CHAPTER 4
ROLE OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF BANGLADESH

In earlier three chapters, an attempt has been made to trace the history of local self-government since its introduction by Lord Mayo in 1870 and its evolution thereafter. It has been discussed in details about the reorganization initiated by Lord Ripon since 1885. The position drastically changed in terms of structure, organizations, powers and function in post-partition era, under the Basic Democracies Order, 1959. After the liberation of Bangladesh, the structure of local self-government was mainly based on the framework designed during the 'Basic Democracies' period of Pakistan. During various historical phases of local self-government, three main points are clearly discernible.

1. They invariably suffered from shortage of funds. Their own resource-mobilization process was prosaic and negligible, whereas government support was too meagre to meet their basic needs.

2. Direct or indirect control of government was too strong to allow them to fulfil the basic objectives. They were much less democratic than they ought to have been.
3. The last but not the least important point was that these institutions did little to create any scope of popular participation.

In 1982, an effort towards reorganization and decentralization of local government was made and in the three tier structure of rural local self-governing bodies, viz., Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad and Zila Parishad, the Upazila Parishad was designed to be the most important organ to play a pivotal role in the system. A very large part of rural development activities were assigned to it.

The present chapter is intended to analyze and evaluate the development activities under the Upazila Parishad and its efficacy as a vehicle of social change. Since, the two other institutions viz., the Union Parishad and Zila Parishad are to play minor roles, no attempt has been made here to discuss their roles in details.

UNION PARISHAD

Union Parishad, the lowest unit of three tier structure, constitutes the base of rural development system in Bangladesh. Earlier it was assigned a variety of minor developmental activities at village level. In fact, it is the institution through which the village folk can
directly be involved in the process of development. But, incidentally, in the reorganized system this grass-root institution has been deprived of its legitimate importance. It has, in the present system, neither resources nor capacity to directly involve village folk in developmental activities. Various studies on the subject as well as interviews with a number of Chairmen of Union Parishads make it abundantly clear that whatever work has been allocated to this institution cannot be undertaken because of lack of funds. It may also be pointed out that no worthwhile mechanism has been evolved or even envisaged in the system to mobilize local resources. It is also a fact that because of these shortcomings no sincere efforts are being made to strengthen the position of the institution or to co-ordinate it with the main stream of national development. In short, it could not play any effective role in the process of development in the past and continues to be a weak link.¹

ZILA PARISHAD

Zila Parishad (District Board during British period and early phase of Pakistan era, and District Council during later phase of Pakistan period), the apex body of the system had enjoyed not only a position of superiority but exercised highest functional responsibilities and autonomy in the areas of health, sanitation, education and communication. The immediate task before the Government of Bangladesh after liberation in 1971 was to reconstruct war-torn economy, restore various types of shattered services and organize relief work on war footing. Zila Parishad, under the circumstances, instead of taking up new development schemes and projects directed all its efforts and capabilities to relief, rehabilitation and re-construction work. In this connection, a reference is to be made to a laudable work done by the Rangpur Zila Parishad, which spent Taka 4.5 million during the period 1972-76 to repair roads, bridges and culverts.

2. Information was gathered by the courtesy of the Secretary of Rangpur Zila Parishad.
After reorganization of the system in 1982, the Zila Parishad not only lost its superiority and primacy but was short of most of its functional value. A considerable proportion of its work was transferred to Upazila Parishad and substantial cut in government funds consigned Zila Parishad to acute financial crisis and it finds it very difficult to fulfil its obligations in the process of development.

It is apparent from the above that the Zila Parishad have been reduced to a least significant position and the shares of Zila Parishad as well as Union Parishad in developmental activities have become nominal and practically non-consequential.

4.1 UPAZILA PARISHAD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Upazila Parishad being the most important and effective part of local self-government, wields considerable powers and responsibilities. As pointed out earlier, under the present decentralized set up of local self-government, Upazila Parishad is the chief instrument of rural development in Bangladesh.
A number of development schemes have been transferred to Upazila Parishad and correspondingly a host of officials from the concerned departments have also been deputed to the institution to assist the public representatives in the planning and implementation of these schemes.

Initially due to limited experience and expertise at the upazila level, the planning and implementation of the development schemes were restricted to some core sectors:

a) Agriculture and Irrigation
b) Small and Cottage industries
c) Transport and Communication
d) Housing and Family Planning
e) Education
f) Health and Social Welfare
g) Sports and Culture
h) Miscellaneous

3. The Guidelines of the Planning Commission, 1988, Sec.6(2).
The national government under the given circumstances had no option but to allocate huge funds in the form of Development Assistance to the Upazila Parishad to achieve its targets. Upazila Parishad, thus, virtually become recipients of regular government grants and acquired an enviable position. Accordingly, in the year 1983-84 a total amount of Taka 1,660 million was distributed at the rate of Taka 5 million among 211 upazilas which were upgraded by the end of Financial Year 1982-83, and at the rate of about Taka 3 million among other 195 upazilas which were expected to be upgraded in the next financial year. This was simply an adhoc arrangement without first formulating any criterion. Later on, four criteria of allocation of grant and their ratio was fixed under the guidelines of 1983. But, subsequently, these were changed in the guidelines of 1985, which are given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE-9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Extent of Backwardness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Criteria of Allocation of Govt. Grant to Upazila Parishad (1988)

- Ext. of Backwardness: 30%
- Population: 20%
- Performance: 30%
- Area: 20%
In 1988, the guidelines were again changed, and it was refixed at the rate of 20%, 20%, 30% and 30% as per population, area, extent of backwardness and performance as shown in the table given above.

In addition to such broad principles of allocation, the guidelines specified the maximum and minimum share for each of the above sectors, probably to assure requisite development in all the areas. This has been shown in the following tables.(Tables 10 & 11)

**TABLE- 10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTORS</th>
<th>MINIMUM SHARE</th>
<th>MAXIMUM SHARE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Irrigation and Industry.</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Infrastructure</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-Economic Infrastructure</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports and Culture</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Agriculture and Irrigation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Small and Cottage Industries</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Transport and Communication</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Housing and Physical Planning</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-Economic Infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Development of Education</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Physical, Mental and Cultural Development of the Children*</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Health and Social Welfare</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Sports and Culture</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Miscellaneous</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This sector was not included in the guidelines of 1985.
An attempt has been made to show the real picture of development in some vital sectors like agriculture, livestock, fisheries, small and cottage industries, education etc. and three upazilas are selected as sample for the present study from three divisions of the country viz., Sonargaon upazila from Dhaka division, Gangachara upazila from Rajshahi division, and Daudkandi upazila from Chittagong division. An informal discussion and interviews were conducted with different functionaries, local elites and representatives of the people of the three upazilas. The beneficiaries, too, were interviewed to assess the impact of development especially the socio-economic changes effected by the development projects. Due to lack of resources and shortage of time at the disposal of the researcher Khulna division could not be covered. But the picture of the three divisions would be almost same to that of Khulna division too.

