
Functional Relationship between Politicians and Bureaucrats: A Case Study on an Upazila Parishad

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ABSTRACT

In this study, we have focused on the structure and function of a local government unit. Effective functioning of decentralization can create an effective local government. Lack of democratic decentralization creates dysfunction in perspective of implementation of projects. As a local government unit we have studied in Matlab South Upazila Parishad. We have focused politics and bureaucrat relationship in the selected Upazila Parishad. In the analysis of collecting data we have seen a huge contradiction between politicians and bureaucratic elites. The Rent seeking mentality of both politicians and bureaucrats to get financial and political interest creates a huge aberrant relationship between them. These contradictions create huge dysfunction in the implementation of development projects. The findings of the study reveal that reasons of conflict are many. These types of conflicts create hamper on the development process of the selected Upazila Parishad.

INTRODUCTION

Local government is a decentralized institution to accelerate the development of a country. In Bangladesh, Upazila Parishad is a very important unit for people's participation. The structure of local government has been amended time to time. The interests of several political parties have been focused with ordinances. Under the present Upazila Parishad Ordinance 2009 Member of Parliament get advisory role over Upazila Parishad. The Upazila Nirbahi Officer has more power than Upazila Chairmen. So, power conflict has been created legally. The legal rules and regulations identified roles of elected representatives and administrators. In this perspective, they think only about their interest in functioning. Power conflict creates in this perspective as rival interest which influences the functioning of the Upazila Parishad.

In keeping mind two question we have conducted this study those are what type of relationship avail among elected incumbents and government officials and what is the impact of this kind of relationship.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In this study we will find out problems in decentralization from politics and administration relationship which creates hamper in smooth functioning of the development process in Matlab South Upazila.

1. To find out the functional relationship between Members of Parliament (MP) and three chairmen including two vice chairmen

2. To Know the functional relationship between Members of Parliament (MP) and Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO)
3. To find out the functional relationship between Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) and Upazila Chairman (UZC)
4. To recommended and give suggestion the existing functional Problems.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

There exists a rival relationship between politicians and bureaucrats in Matlab South Upazila Parishad.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Fred W. Riggs (1964) Boston, studied about the developing countries structural-functional approach in his book of “Administrative Development in Developing countries”. This book has been discussed about transitional society’s administrative structure and political process impact on the formulation of policies which compel administrator to behave like semi politician, making their own policy decision largely on the basis of their private value system.

Heady, Ferrel, (1966), Prentice Hall, Public Administration: a comparative perspective. This book has been described about the bureaucracy based and politics based political system. We have studied the chapter Overview of Bureaucracies and Political Systems, Party prominent political regimes and Bureaucratic prominent political regimes in the theoretical framework of this study.

Abedin, Najmul (1973), “Local Administration and Politics in modernizing societies Bangladesh and Pakistan” this book local administration has been discussed in the perspective of the societal background of Bangladesh which helps us to build up our theoretical framework.

BACKGROUND OF UPAZILA PARISHAD

The history of upazila Parishad is long enough and carries the experiences of the British to Bangladesh period. The first concern for the local government system was Bengali Self Government Act 1985. In Pakistan period basic democracy of Ayub Khan Government introduced to collect revenue and ensure rules and regulations. (Siddiqui, Kamal, 2005)

After the birth of Bangladesh, Upazila Parishad has faced remarkable changes from 1977 to 2009. In 1973 the government has promulgated Local Government Act 1973. But the actual initiative was taken by the military government by ZiaurRahman and Hussain M. Ershad. President ZiaurRahman introduced Gram Sarkar and after that Hussain M. Ershad introduced the Committee for Administrative Reorganization and Reform (CARR). Subsequently, he introduced Upazila Parishad Ordinance 1982 which has prompted the introduction of Upazila Parishad.

