



**Role of Members of Parliament in the decision-making process of
Local Government: A Study on Three Upazila Parishads in
Bangladesh**

By

**MOHAMMAD NURUZZAMAN
MPPG 8th Batch**

August 2019

SIPG

**South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance
North South University**



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Supervisor

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Thesis submitted to the
South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance
in partial fulfillment for the award of
Master in Public Policy and Governance (MPPG)

August 2019



**South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance
North South University**

Dedicated to

To my beloved parents

Wife Tarana Ahmed

Two children-

Jawad Abdullah & Jannatun Nayeem

for their continuous inspiration and support all the way!

Declaration

I declare that the dissertation, entitled “Role of the Members of Parliament in the decision-making process of Local Government: A Study on Three Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh” submitted to the SIPG of North South University, Bangladesh for the Degree of Master in Public Policy and Governance (MPPG) is an original work of mine. No part of it, in any form, has been copied from other sources without acknowledgement or submitted to any other university or institute for any degree or diploma. Views and expressions of the dissertation bear the responsibility of mine with the exclusion of SIPG for any errors and omissions to it.

Signature with Date

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ID No.1829004085

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Abstracts

Upazila Parishad (UZP) is a comparatively new form of local government in the rural setting of Bangladesh where Members of Parliament (MP) is involved as the advisor and his/her advice has a mandatory effect upon it. The present study focuses on the role of MP in the decision making process of Upazila Parishad. The study also tries to explore and identify the areas where MP is mostly interested to influence the decision-making and also to examine how and to what extent the decisions of UZP are influenced by the MP. In addressing the research questions a total of 45 respondents were interviewed, 60 were surveyed during May-June 2019. Based on the governmental-politics model of decision-making, the study developed three explanatory variables which are legal aspects, political aspects and institutional and operational aspects. Role of MP in the decision-making process of UZP was argued to be affected by these variables. From empirical evidences it is found that limited power of UZP Chairman and the level of adherence to the legal jurisdictions of different actors have positive correlation and inability of the Vice-chairmen has a negative correlation on the role of MP in the decision-making process. As far as political aspect undemocratic practice and non-participative mode of decision- making and priority of political interests have a positive influence on the role of MP in decision-making. Besides, one institutional and Operational aspect, dominance of MP has positive effects on the role of MP in decision-making. Regression analysis incorporating all explanatory variables is done to establish the causality between independent and dependent variables and it is found that three explanatory variables can explain 64.4% causality on the role of MP in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad which could be considered as very high.

The main findings from the empirical data are: MPs are found interested mostly on financial matters such as allocation and distribution of resources, selection and implementation of development projects and beneficiary selection of various safety-net programs. As the advice of the MPs is mandatory upon the parishad, therefore, they have emerged as the most influential member in the decision-making process. It is also found that other members of the Parishad hesitate to express their opinion freely or actively participate in the discussion/debate in the decision-making process in presence of MP, therefore, the advisory role of MP overshadow other stakeholders and thereby

affecting the participative culture of decision-making and down-ward accountability in the Upazila Parishad.

Key words: Local government, Upazila Parishad (UZP), Decision-making, Role of MP.

Table of Contents

Declaration.....	ii
Acknowledgement	iii
Abstracts	v
List of Tables	Error! Bookmark not defined.
List of Figures	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Chapter One.....	13
Introductory Discussion	13
1.1 Background	13
1.2 Statement of the problem	15
1.3 Significance of the Study.....	17
1.4 Research objectives	19
1.5 Research questions	19
1.6 Rationale of the study.....	20
1.7 Limitation of the study.....	21
1.8 Structure of the study.....	22
Chapter Two.....	23
Theoretical and Analytical Framework	23
2.1 Review of the relevant literature.....	23
.....	27
2.2 Conceptual understanding.....	30
2.2.1 Defining role.....	30
2.2.2 Defining decision-making.....	31
2.3 Role of the Member of Parliament	31
2.3.1 Delegate	32
2.3.2 Trustee	32
2.3.3 Partisan	32
2.3.4 Constituency service	33
2.4 Role of the Members of Parliament (MP) in Bangladesh Perspective.....	33
2.5 Theoretical framework	35
2.5.1 Decision making dynamics in Upazila Parishad	35
2.5.2 The Governmental-Politics Model	36
2.6 Analytical Framework	38
2.7 Dependent Variable: Role of MP in the decision-making process of UZP	38

2.8	Independent Variables.....	38
2.8.1	Legal aspects	39
2.8.2	Political Aspects	41
2.8.3.	Institutional and Operational Aspects	42
2.9	Framework for Analysis	44
2.10	Operational definition of variables with indicators.....	47
Chapter Three		48
Evolution of government with reference to Upazila Parishad.....		48
3.1	Evolution of Local Government in Bangladesh	48
3.2	Present Structure of Local government in Bangladesh	49
3.3	Upazila Parishad: Its Emergence, Structure and Functions	50
3.4	Decision-making process in Upazila Parishad (UZP)	52
3.5	Main sources of the fund of UZP	53
3.6	Standing Committees of the UZP.....	53
3.7	Scope of Parishad Meetings and decision Making Process	53
Chapter Four		55
Methodology.....		55
4.1	Research Design.....	55
4.2	Research Method.....	56
4.3	Sources of Data and Data Collection Technique.....	57
4.4	Data Sampling	58
4.5	Data Processing and Analysis.....	58
4.6	Unit of Analysis	59
4.7	Reliability and Cross Validation of Data.....	60
Chapter Five		62
Data Presentation, Analysis and interpretation		62
5.1	General Findings	62
5.2	Observations based on legal aspects.....	63
5.2.1	Exclusive power of MP in decision-making process.....	63
5.2.2	Limited power of Upazila Parishad Chairmen.....	64
5.2.3	The capability of UNOs in decision-making	66
5.2.4	The inability of Vice-chairmen to influence the decisions	67
5.2.5	The ability of UP Chairmen to resist the decisions	68
5.3	Observations based on political aspects.....	69

5.3.1	Making decisions without majority voting.....	69
5.3.2	Lack of proper debate/discussion before decisions	70
5.3.3	Government officials except UNOs are passive participants.....	71
5.3.4	Political consideration in decision-making	72
5.4	Observations based on institutional and operational aspects	73
5.4.1	Dominance of MP	73
5.4.2	Dominance of bureaucrats	74
5.4.3	Lack of co-ordination	75
5.5	Consequences of the role of MP on the overall performance of UZP.....	76
5.5.1	Decreases the autonomy of UZP.....	77
5.5.2	Interference in the local government affairs.....	77
5.5.3	Restricts democratic character of local body	78
5.5.4	Limits the development of local leadership.....	79
5.6	Respondents view to make the UZP effective & functional.....	79
5.6.1	Redefining the role of MP, UZP Chairman and UNO	80
5.6.2	Role and functions of core actors need to be clear and specific.....	80
5.6.3	Advisory role of MP should not be mandatory.....	81
5.6.4	Abolishing of the advisory role of MP in UZP	81
5.7	Correlation Matrix for responses on legal Aspects and MP's Role in Decision-Making	82
5.8	Correlation matrix for responses on political factors and MP's Role in Decision-Making	84
5.9	Correlation Matrix for response on institutional & operational factors and MP's Role in Decision-Making	86
5.10	Regression Analysis:.....	87
Chapter Six		89
Findings and Observations.....		89
6.1	Summary of the Key Findings of the Study.....	90
6.1.1	MP is the most influential actor in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad	90
6.1.2	Level of influence of MP depends on local political dynamics, political chain of command also matters	92
6.1.3	Upazila Parishad Chairmen do have some space but Vice Chair have no power at all in decision-making process	92
6.1.4	Problem arises due to struggle for power and control over resources.....	93

6.2	Revisiting the Research Questions.....	93
6.2.1	What are the areas where MP influences decision-making process?	93
6.2.2	How does role of MP influence in the decision-making process of UZP?	94
6.3	Theoretical Implications.....	95
6.4.	Policy Implications	96
6.4	Implication for Future Research	97
	Chapter Seven.....	98
	Conclusion and Recommendations	98
	Bibliography	101
	Appendix – I	106
	Appendix -II	115
	Appendix- III	118
	Appendix IV	119
	Appendix-V.....	120
	Appendix -VI.....	121
	Appendix-VII.....	122

List of Tables

Table No.	Respondents' opinion on-	Page
Table: 5.1	Exclusive power of MP in decision-making	64
Table: 5.2	Limited power of the UZPC in decision-making	65
Table :5.3	Inability of the VCs to influence decisions	66
Table :5.4	Ability of the UNO to influence decisions	67
Table :5.5	Ability of the UP Chairmen to resist decisions	68
Table :5.6	Decision-making without majority voting system	70
Table :5.7	Limited debate /discussion before decision-making	71
Table :5.8	Government officials are passive participant	72
Table :5.9	Priority of the political interest rather than public interest	73
Table :5.10	Dominance of MP	74
Table :5.11	Dominance of Bureaucrats	75
Table :5.12	Lack of coordination	76
Table :5.13	Decrease autonomy of the UZP	77
Table :5.14	Interference in the local government affairs	78
Table :5.15	Restrict democratic character of the local body	78
Table :5.16	Limits development of local leadership	79
Table :5.17	Redefine the role of MP, UZPC and UNO	80
Table :5.18	Role and functions of core actors should be clear and specific	81
Table :5.19	MP's role should not be mandatory	81
Table:5.20	Advisory role of MP should be abolished	82

List of Figures

Figure No.	Name of the figure	Page
Fig: 2.1	Roles of the MP in Bangladesh Perspectives	33
Fig:2.2	Relation between independent and dependent variable	45
Fig:3.1	Present structure of local government in Bangladesh	49
Fig:3.2	Present structure of Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh	50

List of Abbreviations

ADP	Annual Development Programme
CARR	Committee for Administrative Reform/Reorganization
CO	Circle Officer
DC	Deputy Commissioner
DDLG	Director of Local Government
FVC	Female Vice-Chair
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
LG	Local Government
LGD	Local Government Division
LGIs	Local Government Institutions
LGED	Local Government Engineering Department
MP	Member of the Parliament
MPPG	Master in Public Policy and Governance
NSU	North South University
NILG	National Institute of Local Government
NSU	North South University
PIO	Project Implementation Officer
PIC	Project Implementation Committee
SDO	Sub-divisional officer
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
TDCC	Thana Development Coordination Committee
TR	Test Relief
UB	Union Board
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
UP	Union Parishad
UPC	Union Parishad Chairman
UZP	Upazila Parishad
UZC	Upazila Parishad Chairman
UZP	Upazila Parishad
UZPC	Upazila Parishad Chairman
VC	Vice Chairman
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
UDCC	Upazila Development Coordination Committee
UE	Upazila Engineer
UP	Union Parishad

Chapter One

Introductory Discussion

If an underdeveloped nation wants to achieve economic development, it must first change its governmental structure so as to provide local self- government for its villages and rural districts.

Lewis, A.B. cited in (Riggs, 1964)

1.1 Background

Bangladesh has a long recorded history of local government. The country is governed by a unitary form of government, though until 1991 it was presidential type. The Prime Minister is the chief of the government with a council of ministers to help him/her. In most of the cases, it is not possible for the central government to perform all the multifarious functions up to the grass root level. So there is a few alternative but to strengthen local government system for effective development of local level.

Local government allows distribution of work on territorial basis, facilitates use of knowledge of local conditions in tackling problems; help in speed up the decision-making process, and provides prompt service to the people because of using of local knowledge, direct contact with citizens. It can help achieving better participation of local community, acting independently, effective coordination and cheap administration. (Siddiqui, 2005) .

For administrative convenience Bangladesh is divided into 8 (eight) administrative divisions, 64 districts, 491 Upazilas¹ and one development circle, named Tejgaon circle under Dhaka district, 4554 unions (<https://bangladesh.gov.bd/index.php>). Administratively, a division is placed under a Divisional Commissioner. Each division is

¹ Upazila is regarded as a sub-district, one of the administrative units of field administration and also middle tier of rural local government in Bangladesh. administrative point of view Bangladesh is divided into 8 divisions, 64 districts and 491 upazilas (Ministry of Public Administration, Bangladesh)

further sub-divided into several Zillas (districts) each of which are placed under a Deputy Commissioner assisted by other officials. Deputy Commissioner heads the district administration. Each district consists of several Upazilas (sub-districts) headed by the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO)². They all are central bureaucrats of different level. Below the Upazilas there are unions consist of several villages.

Upazila Parishad³ is the middle tier of three tier rural local government system in Bangladesh. It is the midway between local and central government and is a very important tier of political-administrative nexus. Upazila Parishads not only carry out the local government development programs but also implement various projects/ programs of the central government and also implement the national level policy at local level and thus it acts as a bridge between local and national government (Rahman, 2012b).

The UZP system was first introduced in the country by the then military regime in 1982 and though the first election was held in 1985. In the 1990, the second election was held, but before the expiry of the term, the then nationalist government abolished the system in 1991. After that, the new legislation of Upazila Parishad was enacted in 1998 again, but there was no election of Upazila Parishad because of political conflict and lack of support from MPs (Rahman, 2010). Then, the former caretaker government re-introduced the Upazila Parishad system by repealing the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998, with the local government (Upazila Parishad) Ordinance, 2008. On January 22, 2009, 3rd UZP elections were held in 480 Upazilas of the country. Thus, “after a long period of non-existence (1991-2008), Upazila Parishad system became functional and central

² UNO refers to The Upazila Nirbahi Officer; a senior assistant secretary of national government belongs to Bangladesh Civil Service (Administration) cadre. He is the representative of national government to the local administration at upazila level and works as the chief executive officer of the upazila parishad (upazila council). He is assumed to be coordinating officer in upazila administration in Bangladesh.

³ Upazila Parishad is the middle tier of three tier rural local government system in Bangladesh and is a very important tier of political-administrative nexus.

bureaucrats have been brought under the democratic control of elected representatives of local government for the first time in the history of Bangladesh” (Ahmed, Ahmed, & Faizullah, 2011).

Now 5th elected Upazila Parishad is running (1st and 2nd term under military regime, (1985-91) and 3rd -5th term under democratic regime (2009-2018), but Upazila Parishad (UZP) has not turned into an effective local government institution in this long time. In current set up, UZP chairman have very little power, and Vice Chairmen have no specific work or responsibility. Member of Parliament is the advisor of the Upazila Parishad and the advice has the binding effect upon it. The Parishad cannot make any decision without consulting the concerned local MPs. Moreover, most of the financial and administrative powers of the Upazila Parishad are exercised by the UNO. So the newly constituted UZPs have a number of actors regarding decision-making process and views of those actors might be in contradiction with each other. In this situation, most of the UZP chairmen want to make the UZP free from the influence of MPs and UNOs.

So, the roles and functions of the Members of Parliament in Upazila Parishad is an important topic of discussion. A clear understanding of role of MP in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad can be considered as a first major step for effective functioning of the UZPs.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The Constitution of Bangladesh made the provisions to “establish local government as an inseparable organ of administering state affairs to safeguard democratic values under the provision of the articles 9, 11, 59, and 60 of the constitution. These four articles of the Bangladesh Constitution together constitute the supreme source of all laws, ordinances, and rules relating to the local government system of the country” (Khan M. M., 2008). Local government contributes to diffusion of power, national solidarity and democracy by promoting diversification and de-concentration of political activity setting them up as additional center of political experience by affording excellent opportunity in the management of public affairs, and by acting as a safety valve, letting off steam at the local level. This is universally

recognized that basic civic services are best performed at the local level. It can also play supportive role during the national government's formulation and implementation of overall national plans and policies (Siddiqui, 2005)

Human being first established their neighborhood development authority i.e. "village government or town government, before they could even envisage a remote authority such as national government. Even after the rise of nation-state, local government continued to exist as units of central government performing functions of local nature" (Siddiqui, 2005). In age marked by democratic control, decentralization of administration, local level participation in planning and bottom-up development, the importance of local government body needs hardly overemphasized.

According to law, Upazila Parishad is composed of a Chairman, two vice-chairmen (one is mandatorily woman), all UP Chairmen and Mayor of Pourshava (if any) within the jurisdiction of concerned Upazila Parishad and women members of the reserved seats. The structure of the UZP is also contradictory to the constitution of Bangladesh. According to the article 59 of the Constitution, the representatives of the local government shall be elected directly by the people. But now, UP Chairman, who form the major part of the UZP, are elected by the people of the concerned Union only. Moreover, they are not elected for the Upazila Parishad, so they mostly see the interest of the concerned union, not the upazila. Experts suggested taking initiatives to solve the existing problems faced by the Upazila Parishad, including structural changes.

Unlike the Upazila in 1980s, UZP Chairman has no sweeping control over Parishad. Moreover, there are two Vice-chairmen (one is mandatorily female). Three core governing actors (MP, UZP Chairman and UNO) are directly or indirectly involved in the decision-making process. Besides the elected representatives, bureaucrats are also part of the decision-making process. Two Vice-chairs are the Chairs of seventeen committees on different matters of UZP but the decisions of the committees have no binding upon Parishad. If the Chairman and two Vice-chairs have different political orientation, decision making through consensus becomes more difficult. Therefore, for

making a decision not only requires approval of the Upazila Parishad, but also the consent of the concerned MP (Zamil, 2012).

Under the framework of decentralization the Upazila has been made the focal point of both regulatory and development functions. The design of the Upazila Parishad was intended to make Upazila level bureaucrats accountable to the political leadership by placing them under Upazila Parishad. However, instead of creating a better working environment, it created strained relation between the elected representatives and the officials in matters of coordination in Upazila administration. Administrative and developmental conflict in respect of the authority of elected Chairman over execution of policies and resource allocation. It has been stated that unless a proper coordination among the functions of different departments is attained development efforts would be reduced to pieces (Obaidullah, 1999).

With this contextual background, this is a burning issue whether the democratically elected Upazila Parishad will work as a truly independent and autonomous local government body as stated in the constitution under the articles 59 and 60 or it will be controlled by the Members of Parliament and the central bureaucrats in various ways and merely act as an extended arm of the central government to implement national programs at the local level.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The study explores and identifies the processes and practices of decision-making commonly followed in Upazila Parishad. Lack of effective decision-making delays project completion, increases project cost, creates discord and strained inter-personal relationship among the various actors in the Upazila. So there should be a sound working environment for effective planning and smooth implementation of the development projects. In addition to that in line with the decentralization 'rhetoric' of the government some measures have been taken to decentralize field administration in Upazila level. In this connection this study can be of great use to understand the existing realities of decision-making process at Upazila level in Bangladesh.

However, the proposed study will provide some insights into the role of MP in the decision-making process. It also explores the existing process and practices of decision-making in Upazila Parishad. It will help to identify the nature of problems in decision-making process which ultimately leads to inefficiency of the Upazila Parishad. It is also intended to identify the factors that affect the role of MP in the decision-making process. It will provide new dimension to the academics, policy scholars and policy makers to understand the existing problems and to offer appropriate policy directions to overcome those problems. It will also bridge the knowledge gaps between the process and practices of the existing reality for ensuring effective decision-making in the Upazila Parishad.

The present UZPs have a significant difference with the previously installed two Upazila Parishads in the 1980s. Chairmen of first two Upazila Parishad during the military regime were mostly expected to provide a rural support base for the government. So they were provided a large number of facilities and privileges that were rarely enjoyed by any other locally elected representatives before (UNDP, 2010). In the current setup of the UZP, field administration was put under democratic and political control (Siddiquee, 1997) Instead of Upazila Parishad Chairman; decision making power is vested upon the Parishad. Two Vice-Chairmen are the Chairperson of all seventeen standing committees of the Parishad (Male and Female Vice-Chairs become Chairperson of eight and nine standing committees alternatively for two and half years). But as the decisions of the standing committees have still not binding effect upon the UZPs, the role and functions of Vice-Chairmen is less visible (GOB, 2011b).