The development of three Upazila Parishads in some core sectors is being discussed here. But before getting into the elaborate discussion it would be pertinent to give a brief sketch of the three study upazilas.
SONARGAON

Sonargaon upazila under the district of Narayanganj, is situated about 22.5 kms. to the south-east of Dhaka city at the confluence of three big rivers viz., the Meghna, the Brahmaputra and the Lakhya. This place was once the capital of Bengal during the medieval period.

The upazila consists of 11 unions and 510 villages. The total population is 210,330 and density per square mile is 3,479\(^4\) (about 1,344 per sq. km.). The rural people are very poor and their economic mainstay is agriculture. About 6% of the population are engaged in handloom industry.

The total area under cultivation is 30,141 acres, whereas the upazila has got 2,413 acres of fallow land. There are 110 educational institutions in Sonargaon of which 85 are Primary Schools, 6 Junior High Schools, 10 High Schools, 2 Adult Education Centres and 1 College. There is an Upazila Health Complex and 2 Health Sub-centres. The length of transportation net-work of the

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184\]
upazila are near about 17.7 kms. pucca, 8.01 kms. semi-pucca and 70.8 kms. kutcha roads.

Inspite of best efforts of the researcher, statistics of the pre-1982 era could not be collected as these were not maintained systematically. It is, therefore, difficult to determine a base and explain the level of actual progress. The same case is found in the other two upazilas i.e., Daudkandi and Gangachara also. Statistics and allocations for different sectors of these upazilas have been given at appropriate place.

GANGACHARA

Gangachara upazila is situated in the Rajshahi division under Rangpur district. The upazila is 19.2 kms. away from the district headquarter.

The upazila consists of 8 unions and 73 villages. Its total area is 215 sq. kms. and population is 149,429 and density per sq. km. 695. Gangachara has a cultivable area of 35,179 acres. The people are largely dependent on agriculture. 45 mills, mainly flour and rice/husking mills, also provide employment to a good number of people.
There is one Government Health Complex, two Rural Health Sub-Centers. There is no college in the upazila but it has 2 High Schools, 68 Primary Schools and 37 Madrasahs. The upazila has got 24 kms. pucca and 316 kms. kutcha roads.

North Bengal, as a whole is backward in comparison to other areas of Bangladesh. Gangachara being a part of that zone is not an exception to it. The post-upgradation picture of the upazila shows an apparent flow of development activities like well constructed offices and buildings, good communication system etc. and the same picture is found in all the upazilas of Bangladesh. The remarkable impact of decentralization is that agricultural productions have considerably increased. And in the year 1988-89, the upazila had a bumper crop-production crossing the production-target of the year.  

DAUDKANDI

Daudkandi is one of the biggest upazilas in the country under Chittagong division in Comilla district. It

5. As reported by the Upazila Agriculture Officer.
is situated about 32 kms. away from the Comilla district headquarter. The Titas, the Gomti and the Meghna flow through the upazila. The upazila has a low-lying topography and monsoon flood is a normal phenomenon.

It has got an area of 232 square kilometres. The number of unions is 22 spread over 476 villages. The upazila has about 24.0 kms. pucca road, 12.8 kms. semi-pucca and 398.4 kms. kutcha roads. According to the 1981 census, the total population is 416,379. The upazila is densely populated and the density of population per square kilometre is 1794 with a literacy rate of 19.8%. The economy of the upazila is mainly agro-based. More than 90% of the population is dependent on agriculture. Due to developed communication and inland waterways some large and small industries have also been established. There are 2 jute industries, 4 cold-storages, 11 saw-mills, 25 ice-cream factories, 7 oil mills, 63 rice mills, 2 flour mills and some other small industries in the upazila.

The total area of agricultural land is 70,000 acres. The single-cropped land area is 7,000 acres, double-cropped and triple-cropped areas are 54,000 and
9,000 acres respectively. There are 3 Colleges, 26 Secondary High Schools, 194 Primary Schools and 1 Technical College. There is an Upazila Health Complex, 9 Upazila Health Sub-Centres and 4 Union Family Health Welfare Centres.

Daudkandi as compared to other two Upazilas was an already developed area. After upgradation, however, development projects in different sectors were started. In this study, an attempt has been made to measure the impact.

An assessment of the working of three Upazila Parishads in some core-sectors is being discussed here.

AGRICULTURE

It is well-known that agriculture is the primary mainstay of Bangladesh economy generating about 50 per cent of GDP, and accounting for about three-quarters of employment and exports. In the fiscal year of 1986-87, the allocations for the three upazilas under study viz.,

Gangachara, Sonargaon and Daudkandi were Tk. 716,049/-, Tk. 505,094/- and Tk. 996,000/- respectively. From an examination of official records on agriculture, discussion with concerned Agriculture Officers (UAO) and others involved in agriculture in the area, it is observed that agricultural production has increased to a great extent. Credit for this, of course, goes to some extent to the Upazila Parishad for supplying technical know-how, better quality of seeds and fertilizers to agriculturists through different agencies. The table below gives the statistical data of food crop-productions of three upazilas in three years.

**TABLE-12**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daudkandi</td>
<td>108861.44</td>
<td>169978.94</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonargaon</td>
<td>24520.40</td>
<td>44244</td>
<td>41633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangachara</td>
<td>28167</td>
<td>32083</td>
<td>36095</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** Upazila Offices, Daudkandi, Sonargaon and Gangachara.

Though production has considerably increased, still the picture is not up to the mark. Some officials
associated with agriculture sector have held shortage of fund responsible for the lack of desired agricultural production. They are of the opinion that the sectoral allocation of agriculture should suitably be increased. Formerly, under the guidelines of 1983, agriculture sector was receiving 35% to 45% of the total Annual Upazila Development Fund, jointly with the sector of small scale and cottage industries. But in 1985, agriculture sector was separated and its allocation was 15% to 25% and under the new guidelines of 1988, it has further been reduced to 12% to 20%. The point at issue is that allocations for agriculture sector have not only been slashed disproportionately but also brazenly misused. During the early phases of the upazila system the allocated amount was not gainfully utilized due to lack of expertise. The non-utilization of fund probably created a wrong impression leading to unjustifiable cut by the government. It has also been observed that agricultural projects have not always been prepared on the basis of specific data and taking into account the primary needs. The elected members frequently manage government approval for some unnecessary or less important projects for their vested interest or gaining cheap popularity instead of looking
after larger interest, local development and general benefits. The point will be discussed in details at the end of this chapter. The recent withdrawal of subsidy on fertilizer has created great hardship to the farmers. The higher rate of interest (16%) on agricultural loan is yet another burden on farmers. Absence of proper marketing facility at upazila level further adds difficulties to already exasperated farmers. They are not encouraged to think of higher yield for fear of non-remuneration price, unsatisfactory marketing facility and non-availability of proper storage system.