The consequent changes occurred in the form of Upazila Parishad with the introduction of Upazila Parishad Ordinance 1998 and a bill in 2009. The ordinance introduced the posts of vice

chairmen. The bill of 2009 restores the advisory role of Member of Parliament in Upazila Parishad. The above legal changes influence the functional relationship of Upazila Parishad. (As-Saber, S.N. & Rabbi, M.F, 2009)

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Sampling

One Upazila Parishad has been selected purposively for the study. Name of the selected Upazila Parishad is Matlab South Upazila Parishad. This Upazila located at Chandpur district of Bangladesh. There are six Union Parishads in this Upazila.

Description of research area

Matlab South Upazila of Chandpur district with an area of 131.69 sq km, is bounded by Daudkandi and Gazaria, Matlab North Upazila Upazilas on the north, Chandpur Sadar and Hajiganj Upazilas on the south, Kachua (Chandpur) Upazila on the east, Munshiganjsadar and Bhederganj Upazilas on the west. Main rivers are Lower Meghna, Gomati and Dhonagoda. Meghna-Dhanagoda Irrigation Project and ICCDRB are notable.

There are six Union Parishads in this Upazila. Those are:

- Narayonpur (Md. JohirulHoque Mustafa Talukder)
- Nayergong Uttar (Md. Dulal Mean)
- NayergongDakshin (Md. FajlulRahman)
- Upadi Uttar (Md. LutfarRahman)
- UpadiDakshin(Md. Noyab khan)
- Khadergong

One municipality, 131 villages, 98 wards, total population 2,225,740, and 47,800 households, total NGO 22, one police station, government hospital, 16 post office, 13 bazaar. The Education rate of this Upazila is 45.54%, two telephone exchanges.

Sources of data

The researchers have collected theoretical knowledge from secondary sources like: Books, previous relevant research works, journals, web materials etc. The study used quantitative methods. Three questionnaires have been prepared to collect information. The population of the study was Upazila Chairmen, Vice Chairmen, Upazila Nirbahi officer.

Relationship between politicians and bureaucrats

Both central and local government flourishes along with the functional quality and sense of leadership by emphasizing democratic value. In order to ensure accountability and transparency to local authorities (Talukdar, M. Rafiqul Islam, 2009) MPs can encourage access to information to local people in terms of resource allocation, fiscal flow, human funds and setting policy and

program agenda. On the other hand Upazila Chairmen have a strained relationship with local Member of Parliaments, again in such case it is likely to adverse functioning of Upazila Parishad. In the context of real condition two UZVC seeking political and financial self interest either they join MPs or UZC .Without above condition UNOs tactful technical strategy frequently creating an unhealthy functional situation within the Upazila Parishad. As a result current Upazila structure and development process is facing lack of coordination.

Data and Presentation and Analysis

Data collected during the field survey has presented below. The analysis will explore the scenario of functional relationship among politicians and bureaucrats of that particular Upazila Parishad.

A. Jurisdiction of UNO to supervise and advice the activities of UZP

Options	UZC	UZVC (Female)	UZVC (male)
Yes	-	-	-
No	1	1	1

Table: 1 Opinion of UZC regarding supervision of UZP by UNO

B. Opinion of UZC regarding abide by the rules and regulation

Options	UZC	UZVC (Female)	UZVC (male)
Strictly	1	-	1
Partially	-	-	-
Situational	-	1	-

Table: 2 Opinion of UZC regards abide by the rules and regulation

C. Role of UNO in solving problems regarding functioning of UZC

UZC

He has said problems are solved on the basis of conversation between UZC and UNO.

UZVC (Female):

She has different opinion with UZC and said that till she did not fell any problem so no need to take the help of UNO

UZVC (Male):

He has said he has no official relationship with UNO. For this reason he faces a big problem regarding development work.

From the above opinions we have seen communication gap among vice chairmen and UNO. Though UZC has said that problems are solved cooperatively, but in reality this is very few.

D. Opinion of UNO, and government officials regarding UZC understand rules and regulation or not

E. In context of understanding rules and regulation by UZC

57.14% government officials have said yes. 28.57% have said no and 14.28% officials have said no need to understand. In this question UNO has said that yes he understands but he does not go through those rules and regulations.

