Executive Officer Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) is assigned to represent the government in the UZP. However, he or she is largely accountable to the government itself. The research aimed at exploring the role of UNO in the planning and implementation of block grant supported projects.

In analyzing the role of UNO in the planning and implementation of block grant supported development projects a framework was developed, which consisted of three independent variables and one dependent variable. It was argued that legal, political and institutional and operational aspects would influence the planning and implementation process. Since UNO is involved in every stage of the process his or her role also was to be influenced by these three variables. Regarding the legal aspects it was argued that if the elected representatives adhered to their legal jurisdictions it would result in better planning and implementation. Empirical evidences also suggested that positive correlation exists between compliance of legal jurisdictions and the planning and implementation process. Regarding the political aspects it was found that clientelistic considerations negatively influence planning and implementation. Lastly, some of the institutional and operational aspects like unawareness of officials and lack of coordination between officials and the UNO were found to have negative effects on planning and implementation. Thus, the framework was found to be sound through empirical evidences.

The role of UNO in the planning and implementation process, which resembles that of a facilitator, requires him or her to ensure compliance of legal provisions. In other world the legislations expect the UNO to play the role of a classical bureaucrat. However, practical considerations guide the UNO to do otherwise. Given the political situation on the ground the UNO is bound to play a political role. The legal provisions in some cases fail to address local peculiarities and the demand of the political leadership. In fact, UNOs are not found to be opposed to political roles as they preferred to have mutually beneficial outcomes in case of conflicts with elected representatives, which is a clear preference for political roles. It shows that despite the bearer of classical traditions UNOs are ready to explore political roles.

Empirical evidences have also given the indication that increased involvement of the UNO is likely to result in betterment of planning and implementation. Apparently such enhanced role indicate classical role, which is likely to put a check on legal violations. Nevertheless, narrow political considerations were found to be obstructing the quality of planning and implementation. As political influences dissuade the UNO from playing his or her due role planning and implementation suffers. From this point of view playing of a classical role by the UNO is not undesirable. Nonetheless, density of rules necessitates a political role of the UNO. Venturing into a political role by the UNO is unlikely to result in positive outcomes unless the narrow political considerations can be taken care of.

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Not applicable at all = 1

Always applicable = 5

Sl.		1	2	3	4	5
a	Upazila Parishad Chairman has limited power in disposing of the matters of the Parishad.					
b	The two Vice Chairmen cannot influence the decision of the Parishad as the decisions of the standing committees are not binding on the Parishad.					
c	MP is the most influential person in decision making as he or she can overturn the opinion of Upazila Parishad.					
d	The UP Chairmen hold the majority of votes in the Parishad and therefore they, in a body, can resist any decision they do not like.					
e	Government officials have limited accountability to the Parishad and therefore they are not serious about their duties.					
f	UP Chairmen are accountable to the electorates of their respective unions only and therefore are not serious about Upazila Parishad functions.					
g	Upazila Engineer / the concerned government official has been made accountable to the Parishad for project implementation and therefore is serious about his or her duties.					
h	Projects can be taken only in a limited number of areas and therefore projects undertaken cannot fulfill local needs.					

4. In your opinion to what extent do the legal factors (as mentioned in question 3) influence your role in selection and implementation of block grant supported projects?

Not at all

Very much

1 ————— 2 ————— 3 ————— 4 ————— 5

5. Do you face any legal constraint in performing your designated role related to project selection, approval and implementation?

Yes

No

If the answer is yes, please mention the constraint(s).

Political Aspects:

6. The following statements are probable conclusions drawn from the review of political culture of the country. In your opinion, to what extent are the statements practically applicable in your place of work?

Not applicable at all = 1

Always applicable = 5

Sl.		1	2	3	4	5
a	Decisions in the Parishad are not taken on the basis of majority votes as they are taken without any opposition from any member.					
b	There is little debate in the Parishad before taking any decision on projects.					
c	The government officials do not feel free to express their opinions in the Parishad meetings.					
d	Interests of the political followers rather than the interests of the masses get priority in project selection and implementation.					

Sl.		1	2	3	4	5
e	Whether a particular union will get a project depends on the political background of the UP Chairman and/or the particular interests of UZP Chairman, Vice Chairmen or MP.					
f	In implementing the undertaken projects tenders are awarded to parties having linkages with the political leaders in the Parishad.					
g	The government officials do not feel free to inspect the projects.					
h	Local people do not come up with suggestions or complaints regarding any project.					