A well co-ordinated net-work of motivating mechanism through various agencies which is very essential for agricultural development, is simply missing at upazila. The farmers have neither incentive nor adequate information about modern agricultural techniques. The elected members apparently pay little attention to this aspect.

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7. This fact was stated by the Upazila Agriculture Officer of Gangachara upazila.
Livestock and Fisheries are two important sub-sectors placed under the Agriculture sector. Keeping in view the impact of these two productive sub-sectors on rural as well as national development, it is considered desirable to highlight them.

LIVESTOCK

Livestock constitutes an important part of village economy. In the three Upazila Parishads under study some attention has been paid to this sector. This includes establishing dairy farms, augmentation of fodder supply through cultivation of HYV grass like Napier, Iphiliphil etc. by road and canal side and supply of vaccine with proper storage facilities. The upazilas have also arranged for short term training in vaccinating poultry and cattle, and providing first aid for

8. CATTLE AND POULTRY UNDER VACCINATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UPAZILA</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>CATTLE</th>
<th>POULTRY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sonargaon</td>
<td>1987-88</td>
<td>12665</td>
<td>120344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1988-89</td>
<td>44345</td>
<td>356291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daudkandi</td>
<td>1987-88</td>
<td>39182</td>
<td>105411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1988-89</td>
<td>35109</td>
<td>151600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Gangachara upazila the Livestock Officer went abroad for a training and for which relevant data could not be collected.
prevention of general diseases. Genetic improvement, artificial insemination have also been expanded throughout the upazilas. However, inspite of such basic services the outcome is far too short of expectations. Here again the major drawback is the shortage of field workers and hence, the concerned officials too feel frustrated due to overburden.

FISHERIES

Because of its geographical features, Bangladesh has got enormous potentialities for fisheries which can play a vital role in poverty-ridden rural economy of the country not only by way of food supply but also by exploiting its export viability and thereby earning much needed foreign exchange apart from creating employment opportunities in almost every village. Inland and marine fishing brought 9% of export-earning in 1986\(^9\).

Recently, 'Open Water Fisheries Conservation and Management Programme' has been launched by the government with an objective of promoting pisciculture in open waters. The Upazila Parishad can play a positive role in successful implementation of this programme. It can easily motivate people, offer incentives and can promote technical know-how of various types of pisciculture. It can also undertake short term training programme too. Daudkandi, one of the three upazilas under study is highly suitable for the project. The existing fisheries in the area are low yielding, less remunerative and not modernized in any way.

The government has, incidentally, not paid due attention to livestock and fisheries and, consequently, the people are not receiving their benefits which could certainly help in rural development. It is high time that both these sub-sectors should be included in investment priorities list and apart from technical expertise, motivational mechanism also be made available.

SMALL AND COTTAGE INDUSTRY

Small and Cottage Industries have always been an integral part of village life and an inevitable segment of
rural economy. It is the second most important source of employment after agriculture and contributes about 4% of the GDP and 40% of the industrial value. If positive efforts are paid and adequate incentive coupled with marketing facility is made available, cottage industry can greatly help in alleviating the hardship to village folk. The directives of Planning Commission (1983) incidentally clubbed together this sector with agriculture and this vital sector was received little attention while allocating fund of Annual Upazila Development Programme. The village industry languished because of this short-sighted policy for at least two years till it was mitigated in 1985. The guidelines of 1985 delinked the sector from agriculture and specified the percentage of allocation for small and cottage industries from 5 to 10 percent. But unfortunately that fell too short of expectations and a few handloom or knitting units here and there did not make any impact worth the name. Even the funds provided for this purpose remained unutilized. The most astonishing fact is that no project, whatsoever, had

been undertaken in Daudkandi in 1985-86 and in Sonargaon in 1986-87. In 1988-89, a project in small scale industry worth Taka 60,000 was approved but in practice a paltry amount of Tk. 10,000 was spent in Gangachara upazila. Similarly during 1987-88, the whole amount (Tk. 231,114) of a training project for young unemployed also remained unutilized in that upazila.

Perhaps this is the position throughout the country. The study confirms that small and cottage industries have yet not received proper attention of the upazila authorities. Similarly, the members of Upazila Parishad failed to contribute their mite to improve the position. They remained silent spectators enjoying social status as members of the organization.

EDUCATION

Education is the backbone of a nation. No comprehensive development of a country can be visualized if majority of its people remained uneducated. The rate of literacy in Bangladesh, as already pointed out is very
poor and stands at 23.8% only\textsuperscript{11}. The picture in the rural area is more miserable. The Planning Commission's Guidelines(1988) has earmarked 5% to 12.5% amount for the education sector out of the Annual Upazila Development Funds.

It appears from a close scrutiny that a substantial progress has been made in the field of education at these upazilas. Since the introduction of the new system at least 45 schools (25 primary, 20 secondary) and 2 colleges were started in the three upazilas. Now the total number of primary schools, secondary schools and colleges are 349, 55 and 6 respectively. The numbers of teachers and students have also increased to a great extent. In primary schools of 3 upazilas the number of teachers has increased from 1,412 to 1,565, whereas that of the students was raised from 72,796 to 102,896. A satisfactory progress has also been found in case of the High School. There the number of teachers has been enhanced from 446 to 667 while the student population

reached to 20,756 from 14,029 since the inception of upazila.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that there is a definite course of progress in the field of education at upazila level. It is also to be pointed out that prior to the introduction of upazila system, i.e., under the erstwhile Thana Parishad, the system was centralized and so transfer and appointment of the primary school teachers were controlled from the district headquarters. Now, the system has been decentralized and the Upazila Parishad has been given much power in these affairs.

The immediate outcome of the new system is that the number of school-going children has been considerably increasing. In Sonargaon upazila, the number of admissions in the school was recorded at 61% in 1986, and 71% in 1987. In Gangachara, it was 53.03% in 1988-89 and 82.32% in 1989-90. However, the darker point of all the progress is higher rate of drop out. The major cause of this phenomenon is abject poverty. The poor parents who can
ill-afford food for their children choose to send them to work in preference to schools. It is, therefore, imperative that job- opportunities for the adult must be increased so that they can be persuaded to send their children to schools. In Bangladesh, education is free and books as well as sometimes stationeries are also distributed free of cost upto class V till an year ago and now it has been extended upto class VIII. It will go a long way if the government emphasizes the scheme of free mid-meals to poorer school children like in India. This will motivate both the children and the parents. It is also worth consideration that to eradicate illiteracy, schemes should be initiated for evening schools in addition to day-schools and also a comprehensive plan for adult education.