UZC try to cooperate and conform to rules and regulations or not.

85.71% government officials have said that UZC try to cooperate and conform and 14.28% has said he don't try to understand. In this regard UNO has said that UZC sometimes cooperate and conform to this.

Disagreement with UZC over rules and regulation

42.85% government officials, including UEO, UAO and UWCO have said that they have a disagreement in this regard. 57.14% government officials have said they have no disagreement. In this regard UNO Has said that he has 60% disagreed with UZC.

Upazila Engineering Officer (UEO) has said that UZC does not cooperate with his work and also does not go through rules and regulation. Project Implementation Officer (PIO) has also said that UZC does not go through the rules and regulation for financial interest.

UNO has also a huge disagreement with UZC. He has also said that UZC does not go through rules and regulations. But 66.67% UZC have said that the rules and regulations should strictly follow and two vice chairmen have said that they have no official relationship with UNO. So, there is inter rival interest among politicians and administrators and development works are also hampered because of disagreement.

F. Reasons for disagreement and misunderstanding between UNO and UZC

Upazila Chairmen (UZC):

UNO does not send files of transferring department regarding a development project. UNO personally communicates with MP without informing chairman.

Upazila Vice Chairman (UZVC Female):

UNO does not inform about official meeting. He does not give us any official working order. She has also said that they have only the power to sign

Upazila Vice Chairman (UZVC male):

In perspective of writing down ACR, taking administrative decisions in several departments, does not consider an opinion in perspective of revenue expenditure. UNO emphasizes MP's decision regarding resource allocation.

The three UZP Chairmen have more or less same opinion, but two vice chairmen have huge misunderstanding with UNO. In the perspective of misunderstanding with UZC, opinion of UNO varies from three chairmen he has said that most of the cases disagreements occur

regarding rules and regulation and implementation of government programs. UNO has nexus with MP for achieving the interest of both of them. So, not only inter rival interest, but also intra rival interests exist here.

G. Resolutions of UZP meeting passed Unanimously or not

H. Upazila chairman:

66.67% UZC have said that resolutions are passed unanimously at UZP meetings and UZVC (male) has said that he does not get important all time. UZC has said that resolutions passed unanimously with sign of every one. In fact, we have no importance in meeting. In the perspective of effectiveness of UZP meeting 66.67% UZC including one vice chairman have said UZP meetings are more or less effective.

Upazila Vice Chairman (UZVC Female):

The resolutions are passed unanimously but not in all time. Sometimes only sign in the file. She has more or less the same opinion with Upazila Chairman but she also added that they have no official responsibility.

Upazila Vice Chairman (UZVC male):

He has said that the resolutions are passed unanimously. In terms of giving more priority to MP's decision in setting agenda disagreement creates. He is also same with other two chairmen, but he has added interference of MP.

UNO has said till now he did not feel that resolutions of UZP passed unanimously. He has also said that UZP meetings are more or less effective he added that those are not reasonably active. Regarding effectiveness of UZP meeting 75% government officials said yes.

The above analysis indicates also conflicting relationship among UZC, UNO and government official. So, the inter rival relationship exist here.

I. Reasons about recent Upazila Parishad is effective or not to participate



Figure: 1 Recent Upazila Parishad is effective, then TTDC to participate

Three Union Parishad chairman has said that recent Upazila Parishad is effective because:

There is more opportunity to participate in Upazila Parishad. There is low participation in the previous Thana Development Committee. In both systems they have very few opportunities to participate.

Two Vice chairmen have said that UZC and UNO influence most of the work. They said that the existing Upazila Parishad system is not effective it has lost their power.

J. Proper utilization of resources of Upazila by preventing existing problems

K. Upazila Parishad Chairman

Amending the advisory role of Member of Parliament, reintroduction of previous Upazila Parishad ordinance can accelerate the proper utilization of resources of Upazila.