So, findings of the researches conducted on the UZPs of 1980s may not be appropriate for the current UZPs because in the 1980s MPs did not have any role in the UZPs. Currently, MPs are the advisers to the UZPs and the advice has a mandatory effect upon the Parishad. By using this opportunity some of the MPs even impose their decisions in the name of advice (Zamil, 2012). Moreover, currently there are two elected Vice- chairmen along with UZP Chairman. The executive power of the Parishad vested upon the Parishad, instead of Chairman. The changed circumstances, therefore, justify a

new study how the advisory role of the Member of Parliament influences the decision-making process of UZP.

In this context, this study is expected to provide the real scenario of current Upazila Parishad to ensure vibrant local government and overall governance which is necessary for sustainable development in the country.

1.4 Research objectives

According to the section-25 of Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 concerned MP is the advisor to the UZP and the advice has a binding effect upon the Parishad. So, the mandatory nature of advisory role of MP might affect the independent decision-making process and thus, hamper the autonomy of democratically elected Upazila Parishad. So, the main purpose of this study is to address the following objectives:

1. To explore and identify the areas where MP is mostly interested to influence the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad.
2. To identify the ways how advisory role of MP influences the decisions of Upazila Parishad.

1.5 Research questions

The main objective of this study is to analyze the role MP in the decision-making process of UZP. The UZP is a comparatively new form of local government and its structure is somewhat different from other LGIs of Bangladesh. As an advisor of the UZP MP is, therefore, legally empowered to interfere over decisions of the Parishad. In order to explore the way and extent of influence in this regard, the following research questions are posed:

1. What are the areas where Members of Parliament are interested to influence the decision-making?
2. How does the advisory role of Members of Parliament influence the decision-making process at Upazila Parishad?

1.6 Rationale of the study

Upazila Parishad was first introduced in the 1982, when there was no constitutional obligation to set up such independent local government body at Upazila level. There was no provision of advisory role of MP as present, so scope for influencing over Upazila Parishad affairs was very limited for them. In current set up, the concerned local MP is the advisor to the UZP and the advice is mandatory upon it. Moreover, Upazila Parishad is a very important tier of local government in Bangladesh. It imposes tax; prepare budget, planning and implementation of its own development program. It is also plays important roles in the implementation of the policy and programs of the central government at grassroot level. So, any difficulty faced by Upazila Parishad is of a great concern to all.

The proposed study aims to analyze the role of MP in the decision-making process of UZP. Role of MP in the decision-making process of local government is a hectic issue for discussion in a third world country like Bangladesh, so a research on this specific issue is hardly available. Though there are a number of studies on Upazila Parishad and administration, very few of them have been conducted after the new democratic set up after 2009. Moreover, most of current literatures concentrate on the structural and administrative issue of Upazila Parishad and have been focused on the politics-bureaucracy relationship, political participation, decentralization, local governance, and financial management, co-ordination and budgeting without putting special emphasis regarding advisory role of MP in the decision-making process where the dominance of MP is the most significant issue considering the effective decision-making and proper functioning of the UZP. No specific study on the role of MP in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad has yet been done. In view of this context, advisory Role of MP in the Upazila Parishad is one of the major issues to be addressed right now.

The advisory role of MPs is concerned with the effective functioning of the Upazila Parishad and thus a timely intervention both from the academic and policy point of view. This study may fill two gaps in the literature:

(1) The study of the overall performance of Upazila Parishad in the new set up under political leadership.

(2) How and to what extent the advisory role of MP influences the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad.

This study intended to examine the role of MP in the decision making process of Upazila Parishad regarding resource allocation, selection of development projects and beneficiaries selection of various safety-net projects.

1.7 Limitation of the study

Like every research, this study has some limitations too. Due to time and resource constraint only 45 respondents of three Upazilas have been covered for this study. However, the main limitations of the study are as follows-

1. The existing literatures on the role of Members of Parliament in the decision-making process of UZPs are very limited.
2. The role of MPs was assessed mainly on the basis of respondents' opinions of three Upazila Parishad among 492 Upazilas in Bangladesh which may not show the real scenario of the whole country. To overcome this limitation, survey data have been collected from the UZP Chairmen and UNOs of 30 Upazilas, though the data of UZP Chairmen were collected through respective UNOs.
3. Due to time constraint and lack of accessibility, only three running and two ex Members of Parliament were interviewed for this study. MP of Potiya Upazila could not be reached during interview period.
4. Responses of the elected representatives may vary according to their educational and professional background, political affiliation, experiences, and so on.
5. The role of MP's in the decision making process is a highly sensitive issue to be discussed openly due to socio- political culture of the country. The respondents may not explain the actual situation due to fear factor.
6. Finally, Selection of large number of respondents is important for more balanced assessment and accurate findings. However, due to above mentioned

constraints the sample size was limited, which makes it difficult for make a generalization on the whole system of Upazila Parishad.

1.8 Structure of the study

This study will be composed of seven chapters, each of which contains short discussions here:

Chapter One: Introductory Discussion- deals with background, statement of the problem, significance of study, research objectives, and research questions, rationale of the study, limitations, and structure of the study.

Chapter Two: Theoretical and Analytical Framework- discusses a theoretical framework through a brief review of relevant literatures, conceptual overview, dependent and independent variables and their relationship.

Chapter Three: Evolution of Local government in Bangladesh with reference to Upazila Parishad- discusses the historical development of local government and evolution of Upazila Parishad and its current status in Bangladesh and concluded with the roles and functions of Upazila Parishad within the constitutional and policy framework.

Chapter Four: Methodology- discusses an overview of various methodological approaches to collect and analyze data. Why various methodological approaches used and, how such usages were justified over others, and how these were incorporated in this study is also discussed.

Chapter Five: Data presentation, analysis and interpretation- discuss and analyze empirical data obtained from interview, survey and observations. The quantitative data have been analyzed using SPSS. The analysis is divided into two broad areas- The first part discusses the general findings and second part analyzes the role of MP in the decision-making on the basis of the general findings.

Chapter Six: Findings and Observations- summarizes the overall study and analyses the research findings in the light of the analytical framework. It also focuses few issues for future research.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion and recommendations based on study findings.

Chapter Two

Theoretical and Analytical Framework

The main purpose of this chapter is to explore theoretical and conceptual knowledge of the current study. The first part endeavors to a brief synopsis of the concept of local government, evolution of UZP in Bangladesh as well as the role of the MP in the decision-making process at Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh. The second part explains an analytical framework of the present study with the indicators of dependent and independent variables.

2.1 Review of the relevant literature

There are arguments both in favour and also against the involvement of MPs in the local government affairs. Some scholars argued that “there should be clear separation of power among the three organs of the state i.e. the legislative, the judiciary and the executive should function independently. Involvement of MPs in the local government affairs is a serious violation of the principles of separation of power” (CPD, 2003). Furthermore, “MPs are elected for the Parliament not for running local bodies and by having such responsibilities they would overstep their constitutionally mandated authority” (Majumdar, 2009).

N. Islam (2010) argued that “MP’s interest in local government affairs might be due to isolation paradox. MP may think that the local political 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 MPs do not have any such role in the affairs of Union Parishads, Paurashava and City Corporations. Despite the fact that the concerned MPs have advisory role in the Zilla Parishad, their advices are not mandatory upon it” (GOB, 2009b) (GOB, 2000) (GOB, 2009a); (GOB, 2009c).

On the other hand, (Siddiqui, 2005) 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" (Zamil, 2012)

Mahmud, R. (2017) in his study "Citizens' Trust in Local Government: An Empirical Study of Two Municipalities in Bangladesh" found that "citizens' level of trust in city corporations is high & indicates cumulative pattern and cultural variables have the strongest overall effect on variations in citizens' trust than institutional or performance variables. Individual associations or networking along with citizens' acceptance of the use of power in getting services are most important determining variables affecting trust in city corporations".

As-Saber & Rabbi (2009), in their study on "Democratization of the Upazila Parishad and Its Impact on Responsiveness and Accountability: Myths versus Realities", argued that "democratically elected representatives have somewhat failed to enhance their responsiveness and accountability to the people due to strict rules and regulations imposed by the central government, inadequate local resources, loyalty of the civil servants to the central authority, hidden agenda of the government, lack of knowledge and skills of elected representatives, lack of consultation with the local communities, lack of involvement of local citizen in decision making process, and petty but

widespread corruption. The Upazila Parishads were neither democratic nor responsive nor accountable. Weak bureaucratic accountability due to dual control of the civil servants and lack of political accountability of the elected representatives due to lack of democratic practices at national level contributed to poor accountability of the Parishad to its constituents. The overwhelming controlling power of the Ministry of Local Government and the mandatory advisory role of the Members of Parliament have made the situation even more complicated”.

Ahsan (2010), in his study on “Problems of Coordination in Local Administration in Bangladesh” focused on inter organizational coordination at the local administration in Bangladesh and found that “inter-departmental co-ordination suffers from a number of factors such as clear division of activities, dualism in control over officers of various departments, lack of proper functioning of committees, different organizational culture among different cadres of civil services specially generalist versus specialist conflict, dual authority in disbursement of funds and its impact on timely disbursement have facilitated non-existence of proper inter organizational coordination at upazila level. He argued that coordination among the nation building departments is very important for effective and meaningful implementation of central government policy at the local level and lack of proper coordination causes policy implementation delayed, time and resources are wasted, and quality is compromised. He also suggested that informal communication had been observed as a prominent mechanism to ensure coordination among the departments”.

Rahman, M.S. (2010) in his study on “Politicians and Bureaucrats in Upazila Administration: A Study on Conflict-Relationships,” found that “a post- colonial structure of local government, bureaucracy is an integral and essential part of the Upazila administration. Local level officials are found to play more dominant role than elected politicians in the policy making and governance process in the local council. On the whole, the perceptions of local government elected politicians and bureaucrats about their roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis each other are not very healthy and conducive to cooperative relations between the two”.

Sarker (2011) in his study on “The Role of the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) in Coordination Process at Upazila Administration in Bangladesh” attempted to examine the role of the UNO in the coordination process in the context of UDCC from the perspective of other upazila based officers working at upazila level. He found that effective coordination between UNO and other upazila based officers is very important for smooth implementation of central government policy and multi-dimensional development projects at upazila level. He suggested that informal communication; direct contact, supervision, and trust have played a very positive role in facilitating UNO’s role as coordinator. It is also argued that some factors like lack of mutual trust, lack of informal contact and absence of clear-cut directives, cadre distinction hamper UNO’s role as coordinator in Upazila administration which causes delayed implementation of policy/ projects, wastage of resources and time, and compromising quality of the implemented projects.

Ahmed et al. (2011) in the study “Working of Upazila Parishads of Bangladesh: A Study of Twelve Upazilas” looked into a number issues regarding operationalization of UZP such as, the organization of UZP, way of organizing and conducting meetings, the nature of issues discussed, way of making decisions, dynamics of decision making process, how different actors influence the decision making process, the nature of relations among different individuals and organizations and impact of their interaction in governance at the upazila level. They found “several deficiencies that hinder the work of the UZPs such as meetings are not conducted following the rules; members are not informed date of meetings in advance; and necessary documents are not supplied to them, some Upazilas are not following proper format of conducting meeting, widespread deviations between rules and practices have been noticed in the planning and implementation of development projects. Elected representatives were not fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. There is no uniform pattern of relations among the three core actors – MP, UZC and UNO. They also argued that in the long run, the scope of parliamentary oversight, and not parliamentarian’s control, over UZP be

broadened and strengthened and the existing system of electing the UZP be reviewed and revised”.

Rahman, M. S., (2012b), in the study of “Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh: Roles and Functions of Elected Representatives and Bureaucrats”, found that “Upazila Parishads with democratically elected representatives have largely failed to enhance their rapport with people. People were less concerned about the roles and functions of UZP (Only 30% of the people have a basic idea). The recently implemented mandatory advisory role for the members of the parliament (MPs) has complicated the role of the local government and the interference by MPs in local government affairs has weakened the independence of local government”.

Zamil, A., (2012), in his study on “Annual Development Programme Grants for Upazila Parishad: Role of Upazila Nirbahi Officer in the Planning and Implementing Process” found “a positive correlation between the level of adherence to the legal jurisdictions by the elected representatives and the quality of planning and implementation”. UZC, VC and FVC might have different political orientations, making a consensus difficult to achieve. In decision-making of UZP, the “advice” of the local MP is treated as binding. Thus, decision-making of a UZP, in practice, requires the consent of the local MPs. He found that UZCs and VCs are dominated by the political elites, especially by the local MPs, due to lack of clarity of their roles

Hossain & Majumder (2013), conducted a survey entitled “Baseline Study on Upazila Parishad Governance” and found that “after four years of election in UZPs, the Parishad was not functioning as expected, citizen’s perception towards the role of UZP in local development is somewhat ambiguous.” Although Parishad meetings were held regularly, decisions were not taken by vote of the members. Major decisions of the UZP were almost influenced by the local MPs. Therefore, the UZP could not become more democratic or more functional. Standing committees do not have any control on decision making processes. They suggested “more administrative power to UZP, more budgetary allocation for UZP and participatory decision making through consultation

with the people. Moreover, electing honest and capable people in UZP is another way of strengthening UZP”.

Rahman, M. S., (2012a) in the study on “Role of the Members of Parliament in the Local Government of Bangladesh: Views and Perceptions of Grassroots in the Case of Upazila Administration” addressed the “issue of debate whether MPs should have the role in the local government or not as a public representative, whether a democratic Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh enhances its responsive role to the people who elected themselves and the consciousness of the mass people about the elected representatives and their functions and also the expectations of the local people to their elected representatives”.

Rahman (2012b), in a study on “Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh: Roles and Functions of Elected Representatives and Bureaucrats” argued that by capitalizing the unawareness of the local citizen, “the central government and politicians establish their control over local government using the bureaucracy. The Interference in local government affairs, particularly in development activities by MP in the name of advice has weakened the independence of local government. MPs often dictate the UZP development activities to be undertaken without consulting with the local elected representatives or assessing actual need”.

Islam et al. (2014), in a study on “The Functioning of Local Government Leadership in the Financial Development of Upazila Parishads: A Case Study on Sylhet Sadar Upazila” found that, “development at Upazila Parishads are still inadequate for financial development due to lack of leadership capacity, insufficient ADP grant and government allocation, inadequate leasing sources and limited natural resources. They are all dependent on the suggestion of the higher authority and allocation of the national government. Due to lack of skill about the development schemes, lack of political knowledge, local leaders could not take any financial decisions without interference from central Government. Leaders also could not utilize the local resources fully for lack of proper management systems in the UZPs”.

Hossain, M. A., (2015) in the study on “Ensuring Accountability and Transparency at Local Level Finance: A Study from Sylhet Sadar Upazila” observed that “local government institutions in Bangladesh are very weak in quality service delivery and promoting good governance due to a variety of constraints, including lack of revenues, low level of human capital, the absence of participatory decision-making, lack of people’s participation in the budgeting process, and the lack accountability and transparency. Although the local governments were trying to integrate people’s participation into their decision-making, the result was very different. Ensuring accountability and transparency is a core problem at the local level, Various factors are found responsible for the inactivity of local councils such as the mode of government, lack of resources, centralized authority, the apathy of the people, etc”.

Monem, M., (2016) in “An action research on the process and quality of budgeting and planning of Upazila Parishads” identified several limitations of Upazila budgets. Among them, the traditional mindset of resource management, lack of inclusiveness, non-compliance with government guidelines, and no linkage between the Five Year Plans (FYPs) and different periodical plans such as annual plans, etc. were identified as major limitations.

Hassan et al., (2016) in “State of Accountability of the Transferred Departments at the Upazila Parishad and its Consequences for Allocation and Utilisation of Resources: A Study of three Departments”, found that the officials of the transferred departments have strong bureaucratic accountability to their respective district level authorities, but they have very limited democratic accountability to the UZP through the elected local representatives. This accountability relationship is not regulated by formal accountability mechanism; rather in the form of 'coordination'. Although Vice-Chairs are the nominal heads of standing committees, they lacked 'de facto' authority over the development activities of those committees. So the transfer policies are yet to bring any qualitative changes in the process of allocation and utilization of funds and general administrative activities at the Upazila level.

Hassan & Mannan(2016) in their study “Upazila and Union Parishad Governance: A Study on Institutional Relationships and Linkage” found that the linkage was embedded in, and shaped by national and local politics, as well as bureaucratic culture. It also revealed that “overwhelming authority and power (both formal and informal) of the Member of Parliament (MP) over the local government tiers that tend to deter the decentralization process at the local government levels, particularly at the Upazila”.

2.2 Conceptual understanding

This part discusses relevant conceptual understandings of role of MP in the decision-making process UZP. The major concepts in this study are ‘role’ and ‘decision-making’. Role performance and decision-making is very important part of administration and governance as defined in literature. Thereafter various variables of the study are identified and operationalized.

2.2.1 Defining role

Role is defined in various ways. 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).

Davis (1948) defined the role as, “how an individual actually performs in a given position, as distinct from how he is supposed to perform.” The ‘role’ is “the manner in which a person actually carries out the decision in keeping his position. It is the dynamic aspect of status or office and always influenced by factors other than the stipulation of the position itself. The role can be identified in two ways expected role and performed role” (Rahman, 2012a).

Aberbach *et al.* (1981), defined “the role of politicians and bureaucrats provided more comprehensive way. They argued that politicians and bureaucrats each play nine types of roles such as the role of a technician, an advocate, a trustee, a legalist, a broker, a partisan, a facilitator, a policymaker, and an ombudsman”.

Stilborn (2012) identified “four main roles of Public Representatives such as delegate, trustee, partisan, and constituency service. However, to avoid the divergence of defining the role in this study, the role has been operationalized as the expected and performed duties and functions of MPs in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad.”

2.2.2 Defining decision-making

Decision-making entails choice, interest and voice of a person. Empowered decision making can be approached from two angles; one, exercising autonomy (UNFPA, 2007); second, bargaining, negotiating and influencing decision-making processes (Gammage et al., 2016).

In the case of joint decision-making, decisions are taken and carried out between two or more influential actors. So authority or influence is demonstrated not only in real decisions, but also in protest, bargaining and negotiation etc. In decision-making, participating, influencing and making final decisions are linked with one another. Simply participating in decision-making does not mean to control over decisions. Thus, decision-making is concerned with bargaining that incorporates “power-to-ability to make decisions” and “power-within- one’s own ability to make decisions”.

2.3 Role of the Member of Parliament

The role of MPs in the “local government is a hectic issue of discussion and debate especially in the case of Bangladesh. It is obvious that the role of public representatives may differ from developed countries to developing countries due to their much dissimilarity in the governance process. Members of the British Parliament perform mainly three kinds of role like; representing constituents in the Parliament, law making and watchdogs of government (www.parliament.uk). They maintain two offices; one in Parliament and another in their constituency. They are supposed to work in Parliament, in the constituency, and for their political party. From the literature review overall four main roles that MPs can play are identified as: delegate, trustee, partisan, and constituency service.”

2.3.1 Delegate

As the Members of Parliament are elected by their constituents, therefore, they “needed to identify the views of their constituents or a particular section of them. Arlblaster (2002) notes that an MP is a delegate, is an agent of a particular interest. Interaction between MP and such an interest is innermost to this role, as MPs need to identify the views whatever interest they represent. Traditionally, MPs used private and public meetings and their postbag to assess the opinion of the constituents they represent. This role is considered to be obsolete, largely because of the difficulty of identifying the views of their constituents” (Rahman, 2012a).

2.3.2 Trustee

The trustee role “sometimes referred to as the Burkina tradition ascribes to MP a degree of independence as a maker of legislation. Each MP’s obligation is to the consideration of national, not local, issues (Pickles, 1971). In order to be able to judge a decision for its impact on the nation as a whole; MPs were expected to be financially independent so that they were not beholden to a particular interest. A trustee is one who is free to decide according to his own best judgment and conscience in order to serve the common good” (Rahman, 2012a)

2.3.3 Partisan

The partisan role as the party apparatus challenged the both delegate and trustee role within and outside of Parliament “from the middle of the nineteenth century, began to play a greater role in the development and presentation of policy, and who actually got selected to stand for and so get elected to Parliament. The partisan role is now considered the dominant model because party controls the selection and de-selection process of an MP, determines the likelihood of candidates being elected and once elected will shape a Member’s political opportunities” (Norton & Wood, 1990).