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION

For an all-round development, transport and communication constitute a vital infrastructure. The means of communication and transport at Thana level always remained neglected. But after the introduction of the new
system, this sector too has received due attention. In many a case, even the Thana (now upazila) headquarters were not properly linked with the sub-division and district headquarters. Either there were no direct road connections at all or they had been in dilapidated conditions for a long time. The position has, by and large, changed now and the upazila headquarters are adequately connected with the district headquarters. Huge funds are allocated to this sector.

The following table shows the larger allocation of funds for transport and communication during the year of 1986-87 in the three upazilas under study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Upazila</th>
<th>Total Allocation Tk.</th>
<th>Allocation in Transport &amp; Communication Tk.</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daudkandi</td>
<td>5,992,161</td>
<td>1,832,000</td>
<td>30.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangachara</td>
<td>4,873,685</td>
<td>1,432,098</td>
<td>29.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonargaon</td>
<td>2,929,568</td>
<td>758,871</td>
<td>25.90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

200
HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING

The position of Health and Family Planning sector is not much different from the other sectors. In the study upazilas, there has been a considerable development but a lot still remains to be done. There is an acute shortage of doctors, para-medical staff and infrastructural facilities. If a good number of primary health centres can be established, the basic difficulties will be mitigated. For this purpose again training facilities and motivational process is to be undertaken.

At the end it may be said that Upazila Parishads have made some positive efforts but have not yet succeeded in achieving the desired goals. It may be argued that a period of eight years may not be an optimum period to effect a wholesale change and produce an all round development in rural areas which have been languishing in poverty and backwardness for a very very long time. It would, therefore, be unreasonable to pin high hopes in a short time from the Upazila Parishad.
4.2 EFFECTIVENESS OF UPAZILA MECHANISM

The efficacy of upazila can be evaluated from different angles. But probably, the most important aspect is its planning-mechanism. Hence, the study is mainly confined to upazila planning mechanism.

4.21 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Before entering into discussion on upazila level planning, it would be pertinent to have a general view of the local level planning and development as well as different approaches to planning.

It is an established fact that any development greatly depends on proper planning. Without a sound planning, development is inconceivable. In all developing countries, planning exercise at national level is done by a national planning body, which can prepare a national plan in a broad framework. But a central body is, by its nature, handicapped to draw a local plan with appropriate details. It is being generally argued that national level planning pursued so far has an inherent drawback of being
greatly centralized, bureaucratic, elitist and, hence not sensitive to diversified local needs. It cannot possibly comprehend the details of local problems and therefore, unable to pay adequate attention to perennial local grievances.¹²

In the words of Finer, "Government on the spot is necessary in proportions as the central authority is distant from its detailed realities, for, in that case, its finest senses cannot be affected by the immediate circumstances, and its judgement and policies are opt to be clumsy and inappropriate....... In other words, a locality to be left alone in proportion as it was not possible for the central authority to reach and understand it".¹³ This applies most appropriately the desirability of local level planning. A central planning agency cannot


fully appreciate the local problems incorporating peculiar dimensions and issues of the locality as thoroughly as the local people can do.

Secondly, the National Planning body or agency, for the formulation of planning of local area, mainly depends upon the statistics and data collected by official machinery at central level who do not personally verify and which may not always be dependable and sometimes even may lead to inaccurate conclusions.

Further, the central planning machinery does not have enough technical hands to spare for local level planning. Hence, it is realized that there should be a local level planning unit with its own independent orientation and methodology.

In the fourth place, the necessity of local level planning is not only because in the national planning the problems of the rural areas do not receive required representation but also because in the development process involvement of the local people is denied. For, no success in development can be achieved unless the people are motivated to improve their own lot.
Development, in the final analysis, is a socio-economic process which involves people. There is no reason to be misled into thinking that physical infrastructures like roads, canals, schools etc. make up development. They only facilitate development process but development is concerned with people themselves.\textsuperscript{14} At present, the focus of development-strategy has been shifted from growth-strategy to welfare-oriented objectives and goals of the people, specially this is applicable for the countries of the third world. The concept of popular participation has now-a-days became a condition of economic development and social progress. This is generally associated with the active involvement of the masses, especially the disadvantaged groups in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of policies, programmes and specific projects aimed at the attainment of clearly defined objectives and targets of development.\textsuperscript{15} The local level


planning is indeed such a mechanism that ensures the participation of the rural poor and disadvantaged in the development process. Because of this, they are not mute beneficiaries but are also involved in identifying, planning and implementing development projects and programmes. Hence, popular participation should be considered as an indispensable feature of local level planning. Three things viz., autonomy, spontaneity and people's participation are regarded as the components of local level planning.16

This may further be added that local level planning may also help in stopping the feeling of alienation of the rural masses towards the administration. This will reduce the probability of creating a gulf between the government and the governed, which is the essence of a democratic system. This will on the other hand, develop a sense of consciousness and the people will get acquainted with development process undertaken by the government as well as with the reasons for their backwardness, deprivation and perpetuation of poverty.

DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO PLANNING

From the study of different works on planning it is found that there are different approaches to planning\textsuperscript{17}, some of which are discussed here.

A. CONVENTIONAL APPROACH

Waterson in his writing has expounded the term 'Conventional Planning'. He has suggested the sequence in preparation of a plan. These are a) problem identification b) data collection, c) objective setting d) project formulation\textsuperscript{18}.

\textbf{-------------------}

\textsuperscript{17} These approaches are generally used in national level planning but these may equally be applicable in the field of local level planning.


1. Preliminary recognition and definition of problems.
2. Decision to act and definition of the planning task.
3. Data collection, analysis and forecasting.
4. Determination of constraints and objectives.
5. Formulation of operational criteria for design.
6. Plan design.
7. Testing of alternative plan.
8. Plan evaluation.
9. Decision making.
11. Review of the plan from time to time.
Waterson himself realizes that this approach may not be free from limitations and drawbacks. Hence, he has suggested a different approach, which may be more useful. This is known as ‘Problem-Oriented Approach’.

B. THE PROBLEM-ORIENTED APPROACH

This approach puts greater stress on the identification and implementation of projects that would help in the solution of the local problems. To get an immediate response of the community is its main concern. There are six steps in this approach:

i) Identification of the major social problems which need to be resolved.
ii) Reconciliation of these problems with available resources.
iii) Selecting projects and programmes which would be helpful to solve the problems.
iv) Finding a strategy for resolving the problem.
v) Setting the targets and time-horizon.
vi) Choosing overall objectives based on the social problems to be resolved.
C. THE REDUCED PLANNING APPROACH

This approach does not deal with all the sectors at a time. The main concern of this approach is to identify the major problems of the key-sectors. It emphasizes development in the lagging areas of the country. There are two steps of this approach viz., identification of problem and regional description.

D. COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

Comprehensive Development Approach is in a sense a consolidation of the above-mentioned three approaches and generally follows the conventional line of the region explicit and integral to the whole planning scheme. This method has been exercised by the United Nations Centre ForRegional Development (UNCRD) in the Philippines (1974), Indonesia (1975) and Pakistan (1976).

In later discussion, an attempt will be made to determine the appropriate approach in the case of Bangladesh. However, from the above discussion on different approaches of planning it is clear that in organizing local level planning some pre-requisites are essential.
Identification of Problem

This is the first and most important aspect of planning. The planner has to select the area of planning properly. For that a thorough study and analysis of existing situation is necessary. Such a study includes description of the current economic, physical and social structure and assessment of major potentials and constraints in the way of development. Proper data on the above-mentioned points are needed to identify the areas or problems which are to be included in the development plan. Moreover, the planner must be able to foresee the desired future situation. And to achieve that objective out of various problems certain areas should be selected on priority basis.

Target Setting within a Time-Frame

In the second phase, for the implementation of the identified areas of activities some targets or goals will be set out within a time-frame indicating programmes of action. This is necessary for the improvement of the
present backwardness to a desired developed future situation\textsuperscript{19}.

Resource Mobilization

Resource is an inevitable requirement of planning. The planner must be well-aware of the available resources before embarking upon a plan. In the third world countries, resource is always limited, and cannot possibly meet the requirement. The planner has, therefore, to mobilize more resources and also attempt to better utilize the existing ones. The better the management of resources, the higher the attainment of targets.

4.22 UPAZILA PLANNING

In a country like Bangladesh local level planning has got an utmost importance for the development of

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}
its rural areas. It has been revealed from the past that plan prepared by National Planning Commission had a little impact on the solution of the problem of villages. Perhaps one of the main reasons of the acute problems of the rural Bangladesh is the absence of local level planning. Such a scope is now created after the introduction of the upazila system. Upazila Parishad is empowered to prepare a plan for the development of its own area. Previously, different local bodies had the responsibility of preparing development plans in a limited form. Even during the British period, limited powers were delegated to the local bodies at different levels to undertake some development programmes where an element of local level planning too was involved. But the desired goal was not achieved due to shortage of fund and top down control. That practice was continuing during Pakistan period. In 1960s, Thana Training and Development Centre was created at the thana level and was entrusted with the power of local level planning and development. But the institution was mainly concerned with some infrastructural and minor irrigation programmes. Hence, the scope of planning was limited to these two heads.
In 1978, Thana Development Committee at each thana was set up, which was existing parallel to Thana Parishad. It consisted of all the Chairmen of Union Parishads under the thana and some co-opted members. This committee was entrusted with the task of local level planning and implementation of development projects. The Thana Development Committee, could undertake development schemes in agriculture, irrigation and building of rural infrastructure. It had to prepare a five year plan with yearly break up projects. The development schemes of Thana Development Committee as already mentioned, were limited to a very few sectors, hence, anti-poverty, socio-economic projects and other social welfare projects remained out of its purview.

It was felt by the government that if an overall development of the rural areas is desired, there should be a local self-government body at the thana level with sufficient power to prepare plan and undertake schemes according to the needs and grievances of the locality. It was with that view that the Thana Parishad and Thana Administration Reorganization Ordinance, 1982 was promulgated. By this Ordinance, thana was upgraded into
upazila (which was initially known as upgraded thana). The newly created upazilas under the decentralization programme, as envisaged earlier, have been entrusted with a wide spectrum of functions. It has also been given the authority to prepare plans for different development activities.

The Upazila Parishad, as stated earlier, has been empowered to prepare development plan. In this connection, the following official documents are to be reviewed to establish its legal status and statutory basis.

The Resolution on Reorganization of Thana Administration

The resolution on the reorganization of administration at the thana (now upazila level) dated 23rd October, 1982 provides the conceptual foundation of upazila level planning and determines its scope with the introduction of the concept of transferred subjects.20

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The Local Government Ordinance, 1982

The Local Government Ordinance, 1982, has not merely given the legal foundation of the Upazila Parishad but also mentioned about the preparation of plans.²¹

Upazila Business Rules, 1983

References to different aspects of Upazila planning viz., Upazila Plan Book, Upazila Annual Development Plan and Five Year Plan, approval and estimate of works by the Parishad etc. are also found in the Upazila Business Rules, 1983.²²

The Guidelines of the Planning Commission

The Guidelines of Planning Commission for the Upazila Parishad is an important document for

²¹.The Local Government (Upazila Parishad and Upazila Administration Reorganization) Ordinance, 1982 (Ordinance No. LIX of 1982), Secs. 40 & 57 (k).

understanding upazila planning mechanism. In these guidelines detailed procedure and requirement of upazila development plan have been prescribed. The guidelines, as pointed out earlier, were modified twice on 13th July, 1985 and again on 16th June, 1988.

Theoretically, the discussion on the existing pattern of upazila planning, which has been elaborated in this sub-section, is primarily based on the instructions of the National Planning Commission, 1988. The guidelines have clearly specified different aspects of upazila planning viz., planning process (process of identification, selection and approval of schemes), areas and priority of schemes, plan book, project proforma and statistics etc. The focus in this sub-section will be directly on these points.

A. PLANNING PROCESS

i) Identification of Schemes

The provision of formulation of a 'Project Selection Committee' is made in the guidelines for drawing up and approving projects. The committee consists of
elected and deputed official members and its strength would not be more than seven.

This committee is required to visit every union and complete the task of project-selection after consultation with the local people as well as members and Chairman of Union Parishad.23

*Upazila Parishad* may also constitute a 'sub-committee' for scrutiny and technical assistance.24 The process, in this way, directly involves the beneficiaries at least theoretically.

ii) Selection and Approval of Schemes

*Upazila Parishad* is the final authority of approving development schemes. These schemes are to be approved on the basis of consensus of members in the

23. It may be mentioned here that no reference of the formation of such committee was found in the guidelines issued by the Planning Commission, 1983 and its formation started from the financial year 1985-86.

24. The members of the sub-committee may be taken from the *Parishad* or outside it.
Parishad meeting. In the event of no-consensus, the majority decision through voting will decide the issue. The officials attending the Upazila Parishad meeting may participate in the discussion and offer technical suggestions but they do not have right of voting.

In short, there are four phases in planning process. Firstly, the formation of a Project Selection Committee for identification and selection of schemes. Secondly, a sub-committee may be set up for scrutiny and examining technical feasibility. Thirdly, the concerned officer will draft the project-proforma for each scheme and submit the same either to the Parishad or to the 'Project Selection Committee'. And schemes will finally be approved by the Parishad.