Upazila Parishad Vice Chairman (Female)

She is little bit different from the opinion of UZC. She has said about coordination and discussion and emphasizing the most important need of Upazila people.

Upazila Parishad Vice Chairman (male)

Enlarging revenue and development sector of Upazila Parishad and Proper utilization of unused resource. Here rival interest is visible.

Union Parishad Chairmen:

Allocation in various programs like VGD, VDF, Kabikha, and Kabita should provide on the basis of communication system and proportion of population. They also said about emphasizing peoples demand and most important problem of the Upazila.

L. Steps should follow to make Upazila Parishad as an effective unit of local government

UZC

Amendment of the existing Upazila Parishad Ordinance, removal of the advisory role of MP and UZC should get the power to get ACR of government official UZP. UZC should be the chairman of all committees of UZP.

UPVC (female)

She has also said like UZC that to reintroduce the previous UZP ordinance. He also added to reduce self interest mentality.

UZVC (male)

Transferring other retains department to the UZP, delegating responsibility of member secretary to UNO. Removing advisory role of MP and giving official power to Vice Chairman.

Union Parishad Chairmen:

Providing UZC executive power that he can utilize the resources of Upazila effectively. Reducing political nexus and curving corruption.

M. Relationship with MP, UNO, UZC and UPC and UPM

- ❖ In context of meeting with UNO, Union Parishad Chairmen have said that they meet 10 times in last three months.
- ❖ All most all UPC meets UNO for discussing about union Parishad problem and development purpose.
- ❖ In context of Upazila government official UPCs meet average 9 times in the last three month for projects implementation and resolve agricultural problems of Union Parishad.
- ❖ About 85% respondents response they have not got any scope for meeting with MPs in last three months.

N. Upazila Parishad / policy formulation process, Union Parishad members

Option	UPC	Female members	Male members
UZC/UPC	4UZP	7	3
UNO			1
UPC/UZC	1 UZP		
MP			
OTHERS			1

Table: 3 Opinion of UPCs and UPMs regarding policy formulation process

80% Union Parishad Chairman has said that UZC influence the compilation on the planning process but on the other hand.

O. Influence of UZP in compilation of planning process (Question no 19).

- 100% UP female members have said that UPC influences more in the completion of planning.
- 80% UPC have said that planning of UZP complied by cooperatively. 100% female member of UP have said that union Parishad complied by cooperatively; 60% male members of UPC said that UPC policy complied by cooperatively.

Findings of functional dimension

- 100% UZC has said that UNO has no power to supervise over the Upazila Parishad.
- In context of following rules and regulation 66.67% of UZC have said that rules and regulation should follow strictly and 33.33% situational.
- 85.71% government officials have said that UZC cooperate and conform to rules and regulation. But UNO has said that UZCs does not go through the rules and regulation.
- UNO has 60% disagreement with UZC about rules and regulation. 42.45% government officials have said they have disagreement with UZC.

- In context of effectiveness of Upazila Parishad meeting, 66.67% UZCs have said that the meetings are effective and the resolutions are passed unanimously.
- UZCs have said that they have no official relationship with UNO. So, various problems of Upazila Parishad remain unsolved which creates a barrier in development of the Upazila.
- 60% Upazila Parishad chairman have said that recent Upazila Parishad is more effective than Thana Development Committee.

In the above findings, we have seen that there is contradiction among the politicians, administrators.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- For minimizing contradiction between politician and bureaucrats regarding resource allocation of Upazila Parishad adequate financial and human resource allocation is very much important for their better coordination. We have shown this concept in the following.