2.3.4 Constituency service

Constituency service focuses constituency role, which is now suggested as “most important role of MPs. With limited opportunities to influence national policy, it has been suggested that MPs have sought to identify areas where they can justify an appropriate role. Within the constituency role, MPs seek to address individual constituents’ grievances and speak on behalf of the constituency as a whole in the Parliament. The constituency role is encouraged by more MPs to prioritize their contact with constituents, both individually and with groups; though this does not suggest always returning to a delegative mode of behaviour this would blur the boundaries between trustee and delegate further” (Lilleker & Jackson, 2009) cited in (Rahman, 2012a).

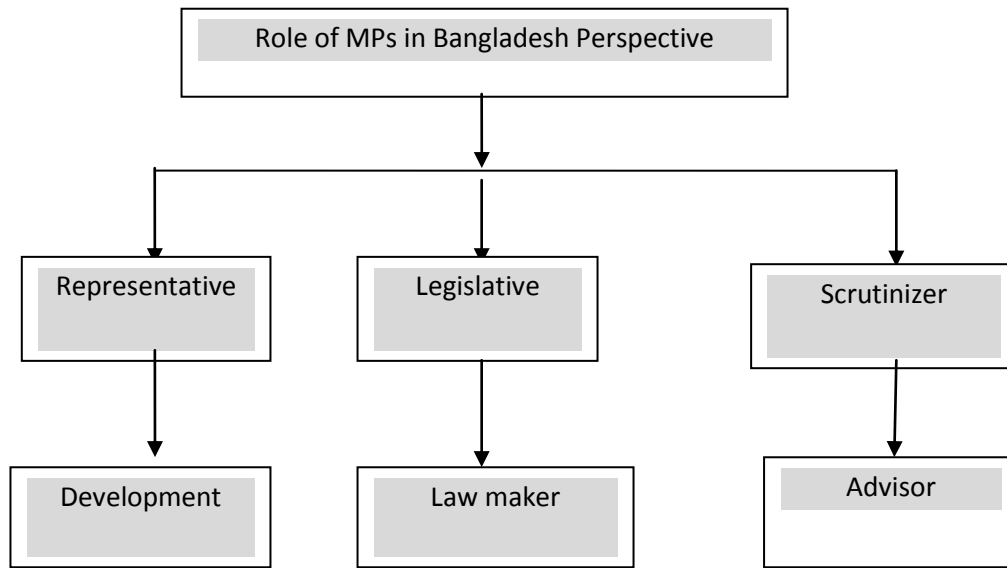
2.4 Role of the Members of Parliament (MP) in Bangladesh Perspective

In Bangladesh, all Members of Parliament “are elected by voters of the constituency. According to the Rules of Business, all MPs (except Ministers) are considered as ‘Private Members’ and they do not hold personal office in the Parliament. According to 65(1) of the constitution of Bangladesh, MPs are vested with legislative powers of the Republic and so their major obligation is to formulate, modify various legislations with a view to administering country in righteous ways following the peoples’ aspiration as the Article 7(1) confirms that all powers in the Republic belong to the people” (Rahman, 2012a)

To make the Parliament effective, Article 76 of the Constitution provides “appointing Standing Committees of Parliament on different issues of public importance. These highly empowered committees should examine draft bills and other legislative proposals, review the enforcement of laws and monitor the activities of the concerned ministries. So, from the above discussion the roles that most parliamentarians fulfill are often summarized as representative, legislator and scrutinizer of the government. The first refers to the fact that MPs have been elected to represent their electorates in the parliament. The second reflects what most of the

citizens think as the central responsibility of an MP, to take part in the formulation of legislation, whether to promulgate new law or amend to existing laws. The third covers the scrutiny or oversight that parliamentarians are expected to exercise over the workings of the executives including the implementation of laws promulgated by the parliament. This function also extends to the support or criticism of proposals placed before parliament by the government and in the committee systems in the parliamentary government” (Rahman, 2012a).

Fig 2.1: Role of MPs in Bangladesh Perspectives



According to article 59(1) of the Constitution of Bangladesh the state has “an obligation to establish local governments in every administrative unit of the republic that are major actors of all sorts of local development activities”. The Parliament also has obligation to take essential measures for the local government which is also defined in the constitution. Article 60 of the Constitution has clearly defined that, “..... Parliament shall, by law, confer powers on the local government bodies, including power to impose taxes for local purposes, to prepare their budgets and to maintain funds”. So the Parliament has a constitutional obligation to provide autonomy of the local government institutions. But in practical term, “as an advisor MPs attend in the Upazila Parishad meetings and take the dominant role in the decision-making and local

governance. As a result, a variety of relationships can be found such as conflicting, collusion and subordination” (Ahmed, Ahmed, & Faizullah, 2011).

2.5 Theoretical framework

Role of MP in the decision-making process of local government is a very important but hectic issue in Bangladesh. Role of MP in the Upazila Parishad decision-making process may be illustrated from three levels, such as ‘legal aspects, political aspects and institutional and operational aspects’. As the focus of the study is analyzing the role of MP in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad regarding resource allocation, projects selection and beneficiary selection of safety-net projects so the main theoretical understanding revolves around the understanding of the influential and dominant role of MP in the decision-making .

The Governmental-Politics Model of decision making: This model of decision making views “decisions as the product of bargaining that takes place among many influential participants. It focuses on the ‘perceptions, motivations, positions, power, and maneuvers of the players’, who differ in ability to shape the outcome” (Allison, 1971).

2.5.1 Decision making dynamics in Upazila Parishad

Dye (1998) has spelt out “nine models for public policy analysis. Among those models ‘group model’ could be relevant for analyzing the decision-making dynamics in the Upazila Parishad. Politics is the struggle among groups to influence public policy and at any given time public policy refers to the equilibrium reached in the group struggle which is determined by the relative influence of any interest group. A change in the relative influence of any group is expected to result in changes in public policy.”

In the UZPs, “different actors could be considered as the representatives of different groups. The MP, UZP Chairman and Vice Chairmen, UP Chairmen, and even government officials of transferred departments may belong to different groups and they have their own choice and interest about particular decision-making. Local political leaders or elites who are not the members of UZP, may also form the part of any

existing group or could be a separate group altogether in the form of civil society or pressure group raising their voice or put pressure on a particular decision. The actors involved in the decision-making process may form permanent or temporary alliances and try to influence the final outcome. The result of the group struggle may be reflected in the quality decisions. Biasness or favoring particular individual or group may be reflected their influence in the process of decision-making” (Zamil, 2012).

2.5.2 The Governmental-Politics Model

The governmental-politics model “views decisions as the product of bargaining that takes place among many influential participants. It focuses on the ‘perceptions, motivations, positions, power, and maneuvers of the players’, who differ in ability to shape the outcome” (Allison, 1971). It is as much “a way of deciding who governs in a highly competitive environment as it is of setting substantive issues” (William, 1996). The decision makers “are mostly motivated by and act on their own needs, choices and interests. The process of decision-making involves a cycle of bargaining among the decision makers for each actor to try to get his or her perspective. More specifically, this model of decision-making process involves each decision-maker tries to sway powerful people within the situation that adopt his or her viewpoint and influence the remaining decision-makers (Allison, 1971). The governmental-politics model does not involve availability of full information or a focus on the optimal viewpoint like those rational models of decision-making (Lyles & Thomas, 1998). Full information is highly unlikely in political model, since it operates based upon negotiation that is often influenced by power and favors. In fact, information is often withheld in order to better maneuver in a given perspective. The information is often withheld and subsequently incomplete, the optimal view point is not a key aspect of this model. The advantages of the political model remains that it provides a representation of the subjective manner in which the real world operates, and it can minimize conflict among the actors. Conflict is also minimized by the swaying of the powerful people to support a particular viewpoint. Once the powerful people support this perspective, other group members usually fall in line behind them” (Nghah, Zakaria, Noordin, & Mustaffa, 2015).

T. Allison's (1971) governmental-politics model of decision-making could explain several dimensions of role of MP in the decision-making process in the Upazila Parishad. The governmental-politics model views decisions "as the product of bargaining among influential participants that focuses on the perception, motivations, position, power and maneuvers of the role players differing in ability to shape the outcomes. Decision-makers are motivated by and act on their own needs and choices and the process involved bargaining among them for getting his/her perspectives. This process also involves everyone tries to get favours from the powerful member to adopt his/her view point to influence the remaining decision-makers. The mode operates based upon negotiation that is influenced by power and favours".

In the Upazila Parishad, decisions-making process involved participation, discussion, debate among the MP, UZP Chairman and Vice-Chairmen, UP Chairmen, Mayor of Pourshava (if any), and reserved women members with different ability to shape the decisions. Among the members, MP is usually politically senior most and more experienced actor. Power, position, administrative influence of MP is also too high, so he/she has more control over the situation. All the actors involved in the decision-making process generally try to get benefit and support from him/her. So majority of the members, therefore, follow the view point of MP. Though Institutional rules of UZP specify who will do what, when and how but as the role of MP is not clearly defined by the legislation, so there is opportunity for MPs to provide any advice regarding resource allocation, development projects and beneficiary selection of safety-net programs. It is claimed that some of MPs are unduly influencing the local government affairs in the name of advice. So dominance of MPs curtails others' access to information regarding projects, justifies unequal project distribution and neglects their leadership role in Parishad meetings as well as development activities. Thus, informal practices restrict or exclude less influential members from their active participation in the debate or discussion leads to create more scope for MP to influence over the local government affairs, which is supported by the governmental politics model of decision-making.

2.6 Analytical Framework

This parts of study starts with a discussion on ‘legal, political, institutional and operational aspects’ of decision-making that might influence role of MP. Finally, an analytical framework has been developed and has been linked with three explanatory variables to the role of MP in the decision-making process. Since MP is legally very powerful in the decision-making process, his or her role also, will be affected by the same factors.

2.7 Dependent Variable: Role of MP in the decision-making process of UZP

The main reason to choose role of MP in the decision-making process UZP as the dependent variable of the study is because the local government institutions such as UZP can play an important role in local development, therefore, the effective decision-making in the UZP needs special attention. To what extent the members of UZP can exercise their legal jurisdiction is not only reflect the level of participative and democratic practice in the decision-making process but also proper use of limited resources for effective development of grass root level.

The study measures the level of influence of MP in the decision-making process regarding resource allocation, selection of development projects and beneficiary of safety-net programs into an index by mapping respondents perception based upon the answer to the questions: “To what extent MP influence the decision-making process regarding the following”- (i) resource allocation (ii) Selection of development projects and (iii) beneficiary selection of safety-net programs on a 1-5 point scale, i.e. Very low to very high. The “Very low” is coded as “1” and subsequently “Very high” as “5”.

2.8 Independent Variables

Based on Governmental-Politics model of decision-making approach the study has developed three explanatory variables such as ‘the legal aspects, political aspects and institutional & and operational aspects that may affect on the role of MP in the decision-making process’. First, the study tries to see the effect which legal, political and

institutional and operational aspects of the decision-making have in the variation on the role of MP the decision-making process of UZP.

2.8.1 Legal aspects

Legal aspects such as exclusive power of MP, limited power of the UZP Chairman, ability of the UNO to influence decisions, ability of the UP Chairmen, in a body, to resist, and limited functions of the Vice-chairmen to influence decisions may have affects on dependant variable i.e. role of MP in the decision-making process.

2.8.1.1. Exclusive power of MP

According to the current legislation of the Upazila Parishad, MP is the advisor of the Upazila Parishad and the advice has a binding effect upon the Parishad (section-25 of Upazila Parishad Act, 2009). So MP has emerged as the most powerful and influential actor in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad.

There was no provision of advisory role of MP in Ordinance of 2008. However, the concerned MP again reinstated as the advisor of UZP(s) situated in the jurisdiction of the constituency by the reinstatement of Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 in 2009. Moreover, the concerned MP is to be informed to communicate with the government made by the UZP which consolidated their power over local government affairs (Zamil, 2012; GOB, 2010).

2.8.1.2 Limited power of the UZP Chairmen

Unlike the 1980s, currently, UZP Chairman alone has no sweeping power in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad. According to the researchers and academicians, one of the main objectives of forming Upazila Parishad by the then military ruler at that time was to create a strong local political support base for the military regime at the grass-root level. Possibly for that reason, abundant power and a lot of facilities were provided to the then UZP Chairmen which have never been provided to any level of local government representatives in the history of Bangladesh. Moreover, in the current set up, two posts of vice-chairmen have been created along

with Chairman, and decision-making power is vested upon the Parishad instead of Chairmen alone. Legally he/she is only entitled to a casting vote in the decision-making.

2.8.1.3 Inability of Vice-chairmen to influence decisions

According to the legislation two Vice- chairmen do not have any responsibility except presiding over UZP meetings in absence of the Chairman as per rule 4(1) of Implementation Rules, 2010 and section-15 of the legislation. For this reason, T. Ahmed (2010) has recommended to abolish the posts of Vice-chairmen as they have no specific responsibilities in the legislation. As per section 31(8) of the ordinance 2008, they were entitled for one vote each counted equally with those of the UP Chairmen and Members. As per section-29 of legislation, Vice-chairmen are authorized to chair 17 committees on different matters of the UZP but the decisions have no binding effect upon the UZP yet (GOB, 1998), (GOB, 2010) (GOB, 2011b). Moreover, the majority of the Vice-chairmen, especially women vice -chairmen are usually having much lower profile, power and position in the local and national politics comparing with MP or UZP Chairmen. So, theoretically, therefore, they are not at all influential in the decision-making process.

2.8.1.4 The majority of UP Chairmen

Union Parishad Chairmen are consisting of the majority voting members of the Upazila Parishad. So, theoretically, in a body, they have the capability to resist against any proposal brought at UZP meeting for decision-making, if they do not like it. They are elected by the citizens of respective unions, therefore, accountable to them only, not to the whole population of the Upazila. It could be argued that “such a majority voting power allow the UP Chairmen to counter balance the whimsical act of UZP Chairman and Vice Chairmen. According to section-13A of the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998, four-fifth of the members of the Parishad can initiate a non- confidence motion against the UZP Chairman or Vice-chairmen or any other member of the UZP on the grounds of gross violation of the legislation, a serious misconduct or physical and mental incapacity

(GOB, 2011b). Perhaps, this provision also adds some value to raise the importance of the Union Parishad Chairmen in the Upazila Parishad” (Zamil, 2012).

2.8.1.5 UNO as Representative of the central Government

As per section 33 of the legislation, the UNO will be the Chief Executive Officer of the Parishad and shall provide secretarial support to it. He/she shall also implement decisions of the Parishad and responsible for maintaining financial discipline and other functions as per rule. Though the UNO is supposed to provide secretarial support only in reality he/she is one of the three core actors in the decision-making process. Furthermore, the UNO is responsible to assist UZP to perform its functions. If any decision of UZP violates the law or goes against the public interest, UNO can request to reconsider the decision. If the UZP still decides to stick to it, the UNO can inform the government by keeping the UZP Chairman informed (GOB, 2010) (GOB, 1998). The UNO is the link between central government and the local government playing a crucial role on behalf of central and local government and coordinates the work of different departments. The overall situation makes him/her as a powerful actor in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad.

2.8.2 Political Aspects

Narrow political considerations may come into play in the decision-making of UZP and influence the actors involved in decision-making process shaping up the outcomes.

2.8.2.1 Decisions are not taken on the basis of Majority Vote

According to the provision of rule 6(4) of the Implementation Rules, 2010 any decision of Upazila Parishad is to be taken in Parishad meeting democratically based on consensus or majority voting system (if any disagreement). But in practice, decisions in the UZP are not made on the basis of majority votes an often adopted on consensus basis without any opposition from any member in the meeting.

2.8.2.2. There is very limited discussion before decision-making

Logical discussion or debate is essential for continuing democratic practice as well as for better and effective decision-making. But currently, decision-making lacks lively & vibrant debate or discussion due to the unwillingness of the majority members of the UZP especially UP Chairmen to participate actively in the decision-making process.

2.8.2.3 Government officials except UNO are passive Participants

Government officials working at the Upazila level are the technical experts in concerned areas of the projects implementation, so it was expected that they actively participate in the discussion/debate during decision-making. But usually they are not interested to take part in the decision-making process because it may create conflicts with the public representatives. So except UNOs most of government officials are found as a passive participant in the decision-making process.

2.8.2.4 Priority of interest of the Political followers

It is expected that Upazila Parishad undertakes the development projects considering public interest to ensure the best use of tax payer's money. But practically scenario is not the same as expected. Consideration of political interest gets priority over the public interest due to the existence of a patron-client relationship between the politicians and their followers. Khan, Islam, & Haque (2008) argued that "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."

2.8.3. Institutional and Operational Aspects

Local government institutions, in particular UZPs, are the part of executive organ of the State. Local Government Division of the Government provides policy decisions and supervises the activities UZPs. Besides, Field administration also has limited

supervisory authority on the UZPs. So, the issue of coordination and dominance of MP and bureaucrats becomes important along with the aforesaid factors in the decision-making process.

2.8.3.1 Dominance of MP

According to the provisions stated in the article 59 and 60 of the Bangladesh constitution and the principles of decentralization of local government, Upazila Parishad is a democratically elected local government body and supposed to make their own decisions independently. Moreover, MPs are not elected for the local government; therefore, they are not supposed to be involved with the local government decision making process or local development activities. But according to the legal provision of UZP, MP is advisor of the UZP and his/her advice is mandatory for the Parishad. So MPs have been emerged as most powerful actors in the decision-making process of the UZP which is not desirable considering empowerment of local government as a truly independent and functional local body.

Rahman (2012) argued that “the advisory role of MPs in the local government pave the way for interference in local government affairs by MPs, particularly in development activities, and it has weakened the independence of local government. MPs often dictate the development activities to be undertaken without consulting with the local elected representatives or assessing actual need.”

2.8.3.2 Dominance of the bureaucrats

Though the UNO is the Chief Executive Officer of the UZP and is supposed to provide only secretarial support to the Parishad, actually he/she plays somewhat influential role and is one of the main three core actors in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad. The UNO is responsible for coordination among the 17 nation-building departments working at Upazila level (GOB, 2010). Ahsan (2010) found that there is long term specialist versus gap among the government officials in Bangladesh, therefore, specialist officers used to dislike the dominance of UNOs, a mid level generalist officer. On the other hand, elected political leaders also do not like the

influence of the UNOs in the Parishad. Rahman (2012b) argued that “ambiguity in role definition and conflicting Interests between bureaucrats and elected representatives render the local government especially Upazila Parishad dysfunctional”.

An Upazila Chairman of one Upazila under Feni district claimed during interview that virtually there is no power of UZP Chairmen in the Parishad. Among the 96 committees of 17 transferred departments UNO are the chair of most of the committees. So UZP Chairmen could not take decisions independently due to the dominance of the central bureaucrats.

2.8.3.3 Lack of coordination

Coordination in the Upazila Parishad has two dimensions such as –coordination between UZP elected political leaders and government officials and coordination among the elected political leaders. UNDP (2010) in a study of twelve Upazilas found that “the relationship between Upazila Parishad and Union Parishads is not hierarchic but collegial where bargaining and compromise may provide the way to overcome conflicts and disagreements. On the other hand, relationship between Upazila Parishad and the officials of the transferred departments is hierarchical and UZP can hold them accountable to some extent.” Besides, the UNO is responsible for coordination among the government officials (GOB, 2010). Sarker (2011) found that “there is a moderate level of coordination between the UNO and other government officials at the Upazila level”. Ahsan (2010), argued that “lack of inter-departmental coordination causes delay in policy implementation, wastage of time and resources, and compromise in quality of the project implementation”.