7. In your opinion to what extent do the political factors (as mentioned in question 6) influence your role in selection and implementation of block grant supported projects?

Not at all Very much

1 ————— 2 ————— 3 ————— 4 ————— 5

8. In case of any difference of opinions with the members of Upazila Parishad, to what extent do the following strategies resemble the one adopted by you?

Not at all = 1 Very much = 5

Sl.		1	2	3	4	5
a	Emphasize on complying with the rules and upholding public interests					
b	Attempt to find a solution that would be more or less acceptable to all the parties					
c	Refrain from giving own opinion in order to avoid possible conflict					
d	Support the opinion of someone who has the strongest influence on Upazila Parishad					

9. Is there any instance when you could not perform your designated role in project selection or implementation owing to political reasons? If the answer is yes then please mention the incident.

10. Rank the following persons in terms of their influence on selection of projects under block grant support in your place of work.

Least influential = 1

Most influential = 5

Person(s)	1	2	3	4	5
Member of the Parliament					
Upazila Parishad Chairman					
Vice Chairman					
Female Vice Chairman					
Union Parishad Chairmen					
Local political leaders					
Local elites					
Concerned Government Officer (Upazila Engineer or others)					
UNO					

11. Rank the following persons in terms of their influence on implementation of projects under block grant support in your place of work.

Least influential = 1

Most influential = 5

Person(s)	1	2	3	4	5
Member of the Parliament					
Upazila Parishad Chairman					
Vice Chairman					
Female Vice Chairman					
Union Parishad Chairmen					
Local political leaders					
Local elites					
Concerned Government Officer (Upazila Engineer or others)					
UNO					

Institutional and Operational Aspects:

12. In your opinion, to what extent are the following statements applicable in your place of work?

Not at all =1

Very much = 5

Sl.		1	2	3	4	5
a	Funds received as block grant are insufficient to meet the development demands of the upazila.					
b	Quarterly installments do not arrive on time.					
c	Transferred department officials are ill oriented about their responsibilities in the Parishad.					
d	Political leaders are not fully aware of the functions of the Parishad.					
e	Deputy Commissioner, Divisional Commissioners or other higher officials do not show much interest in inspecting the projects.					
f	Level of coordination between UNO and other government officials is not satisfactory.					
g	People are not aware of the responsibilities of Upazila Parishad.					

13. In your opinion to what extent do the institutional and operational factors (as mentioned in question 12) influence your role in selection and implementation of block grant supported projects?

Not at all Very much
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5

14. Is there any instance when you could not perform your designated role in project selection or implementation owing to institutional and operational constraints (as mentioned in question 12)? If the answer is yes then please mention the incident.

15. Have you received any training or orientation related to your responsibilities at the Upazila Parishad?

Yes No

If the answer is yes then how far has it been helpful in discharging your responsibilities at the Upazila Parishad?

Not at all Very much
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5

Implementation Aspects:

16. How far do you think are the following statements applicable in the context of project selection and implementation under block grant budget in your working place?

Not at all applicable = 1

Very much applicable = 5

Sl.		1	2	3	4	5
a	Selected projects are people oriented.					
b	Elected representatives properly monitor the projects.					
c	Government officials including the UNO monitor the implementation process properly.					
d	Wastage of resources can be prevented.					
e	Implementation agencies are selected as per rules and regulations.					
f	Project specifications on paper are met on the ground.					
g	To the best of my knowledge documents related to project selection and implementation are prepared and preserved properly.					
h	Project details are displayed properly at the sites.					

Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix II

Interview Questionnaire for the Elected Representatives

1. How much conducive are the legal provisions related to the utilization of block grants for local development? Do you think that the legal provisions related to the utilization of block grants can be complied with all the times?
2. Do you feel yourself pressured from your political followers to extend favours to them? Do you think that sometimes you have no other option but to extend undue favours to them?
3. Do you find it justified to extend a favour or two to your followers?
4. How do you assess the quality of works done with block grants?
5. What role do you expect the UNO to play in the planning and implementation of block grant supported development projects?

Appendix III

Interview Questionnaire for the Upazila Level Officials

1. Do you find the legal provisions for the utilization of block grants conducive for local development?
2. Do you face any legal, political, institutional or operational constraints in planning and implementation of projects under block grants?
3. How do you evaluate the role of UNO in planning and implementation of block grant supported projects? What role do you expect him or her to play?

Appendix IV

Interview Questionnaire for the Deputy Commissioner

1. How do you assess the relation between the elected representatives at the Upazila Parishad and the UNO?
2. How do you expect the UNOs to deal with political pressure in discharging their duties?
3. What role can the DC play in minimizing conflicts between the elected representatives and the UNO?