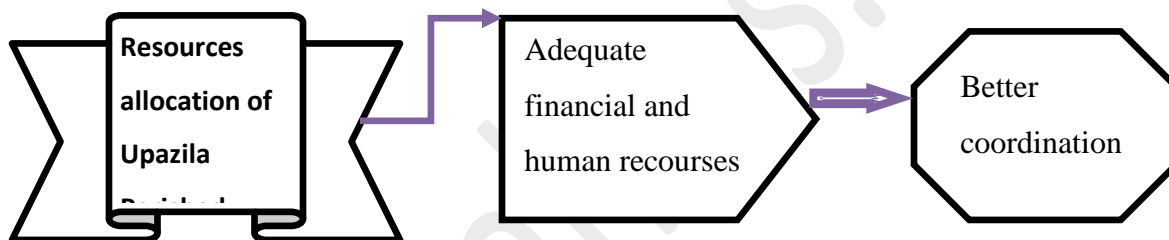


Figure: Model of the relationship between resources and coordination deduced on literature on resources and coordination in policy implementation

- Development of our society cannot be obtained if we do not give equal rights to the women and give them the opportunity to participation of local administration. The method of nomination and indirect election are not enough for the actual representation of women's community.
- Clarification of the roles of Upazila Vice Chairmen for minimizing their dissatisfaction.
- The National Institute of Local Government (NILG) has been providing training since its inception in 1969 but only a negligible number of trainees have been trained and the duration of training is not enough to bring any dramatic change in the outlook of the Upazila Parishad officials. The training institution should be set up in ZilaParishad and time bound courses should be offered.
- Training for the politicians should provide centrally and locally before electing as UPC and UZC.
- It is impossible on the part of the local administration to carry out the multidimensional functions which such little financial support and inexperience manpower.

- Implementation of the decentralized process interfere of the central government should minimize by reducing advisory role of Member of Parliament.
- Informal communication leads to coordination among incumbents and government official involved in policy implementation. When they will share information through interaction, coordination takes place; this is because interaction among individuals creates opportunities for acquiring and sharing information on many issues on policy implementation.

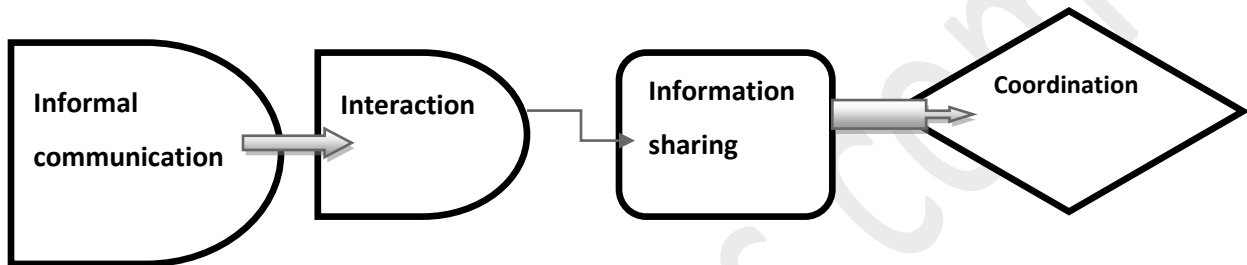


Figure: A model of the relationship between informal communication and coordination

(Source: Ahsan A. H. M. Kamrul)

- Irrespective of their intention Specific amount of work can be handed to the Upazila Parishad. So that politician and administrator cannot interfere with each other.
- It is mandatory to ensure that the rural poor participate in development activities. It is observed that the chairman and the members usually come from the rich and elite class. and the rural people are unfairly deprived from participating in the local administration
- Creating inter decentralization of transferring department activities.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Introduction of the recent Upazila Parishad ordinance 2009 creates huge overlapping and misunderstanding among the politicians and administrators. These hamper in the functioning of Upazila Parishad. More concentration of power has created an antagonistic mentality to work. The findings of the study reveal that reasons of conflict are many. Here the most important thing is that the two actors are not only differing in their position but also function and relation. Consequently, this type of conflict hampers to the development of Upazila. It also hampers the smooth functions of Upazila Parishad. If we can do so we will see the face of light in the sector of development of upazila Parishad. It also accelerate the effective functioning of Upazila Parishad

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