2.9 Framework for Analysis

The discussions so far reveal that “the role of MP in the decision-making process of UZP might be influenced by legal, political, institutional and operational aspects. Thus, for developing a framework for analysis three explanatory variables have been identified”. The first one is the legal aspects which includes compliance of law, rules; regulation etc though the legislations are universally applicable for all, but adherence to

the jurisdictions may vary. Different factors of legal aspects are exclusive power of MP, limited power of UZP Chairmen, limited functions of Vice-chairmen, Influence of UP Chairmen as voting majority and influence of the UNO as a central bureaucrat.

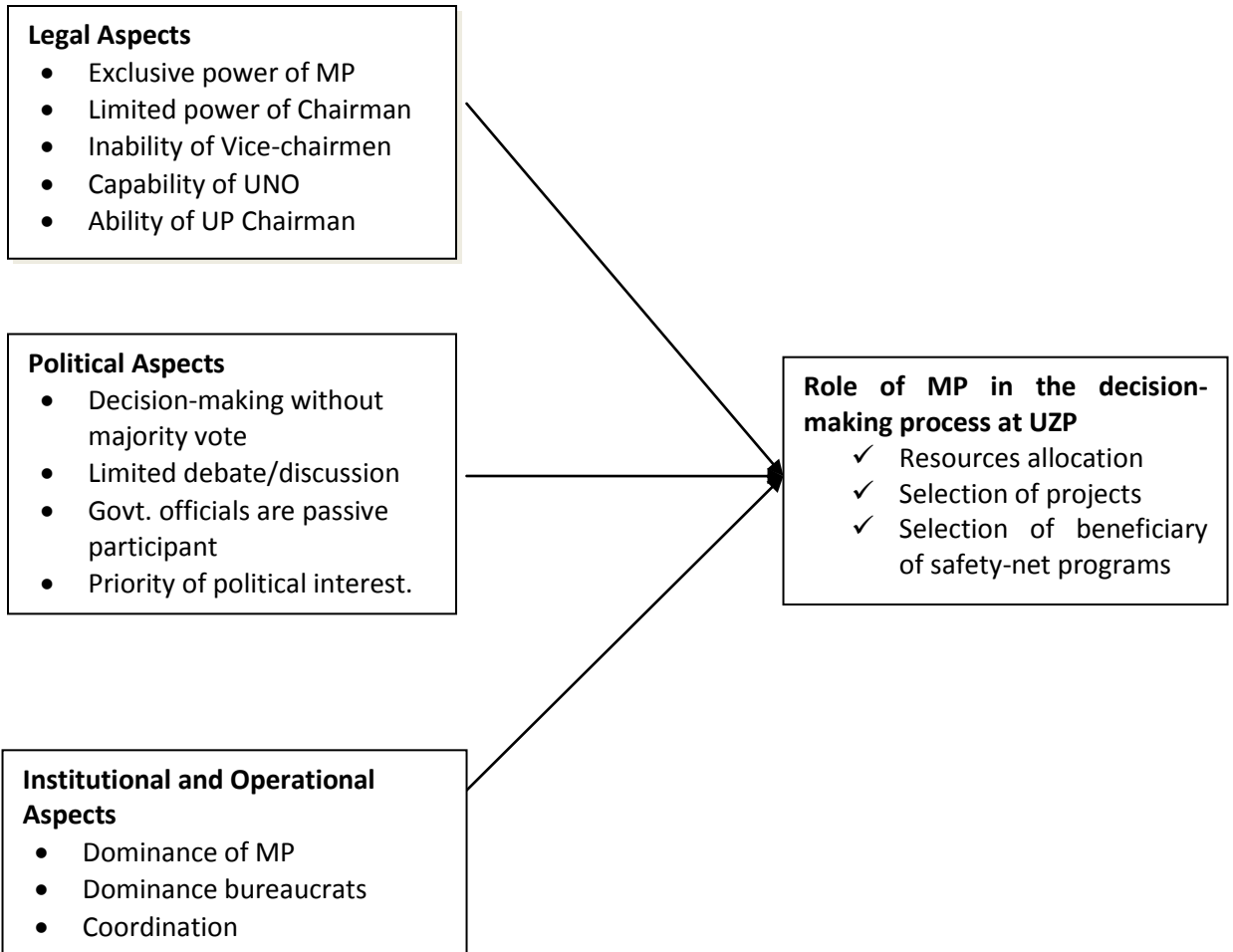
The second independent variable is the political aspects which incorporates the decision making dynamics in the UZP and the influence of different actors in the decision-making process. Different factors involved in the political aspects are undemocratic mode of decision-making without majority voting system, limited debate or discussion before decision-making, passive participation of government officials in the decision-making except the UNO and priority of political interest rather than public interest.

The third independent variable is institutional and operational aspects. It incorporates the issues of coordination, dominance of MP and dominance of bureaucrats. All three independent or explanatory variables can be argued to influence the dependent variable – role of MP in the decision-making process of UZP.

Fig 2.2 The tentative relations of explanatory variables with the dependent variable

Independent Variables

Dependent Variable



2.10 Operational definition of variables with indicators

SL	Dependent variable	Operational definition	Indicators	Sources of data	Method of data collection
1	Role of MP in decision making Process of UZP	Role of MP in resources allocation, projects selection, beneficiaries selection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resource allocation 2. Selection of projects 3. beneficiaries Selection of safety-net program 	Primary and secondary data	Interview survey content analysis
SL	Independent variables	Operational definition	Indicators	Sources of data	Data collection method
1	Legal Aspects	Practical exercise of legal jurisdiction of different actors in the decision-making process of UZP	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exclusive power of MP 2. Limited power of UZP Chairman 3. Inability of Vice Chairmen 4. Capability of UNO 5. Ability of UP Chairman 	Primary and secondary data.	Interview Survey content analysis
2	Political Aspects	The internal political dynamics and relative importance of various actors in the decision-making process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decision-making without majority vote 2. Limited debate 3. Govt. officials are passive participant 4. Priority of political interest. 	Primary and secondary data	Interview survey content analysis
3	Institutional & Operational Aspects	Dominance of MP and bureaucrats Co-ordination among officers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dominance of MP 2. Dominance of bureaucrats 3. Coordination 	Primary and secondary data	interviews survey content analysis

However, the models and theoretical concepts will be assessed by the researchers may change over time, situation and political transformation or evolution of the organization. The next chapter will focus on such transformation and development of local government organization specially Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh with the change of time.

Chapter Three

Evolution of government with reference to Upazila Parishad

The purpose of this chapter is to give a brief account of the historical development of local government and evolution of Upazila Parishad and its current status in Bangladesh. It begins with the evolution of local government in Bangladesh. Then it proceeds with a brief overview of the structure of present local government institutions, concluding with the history of the evolution of the Upazila Parishad, with its roles and functions, within the constitutional and policy framework.

3.1 Evolution of Local Government in Bangladesh

The local government in Bangladesh has a long history that goes back to India. Evidence of some forms of village self-government system in ancient India is found in the “The Rig Veda”, a book written approximately in 1200 B.C. (Siddiqui, 2005). However, the modern system of local government originated in the nineteenth century under the British regime (Aminuzzaman S. M., 2013). The district was the core administrative unit of Bengal and the other parts of British India where there were several sub-divisions (sub-districts) consisting of a number of police stations locally known as ‘Thana’.

In 1885, a three-tier rural government system such as districts, sub-divisions and unions were established by Bengal Local Self Government Act (Siddiqui, 2005). Under this legislation, the villages were segmented under unions, for the first time in the Bengal. The ‘Union’ level local government council was the ‘Union Board’ (now Union Parishad). Sub-divisional Boards were also established but existed only for a short time. ‘District Councils’ later ‘District Boards’ and ‘Unions Board’, were headed by the elected representatives. Thus, both District and sub-divisional boards were partially democratic, although it was subjected to British administrators (Sarker J. , 2018).

In the Pakistan period (1947-1971), a new form of local government, named ‘Thana council’ was emerged, under the direct supervision of the sub-divisional officers (SDOs) in connection with establishment of local government system for all of Pakistan

by the then military ruler, after he seized power, to tolerate democracy only at a local level. But the Thana councils had no power of taxation which the district and union boards exercised.

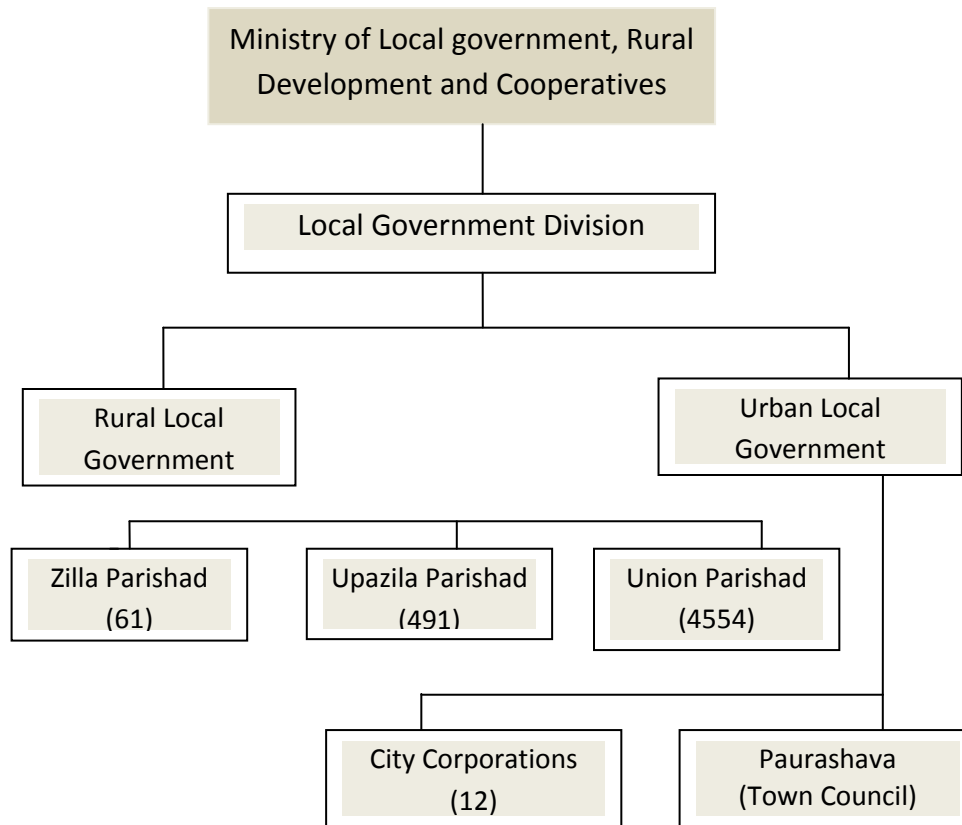
After independence in 1971, three-tier local government continued in Bangladesh (Blair, 1985; Ali 1987 cited in As-Saber & Rabbi, 2009). In 1973, The Local Government Act was introduced which continued a three-tier system calling the Union Board a “Union Parishad” (UP), the Thana Training and Development Committees (TTDC), and the District Councils the “District Board” (now Zilla Parishad). Only Union Parishads had elections, other two levels remained under bureaucratic control.

3.2 Present Structure of Local government in Bangladesh

Local government is widely known as local self-government. UN defines local self government as “a political sub-division of a nation which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs, including the power to impose taxes or exact labour for prescribed for specific purpose. The governing body for such an entity is elected or otherwise selected.” (Siddiqui, 2005)

There are two types of local government systems in Bangladesh - urban and rural. The rural local governments are Zilla Parishad, Upazila Parishad and Union Parishads. Among the rural local government, all representatives of Union Parishad are directly elected by popular election while representatives of the Zilla Parishad are elected by the elected members of rural and urban local governments in the area of the concerned district. At Upazila Parishad there are both directly elected and ex-officio members. The urban local governments are Pourshava in the small towns and City Corporations in the big cities. All representatives of the urban local governments are elected directly by popular election (Siddiqui, 2005). The organogram of present local government system in Bangladesh is given below:

Fig 3.1: Present Structure of Local government in Bangladesh



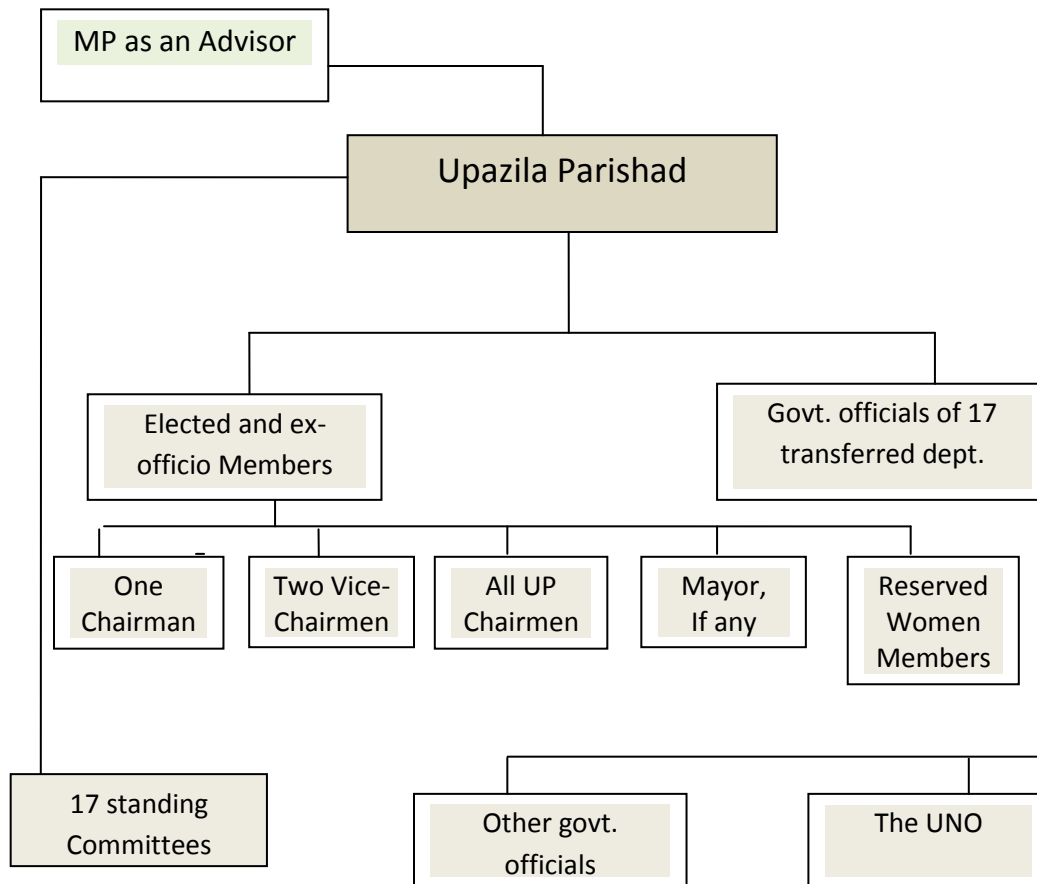
3.3 Upazila Parishad: Its Emergence, Structure and Functions

Upazila Parishad was first introduced in 1982 by the then military regime. Based on the report of the Committee for Administrative Reorganization/Reform (CARR) which proposed a three-tier local government system in Bangladesh including Upazila Parishad (UZP) at the sub district level, Upazila Parishad Ordinance was enacted in 1982 and first election of the Upazila was held in 1985. The Nationalist Government abolished the Upazila Parishads in 1991.

After that, Upazila system restored by enacting the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 but UZP election was not held. After 1991, 3rd Upazila Parishad election was held in January 2009. Seventeen departments working at Upazila level has been transferred to the UZP (**see Appendix-III**) for strengthening and capacity building of the UZP. The redefined role of the UZP includes local level development planning and budgeting to make local government more participative and citizen centered.

Upazila Parishad composed of - the Chairman; two Vice-chairmen, one of whom shall be a woman; Chairman or acting chairman of all Union Parishad and Mayor or acting mayor of Pourshava, if any, in the area of the Upazila; and One-third of female members of the reserved seats of all Unions and Pourshava (if any) who are elected in a prescribed manner.

Fig 3.2: Present Structure of Upazila Parishad



Different categories of actors are involved with the governance process of UZP and their roles are statutorily defined. The Member of Parliament is the most influential actor in the decision-making process of UZP as “advisor” of the Parishad. UZP Chairman exercises the executive power of the Parishad and conducts & presiding over the Parishad meetings, monitoring of UZP employees and supervising all accounts of UZP with the UNO jointly. The two Vice-Chairmen have no specific responsibility except

working as 'acting chairmen' and preside over the meeting in absence of Chairman. Though they chair 17 committees of the Parishad, the recommendations have no binding effect. The role of members, especially the UP Chairmen, as the majority voting members, is very important. Government officials also have important role in implementing decisions of the Parishad. All officials work under the supervision of Chairman and with the co-ordination of the UNO.

The roles and functions of UZP are illustrated in Section 23 under Schedule 2 of the legislation of 1998. There are 18 (eighteen) functions of UZP (**see Appendix-IV**). One of the major functions of the UZP is to plan and implement development projects for the benefit of the local people. For this, the UZP needs to prepare an annual development plan and a five-year plan.

3.4 Decision-making process in Upazila Parishad (UZP)

According to the legislation, UZP meeting will be held once in a month, and the meetings are called and chaired by the UZP Chairman. Quorum is not necessary for conducting meeting and there is no reference who sets the agenda. Emergency meetings can be called at short notice. Upazila Parishad (Implementation) Rules, 2010 provide the procedure of conducting meeting:

- The UZP can take decisions, allocate resources to different sectors and identify the types of projects.
- A business of the UZP is to be disposed of either in the UZP meeting or in any meeting of the standing committees.
- Decisions are to be taken in a specified way and a prescribed way of documentation is to be followed.
- When an issue is placed in monthly meeting, the Chairman, if necessary put the matter to a vote.
- So as far practicable, all decisions will be adopted by, based on consensus. However, in case of difference of opinions, the issue may be settled on the basis of majority vote.

- Each member has one vote. However, the Chairman is entitled to a casting vote.
- The UNO will take necessary measures to implement the decisions of UZP

3.5 Main sources of the fund of UZP

As per sections 35 and 44 of the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 specify nine sources of fund for the UZP (**see Appendix-V**). This includes

- Block grants from the government under ADP
- Revenue surpluses
- Local donations
- Funds received from any organizations for project implementation (GOB, 2010).

3.6 Standing Committees of the UZP

There are seventeen Standing Committees (**see Appendix-VI**) of the Upazila Parishad that are the part of formal structure of UZP. Recommendations of the committees have to be further approved in the monthly meeting of UZP. According to Aminuzzaman *et al.* (2017), “Standing Committees are the most effective and potential means that can make UZP more accountable, responsive, inclusive and participative”

3.7 Scope of Parishad Meetings and decision Making Process

As per rule 5 of the Implementation Rules, 2010 some finance, development, operation, coordination and miscellaneous matters are to be disposed of in the UZP meetings mandatorily (**see Appendix – VII**).

The main purpose of this chapter was to provide a brief discussion of the historical development of local government and its current status in Bangladesh. For doing so, the genesis of various units of local government tracing back to the years of British rule in the Indian sub-continent to date has been discussed.

Thus, this work will aim to evaluate such organizational revolution and the role of public representatives in the local development process using the methods and technology explained and described in the following chapter.

Chapter Four Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to present an overview of the methodological approaches regarding the research objectives and research questions of the study. It also discusses the process used to collect and analyze data. The study is intended to explore and identify the areas where MP influences the decision-making and also to examine how and to what extent MP influences the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad.