B. AREAS AND PRIORITIES OF DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES

The Upazila Parishads are expected to undertake development activities in the following areas and prepare plan accordingly.

a) The formulation and implementation of local level projects falling under the 'transferred subjects'.
b) The *Upazila Parishad* is expected not only to implement development-projects of local nature but also the component of the national projects like the Rural Works Programme, Food for works Programme, Intensive Winter Cultivation Programme, Local Fisheries Programme etc. Hence, the planning, designing and executing the components of national projects are entrusted to it.

There are some Annual Development Projects (ADP) and some of its components which are presently being implemented by the national government, can now be implemented by *Upazila Parishad*. In this field, the *Upazila Parishad* will perform some agency functions on behalf of the national government in accordance with the institutions which may be issued from time to time.\(^{25}\)

The next point under discussion will be the priority of schemes or what type of projects would be undertaken by the *Parishad*. The guidelines expect the *Upazila Parishad* to be adequately conversant and well

\(^{25}\) The Guidelines of 1988, 2(a), (b).
aware of the following points before embarking on implementation of development schemes.

a) The objectives and priorities of the national government as declared in the current Five Year Plan and Development Programmes.

b) The projects undertaken or implemented in particular area by the national government, Divisional Development Board and other agencies.

The concerned planning authority of the upazila, equipped with clear conception and sufficient knowledge of different areas of planning can successfully prepare the upazila development scheme. The guidelines have clearly mentioned what types of projects would be taken by the Upazila Parishad as well as by other agencies. Firstly, it has been suggested in the guidelines of 1988 that Upazila Parishad would take up projects, devoid of inflationary impact, which can be implemented within a short gestation period, not exceeding two years.26

26. Ibid., 6(4).
Secondly, *Upazila Parishad* will avoid taking up very big projects to ensure the proper utilization of scarce resources. Instead, they should undertake a number of small but viable projects providing benefit to the largest possible number of people. Similarly, expenditure on one project, should not exceed one-third allocation of a particular sector in the Annual *Upazila Development Plan* (AUDP).\(^{27}\)

While *Upazila Parishad* would take up development projects, it would stress upon employment generation, including self-employment and income-generating activities.

Due weightage should be given to the development of *hats* and *bazars*, when the *upazila* plan is formulated. Because, these are the growth-oriented areas in rural context and sufficient development schemes in this regard has not yet been initiated at national level.\(^ {28}\)

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It has been noticed from different government documents that productive sector should get proper attention in upazila planning in such a way that it could bring benefit to general masses. To ensure this, the guidelines have mentioned following areas where the Annual Upazila Development Fund could not be invested:

1. Construction of cafeteria, restaurant or shopping centres.
2. Extension of office-building or any other buildings for the upazila functionaries.
3. Expenditure for payment of areas of any government department or any other dues or for payment to cover any loss.
4. Construction/reconstruction of gates or boundary-walls of the Upazila Parishad Bhawan, Shahid Minar, Mosques, Temples, Churchs etc.
5. Purchase of generators for electrification.
7. Construction of any club or other association building.

29. This restriction was added in the guidelines of 1988.
8. Construction/repair or extension of buildings for bank or any other government or autonomous organization.
10. Extension of loan to any individual, family or institution.
11. Purchase of land for construction of new hats and bazars,
12. Expenditure on subjects retained by the national government.
13. Expenditure for any item of the revenue head of the Upazila Parishad.
14. Direct purchase of land for digging of ponds or for play grounds of schools.
15. Undertaking projects in municipal areas.
16. Procurement of expensive equipments, furniture and luxury goods.
17. Undertaking projects for generating income for Upazila Parishad.
18. Establishment of kindergarten schools.
19. Expenditure on the same projects by amalgamation of Upazila Development Fund and funds available for the divisible components of national projects.
20. Undertaking schemes without considering the practical feasibility, priority, constraints of the local resources etc.

C. PLAN BOOK

It has also been mentioned in the guidelines that Upazila Parishad will maintain a 'Plan Book' on the basis of previous lines and keep it updated from time to time. Besides, the Parishad has also to prepare an Annual Upazila Development Plan (AUDP) for every financial year.

D. PROJECT PROFORMA

All project proposals will be prepared in prescribed proforma (Appendix-9) by the concerned functional upazila officer and he will be responsible for placing the same for consideration of Upazila Parishad in accordance with the rules.

E. STATISTICS

The guidelines emphasize on the maintenance of reliable and quantitative statistics as pre-requisite of a good planning. The guidelines of 1988, provide for
conducting necessary socio-economic survey and studies. That task is to be performed by concerned departmental officer without engaging any consultant. *Upazila Parishad* is required to publish the statistics as well as achievements in the area from time to time.

4.23 THE FACTUAL GROUND

For analysis of factual ground position of planning system of three *Upazila Parishads* (Gangachara, Daudkandi and Sonargaon), a further survey was carried out on the basis of some important points, e.g., planning process, priority of schemes, maintenance of project-proforma etc. These have been discussed in details in this sub-section.

PLANNING PROCESS

(PROCESS OF IDENTIFICATION AND SELECTION)

In the first place, it is noted that the three *Upazila Parishads* did not fully adhere to the principles and procedures laid down in the guidelines in this particular field. For example, the 'Project Selection Committee' which is expected to play a vital role in
identification and selection of schemes in consultation with local people are either exist on paper only or superficially concerned with their duties. The picture of the meetings of 'Project Selection Committee' of these upazilas in the year 1986-87 will prove the fact.

**TABLE - 14**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Upazila</th>
<th>Number of meetings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daudkandi</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonargaon</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangachara</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Since the projects are not prepared by the committee specifically assigned for the task, the Chairmen of the lower councils i.e., Union Parishads, who are the representative members in Upazila Parishad, as well as the concerned officers place project proposals in the Upazila Parishad and those are invariably passed in the meeting of the Parishad without sufficient discussion. The sub-
committees for examining technical feasibility are rarely formed in these upazilas.

The general tendency of the representative members as found is that they want to get more projects approved for their own areas and try to build their personal image among the people. It has also been revealed from the study that the undertaken projects are largely determined by the Upazila Parishad Chairman and no one affords to displease him. Consequently, his power and position is determined by the number of projects he approves. The official members in expressing their resentment over the whole process also say that as they do not have the voting right in the Parishad-meeting, they remain helpless and silent spectators there. Because of which there is every possibility of undermining their views. Of course, in Gangachara upazila, a different picture is noticeable. There exists a cordial relationship among the Upazila Parishad Chairman, representative and official members, and due importance is being given to the views and suggestion of both the representative and official members.
In actual practice, the representative members of the *Upazila Parishad* calculatedly by-pass the Project Selection Committee or directly prepare schemes and place them to the *Upazila Parishad* meeting. The result is that people of the locality are not involved and not even consulted in the planning process which is so emphatically mentioned in the guidelines. The basic purpose of 'Project Selection Committee' in this way, is completely defeated.