Appendix V
Local Government Related Provisions in Different Versions
of the Constitution of Bangladesh

Version / Amendment of the Constitution	Provisions Related to Local Government
Original Constitution adopted on November 4, 1972	<p>Article 11: Effective participation by people through the elected representatives in administration at all levels.</p> <p>Article 59: Local Government in every administrative unit of the Republic. Functions may include administration and the work of public officers, maintenance of public order, preparation and implementation of plans relating to public services and economic development.</p> <p>Article 60: Parliament to give effect to Article 59, confer power to local government bodies including power to impose taxes for local purposes, prepare budgets and maintain funds.</p>
4 th Amendment, 1975	Article 59 and 60 repealed.
5 th Amendment, 1979	Replacement of Article 9: State to encourage local government institutions composed of representatives of the concerned areas. Special representation of peasants, workers and women.
12 th Amendment, 1991	Article 59 and 60 reinstated as of the original Constitution.
15 th Amendment, 2011	Article 9 brought back to its status in the original Constitution. No longer relevant for local government.

Source: GOB, 1975; GOB, 2006; GOB, 2011

Appendix VI

Functions of Upazila Parishad

Planning, Budgeting, Implementation and Coordination:

1. Preparation of development plans, including Five-Years Plans, to be implemented in different periods of time.
2. Implementation of the programmes of different Government agencies that may be transferred by the Government to the *Parishad*, and supervision and coordination of the activities of any such agencies.
3. Coordination and assessment of the development programmes undertaken by the union *Parishads* and providing them with necessary cooperation.

Law and Order:

4. Review of the activities of the police department along with the development of law and order situation in the *Upazila* and sending reports regularly to the higher authorities.
5. Organizing public opinion and taking other preventive measures to resist the crimes of hooliganism, theft, robbery, smuggling, abuse of drugs etc.

Service Delivery:

6. Providing motivation and aid for the extension of education at *Upazila* level, and provide supervision and aid to the concerned institutions for the purpose of further development of the secondary and madrasah education systems.
7. Ensuring the services of public health, nutrition and family planning
8. Development of sanitation and sewerage system and adaptation of proper measures for supplying drinking water.
9. Adopting and implementing programs for the development of agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forest resources.
10. Adaptation and implementation of small-scale irrigation projects, in accordance with the directions of the Government, for the purpose of the best utilization of the surface water.
11. Adopting social forestry and other programs with the aim of preservation and development of environment.
12. Construction, repair and maintenance of inter-union link-roads.
13. Providing support and coordination to the cooperative societies and Non-Government voluntary organizations.
14. Adopting programmes for establishment and extension of small and cottage industries.

15. Adopting and implementing own programmes for generating self-employment and for reduction of poverty, and providing necessary assistances to the Government in the implementation of the Government programmes in this relation.

Welfare:

16. Implementing and aiding the programmes of women, children, social welfare, youth, sports and cultural activities.

17. Organizing public opinion, and taking other preventive measures, to resist the crimes of repressions against women and children etc.

Other:

18. Performing such other functions as the Government may assign from time to time.

Source: GOB (2010: 25); Steffense, Land & Monem (2011)

Appendix VII

**Additional functions of Upazila Parishad listed out in the
Table of Orgranogram & Equipment**

1. Coordination of all activities related to the management of disaster
2. Cooperation with other organizations involved in similar activities as that of the Upazila Parishad
3. Introduction and encouragement to E-governance

Source: Local Govt. Division (2011a)

Appendix VIII

List of officials responsible for subjects transferred to the UZP

Serial no.	Concerned Ministry & Department	Official responsible for transferred subjects
1	Ministry of Youth and Sports (Department of Youth Development)	Upazila Youth Development Officer
2	Ministry of Public Administration	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
3	Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (Department of Fisheries / Department of Livestock)	i) Upazila Fisheries Officer ii) Upazila Livestock Officer
4	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (Department of Health)	i) Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer ii) Upazila Family Planning Officer
5	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (Department of Women Affairs)	Upazila Women Affairs Officer
6	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (Department of Primary Education)	Upazila Education Officer
7	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperative (Local Government Engineering Department / Department of Public Health Engineering/ Bangladesh Rural Development Board / Department of Cooperatives)	i) Upazila Engineer ii) Assistant / Sub Assistant Engineer (DPHE) iii) Upazila Rural Development Officer iv) Upazila Cooperatives Officer
8	Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture Extension)	Upazila Agriculture Officer
9	Ministry of Food and Disaster Management (Department of Relief and Rehabilitation)	Project Implementation Officer
10	Ministry of Social Welfare (Department of Social Welfare)	Upazila Social Welfare Officer
11	Ministry of Education (Department of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education)	Upazila Secondary Education Officer
12	Ministry of Environment and Forest (Department of Environment / Department of Forest)	Upazila level officer/staff of Department of Environment and Bangladesh Forest Department