4.1 Research Design

Research design is a complex and multifaceted area and it is different for each field in which it is conducted. A research design 'is a plan of proposed research work' (Aminuzzaman S. M., 1991), "the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure" (Selltiz, 1965 cited in Aminuzzaman, 1991), the overall strategy which ingrates the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way that addresses the research problem effectively and provides guideline for the researchers to complete the investigation successfully. Yin (2003) defined research design as "the logic that links the data to be collected (and the conclusions to be drawn) to the initial questions of study" while Creswell (2009) described it "as the plans and procedures for research which involve the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis". For the analytical purpose, the research design can be divided into four parts: "the research question, the theory, the data, and the use of the data" (King, Keohane, & Verba, 1994).

Social Sciences research can be carried out by three approaches – "qualitative, quantitative or mixed approach. Qualitative and quantitative approaches are mainly used to examine and understand the opinions of the respondents on social problems which make generalization about the problem and examine the relation among variables used in research to test theories, respectively, while both are considered in

using mixed approach” (Creswell, 2008). Qualitative research approach describes an event with the use of words and is generally used for exploring and understanding a social problem and making a generalization about the problem and the researcher has to rely on the respondents’ views on the issue studied and examines the information from the perspective of the respondents’ perceptions while quantitative research involves analyzing data using statistical procedures to test theories by examining the relationship among the variables used in the research. Mixed method research “is the combination of both qualitative and quantitative forms” (Creswell, 2009).

The present study adopts mixed method approaches i.e. qualitative approach is supplemented by appropriate quantitative methods to clarify the impact of the influence of the Members of Parliament in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh. An exploratory and descriptive case study approach is used for collecting relevant information because how, what, and why questions have been posed.

4.2 Research Method

Combinations of in-depth interview, observation, questionnaire survey, and content analysis have been used in this study. Using of different methods reduces biasness in the study and work as a reliable tool for a research. Interview method helps the researchers to collect data by face to face contact from the respondents. “Interview is a systematic method by which a person enters deeply into the life of even a stranger and can bring out required information and data for research proposal” (Aminuzzaman S. M., 1991). The author conducted interview using in-depth interview method. The questions were mostly structured with some unstructured (open and close ended) questions. Closed ended questions were used to save time and a small portion of open ended questions were used to have in-depth knowledge and insight of the respondents about the role of MP in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh. The author took interview of total 45 elected representatives and appointed officers of three Upazila. A comprehensive and in-depth focus was given to UZP Chairmen, UNO, PIO, and UE during interview.

4.3 Sources of Data and Data Collection Technique

Both Primary and secondary sources of information were used in this study. Information was collected by in-depth interview, direct observation, questionnaire survey and content analysis. Interviews have been carried out by the author himself and questionnaire survey was done through the respective UNOs during May and up to June 15, 2019.

Primary information have been collected through interviews of the respondents including MPs, UZP Chairmen, and Vice-chairmen, Upazila level officers and UP chairmen of Banskhali and Potiya Upazila under Chittagong district and Sadar Upazila of Lakshmipur. Purposive sampling method was used to select the respondents for in-depth interview and they were selected from six categories such as the Members of Parliament, UZP Chairman, and Vice-Chairmen, UP Chairmen, Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), and other government officials resulting in 45 interviews from the three Upazilas including 15 from each Upazila. The Vice-Chairmen of Banskhali, women Vice-Chairs of Potiya and Lakshmipur Sadar could not be interviewed because the former one was yet to take oath and latter could not be reached during the period of data collection.

To validate the qualitative findings, questionnaire survey was done in another 30 Upazilas under 18 districts from eight administrative divisions, which constitute about 6% of the total Upazila Parishads in Bangladesh to collect quantitative data collected from 30 UZP Chairmen and 30 Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNOs), who are the key role player in the decision-making process at UZP. Convenient sampling method was used to select Upazilas for questionnaire survey. Data from UZP Chairmen were collected through respective UNOs. Moreover, some Members of Parliament, UZP Chairmen, Vice- chairmen, UNOs, elected members and appointed officials of other Upazila Parishads were also interviewed to face and over telephone to validate the findings using convenient sampling methods to validate the findings.

Direct observation was done by participating in the monthly meeting of Banskhali and Potiya Upazila Parishad by the author himself during data collection period. Findings

were supplemented by direct working experience of the author as UNO for almost three years in Lakshmipur Sadar Upazila

Secondary data have been collected by content analysis. Relevant documents such as books, journal articles, dissertations, reports, legislations, rules, regulations and manuals, newspapers, magazines, websites etc concerning the influence of MPs in the local government affairs have been used to examine role of MP in the decision –making process of Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh. Secondary data have been used to supplement the primary data collected from the in-depth interviews and questionnaire survey. Documentation on meeting minutes of the Upazila Parishad monthly meetings have been done to explore coordinating role of the UNO with other officers.

4.4 Data Sampling

A total of 45 respondents from the study areas have been interviewed to examine the role of MP in the decision-making process of the Upazila Parishad. This study has been conducted in three Upazilas: Banskhali and Potiya Upazila and Lakshmipur Sadar Upazila. Banskhali and Potiya Upazila are under Chittagong district and Lakshmipur Sadar Upazila is under Lakshmipur district. The author takes interviews of 45 respondents from the three Upazila including MPs, UZP Chairmen and Vice – Chairmen, UP Chairmen and government officers. Questionnaire survey was done in another 30 Upazilas to collect quantitative data from 30 UZP Chairmen and 30 Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNOs) who are the core actors in decision-making process of Upazila Parishad. Moreover, some public representatives and appointed officials of other Upazila Parishads were also interviewed to validate the findings.

4.5 Data Processing and Analysis

To validate the qualitative findings, survey data have been collected from UZP Chairmen and UNOs of another 30 Upazilas. The collected quantitative data has been accumulated and analyzed using SPSS. It also uses some charts, graphs to present data in a graphic manner. Mixed approaches of qualitative and quantitative methods have been used to interpret the data. Qualitative approach has been used to explain the

significance of the phenomenon, the level of influence of MP over the Upazila affairs especially on the allocation of resources and projects and selection of beneficiary of safety-net programs while quantitative approach has been used to generalize the existing phenomenon from the information/data which has been provided by the respondents.

4.6 Unit of Analysis

Selection of the appropriate unit of analysis is primarily related with accurate specification of primary research question (Yin, 2003). Since Bangladesh is a unitary state, an Upazila bears more importance in the system of local governance as an outcome of political and administrative decentralization. Therefore, the upazila has becomes a focal point of all development activities. In this study, Upazila Parishad is considered as unit of analysis as it is intended to assess the role of MP in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad. According to Yin (Yin, 2003), multiple-case designs may be preferred over single-case designs. It offers analytic benefits and helps to avoid skepticism to do empirical work. From this point of view, this study intended to cover three Upazilas among 491 Upazila in Bangladesh focusing on the role of MP in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad.

The study is intended to cover three Upazilas, namely Banskhalī and Potiya Upazila and Lakshmipur Sadar Upazila. Potiya Upazila under Chittagong district has been chosen because it is somewhat developed and sub-urban in nature. It is located about 20 km southeast and attached with the periphery of the district headquarter of the second largest city Chittagong, the commercial capital of Bangladesh. It has a very easy communication with both the capital city, Dhaka and district head quarter, Chittagong. Lakshmipur Sadar Upazila was chosen as districts headquarter and its semi-urban nature. It is located in the midway of Dhaka and Chittagong, about 150 km away from the capital city, Dhaka and 130 km away from commercial capital, Chittagong and it also has comparatively easy road communication. On the other hand, Banskhalī Upazila under Chittagong district was chosen because it is extremely rural nature and under developed Upazila. Furthermore, Potiya, Lakshmipur Sadar are administratively marked

as A category and Banskhali is marked as B category Upazila i.e. more resourceful & developed and less resourceful and comparatively less developed Upazila. Again, Lakshmipur Sadar Upazila is comparatively larger and composed of two Parliamentary Constituencies (one full and one partial) and two other Upazilas composed of single Parliamentary constituency. It was assumed that the combination of sub-urban, semi-urban and rural area, more & less resourceful, more developed & less developed, and different geographical location may add value to the study and can be a great use to have comparative understanding of the role of MP across Upazila to Upazila.

However, these three Upazilas of different geographical locations and size can be of great use to have a comparative understanding of the level of variation concerning the role of MP in the decision-making process of the Upazila Parishad. The general assumption is that there has been certain level of variation in the role of MP in the decision-making process across Upazila to Upazila. It has been assumed that the more resourceful the Upazila is, the higher the level of influence of MP. It is also assumed that a combination of the rural, semi-urban and sub-urban area may add value and quality of the study. Moreover, Banskhali is the birth place of the author's and Potiya is situated near Banskhali under same district and the author previously worked as Upazila Nirbahi Officer in Lakshmipur Sadar Upazila for almost three years. The author's personal network may be utilized to have easy access to data. Lakshmipur Sadar is the previous working place where the author worked as UNO for almost three years. So it was intended that personal networking might be helpful for easy access to data source and data could be easily collected with manageable time and cost.

4.7 Reliability and Cross Validation of Data

The primary data for this study has been collected from the respondents like MPs, UZP Chairmen and Vice-chairmen, Upazila level officers and Union parishad chairmen using purposive sampling method. These respondents are the actors who are directly involved in the overall the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh. Creswell and Miller (2000 cited in Creswell 2009, p.1910) opines that "validity has been one of the important strengths of qualitative research. Validity refers

to trustworthiness of data which is subject to the measurement of the phenomenon, research problem. To confirm validity and reliability of the collected data, data collected from one method are usually cross checked with another method. However, to enhance the trustworthiness of data, secondary documents have been used as a source of evidence to cross check data collected from interview”

The chapter has discussed methodological approaches concerning the objectives and research questions for the study. To examine and analyze the role of the Members of Parliament in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh, a mixed method approach combinations of interview, quantitative survey, observation and content analysis have been used. As regards to content analysis principle of authenticity and objectivity has been maintained.

The rationale for making the choice is also explained and critiqued. Using the methodology, strategies and techniques above, the research was undertaken to analyze the presented data.

Chapter Five

Data Presentation, Analysis and interpretation

This chapter analyzes empirical data obtained from in-depth interviews and observations from the study areas (Banskhali, Potiya and Lakshmipur Sadar Upazila) as well as the questionnaire survey from UZP Chairmen and UNOs of 30 Upazilas. The qualitative data have been synthesized by compiling narratives and using key words in line with the analytical framework. The quantitative data have been analyzed following key questions asked in the study using SPSS, presented in tables. The quantitative data have been used to validate the qualitative data. Thus the qualitative data has performed a triangulation function which has become almost standard in social science research.

The analysis is divided into two broad areas- The first part discusses the general findings from the empirical data divided into 'legal, political, institutional and operational aspects and the assessment of the decision-making' process of Upazila Parishad. The second part analyzes the role of MP in the decision-making process regarding resource allocation & distribution, project selection and beneficiary selection of safety-net programs on the basis of the general findings.

5.1 General Findings

Qualitative data have been collected through in-depth interviews from 45 respondents in the study area and survey data have been collected from 30 UNOs and 30 UZP Chairmen of 30 Upazilas. The questions cover legal aspects, political aspects, and institutional & operational aspects of the decision-making and the independent and dependent variables of the analytical framework. Findings from the quantitative part of the collected data have been used to cross-check with the qualitative information received through interviews. The major findings on the different factors of dependent and independent variables are described below:

5.2 Observations based on legal aspects

According to the legislation of Upazila Parishad, the Members of Parliament, Upazila Parishad Chairmen, and Vice-chairmen, UP Chairmen, Mayor of Pourshava, and reserved women members have their specified legal jurisdictions in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad. However, the capabilities of exercising of such jurisdiction may practically vary across Upazila depending on the political and administrative situations of the concerned Upazila, perceptions, motivations, positions, power, and maneuvers of the key role players, who differ in the ability to shape the outcome i.e. final decisions (Allison, 1971).

As the advice of MP is mandatory upon the UZP, theoretically, therefore, he/she is the most powerful actor in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad and it is possible for him/her to overturn the decisions. However, to what extent the reality matches the theoretical perspectives in the practical situation have been assessed to find the real picture of the level of the influence of MPs' in the decision-making process.

Legal factors that affect incorporate a wide range of issues. Most importantly legal aspects describe the practical exercise of the jurisdictions of different actors in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad. Factors related to legal aspects are-

5.2.1 Exclusive power of MP in decision-making process

According to the legislation of the Upazila Parishad, MP is the advisor of the Upazila Parishad and the advice has a binding effect upon the Parishad (section-25 of Upazila Parishad Act, 2009). Though, MP has no vote in Upazila Parishad, but as the advisor legally he/she empowered to influence decisions of UZP. It is found in the study area that as a politician and public representative MPs are more experienced than UZP Chairmen; power, position, administrative control of MPs also supplement the overall situation. So MPs have emerged as the most influential actor in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad. It is also found that some of MPs have a tendency to dictate in the decision-making process but some of them are not interested about Upazila

affairs. From the survey data, the extents of influences of MP in the decision-making process are as follows-

Table No: 5.1 – Respondents’ views on "MP is the most influential person in the decision- making process"

Response	Percent (%)
Disagree	28
Agree	65
Not sure/undecided	7
Total	100

In practical term, survey data reflect that about two-thirds (65%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that MP is the most influential person in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad and he/she is practically able to overturn the decisions. Nevertheless, more than one-third (35%) of the respondents either disagreed (28%) or remained undecided (7%) with the statement, which means that legal jurisdiction only may not always ensure the supremacy of MP in the decision-making process.

Among the three Upazilas under present study, the higher level of influence of MP over the local government affairs is found in Potiya Upazila, moderate level of influence his found in Banskhali Upazila and comparatively lower level of influence is found in Lakshmipur Sadar Upazila.

5.2.2 Limited power of Upazila Parishad Chairmen

Unlike the 1980s, currently, UZP Chairman alone has no sweeping power in the Upazila Parishad. According to the researchers and academicians, one of the main objectives of forming Upazila Parishad by the then military ruler at that time was to create a strong local political support base for the military regime at the grass-root level. Possibly for that reason, abundant power and a lot of facilities were provided to the then UZP Chairmen which have never been provided to any level of local government representatives in the history of Bangladesh (Siddiquee, 1997). Moreover, in the current set up, two posts of vice-chairmen have been created along with Chairman, and

decision-making power is vested upon the Parishad instead of Chairmen alone. Legally he/she is only entitled to a casting vote in the decision-making.

However, in the practical term, except for two-fifth (40%) of the respondents, the majority (60%) of the respondents in the survey either disagreed (47%) or remained undecided (13%) on the statement that UZP Chairman alone has very limited influence in the decision-making process of UZP. It means that UZP Chairmen are not deriving their power not only from the legal provisions; there are some other factors which may complement their authority and power and create some space for them in the decision-making process.

Table No: 5.2 – Respondents’ views on “UZP Chairman alone has very limited power to influence the decision-making process”

Response	Percent (%)
Disagree	47
Agree	40
Not sure/undecided	13
Total	100

The findings of the qualitative data from the study areas have also supported this reality. Majority respondents mentioned that except legal jurisdiction, many other factors such as political affiliation; local political support base, existence of internal political conflicts and grouping in local politics, personal choice and interest, patron-client relationship, interests of political followers, power & position in local and national politics, and education, experience, and personal capability of the UZP Chairmen may also contribute to enhance their capacity to influence the decision-making process in the Upazila Parishad.

Among the study areas, it is found that the level of influence of UZP Chairman is comparatively higher in Sadar Upazila under Lakshmipur district, moderate in Banskhal and lower in Potiya Upazila under Chittagong district.

5.2.3 The capability of UNOs in decision-making

According to the legislation, the UNO is supposed to provide secretarial support and is also responsible for the financial discipline of the Upazila Parishad. As he/she does not entitle to vote in the meeting of the UZP, therefore theoretically, he/she does not have any power to influence the decision-making process. But in practical terms, more than two-thirds (71%) of the respondents in the survey agreed that the UNO can influence the decisions of the Upazila Parishad. Nevertheless, about one third (29%) of the respondents either disagreed (12%) or remained undecided (17%) with the statement.

Table No: 5.3 – Respondents’ views on “UNO is somewhat influential in the decision-making process as a central bureaucrat”

Response	Percent (%)
Disagree	12
Agree	71
Not sure/undecided	17
Total	100

These findings are also substantiated with the qualitative data from the interview and observation. It reveals that as a representative of the central government and jointly signatory cheque with UZP Chairmen make some space for UNOs to influence the decision-making. Moreover, UNOs are responsible for overall coordination and financial discipline of Upazila Parishad. Besides, he/she can write to the government, if any decision of Upazila Parishad goes against the public interest or incase of violation of law. So, in the overall situation, UNO has some controlling power in the decision-making process. These findings substantiated the findings of previous studies where UNO has been identified as one of the three core actors in the Upazila Parishad with MP and UZP Chairman.

However, on the respondents’ view, the level of influence of UNOs varies across Upazilas depending upon the political and administrative practice, the relationship of UNO with MP and UZP Chairmen, decision-making dynamics. Among the study areas, it

is found that the extent of influence of UNOs is higher in Banskhal, moderate in Lakshmipur Sadar and comparatively lower in Potiya Upazila.

5.2.4 The inability of Vice-chairmen to influence the decisions

According to the legislation, Two Vice- chairmen have no specific role and function or visible power to influence the decisions of Upazila Parishad. They are entitled to one vote each in the meeting of the UZP. Though are also authorized to chair 17 committees on different matters of the UZP but the recommendations of the committees have no binding effect upon the UZP. Moreover, the majority of the Vice-chairmen, especially women vice -chairmen are having much lower profile, power and position in the local politics comparing with MP or UZP Chairmen. So, theoretically, therefore, they are not at all influential in the decision-making process.

Table No: 5.4 - Respondents views on “Vice-chairmen are not influential at all in decision -making process UZP”

Response	Percent (%)
Disagree	22
Agree	60
Not sure/undecided	18
Total	100

In real term also, almost two-thirds (60%) of the respondents in the survey agreed with the statement that two Vice-chairmen cannot influence the decisions of UZP at all. Nevertheless, more than one-third (40%) of the respondents either disagreed (22%) or remained undecided (18%) with the same, which may indicate that in some Upazilas there are some Vice-chairmen who can influence the decisions to some extent.

During the interview, respondents mentioned that political affiliation; power and position in politics, local political support base, relationship with MP, UZP Chairmen, and UNO, acceptance among UP Chairmen, awareness, education, experience, etc might be supplementing the lack of legal power for the Vice-chairmen in the decision-making process. Among the study areas, it is found that Vice-chairman of Lakshmipur Sadar Upazila, who is a lawyer and has a strong local political support base, is found to be

somewhat powerful in the decision-making than Banskali and Potiya. However, the level of influence of female Vice chairmen is found not so visible in the study areas during data collection.

5.2.5 The ability of UP Chairmen to resist the decisions

Union Parishad Chairmen are consisting of the majority voting members of the Upazila Parishad. Therefore, theoretically, they have the ability to resist against any proposal brought at UZP meeting for decision-making, if they do not like it. In real term also overwhelming majority (85%) of the respondents agreed that the UP Chairmen, in a body, can practically influence the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad or they can resist against any decisions if they do not like. However, few (15%) respondents either disagreed (12%) or remained undecided (3%) with the statement. The probable reasons might be that the UP Chairmen are not political competitors with MP or UZP Chairmen.

Table No: 5.5 - Respondents views on “UP Chairmen are influential in the decision-making process as majority voting members in Upazila Parishad”

Response	Percent (%)
Disagree	12
Agree	85
Not sure/undecided	3
Total	100

But qualitative data from the interview do not match with the findings of the survey findings. Most of the respondents in the study areas in the interview mentioned that most of the UP Chairmen do not actively take part in the discussion/debate in the Upazila Parishad meeting because currently the majority of them are the local leaders of the ruling party and devoted follower of either MP or UZP Chairmen. Last UP election of 2016 was held using the symbol of the political party for the first time in the country. As MPs are the most influential political leader of the concerned Upazila, majority of existing UP Chairmen were nominated according to the preference and support of MPs, except a few exceptional cases. As a result, generally they are very much loyal to MPs.