**PRIORITY OF SCHEMES**

From a close study it appears that priorities are being accorded to those projects which have demonstrative impacts rather than those which are of lasting utility. Both the Chairman of *Upazila Parishad* and the representative members exploit the situation for electoral gain in future. They vie with each other in creating a psychological impression upon the electorate. The nature of the projects are mainly of infrastructural and demonstrative rather than utility or welfare ones violating the guidelines. In support of that contention the lists of projects and sectoral allocation (under Annual *Upazila Development Programme, 1987-88*) of the *upazilas* under study are given, which conclusively prove the point.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTOR</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PROJECTS</th>
<th>ALLOCATION (Taka)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Construction of drain</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3,364,593.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Re-excavation of pond</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>178,069.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Purchasing fertilizer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>121,731.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Agricultural demonstration plot</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13,609.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SMALL SCALE AND COTTAGE INDUSTRIES</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of bridges</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1,175,860.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(HOUSING AND PHYSICAL PLANNING)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrification of an office</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19,493.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repairing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>158,785.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of different offices, buildings,</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,392,472.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roads, drains and sheds in market</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction-Works</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>330,949.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EDUCATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of educational institutions (Madrasah)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>945,728.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SPORTS &amp; CULTURE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>49,520.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MISCELLANEOUS</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>80,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Upazila Parishad Office, Daudkandi.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTORS</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PROJECTS</th>
<th>ALLOCATION (Taka)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery Projects</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>230,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-excavation of Ponds and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Fishery project</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11,654.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock project</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>54,064.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Training, fodder supply)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of culverts in</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>266,200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>different unions for drainage.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and other Projects</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>598,360.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SMALL SCALE AND COTTAGE INDUSTRIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of Training Centre</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>231,114.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repair Work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17,641.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>358,871.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development of community halls</td>
<td></td>
<td>50,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project for unemployed youth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>154,225.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Projects in different unions</td>
<td>100,000.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EDUCATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply of furnitures</td>
<td></td>
<td>310,827.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Works</td>
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<td>35,843.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SPORTS &amp; CULTURE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplying materials for sports and cultural development</td>
<td>231,113.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MISCELLANEOUS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>231,114.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Upazila Parishad Office, Gangachara.
### TABLE - 17
SONARGAON UPAZILA PARISHAD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTORS</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PROJECTS</th>
<th>ALLOCATION (Taka)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repair-work</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19,507.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Work</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>38,584.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing (Seed, manure etc.)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>195,080.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock Project (Chicken-rearing project and exhibition of cattle)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of bridges and culverts</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1,474,246.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconstruction of wooden bridges</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>218,341.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repair work &amp; Brick-soiling</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>51,015.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EDUCATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repair of educational institutions</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>698,399.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Upazila Parishad Office.

* Out of these 16 projects under Transport and Communication sector, 2 were financed by CARE, (Cooperation for American Relief Everywhere, an American Agency) amounting Tk. 674,720.00 and 4 were financed jointly by Upazila Parishad and the Social Welfare Department, Government of Bangladesh amounting Tk. 56,000.00.
The guidelines have clearly mentioned that employment and income-generating projects would be undertaken for a short gestation period not more than 2 years and expenditure of such projects would not exceed one-third of allocation of a particular sector in the Annual Upazila Development Programme. But it is found that a number of projects could hardly be completed within a limit of two years. The representative members take the opportunity of approving the projects at lower estimates and try to release funds immediately which obviously makes the completion of work within scheduled time impossible. No additional allocation is possible for those incomplete projects in the subsequent years. Ultimately there is a misuse of funds. The guidelines are thus violated with impaucity. This position discussed in three upazilas in fact, represents the position of the entire country.

PLAN BOOK

*Upazila Parishad* is required to maintain a 'Plan Book' as discussed earlier. The Daudkandi *Upazila Parishad*, never maintained any Plan Book till 1982. The reason, as reported by the *Upazila* Engineer, is that the
Parishad did not receive the Plan Book from the government earlier. However, those are recently supplied which may hopefully be used in future. On the other hand, Sonargaon Upazila Parishad, is of course, maintaining the Book properly. The official staff of this Upazila Parishad are experienced and particular in maintaining it. They have updated it regularly. Gangachara Upazila Parishad is also particular about it.

PROJECT PROFORMA

Filling up upazila project proforma, as prescribed in the guidelines, may be regarded as an important tool of upazila planning.

This supplies various informations in respect of targets, time-limit etc. of a particular project as well as creates a scope of its evaluation. But in reality, the upazila authorities are not giving due importance to this vital point. Sometimes, they use the project proforma, but in most cases, they ignore it. Regarding project proforma they are of opinion that this is too complicated, cumbersome and time-consuming. Its practical utility is very often ignored by them.
STATISTICS

The success of planning largely depends on the up-to-date relevant data. Though there is a clear instruction in the guidelines to maintain proper statistics, like other factors mentioned in the guidelines, this too, is frequently ignored in the upazilas under study. Even if it is sometimes maintained, it does not yield proper information hence, not useful in the preparation of an effective plan for the upazila concerned.

4.24 CRITICAL APPRAISAL

It can be concluded from the above discussion that the local self-governing bodies in Bangladesh have not succeeded to achieve the desired development in rural areas because of a variety of drawbacks and limitations. It has already been pointed out that Upazila Parishad, since 1982, has been entrusted to play the key-role in rural development of Bangladesh. The stand of the researcher on the role of Upazila Parishad in rural development has been that if it has to undertake
development schemes in different sectors with limited resources it must have a sound planning system.

From the analysis of planning system of the three *upazilas* under study and discussion with persons related to the system in different *upazilas* of the country and national level planning expert, it appears that *upazila* planning mechanism has not yet attained its matured position and suffers from a number of deficiencies.

The pre-requisites of a sound plan like thorough study of existing situation, socio-economic structure, physical condition, infrastructural facilities and major potentials and constraints in the way of development are not seriously taken into consideration when *upazila* plan is prepared. It is also to be noted that accumulation of data related to above-mentioned points, and their proper analysis and assessment, which is required for the preparation of a workable plan, is also absent. All these obstruct the identification of problems on priority basis. In a development plan, qualitative targets in realistic and objective terms should be set out and pragmatic
strategies to be adopted for the fulfilment of such targets within a specific time-frame. From the study, it is observed that these points too, do not receive due weightage before the preparation of upazila plan. That is why, inherent defects remain in it. The first and second steps of planning about which there has been a discussion earlier, are thus absent here.