Source: GOB (2010: 26); GOB (2011)

Appendix IX

Sample list of some functions in the Charter of Duties

that are retained or regulatory in nature

Officer having transferred functions	Transferred functions as mentioned in the Charter of Duties	Reasons for considering the functions as retained or regulatory in nature
Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer	Coordination and overall supervision in epidemic situations Taking steps for applying the laws such as Food Ordinance, Salt Ordinance, Ordinance related to mother's milk, Drugs Act etc.	Public health related emergencies are handled centrally. Application of such laws requires involvement of police and executive magistrates, who are outside the jurisdiction of UZP.
Upazila Family Planning Officer	Supervision of Health and Family Welfare Centre, Community Clinics and Satellite Clinics	No information about the involvement of UZP in Community Clinic Project run by the government.
Upazila Agriculture Officer	Coordination of supply and distribution of fertilizer and seeds Performing secretarial duty in all committees related to agriculture	Fertilizer and seeds are distributed under the supervision of the govt. Functions of upazila level committees related to agriculture have not been transferred to UZP.
Upazila Fisheries Officer	Participation in the management of khas water bodies	Water bodies owned by the govt. are managed by the AC (Land) Office under supervision of DC / Ministry of Land.
Project Implementation Officer	Serve as the Member Secretary of Project Implementation Committee for Renovation / Maintenance of Rural Infrastructure	The Committee runs as a separate entity and has no relation with UZP.

Appendix X
Illustrative list of regulatory and major development functions
retained by the government as per the Local Government (Upazila Parishad
and Upazila Administration and Reorganization) Ordinance, 1982

1. Civil and Criminal judiciary
2. Administration and management of central revenue
3. Maintenance of law and order
4. Registration
5. Maintenance of essential supplies including food
6. Generation and distribution of electric power
7. Irrigation scheme involving more than one district
8. Technical education and education above primary level
9. Modernized district hospitals and hospitals attached to the medical colleges
10. Research organizations
11. Large scale seed manipulation and dairy farms
12. Large scale industries
13. Inter district and inter upazila means of communication
14. Flood control and development of water resources
15. Marine fishing
16. Mining and mineral development
17. Compilation of national statistics

Source: Wahhab, 2002: Appendix II

Appendix XI
Involvement of Chairman, Vice Chairman and female Vice Chairman
in different committees outside the jurisdictions of the UZP

Upazila Level Committee	Involvement of Chairman, Vice Chairman or Female Vice Chairman
Upazila Task Force Committee for Implementation of “Asrayan-2” Project	✓ Chairman to act as Adviser to the Committee; entitled to get involved in all activities including selection of project location, selection of beneficiaries and completion of earthwork
Upazila Committee for Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF)	✓ UZP Chairman: Chairman of the Committee
Committee for Renovation and Maintenance of Rural Infrastructure (Test Relief - Food Grain / Cash)	✓ UZP Chairman: Chairman of the Committee ✓ Two Vice Chairmen: Members of the Committee
Committee for Renovation and Maintenance of Rural Infrastructure (Food for Work – Food Grain / Cash)	✓ UZP Chairman: Chairman of the Committee ✓ Two Vice Chairmen: Members of the Committee
Upazila Committee for Employment Generation Programme for the Poorest	✓ UZP Chairman: Chairman of the Committee ✓ Two Vice Chairmen: Members of the Committee
Coordination Committee for Implementation of “Ekti Bari Ekti Khamar” (One House One Farm)	✓ UZP Chairman: Chairman of the Committee
Upazila Committee for Management of Jolmohals (Water bodies) up to 20 Acres	✓ UZP Chairman: Second Adviser of the Committee along with the MP
Upazila Committee for Management and Settlement of Khas Lands (Govt. owned lands)	✓ UZP Chairman: Adviser of the Committee along with the MP

Source: PMO (2011); MFDM (2009); MFDM (2011a); MFDM (2011b); MFDM (2011c); Ministry of Land(2009a); Ministry of Land(2009b); BRDB Netrokona Sadar (2010).