So agreement on an issue of common interest like distribution of resource or projects is very likely among them.

However, differing political orientations, existence of strong political conflict or grouping in local politics, awareness, motivation, and training of local representatives, culture of participative decision making, priority of public interests over personal or political interest, political stability and democratic practice might prevent such alliances in some cases which are not common in the current situation.

Among the study areas, it is found that UP Chairmen, in a body, sometimes raise their voice in Lakshmipur Sadar and Banskhalia Upazila, but they have almost no voice in Potiya. So level of influence of MP in the decision-making is highest in Potiya among three Upazilas under study.

5.3 Observations based on political aspects

Political factors that affect the decision-making process of the Upazila Parishad incorporate a wide range of issues. Most importantly the political aspects describe the relative importance of different actors in the decision-making process. The decisions of UZP might be influenced by the considerations of patron-clientelism also.

Besides, political leaders have a tendency to overemphasize physical infrastructures and exerting pressure on the bureaucrats. UNOs during interview mentioned that political leaders and public representatives are more interested in infrastructure projects rather than projects like human resource development, women empowerment etc because physical infrastructures projects have multiple benefits such as developments are easily visible to the citizens which may be helpful for them in winning in the next election, tender may be awarded to kith and kin or political followers and obviously have the opportunity to have some cash profit.

5.3.1 Making decisions without majority voting

According to legislation, any decision of Upazila Parishad is to be taken in Parishad meeting democratically based on consensus or majority voting system (if any disagreement). In practical term also, about two-thirds (62%) of the respondents

agreed with the statement that the decisions in the UZP are not made on the basis of majority votes as often adopted without any opposition from any member in the meeting. However, more than one-third (37%) of the respondents either disagreed (32%) or remained undecided (5%) with the same which may mean that in some Upazila MP or UZP Chairmen may not dominate the decision-making process extremely, so members get some space to take part in the decision-making.

Table No: 5.6 - Respondents views on “decisions of UZP are not made on the basis of majority voting system”

Response	Percent (%)
Disagree	33
Agree	62
Not sure/undecided	5
Total	100

Finding of the qualitative data substantiated this reality. Majority of the respondents mentioned that almost all the elected representatives including MP, UZP Chairmen, Vice- chairmen and UP Chairmen belong to the same political ideology and UP Chairmen are mostly loyal to the opinion of MP or UZP Chairmen due to the political chain of command. Moreover, sometimes they maintain liaison and internally distribute resources or projects among them even long before meeting which the UNO or other concerned officers know much later. Political control & chain of command and unholy alliances among the public representatives/politicians may be responsible for adopting decisions in Upazila Parishad without any opposition from any member in the meeting.

This is the common scenario of all three Upazilas under study. It is found that in most cases projects or beneficiary list are finalized before meeting just for formality and passed without any opposition from any member. This may be due to the reason that no one wants to take a risk to give opinion against the desire of MP which may endanger their future political leverage.

5.3.2 Lack of proper debate/discussion before decisions

Logical discussion or debate is essential for continuing democratic practice as well as for better and effective decision-making. But currently, decision-making lacks a

lively & vibrant debate or discussion due to the unwillingness of the majority members of UZP to participate actively in the decision-making process. In practical term also, half (50%) of the respondents agreed on the statement that there is a very little debate/discussion in the UZP meetings before making decisions. Nonetheless, half (50%) of them either disagreed (37%) or remained undecided (13%) with the same.

Table No: 5.7 - Respondents views on “there is a very limited debate/discussion before decision-making”

Response	Percent (%)
Disagree	37
Agree	50
Not sure/undecided	13
Total	100

Such findings contradict with the findings the interview data of this study. This might be due to the facts that in some Upazilas the newly elected UZP Chairmen, Vice-chairmen, and UP Chairmen are showing much interest in UZP affairs than before. However, UNOs of Potiya and Lakshmipur Sadar Upazila mentioned that no quality debate takes place in the meeting before decision-making. Some UP Chairmen raise their voice only when they get fewer projects for the concerned union. This is very common scenario in Potiya and Lakshmipur Sadar Upazila.

5.3.3 Government officials except UNOs are passive participants

Government officials working at the Upazila level are the technical experts in concerned areas of the projects implementation, so it was expected that they actively participate in the discussion/debate during decision-making. In practical term, it is found true from the survey data. More than three-fourth (78%) of the respondents either disagreed (68%) or remained undecided (10%) that government officials generally do not express their opinions in the decision-making process of UZP, while less than one-fourth (22%) of the respondents agreed with the same statement which may mean that mind-set of the government officials has changed to some extent and currently they are

willingly working in collaboration with the elected representatives for effective development at grass root level.

Table No: 5.8 - Respondents views on “government officials generally do not express their opinions in decision-making process”

Response	Percent (%)
Disagree	68
Agree	22
Not sure/undecided	10
Total	100

But qualitative data do not support this finding. From the study areas, it is observed and realized that except the UNOs majority of the transferred departments’ officials, except Upazila Engineer (UE) and Project Implementation Officer (PIO), are not enough caring and concerned about the Upazila Parishad affairs. Most of them raise their voice only when they need any projects for the concerned department. Moreover, some of the Upazila Engineers (UE) and Projects Implementation Officers (PIO), who are involved with the planning and implementation of most development projects at Upazila level, have a tendency to maintain an unholy liaison with some contractors and corrupted persons to fulfill their self-interest rather ensuring the quality implementation of projects.

Some Upazila level officers during the interview mentioned that conflicting with the public representatives or politicians hampers the overall working environment and make both their job and personal life difficult at the Upazila level. The reluctance of government officers except UNOs are found as a passive participant in the decision-making process and level of reluctance is almost same in study areas. In the study areas government officers of Banskhalı have been found comparatively more participative on Upazila affairs than two other Upazilas.

5.3.4 Political consideration in decision-making

It is expected that Upazila Parishad undertakes the development projects considering public interest to ensure the best use of tax payer’s money. But practically scenario is not the same as expected. About two-thirds (63%) of the respondents agreed

with the statement that interests of the political followers get the priority rather than public interest in selection projects. Nevertheless, more than one-third (37%) of the respondents either disagreed (17%) or remained undecided (20%) with the same which means that in some Upazilas or at least in case of some projects the decisions are made considering public interests.

Table No: 5.9 - Respondents views on “interests of the political followers get priority rather than public interest in selection of development projects”

Response	Percent (%)
Disagree	17
Agree	63
Not sure/undecided	20
Total	100

The findings are also substantiated by qualitative data. During interview, the majority of the respondents mentioned that consideration of political interest get priority over the public interest mostly happen due to the existence of a patron-clientelistic relationship between the politicians and their followers. Among the study areas, political considerations get priority over public interest in project selection is found highest in Potiya, moderate Lakshmipur Sadar Upazila and lowest in Banskali Upazila

5.4 Observations based on institutional and operational aspects

A number of institutional and operational issues are important in the decision-making process of the Upazila Parishad. Moreover, the mandatory advisory role and dominance of MP and the supervisory role of the higher bureaucratic authorities & dominance of the bureaucrats might also have an influence on the decision-making process regarding planning and implementation of projects.

5.4.1 Dominance of MP

According to the provisions stated in the article 59 and 60 of the Bangladesh constitution and the principles of decentralization of local government, Upazila Parishad is a democratically elected local government body and supposed to make their decisions

independently. MPs are not elected for the local government; therefore, they are not supposed to be involved with the local government decision making process and local development activities. But as per legal provision, MP is advisor of the UZP and his/her advice is mandatory for the Parishad. So MPs have been emerged as most powerful actors in the decision-making process of the UZP which is not desirable considering empowerment of local government as a truly independent and functional local body.

Table No: 5.10 - Respondents views on “dominance of MP is a barrier for effective decision making at UZP”

Response	Percent (%)
Disagree	18
Agree	67
Not sure/undecided	15
Total	100

In practical term also, two-third of the respondents (67%) agreed with the statement that dominance of MP is a barrier for effective decision making at UZP. Nevertheless, about one-third (33%) of the respondents either disagreed (18%) or remained undecided (15%) with the same which means that the influence of MPs varies across Upazila to Upazila.

Finding of the qualitative interview also supports the reality. Among the study areas, it is found that the level of interference of MP over Upazila affairs is very low in Sadar Upazila of Lakshmipur districts. On the other hand, in Potiya Upazila, MP is concerned about almost everything while moderate level of interference is found in Banskhali Upazila of Chittagong district. Both in qualitative interview and questionnaire survey, majority of the respondents considered the dominance of MP in the local government decision-making process as a barrier for effective decision-making in the UZP.

5.4.2 Dominance of bureaucrats

Though the UNO is the Chief Executive Officer of the UZP and is supposed to provide only secretarial support to the Parishad, actually he/she plays powerful role and

acts as one of the main three core actors in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad. But Survey data suggested that majority of the respondents did not consider the dominance of the bureaucrats as a barrier of effective decision-making in the UZP. Three-fourth (75%) of the respondents either disagreed (50%) or remained undecided (25%) with the statement that dominance of bureaucrats is a barrier for effective decision making at UZP while one-fourth (25%) of the respondents agreed (25%) with the statement.

Table No: 5.11 – Respondents’ views on “dominance of bureaucrats is a barrier for effective decision making at UZP”

Response	Percent (%)
Disagree	50
Agree	25
Not sure/undecided	25
Total	100

The finding contradicts with the previous studies. But qualitative data of this study support this finding. During the interview most of the respondents including UNOs mentioned that currently most of MP, UZP Chairmen & Vice -chairmen and UP Chairmen who are the role player in the decisions-making process in Upazila Parishad belong to same political ideology and elected with same political symbol. So, it is very common to form strong alliance among them, hence the scope of the bureaucrats has been reduced to dominate the decision-making process. Another reason may be that most of the currently working UNOs maintain a very good relationship and alliance with MPs, the most powerful actor; therefore, their parts of the influence also come through MPs.

5.4.3 Lack of co-ordination

Effective co-ordination among the UNO and office heads of 17 other nation building departments working at Upazila level is essential not only to ensure proper completion of local government projects but also necessary for effective and successful implementation of different programs of national government. As the officers of the various departments are technically expert and involved with planning and

implementation of projects at Upazila level, therefore lack of co-ordination may affect the quality of decisions. Generally, there is long existence of a generalist versus specialist psychological gap between the UNO and officers of other transferred departments.

Table No: 5.12- Respondents views on “there is lack of coordination between UNO and other government officials at UZP”

Response	Percent (%)
Disagree	37
Agree	47
Not sure/undecided	18
Total	100

In the reality also about half (47%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that there is lack of coordination between UNO and other government officials at UZP. Nevertheless, majority (53%) of the respondents either disagreed (35%) or remained undecided (18%) with the same statement. These finding is also substantiated with the findings of the interview, observation and also the previous research findings. It indicates that still there is a lack of proper co-ordination and trust among the UNO and other government officials in the UZP which can be considered as a barrier for effective decision-making, especially in quality implementation of development projects at Upazila Parishad.

Among the study areas, coordination between the UNO and other government officials is found comparatively better in Banskhalī than in Potiya and Lakshmipur Sadar Upazila.

5.5 Consequences of the role of MP on the overall performance of UZP

Local government bodies are expected to be free from the influence of the central/central government and are supposed to be a truly autonomous local self-government able to make their decision independently. Upazila Parishad is an important tier of the three-tier rural local government which works as a bridge between the local and national government. But from the very beginning, it could not work independently

due to the dominance of the Member of the Parliament and national level bureaucrats. MP is the advisor of the Upazila Parishad and the advice is mandatory for the Parishad which results in the following probable consequences.

5.5.1 Decreases the autonomy of UZP

As the advice of MP is mandatory for the UZP, so undoubtedly it decreases the autonomy of the democratically elected Upazila Parishad to make their decisions independently. In practical term , more than two-thirds (70%) of the respondents agreed on the statement that the advisory role of MP decreases the autonomy of democratically elected UZP. However, about one-third (30%) of the respondents either disagreed (12%) or remained undecided (18%) with the same.

Table No: 5.13 - Respondents views on “advisory role of MP decrease the autonomy of UZP”

Response	Percent (%)
Disagree	12
Agree	70
Not sure/undecided	18
Total	100

Such finding reveals that most of the respondents believed that in reality, Upazila Parishad could not work independently with the dominance of MP in the name of the advisor. These findings also support the findings of the qualitative data. During interview, the majority of the respondent mentioned that the advisory role of MP certainly hampers the autonomy of the democratically elected UZP to take their decisions independently.

5.5.2 Interference in the local government affairs

Local development is one of the most important affairs of the democratically elected local government body. On the other hand, MPs are elected to represent the citizens of the concerned constituency and to represent them in the Parliament to discuss the national level problem and policy formulation to solve the problem. MPs

involvement in the Upazila Parishad decision-making can be considered as interference in the local government affairs.

Table No: 5.14 - Respondents views on “advisory role of MP is the Interference of local government affairs”

Response	Percent (%)
Disagree	11
Agree	75
Not sure/undecided	13
Total	100

In practical term also, three-fourth (75%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that advisory role of MP is the interference of local government affairs while one-fourth (25%) of the respondents either disagreed (12%) or remained undecided (13%) with the same. MPs are elected for working in the parliament and the representatives of the local government are elected to work for local development. Generally power and position of MP is much higher than the elected representatives of Upazila Parishad. So when MPs are involved in the local government decision-making process or local development works, it is both the wastage of time of MP and also interference in the local government affairs.

5.5.3 Restricts democratic character of local body

According to the Bangladesh constitution, elected Upazila Parishad bears the character of a democratic local body. It could work as an independent unit of local governance under the leadership of elected representatives. But due to advisory role of MP who can overturn the decision of the Parishad violate the democratic character of the UZP.

Table No: 5.15 - Respondents views on “Advisory role of MP restrict the democratic character of local body”

Response	Percent (%)
Disagree	10
Agree	70
Not sure/undecided	20
Total	100

In practical term, more than two-third (70%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that advisory role of MP restricts the democratic character of local government body while about one-third (30%) of the respondents either disagreed (10%) or remained undecided (20%) which mean that most of the respondents believed advisory role of MPs is a hindrance to work UZP as an independent and democratic local government body.

5.5.4 Limits the development of local leadership

Local government institutions are the breeding ground for leadership development. Interestingly, about two-third (62%) of the respondents either disagreed (15%) or remained undecided (47%) with the statement that advisory role of MP limits the development of local leadership while more than one-third (38%) of the respondents agreed with the same.

Table No: 5.16 - Respondents views on “advisory role of MP limits the development of local leadership”

Response	Percent (%)
Disagree	15
Agree	47
Not sure/undecided	38
Total	100

This finding is also consistent with the qualitative data. Majority respondent believed that MP works as a guardian of the locally elected representatives of the Upazila Parishad and it did not hamper the local leadership development that much.

5.6 Respondents view to make the UZP effective & functional

In the existing legislation, complain of the most UZP Chairmen and Vice-chairmen is that Upazila Parishad cannot work independently due to the dominance of MP and bureaucrats. In the previous terms (3rd and 4th UZP) Upazila Parishad Chairman and Vice Chairmen Alliance and also local government specialist demanded for amendment of the legislation to abolish the advisory role of MP and also to clear and redefine the role and functions of the public representatives and bureaucrats.

5.6.1 Redefining the role of MP, UZP Chairman and UNO

MP is the advisor of the Upazila Parishad and his/her advice is mandatory upon the Parishad. On the other hand, though the UNOs are supposed to provide only secretarial support to the UZP, in reality, they control the overall financial and administrative matters of the Upazila Parishad. Moreover, most of the UNO have a tendency to maintain a close liaison with MP bypassing the Upazila Parishad. So UZP Chairmen anyway cannot go beyond MP and UNO. Furthermore, role and authority of MP, UZP Chair and UNO is not clearly defined which also sometimes creates problem on role and power sharing issue. In this reality, the opinions of the respondents were asked on the statement that whether the role of MP, UZP Chair and UNO should be redefined.

Table No: 5.17 - Respondents views on “role of MP, UZP Chair and UNO should be redefined”

Response	Percent (%)
Disagree	00
Agree	95
Not sure/undecided	5
Total	100

Overwhelming majority (95%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that the role of MP, UZP Chair and UNO should be redefined while only 5% remained undecided and none of the respondents disagree with the same. It may mean that both UZP Chairmen and UNOs want that the role and responsibility of the main three actors should be redefined for proper functioning of the UZP.

5.6.2 Role and functions of core actors need to be clear and specific

Upazila Parishad Chairmen, Vice-chairmen and local government specialist are claiming that the role and function of MP, UZP Chairman, and UNO are not clear and specific in the current legislation which creates functional ambiguity and conflicts among them. All the (100%) respondents of the respondents agreed with the statement that role of MP, UZP Chair and UNO Should be clear and specific none of the respondents neither disagreed nor remained undecided which mean that all the

respondents believed that they are facing problem with existing unambiguous role and power sharing issues of the core three role players and want solution for proper functioning of Upazila Parishad.

Table No: 5.18 - Respondents views on “role and functions of MP, UZP Chair and UNO should be clear and specific”

Response	Percent (%)
Disagree	00
Agree	100
Not sure/undecided	00
Total	100

5.6.3 Advisory role of MP should not be mandatory

Currently, MP is the advisor of the Zilla Parishad and Upazila Parishad of rural local government. Among the rural and urban local government of Bangladesh only in Zilla Parishad and Upazila Parishad, MP is working as an advisor. But UZP, advice of MP is not mandatory in case of Zilla Parishad. In the practical term, the overwhelming majority (85%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that MP's advice should not be mandatory for UZP while very few of them disagreed (7%) or remained undecided (8%).

Table No: 5.19 - Respondents views on “MP's advice should not be mandatory for UZP”

Response	Percent (%)
Disagree	7
Agree	85
Not sure/undecided	8
Total	100

5.6.4 Abolishing of the advisory role of MP in UZP

As MP is the advisor and his/her role is mandatory for the Parishad, So UZP legally bound to complying MP's advice in the decisions. In practical term also, Again majority (55%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that the advisory role of MP in the UZP should be abolished. Nevertheless, about half of the respondents

disagreed (18%) or remained undecided (26%) with the statement. It means that a large group of the respondents' wants that MP's role as advisor in the Parishad is not a major problem but his/her advice should not be mandatory.

Table No: 5.20 - Respondents views on "the advisory role of MP should be abolished"

Response	Percent (%)
Disagree	18
Agree	55
Not sure/undecided	26
Total	100

5.7 Correlation Matrix for responses on legal Aspects and MP's Role in Decision-Making

Correlations could be found between the set of legal factors and the role of MP in the decision-making. The following correlation matrix showed that the exclusive power of MP, the limited power of UZP Chairmen, adherence to the legal jurisdiction of the different actors are positively correlated with the role of MP in the decision-making. On the other hand, the inability of the vice-chairmen and the role of MP in the decision-making are negatively correlated. However, correlations between the ability of UP Chairmen, the ability of UNOs and Role of MP in the decision-making are found statistically insignificant.

Set of legal factors	Role of MP in the decision-making
Exclusive power of MP	.640**
Limited power of the UZP Chairman	.363**
Inability of the VCs to influence the decisions	-.312*
Capability of the UP Chairmen, in a body, to resist/influence decision	.036
Ability of the UNO to influence the decisions	.037
Adherence to the legal jurisdiction of different actors	.366**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Strong level of positive correlation between the exclusive power of MP and the role of MP in the decision-making process indicates that the more exclusive the power of MP, the higher the role of MP of in decision-making process. It means that where MP is more powerful and highly influential, the role of MP in the decision-making is also higher in that Upazila. Among three Upazilas under study, MP of Potiya Upazila is more powerful and highly influential, so the role of MP in the decision-making also found higher in Potiya than two other Upazilas.