Planning is not an easy task. The planners must have a comprehensive knowledge of the socio-economic conditions of the country as a whole as well as the locality for which the plan would be prepared. At the national level there exists the Planning Commission and its members are well aware of the methods and techniques of the preparation of plan. But at the upazila level, Upazila Parishad Chairman, representative members, i.e., Chairmen of Union Parishads and government officials have been entrusted with the responsibility of preparing plan. In actual practice, they lack requisite expertise for plan-preparation nor do they possess a sound understanding of national as well as local problems to work out a viable plan. The history of the country shows that local level planning has never been evolved here as a tradition.
The main objective of Upazila plan, as explained earlier, is to ensure popular participation. But unfortunately, this vital point is generally ignored in one way or the other and, consequently, a sense of apathy has already grown among the people. The study of Gangachara upazila shows that most of the people have no knowledge about upazila system. Even the educated people are gradually becoming indifferent. Without an assurance of popular participation, it becomes quite difficult to motivate the rural masses to take interest in development projects.30

Taking into consideration the socio-economic condition of the rural people, of whom over ninety percent live below poverty level, first priority in upazila level planning should be given to the fulfilment of basic needs like food and shelter of the people. How more job-opportunities could be created have to be the objective of the local level planners because, without the alleviation of rural poverty or without the assurance of a minimum living standard of the rural people, any attempt to rural development would be a far cry. Unfortunately, this

problem has not received attention of the *upazila* level planners. For such a negligence, the *upazila* authorities should not only be held responsible, because national government in its guidelines has also not put sufficient stress to this problem.

The newly introduced *upazila* system, has no doubt enlarged the scope of local level planning which, as it has been pointed out earlier, has got a great importance for the development of rural Bangladesh. The system being new, the government has felt the necessity of giving some guidelines through the National Planning Commission with the hope that this would help the *Upazila Parishad* members, who do not have previous experience in planning, i.e., in the preparation of Annual and Five Years *Upazila* Development Plan. But to speak the truth, the guidelines are not as operational as they ought to be. These are mostly directional in nature. They have not clearly mentioned as to actual technique of preparation of a plan, and do not clearly furnish a framework or model which could help the concerned authorities to formulate a sound *upazila* plan.
Sectoral allocation limit is another problem which put the Upazila Parishad in tight spot. The guidelines specify the maximum and minimum limits of financial allocation of different sectors and that sectoral allocation generally been made inviolable. This rigidity in sectoral allocation creates problem. A particular upazila even if in dire need, cannot undertake a particular project beyond the allocated limit as they are not authorized to spend outside the sectoral ceiling. Further, adherence to sectoral strategy is not possible in all areas due to physical and other variations. For example, sectoral allocation in agriculture can hardly be adhered to in hilly, deeply flooded and coastal areas. In such cases, the Upazila Parishads have either to violate the sectoral ceiling prescribed in guidelines or to leave funds unutilized. A serious contemplation on this point is inevitable and norms for reappropriation of funds from less urgent sectors to more urgent sectors be evolved.

In case of internal resource mobilization the policy of national government seems to be defective in the sense that some restrictions have been imposed to the Upazila Parishad in undertaking income-generating projects
out of its Annual Upazila Development Fund and this puts a check on recycling or regeneration process. But to avoid that kind of malpractice, instead of those restrictions, the government could ensure proper supervision or utilization of Development Fund. Moreover, a considerable proportion of Annual Upazila Development Fund, which had been coming from the national government are gradually decreasing leaving no scope of further development.

This will become clear from the year-wise allocation of Development Fund from the government for 460 upazilas.

**TABLE - 18**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Taka (in millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983-84</td>
<td>1,709.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-85</td>
<td>2,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-86</td>
<td>2,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-87</td>
<td>1,600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-88</td>
<td>2,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-89</td>
<td>700.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-90</td>
<td>748.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>300.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Under these circumstances, if the Upazila Parishad is not given sufficient autonomy in its internal resource mobilization, the whole structure of development activities will crumple.\textsuperscript{31}

It is desirable that Upazila Parishads should contemplate a comprehensive programme of resource-mobilization of their own. The proposals of the Chairmen of Upazila Parishads in a meeting convened by National Institute of Local government in 1990, in this connection, is worth consideration. Their suggestions as a whole were on some new income-generating sources like horticulture, expansion of hats and bazars, establishment of new markets on commercial basis etc. Some of them were of the opinion that a substantial portion of land development tax, registration fees etc. could greatly improve the revenue position. In the same meeting, the Chairman of the Pirganj Upazila Parishad informed that he had attempted to reduce the dependency on central grant by planting 150,000

\textsuperscript{31} Government has recently started realizing the problem. This point is now under active consideration of the government and it is expected that some appropriate decision on this issue will shortly be taken.
coconut trees in his area out of which 80,000 are at present satisfactorily growing and 10,000 to 12,000 trees have already started bearing fruits.

*Upazila Parishads* have to undertake a concerted motivation promotion programme to make the people understand that without internal resource-mobilization they would fail to deliver goods and achieve their targets. However, the attitude of the people have been gradually changing and now there is a positive response, the reflection of which is seen in the collection of the three *Upazila Parishads* under study during the year 1986-87.

**TABLE - 19**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UPAZILA</th>
<th>REVENUE (Taka)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gangachara</td>
<td>314,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonargaon</td>
<td>1,266,223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daudkandi</td>
<td>2,158,466</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Monitoring and Evaluation is essential for the proper implementation of the planned projects. Most of the South East Asian countries have already resorted to this
The guidelines of the Planning Commission also put stress on it.

The responsibility for implementing the project rests with the concerned officer as nominated by the Upazila Parishad. The Parishad may constitute a 'Project Committee' including official and non-official members for providing supervision and guidance of the implementation of the project. There is also a provision of 'Review Committee' for a closer scrutiny and monitoring the implementation of the projects. Deputy Commissioner may time to time inspect different projects and send his reports to the Upazila Chairman and Divisional Commissioner along with the suggestion and comments, and may also endorse those copies to the ministry, if necessary.

But this important aspect has not so far received proper attention. Project supervision, monitoring

and evaluation are not done properly. Project Supervisory Committee or Review Committee, as instructed in the guidelines to perform the task of evaluation, is practically found non-operational and hence the projects fail to follow the chartered course. From an inquiry into the Monitoring and Evaluation Cell of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives regarding the performance of audit it is found that no audit has taken place in Sonargaon and Gangachara whereas audit has been performed six times in Daudkandi upazila since its creation. In 1986-87 audit was undertaken in 22 upazilas which is only 4.8% of the total number of upazilas.

At the end of the chapter, it has been divulged that defective planning may primarily be held responsible for the incapability of Upazila Parishad in bringing desired development in the rural areas. If every Upazila Parishad of the country would have succeeded to prepare a plan complete in all respects, the overall picture of rural Bangladesh could have been much better.