Similarly, Strong level of the positive correlation between the adherence to the legal jurisdiction of the actors and the role of MP indicates that the more the level of adherence to the legal jurisdiction of the actors, higher the role of MP of in the decision-making process. According to legislation, as advisor MP is the most influential and powerful actor, UZP Chairmen also have some space to exercise limited power, Vice Chairmen have almost no power, and UNOs are somewhat powerful as a central bureaucrat but he/she mostly supports MP which ultimately leads to the higher role of MP in the decision-making process. The only check and balance in the Upazila Parishad could be the strength and capability of UP Chairmen to unite for a justified and legal cause to ensure the quality of the decision and also to create an opportunity for other members for active participation in debate and can prevent imposing undue decision by MP.

Besides, moderate level of negative correlation between the inability of Vice chairmen and the role of MP in decision-making indicates that the more unable the Vice-chairmen to influence decisions of UZP, the more the role of MP in the decision-making. UZP Chairmen and two Vice-Chairmen are directly elected representative of Upazila Parishad and the capability of the Vice-chairmen can also supplement the power of UZP chairmen. Indeed, the inability of the Vice-chairmen reduces the power/capability of Upazila Parishad; hence increase the role of MP in decision-making.

Limited power of UZP Chairmen in the Upazila Parishad and role of MP in the decision-making process indicates that the more limited the power of the UZP Chairmen, the higher the role of MP in the decision-making process. It means that

limited power of Upazila Parishad Chairmen and inability of the Vice –chairmen make more space for MP’s influence in the Upazila Parishad. Among the study areas it has been found that UZP Chairman and Vice –chairmen in Lakshmipur Sadar Upazila Parishad are comparatively more powerful than two other Upazila, so the level of influence of MP is also lower than Banskhal and Potiya Upazila.

Moreover, moderate level of negative correlation between the inability of the vice-chairmen and the role of MP in the decision-making process implies that the less the inability of the Vice-chairmen to influence, the higher role of MP in the decision-making process. Correlations with two other variables are found statistically insignificant.

Though the MP is not voting member of UZP, the law related to the Upazila Parishad has legally empowered the MP in decision making process. The decision which is taken by the MP usually be uphold because no one protest the decision of MP, even if it is against the majority opinion. The political culture of Bangladesh is also basically based on a manifestation of clientelism. Currently, the MP, the UZP Chairman, Vice – chairmen or UP chairmen are the follower of the same political party in most cases. So due to the lack of democratic practice within the political parties and presence of cliental relation exists between the political leaders, except UZP Chairman most of the members support the MP in decision-making, therefore, reflects in the decision making process. In that case, the moderate level of power exercised by the UZP in decision making process

5.8 Correlation matrix for responses on political factors and MP’s Role in Decision-Making

Correlations could be found between the set of political factors and the role of MP in the decision-making. The following correlation matrix showed that decision-making without majority voting system; limited debate and political considerations are positively correlated with the role of MP in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad. However, correlations between non-participation of government officials are found statistically insignificant.

Strong level of positive correlation between non-participative/undemocratic mode of decision-making and the role of MP in the decision-making process indicates that the more the non-participative the decision would be, the higher the role of MP in the decision-making. It means that participatory and democratic decision-making process enhances the active participation and vibrant discussion of the members of UZP makes the scope of MP's role limited. Among the study areas Lakshmipur Sadar and Banskhali UZP members are more active than Potiya, so role of MP in the decision-making in two Upazila is lower than Potiya Upazila.

Set of political factors	Role of MP in the decision-making
Non-democratic mode of decision-making	.468**
Limited debate/ discussion	.513**
Non-participation of govt. officials	.034
Consideration of political interest	.327*

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Similarly, strong level of positive correlation between limited debates/discussion before decision-making and role of MP in the decision-making process indicates that the more limited the debate/discussion, the higher the role of MP in the decision-making process. It means that active and participatory discussion and debate before decision-making process enhances the thorough discussion about the necessity and logic behind selection and quality implementation of projects which makes difficult to adopt shadow project or bias selection of projects thus makes the scope of MP's role limited. Among the study areas in Banskhali UZP members especially UP Chairmen are comparatively more active in debate/discussion before selection of projects than Potiya and Lakshmipur Sadar Upazila, better selection and implementation quality of projects has been found in Banskhali than two other Upazila.

Moderate level of positive correlation between the consideration of political interest and the role of MP in the decision-making process implies that the more the consideration of political interest of the political followers, the higher role of MP in the decision-making process. It means that selection of projects based on political interest

rather than public interest resulted in ineffective decision-making and in most cases this biasness caused for providing undue facilities to the political follower of MP.

However, correlation between non-participation of government officials and role of MP in the decision-making process is found insignificant. It may be due to the reason that they are not voting members of UZP and reluctant to participate actively in the decision-making process, hence, they are not so influential in the decision-making process.

In the present political scenario in Bangladesh, the overwhelming turnout of current incumbent Political party in the recent national election as well as local government elections such as UZP increases the chance of the presence of members from same political party in the committee. MP is more influential than the UZP chairman due to his position in the Parliament. Therefore, practice of non-democratic mode of decision making is prevailed.

5.9 Correlation Matrix for response on institutional & operational factors and MP's Role in Decision-Making

Correlations could be found between the set of institutional and operational factors and the role of MP in the decision-making.

Set of institutional and operational factors	Role of MP in the decision-making process
Dominance of MP	.562**
Dominance of bureaucrats making	.199
Lack of co-ordination	.056

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above correlation matrix showed that dominance of MP over the Upazila Parishad affairs is positively correlated with the role of MP in the decision-making process. Strong level of positive correlation between the dominance of MP and the role of MP in the decision-making process indicates that over dominance of MP on the Upazila affairs may cause less participation of other members resulted in ineffective and

non-functional Upazila Parishad. Among the study areas, in Potiya Upazila it is observed that almost everything of Upazila Parishad need to be consulted with MP before decision-making. However, dominance of bureaucrats and lack of co-ordination between UNO and the government official and their impacts on role of MP to influence decision-making process have been found statistically insignificant i.e. they do not significantly influence the role of MP in the decision-making process.

The dominance of MP is so strong that, the presence of other members in the meeting turns to be mere onlookers, according to the Study of UNDP. The dominance of MP in the meeting is by virtue of his or her expertise and effective coordination with stakeholders. The presence of MP in the meeting is to make sure their control on the development activities in his constituency. Still MPs work as the advisor of the Upazila Parishad to ensure their control (Zamil, 2012).

5.10 Regression Analysis:

The study attempts to test an integrated model of regression analysis covering all explanatory variables to assess the role of MPs in overall management system and the dynamism of UPZ. Regression analysis incorporating all independent variables is presented to establish the causality between the explanatory variables and the dependent variable, i.e., role of MP in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad

The integrated regression model includes all the explanatory variables used in the analytical framework attempt to assess the causality between the explanatory variables and the dependent variable. The analysis incorporating the set of factors of independent variables attempt to assess the causality between the explanatory variables and the dependent variable which can explain 64.5 percent (Adjusted R square of 0.645) of the total variations on the role of MP in the decision-making.

The analysis shows that exclusive power of MP and limited power have a significant positive influence on the role of MP in the decision-making. Moreover, inability of two VCs to influence decisions and lack of co-ordination has a significant negative influence on the role of MP in the decision-making.

	Independent Variables	Role of MP in the decision-making process (Standardized Coefficient, β)
Legal Aspects	Exclusive power of MP	.598**
	Limited power of UZP Chairmen	.191
	Inability of two VCs to influence decisions	-.176**
	Ability of UP Chairmen to resist untidily	-.046
	Ability of the UNO to influence decisions	-.027
	Non-democratic mode decision-making	.152
Political Aspects	Limited debate/ discussion	.030
	Non- participation of govt. officials	.084
	Priority of political interest	.034
Institutional & Operational Aspects	Dominance of MP	.253**
	Dominance of bureaucrats	-.012
	Lack of Co-ordination	-.186**
	R-square (Adjusted)	.645

Notes: **P<.05

The beta coefficients for two factors from both legal aspects and institutional & operational aspects group reveal statistically significant effects. Both groups have one positive and one negatively significant factor. It seems that exclusive power and dominance of MP has the highest effect on the role of MP in the decision-making process. This indicates that the MPs, who are highly powerful and influential and tends to show dominancy over others, have more influence in the decision-making. However lack of co-ordination in the UZP and inability of the Vice-chairmen have negative effect on the role of MP in decision-making.

In this chapter the author has sought to demonstrate the key and general findings of this study critically and discuss the matters in a logical way. Findings depicts that the undue role of MP in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad is a barrier

for establishing an effective and functional local government body at Upazila level and the Upazila chairman have some space in the decision-making process if he has the strong ruling party political affiliation. So the author will try to resolve these findings in the next chapter.

Chapter Six

Findings and Observations

On the basis of objectives and research questions this chapter summarizes the overall study and analyses the findings of the study in the light of the analytical framework. It focuses the answers to the research questions. Furthermore, the purpose of the study was to evaluate the role of MP in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad and based on the analysis and the observations, the chapter concludes by raising a few issues for future research. The data obtained from questionnaire survey have been validated through key informant interviews and field based observation to ensure reliability and validity of the study. Besides, secondary resources have been reviewed to examine the findings in light of contemporary literature on local governments, especially on Upazila Parishad.

6.1 Summary of the Key Findings of the Study

As identified in chapter one, the foremost objective of this study was to assess the role of MP in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad. So here the author was trying critically to the study was attempted to identify the areas of influence and the way of influencing the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad by MPs. Summary of the major findings of the study are as follows-

6.1.1 MP is the most influential actor in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad

Though according to the section-25 of Upazila Parishad Legislation, MP has no vote in Upazila Parishad, but as the advisor of the Upazila Parishad his/her advice is mandatory upon the Parishad (GOB, 1998), therefore, legally he/she empowered to influence decisions of UZP. The correlation matrix and regression analysis showed that all explanatory variables significantly affect the role of MP in the decision-making. Among the study areas, it is found that the level of influence of MP is higher in Potiya Upazila, moderate in Banskhalı Upazila of Chittagong district and lower in Sadar Upazila of Lakshmipur district. Qualitative findings suggested that other members of the UZP are generally to be hesitating to give opinion freely in the presence of the MP.

The findings about the influence of MPs have been substantiated by previous studies and qualitative data of the present study. Majority respondents opined that many factors may supplement to shape the overall position of MP among the role players such as political affiliation, personal choice and interest, existence of patron-client relationship, interests of political followers, existence of internal political conflicts and grouping in local politics, local political support base, power & position in local/national politics, education, and experience of MP etc. These factors may cause the variation in the level of MP's influence in the decision making.

Islam (2018) mentioned that "MP's role as Adviser to the Upazila Parishad is not conflicting as long as the MP is mindful of the wellbeing of the people in his/her constituency. But in the reality, the "advice" of MPs often turns into an "executive order", overriding and controlling development plans and actions by the elected representatives at the Upazila Parishad" (Islam M. T., 2018). Rahman, (2012) also argued that "mandatory advisory role for the members of the parliament (MPs) has complicated the role of the local government and the interference by MPs in local government affairs has weakened the independence of local government".

The UNDP research also suggested that "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" (UNDP, 2010).

From the empirical data and content analysis it is found that the advisory role of the MP overshadows other stakeholders in the decision-making process and thereby affecting the participative culture of decision-making and down-ward accountability in the Upazila Parishad.

6.1.2 Level of influence of MP depends on local political dynamics, political chain of command also matters

Level of influence of MP in the decision-making of Upazila Parishad may vary according to the local political situation, political affiliation, power and position of MP and UZP Chairmen. If MP and Chairmen belong to different political affiliation, then who belong to ruling party generally dominate in decision making process irrespective of position. In two previous terms (3rd and 4th Upazila Parishad) Chairmen and Vice-chairmen were elected from opposition party both in Potiya and Banskali Upazila while MP belong to ruling party. Hence, the UZP affairs were mostly dominated by MPs. On the other hand, Both MP and UZP Chairman in Lakshmipur Sadar Upazila belong to ruling party, and UZP Chairmen have long term familial influence in the local politics and strong local support base, so dominance of MP is found comparatively in Lakshmipur Sadar than two other Upazila.

Moreover, in most cases, MPs are politically senior and more experienced than UZC. Currently, MP, UZC and most of the UP Chairmen belong to same political party, and they need to follow the political command also, therefore, they need to obey the decision of MPs. So it is difficult for them to go against the desire of MP. Among the study areas the MP in Potiya and Banskali are more influential than Lakshmipur Sadar.

6.1.3 Upazila Parishad Chairmen do have some space but Vice Chair have no power at all in decision-making process

Currently Upazila Parishad Chairmen do not have sweeping power; decision-making power is vested upon the Parishad. Legally UZO is only entitled to a casting vote and two VCs have one vote each. Majority of the respondents in survey opined that UZC have some space in the decision-making process though two VCs have no power to influence the decisions.

UNDP research also suggested the findings. They found that “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. 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.”

6.1.4 Problem arises due to struggle for power and control over resources

Both MP and UZP Chairman are politically elected almost from same area and by same constituents, made similar pledges during election, therefore, both MP and UZP Chairmen have same obligation to the local people. Besides, visibility and attachment with the local people in development activities are equally important to them. Both of them struggle for struggle for power, control over resources and selection projects. As resource of UZP is very limited and preference of MPs and UZP Chairmen are different in most cases so conflicts arises between MP and UZP Chairman regarding role and power sharing issues. Razzaque (2017) mentioned that “resource allocations and distributions are largely influenced by the local MP rather than the upazila chairperson and other members of elected body of upazila parishad”.

6.2 Revisiting the Research Questions

The main objective of this study was to assess the role of MP in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad. So the study was attempted to identify how the role of MP influences the decision making process of UZP and also to examine the areas of influence and the overall impacts of such influence upon the decisions of UZP. In respond to these queries following research questions have been formulated to assess the role of MP in the decision-making; (i) What are the areas where MP influences decision-making process? (ii) How does role of MP influence in the decision-making process?

6.2.1 What are the areas where MP influences decision-making process?

Though the MP is the advisor of the dozens of Upazila level committees, it is appears from the empirical data of interview and observation that MPs are mostly

interested in the financial matters such as allocation of resources, selection of development projects and beneficiary selection of various safety-net programs, selection of beneficiaries of loan and grant, allocation of house, corrugated iron sheets, blanket, agricultural equipment etc. MPs, however, found to show very little interest about non-financial matters.

Islam (2018) argued that, “in many cases, “the MP nominates his/her party loyalists in the selection committees and beneficiary lists of the social safety net programme, making sure that the beneficiaries of Food for Work, Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF), test relief, old-age allowance and other programmes come from the followers of the political party that the MP belongs to”. Razzaque (2017) mentioned that “a research carried out the local governance programme ‘Sharique’ showed that MPs tend to interfere in departments where resources are larger in size due to the relevance of the projects under them for her/his constituency. Transferred officials frequently receive informal ‘advice’ from the MP while approving beneficiary list for those services and in some cases they have to implement such advice without any question”. (Razzaque, 2017)

6.2.2 How does role of MP influence in the decision-making process of UZP?

As an independent local government unit stated in Bangladesh Constitution and democratically elected body Upazila Parishad is supposed to take decisions independently without any interference from the national government. But according to the legislation of UZP, MP is the advisor of the UZP and the advice has a mandatory affects. So MP is legally empowered to influence decision-making process and Parishad is bound to adopt the advice of MP. Moreover, MPs are politically senior, more experienced, their powers, position, administrative influence is so high, they also have more control over the local political situations than other members of UZP, so they have emerged as the most influential actor in the decision-making process. Nevertheless, currently most of MPs, UZP Chairmen & Vice chairmen and UP Chairmen belong to same political ideology and ruling party; therefore, they have to follow political chain of command. As MP is the most powerful actor among all other elected members,

therefore, it is difficult for them to go against the desire of MPs. So in most cases other members follow the desire of MPs, thus, decisions of the Upazila Parishad are highly influenced by the role of MP.

6.3 Theoretical Implications

T. Allison's (1971) governmental-politics model of decision-making to explain several dimensions of role of MP in the decision-making process in the Upazila Parishad and their impacts have been examined in this study to clarify the subject matter. Now it is important to have a brief discussion on the justification of the application of this theory in the context of Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh.

The governmental politics model views "decisions as the product of bargaining among many influential participants which focuses on the perception, motivations, position, power and maneuvers of the role players differing in ability to shape the outcomes. Decision-makers are motivated by and act on their own needs and choices and the process involved bargaining among them in order for each one get his/her perspectives. This process also involves everyone tries to sway the powerful member within the situation to adopt his/her view point and influence the remaining decision-makers. The mode operates based upon negotiation that is influenced by power and favours" (Allison, 1971).

In Upazila Parishad decisions-making process theoretically involved participation, discussion, debate of different actors. The MP, UZP Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen, UP Chairmen, Mayor of Pourshava (if any), reserved women members are influential decision-makers with different ability to shape the decisions. Among all members, MP is most powerful due to his/her power, position, and administrative influence. Other actors of Upazila Parishad usually try to get benefit and support from him/her. So, majority of the elected members, therefore, follow the decisions/ desire of MP in the decision-making. On the other hand, as MP is the most powerful actor in the local politics, majority members want to avoid future risk for political leverage by giving opinion against MPs.

Empirical data show that, there is very less debate/ discussion before decision-making in the Upazila Parishad. As a result, decisions of Upazila Parishad are mostly taken following undemocratic way without majority vote. So, MP has emerged as the most powerful decision maker in Upazila Parishad and most of the elected members follow him/her due to his/her power and position and administrative and political influence. In most cases desire/ decisions of MP comes as the decisions of the Upazila Parishad in meeting minute.

Institutional rules specify who will do what, when and how but the role of MP is not clearly defined by the legislation of Upazila Parishad. They mostly provide informal advice to UZP Chairman or UNO regarding resource allocation and distribution and some of them are unduly influencing the local government affairs in the name of mandatory advice. Thus redefining the formal roles and functions of the key actors expedites participation of other members in decision-making process in the context of UZPs in Bangladesh. In UZPs, dominance of MPs also curtails others' especially women members' access to information regarding projects, justifies unequal project distribution and neglects their leadership role in Parishad meetings as well as development activities. Thus, informal practices restrict or exclude less influential members from their active participation in the debate or discussion leads to create more scope for MP to influence over the local government affairs, which is supported by the governmental politics model of decision-making.

However, it is observed that the socio-culture factor such as high power distance and authoritarian culture has an impact on the process of decision-making process. The observations are drawn from this study thus indicate that social science theories are not always universal but in many cases "culture and context-bound."

6.4. Policy Implications

The Government of Bangladesh for the last decade introduced various approaches and operational modalities to strengthen the local government institutions to improve the service delivery mechanisms and quality participation and accountability

system at local government institutions of Bangladesh with a particular focus on rural areas.

Findings of the study noted that the role of MP in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad is a barrier for establishing an effective and functional local government body at Upazila level. It is a reflection that Upazila Parishad is not working properly and functioning of UZP are not up to the mark or well planned for development of grass root level of Bangladesh. Islam (2018) mentioned that, “to make the development work really meaningful and sustainable, the “bottom–up” approach of development at the UZP is the need of the hour. This necessitates decentralization of democracy down to the lowest level”

In view of the context, the policy framework on local governance institutions especially the Upazila Parishad may be revisited in line with the national and international policy documents like 7th Five Year Plan, Election manifesto of 2018, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Vision 2021 and Delta plan etc. and emphasized to enhance the strengthening of Upazila Parishad to ensure effective and responsive governance at grass root level.

6.4 Implication for Future Research

The study tested the implication of legal, political and institutional & operational variables on the role of MP in the decision-making process of the Upazila Parishad seem to have fostered new arena of study of the advisory role of MP in the local government decision-making process especially in the context of Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh. It is found that legal and political aspects variables have relatively higher influence on the role of MP in the decision-making process than institutional & operational aspects variables. The study observed that the dominance of MP in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad causes interference in the independent decision-making. It can be argued that due to high power distance and the nature of authoritarian culture in the country still bears a society involving unquestioning obedience to MP, the higher policy-making and politically & administratively most influential person in the concerned

constituency. Moreover, raising questions about authority of superior is quite unconventional in Bangladesh. As a result a fuzzy picture of MP's influence is prevailing in the local government of Bangladesh.

However, the regression model explains 64.4% causality between dependent and independent variables. Findings though suggested contemporary work of the leading scholars in this field like (Rahman 2010, 2012; Ahmed *et al* 2011) observed a high level of influence of MPs in the local government especially in the context of Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh, there is still room for further research, and facilitates more in-depth analysis of the research problem by narrowing down the theories, texts, and concepts used. Furthermore, for better understanding of research problem, a quantitative research can produce more interesting and noteworthy findings.

Apart from these, since each upazila in Bangladesh, from administrative point of view, shares similar features, this study provides more concrete and context-dependent knowledge, which may also be used to resemble the findings revealed by the study done in future. This also leads to further scope of study as taking into account the recent political trends and phenomenon in Bangladesh. The model used by the author can explain around 64.5% of the total variability. So, other dimensions like cultural dimension, political economy, and their relative contribution in influencing the decision-making process can be addressed in further research as well.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this chapter is to conclude the study by resolving the findings based on the research objectives and research questions discussed throughout the study. This chapter also focuses on the most important outcome of the present study,

i.e. undue interference of MP in UZP decision making process resulting wastage of time, misuse of resources and also the quality of work is to be compromised.

Considering ‘the role of MP in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad’ as a main problem this study has been started with a general objective in designing research questions that are aimed to find out the areas of influence and the ways how the influence of MP affecting the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad. To achieve this objective by correcting the main problem, it is important to define the advisory role of MP, effective role of Chairman and legal role of UNO evidently.

Upazila Parishad is an important tier of three tiered rural local government of Bangladesh. The 7th Five Year Plan, Vision 2021, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Delta Plan and the Election Manifesto of the present government all are emphasizing the strengthening of local government institutions in Bangladesh for ensuring the service at the doorstep as well as ensuring development. To ensure democracy and sustainable local development effective and functional Upazila Parishad is necessary. This study is an attempt to assess the role of MP in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad.

As a local government institution Upazila Parishad (UZP) still lacks both capacity and maturity regarding finance and independent decision-making for effective local development. It has to depend mostly on the central government for financial support to implement different development programs. According to the regulations concern the local MP is the advisor of the Upazila Parishad and his/her advice has a mandatory effect on the decision making process of the Parishad. Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) works as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Parishad representing the government and is largely accountable to the central government. MP, UZP Chairmen and the UNO are the key role players in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad. Among the actors MP is the most powerful role player for his/her advisory function and also for his/her legal power, position and administrative & political influence as a law maker, and as a senior, experienced & powerful political leader of the concerned Upazila. The study analyzed and explored the multi-dimensional role of MP in the decision-making

process of Upazila Parishad. In analyzing the role of MP a framework was developed consisting of three explanatory variables. It was found that legal, political, institutional and operational aspects influence the role of MP in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad because of not defining the advisory role of MP evidently.

Since MP is the advisor to the UZP and his/her advice has a mandatory effect upon the Parishad, so he/she has emerged as the most influential role player in the decision-making process of UZP. To sum up, the role of MP needs to be clearly defined in the legislation and also functions of the core actors such as MP, UZP Chairmen and UNO need to be redefined and revisited to find Upazila Parishad effective, functional and truly independent local self government institution. MPs may work as an advisor but his/her advice should not be mandatory to the Parishad. He can provide advice for the betterment of the parishad and effective implementation of development projects. MPs also can supervise whether the activities of Upazila Parishad is executed following the rules and regulations of central government but there is no scope for him to involve directly in decision-making process and participate in local development activities. This study also reveals that in the name of advice, some of MPs unduly interfere in the local government affairs. However, the level of influence varies depending upon political affiliation, personal choice and interest, patron-clientelism, local political support base and power & position in local /national politics and experience of MP.

Due to the direct involvement (sometimes undue interfere) of MP in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad, interests of the political followers or vested groups get priority in case of resource allocation and project selection rather than assessing actual local needs. Sometimes tenders are awarded to the contractors having strong political linkage which makes the timely project implementation difficult and causes wastage of time, misuse of resources and also the quality of work is to be compromised.

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Appendix – I
Survey Questionnaire

**Role of the Members of Parliament in the decision-making process of Upazila Parishad
in Bangladesh**

This questionnaire will be used to conduct the above-mentioned research as an essential part of the Master in Public Policy and Governance (MPPG) Program of North South University, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Privacy and anonymity of the respondents will be maintained strictly. Data collected by this interview will be used only for research purpose. Please put a tick mark against chosen answer/write the answer precisely.

Regards
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Name of the Upazila:

District:

Division:

Part A: Background Information

Z1. Type of Respondent

1. UZP Chairman
2. UNO

Z2. Political party affiliation

1. Awami League
2. BNP
3. Jatiya Party
4. Jamayat Islami
5. Others (Please specify).....
9. None

Z3. Tenure in service for (UNO)/ political experience (for UZP Chairman)

1. Less than 1 year
2. 1-2 years
3. 2-3 Years
4. 3-5 Years
5. More than 5 Years
9. Don't know

Z4. Tenure as UNO /as elected representative (for UZP Chairman)

1. As UZP Chairman.....Year
2. As Vice ChairmanYear
3. As UP ChairmanYear
4. UNO Year
5. Others (Please specify).....Year

Z5. Tenure as UNO in this Upazila/ UZP Chairman

- 1 Less than 1 year
- 2 1-2 years
- 3 2-3 Years
- 4 3-5 Years
- 5 More than 5 Years
9. Don't know

Z6. Age of the respondent

1. Up to 25 Years
2. 26-35 Years
3. 36-45 Years
4. 46-60 Years
5. More than 60 years

Z6. Gender of the respondent

1. Male
2. Female

Z7. Education of the respondent

1. Lower/ Secondary level
2. Higher Secondary level
3. Graduate degree
4. Master degree/ higher
5. Professional/ Others
9. Don't know

Z8. Main Occupation

1. Agriculture
2. Business
3. Contractor
4. Job
5. Professional/Others
9. Don't know

Z9. Income (Yearly)

1. Up to 5 lac
2. 5-10 lac
3. 10-15 lac
4. 15-20 lac
5. More than 20 lac
6. Don't know

Part B: Questions on UZP and role of the MP in decision-making

A1. What extent is you satisfied with the existing system of Upazila Parishad regarding the overall management of development activities (resource allocation & distribution, selection of development projects, and beneficiaries of safety-net programs etc)?

1. Very dissatisfied
2. Dissatisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4. Satisfied
5. Very satisfied
9. Don't know

A2. How would you assess the overall working environment regarding coordination between the UNO, UZP Chairman and government officials in your Upazila?

1. Very poor
2. Poor
3. Neither poor nor good
3. Good
4. Very good
9. Don't know

A3. How would you evaluate the working relationship between the MP and UZP Chairman in your Upazila?

1. Not at all cordial
2. Not so cordial
3. Neither cordial nor uncordial
4. Cordial
5. Very cordial
9. Don't know

A4. How would you evaluate the working relationship between MP and UNO in your Upazila?

1. Not at all cordial
2. Not so cordial
3. Neither cordial nor uncordial
4. Cordial
5. Very cordial
9. Don't know

A5. Does the MP attend in the monthly meetings of the UZP regularly?

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Occasionally
4. Always
9. Don't know

A6. Does the MP nominate any representative to ensure his/her representation in the discussion, decision-making and planning of UZP?

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Occasionally
4. Always
9. Don't know

A7. What is the nature of advice provided by the MP in the last one year in your Upazila?

1. Mostly formal advice (written)
2. Mostly informal advice (over phone)
3. Both formal and informal advice
4. No advice
9. Don't know

A8. "The MP has a very dominant role in the beneficiary selection process of various departments of UZP" - What is your opinion?

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree
9. Don't know

A9. As per the law, "the MPs are authorized to control over the development activities of the UZP in the name of advice" – in your Upazila what extent does the MP influence the following cases in last one year?

	1 Very low (> 10%)	2 Low (11-25%)	3 Moderate (26-50%)	4 High (50-75%)	5 Very high (< 75%)	9 Don't know
Resource Allocation and distribution						
Selection of projects						
Beneficiary Selection (safety-net programs)						

A10. In your experience, what is the general trend of influence of the MP in the affairs of Upazila Parishad over last 10 years?

1. Significantly decreasing
2. Decreasing
3. Neither increasing nor decreasing
4. Increasing
5. Significantly increasing
9. Don't know

A11. The following statements have been made in the light of current legislations related to UZP. How do you evaluate these situations in your Upazila?

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree	9 Don't know
MP is the most influential person in decision-making						
UZP Chairman has very limited influence						
UNO is somewhat influential as a central bureaucrats						
Vice-Chairmen are not influential at all						
UP Chairmen, in a body, are somewhat influential						

A12. Who plays the most influential role in terms of decision-making of UZP regarding development activities (e.g. resource allocation & distribution, selection of projects, etc)?

Actors	1 Not at all influential	2 Not so influential	3 Somewhat influential	4 Very Influential	5 Don't know
The MP					
UZP Chairman					
UNO					
UP Chairmen					
Other members					

A13. The statements have been made from analyzing the political culture of the country.
How do you evaluate these situations in decision-making process of UZP meetings?

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree	9 Don't know
Decisions are not taken on the basis of majority votes						
There is very little discussion/debate in decision-making						
Government officials do not express their opinions generally						
Interests of the political followers get priority rather than public interest						

A14. How do you evaluate these following institutional and operational factors in decision-making process situations of UZP?

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree	9 Don't know
Dominance of the MP is a barrier for effective decision-making						
Dominance of bureaucrats is a barrier for effective decision-making						
There is lack of coordination between UZP and government officials						

A15. In your view, what are the consequences of the advisory role of the MP over the affairs of Upazila Parishad in the following cases?

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree	9 Don't know
Decrease the autonomy of elected UZP						
Interference in the local government affairs						
Restricts the democratic character of local body						
Limits the development of local leadership						

A16. What are your opinions to make UZP more functional & effective regarding development decision-making in the following cases?

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree	9 Don't know
Role of the MP and UZP Chairman and UNO should be redefined						
Role of the MP, UZP Chairman and UN must be clear and specific						
MP's advice should not be mandatory for UZP						
The advisory role of MP should be abolished						

A17. Please rank the factors that negatively affect the overall performance of Upazila Parishad? (Write 1, 2, 3 in the box according to importance).

1. Dominance of MP
2. Dominance of the bureaucrats
3. Conflict between the MP & UZP Chairman
4. Conflict between the MP & UNO
5. Lack of coordination between UNO and other officers
6. Others (if any, please specify)

A18. If you have any suggestions for making Upazila Parishad more functioning and effective local body, please specify.

Signature (not mandatory)

Thank you for your time and co-operati

Appendix -II

Interview guide

1. What extent is you satisfied with the existing system of Upazila Parishad (regarding resource allocation & distribution, selection of projects, beneficiary selection of safety-net programs)?
2. How would you assess the overall working environment in your Upazila (regarding coordination between the UNO, UZP Chairman and government officials)?
3. How would you evaluate the working relationship between the MP and UZP Chairman in your Upazila?
4. How would you evaluate the working relationship between MP and UNO in your Upazila?
5. Does the MP attend in the monthly meetings of the UZP regularly?
6. Does the MP nominate any representative in UZP to ensure his/her representation in the discussion, and decision-making?
7. What is the nature of advice provided by the MP in the last one year in your Upazila?
8. “The MP has a very dominant role in the beneficiary selection process of various departments of UZP” - What is your opinion?
- A9. As per the law, “the MPs are authorized to control over the development activities of the UZP in the name of advice” – in your Upazila what extent does the MP influence the following cases in last one year?
 - a) Resource Allocation and distribution :
 - b) Selection of development projects :
 - c) Beneficiary Selection of safety-net program:
10. In your experience, what is the general trend of influence of the MP in the affairs of Upazila Parishad over last 10 years?

11. The following statements have been made in the light of current legislations related to UZP. How do you evaluate these situations in your Upazila?

- a) MP is the most influential person in decision-making:
- b) UZP Chairman has very limited influence:
- c) UNO is somewhat influential as a central bureaucrat:
- d) Vice-Chairmen are not influential at all:
- e) UP Chairmen, in a body, can influence decisions:

12. Who plays the most influential role in terms of decision-making of UZP (regarding resource allocation, selection of projects, and selection of beneficiary)?

- a) The MP:
- b) UZP Chairman:
- c) UNO:
- d) UP Chairmen:
- e) Other members:

13. The statements have been made from analyzing the political culture of the country. How do you evaluate these situations in decision-making process of UZP meetings?

- a) Decisions are not taken on the basis of majority votes:
- b) There is very little discussion/debate in decision-making:
- c) Government officials do not express their opinions generally:
- d) Interests of the political followers get priority rather than public interest:

14. How do you evaluate these following institutional and operational factors in decision-making process situations of UZP?

- a) Dominance of the MP is a barrier for effective decision-making:
- b) Dominance of bureaucrats is a barrier for effective decision-making:
- c) There is lack of coordination between UZP and government officials:

15. In your view, what are the consequences of the advisory role of the MP over the affairs of Upazila Parishad in the following cases?

- a) Decrease the autonomy of elected UZP:
- b) Interference in the local government affairs:

c) Restricts the democratic character of local body:

d) Limits the development of local leadership:

16. What are your opinions to make UZP more functional & effective regarding development decision-making in the following cases?

a) Role of the MP and UZP Chairman and UNO should be redefined:

b) Role of the MP, UZP Chairman and UN must be clear and specific:

c) MP's advice should not be mandatory for UZP:

d) The advisory role of MP should be abolished:

A17. In your opinion, what are the three most important factors that negatively affect the overall performance of Upazila Parishad?

A18. If you have any suggestions for making Upazila Parishad more functioning and effective local body, please specify.

Appendix- III

List of transferred department to the UZP

Serial No.	Concerned Ministry & Department	Official responsible for transferred subjects
1	Ministry of Youth and Sports a. Department of Youth Development	Upazila Youth Development Officer
2	Ministry of Public Administration	Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO)
3	Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock a) Department of Fisheries b) Department of Livestock	i) Upazila Fisheries Officer ii) Upazila Livestock Officer
4	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare a. Department of Health b. Department of Family Planning	i) Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer ii) Upazila Family Planning Officer
5	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs a) Department of Women Affairs	Upazila Women Affairs Officer
6	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education a. Department of Primary Education	Upazila Education Officer
7	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperative a) Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) b) Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) c) Bangladesh Rural Development Board d) 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 a) Department of Agriculture Extension	Upazila Agriculture Officer
9	Ministry of Food and Disaster Management a) Department of disaster management and Relief	Project Implementation Officer

10	Ministry of Social Welfare a) Department of Social Welfare	Upazila Social Welfare Officer
11	Ministry of Education a) Department of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education	Upazila Secondary Education Officer
12	Ministry of Environment, Climate Change Forest a) Department of Forest	i) Range officer, Forest Department

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

Appendix IV

List of Functions of Upazila Parishad

1. Preparation of five-year and different time-specific development plans
2. Implementation, supervision and coordination of programs and activities of various government departments transferred to the Parishad
3. Construction, repair and maintenance of inter-union roads
4. Initiation and implementation of Upazila Parishad small irrigation projects to ensure optimal use of surface water in accordance with the government guidelines
5. Ensuring public health, nutrition and family planning services
6. Improvement of sanitation and drainage system and taking measures for supplying safe drinking water
7.
 - a. Motivation and assistance for expansion of education at the Upazila level
 - b. Monitoring of activities of and giving assistance to the concerned institutions for improvement of quality of Secondary and Madrasha education
8. Taking measures for establishment and expansion of cottage and small industries
9. Giving assistance to and coordination of activities of cooperatives and non-government voluntary organizations
10. Implementation of and providing assistance to women, children, social welfare, youth, sports and cultural activities
11. Initiation and implementation of activities for improving agricultural, livestock, fisheries and forest resources

12. Review of activities of the police department along with improvement of law and order situation in the Upazila and sending reports to the higher authorities regularly
13. Initiation and implementation of self-motivated measures for creating self-employment and poverty reduction, and providing necessary assistance to the government in implementing related governmental programs
14. Coordination and examination of and giving assistance to development programs of Union Parishads
15. Taking various preventive measures including creating public awareness against committing crimes like oppression of women and children, etc.
16. Taking various preventive measures including creating public awareness against committing crimes such as violence, theft, robbery, smuggling, use of narcotics, etc.
17. Taking various measures including social forestation for preservation and development of environment
18. Other functions as assigned by the government from time to time

Source: (GOB, 1998)

Appendix-V

Sources of Revenue of Upazila Parishad

1. Lease money from government specified *haat-bazaar*, *jalmahals* and ferrighats situated entirely within the upazila boundaries
2. Tax on business institutions and industries situated with Thana headquarters
3. (a) Tax on cinema situated in Thana headquarters of those upazilas where there is no paurashava
(b) Part of tax on drama, theatre and *jatra* to be decided by rules.
4. Street lighting taxes.
5. Fees levied on fairs, exhibitions and entertainment show organised by non-government sector.

6. Fees for licenses and permits granted by the Parishad on profession, trade and callings.
7. Fees for services and facilities maintained by the Parishad.
8. 1% of registration fees on property transfer and 2% of land development tax
9. Tax, rate, toll, and fees imposed on other sources as directed by the government from time to time or income earned from other sources.

Source: (GOB, 1998)

Appendix -VI

List of 17 Committees on different matters of UZP

Section 29 of the Upazila Parishad Act 1998 (As amended up to 30 June 2009) requires that the Upazila Parishad set up one committee for each of the following subjects whose term shall be a maximum of two years six months, namely:

- a) Law and order;
- b) Communication and physical infrastructure development;
- c) Agriculture and irrigation;
- d) Secondary and madrasha education;
- e) Primary and mass education;
- f) Health and family welfare;
- g) Youth and sports development;
- h) Women and Child development;
- i) Social welfare;
- j) The freedom fighter affairs;
- k) Fisheries and livestock;
- l) Rural development and co-operatives;
- m) Information and Cultural Affairs;
- n) Environment and forest;
- o) Market price observation, monitoring and control;

- p) Finance, budget, planning and collection of local resources;
- q) Public health, sanitation and pure water supply

The Chairman of the Committee shall be elected from among the Vice Chairman of UZP. The Upazila Officer of the concerned department shall be the member-secretary of the committee. Each committee meeting shall be held at least once every two months.

Source: (GOB, 2009; GOB, 2011)

Appendix-VII

Matters disposable at UZP meeting

Matters which needed to place at the UZP meeting for decisions are as follows:

A. Financial matters that come into Parishad agenda includes

1. All matters related to Parishad funds
2. Matters related to impose tax, rate, tolls and fee under of UZP
3. Annual budgets of the Parishad,
4. Revised budget of the Parishad
5. Proposals for expenditure that do not included the current year's budget
6. Statement of income and expenditure,
7. Approval decisions relating to working quality and estimates,
8. Investment of UZP funds and
9. Audit matters pertain to the financial matters

B. Development related matters that come into Parishad agenda includes

1. Approval of development projects or proposals and estimates,
2. Preparing and updating of yearly development plan, five year plan and plan book,
3. Monthly review, monitoring and evaluation of development works implemented by Parishad fund and
4. The development projects transferred to the UZP by the government time to time

C. Operational matters to be included in the agenda are

1. All matters related to the officers and staff of the UZP or the transferred departments
2. Review and approval of the recommendations of the standing committees

3. Review of the proposal and recommendations

D. Co-ordination matters to be included in the agenda are

1. Review of performance of transferred departments, activities of NGOs and
2. Quarterly review of the report and narratives of the govt. regulatory departments

Besides, any subject taken into consideration by the UZP for implementation of the Act is to be placed before it. (GOB, 2010).