Decentralisation and The Local State

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Political Economy of Local Government in Bangladesh

Tofail Ahmed

Agamee Prakashani

Dedicated
to
My Wife
Masuda A Chowdhury
Whose quite sacrifices blossomed
into my loud successes

Preface

This is a matter of immense pleasure to write a preface for the revised edition of the book. I am grateful indeed to all the people who appreciated the work and encouraged me to initiate a revised edition. I was very sceptical from the very beginning about the acceptability of the approach and the method used and the contents the book contain. It was completely a new theoretical terrain ever deployed in social science studies in Bangladesh. Decentralisation is well understood here in Bangladesh from its institutional and developmental perspectives. The political economy of Decentralisation as embedded in the nature of social formation, mode of production, state ,class and crisis of capitalist accumulation of different dimensions, and lastly situating the whole analysis within a new theoretical framework 'Local state' together is never done in the local and national contexts in Bangladesh. That was one of the risks undertaken while initiating the work in the early nineties and bringing new edition after a long gap of almost 17 years is even a more formidable challenge. Many of the readers may naturally look for the analysis based on the latest information. I believe, the enlightened readers will accept my apology in this regard. It was not possible to update the empirical data as it involves huge expenses and I also did not feel very strongly that the new set of empirical data is at all required to substantiate the arguments already made in the study, as empirical as well as objective socio-political situation have not changed substantially.

The class nature of Bangladeshi state, the political crisis it encounters and the way the central political and social classes try to mould, shape and reshape the local state have not changed in a substantive way compared to the situation already analysed (1960-1990) in the book. Moreover, there are signs of deterioration while empowerment of the masses is considered. There are certain definite changes in the economic domain. The petty-bourgeoisie absolutely in economic term are more consolidated in size, volume and magnitudes compared to the situation existed in 20 years back; but politically still they belong to the same petty-bourgeoisie. They do not behave like bourgeoisie proper in spite of upward economic mobility. They are still very much embedded in the process of

lumpenisation as far as the political behaviour is concerned. Similarly, income poverty situation of the masses also in general improved with no substantial qualitative impact on the nature of the class composition and class nature of the state. Due to consistent economic growth (albeit of peripheral nature) new social forces are emerging but these forces are to a large extent swallowed or absorbed within the clientlist structure of the central state. There are conflicts, tensions and crisis of endemic nature. The central state passes through a continuous crisis situation; big crisis comes cyclically more or less in every 10 years. Local Governments at times become the first casualty of the crisis as more and more centralisation tools are deployed as a solution to ease the endemic crisis of the regimes.

The commitment for greater decentralisation, strengthening local government and autonomy for the local state still remain a far cry in Bangladesh. To address the issues of 'local governance' from the context of decentralisation, a new chapter is added with the main book as post-script. I believe the interested persons may get another round of analysis with some recommendations(albeit from institutional perspectives) in the new chapter for making some forward looking reform agenda in local governance.

I should gratefully acknowledge the debt of my teachers, colleagues and friends who helped in various ways to materialise the project in the late eighties. It was basically my Ph.D. dissertation later developed as a book. Professor Suranjit Kumar Saha and Professor Chris Gerry (Centre for Development Studies, Swansea, University of Wales, UK) were my philosopher, guide and friends during my five year study period in UK. The amount of time, efforts, wisdom and sympathy they extended to me is unthinkable and unforgettable. The foreword contributed by Professor Saha in the first edition of the book bears a testimony towards that end. Besides, other teachers and scholars of Swansea Collage of the University of Wales were also of tremendously supportive to me. I like to express my profound gratitude to Professor Alen Rew, Mike shepperdson, Jim Whetton, Ian Cleg and David Marsdon for their sincere help and cooperation during my studies in Swansea. Professor Mohammad Mohabbat Khan of DU and Diana Conyers of IDS, Sussex contributed reviews of the book in *Economic and Political weekly* (Bombay) and *Public Administration and Development (UK)* Journals respectively. Professor B.K. Jahangir arranged a discussion session at CSS, DU

in 1992 on the book. I am very grateful to these three distinguished academics of high international reputation for their generous support and appreciation.

Professor Aka Firowz Ahmad, Chairman of Department of Public Administration, DU and Professor Muslehuddin Ahmed (former vice-chancellor of Shahjalal University) encouraged me to bring out a revised edition of the book. Mr. Saifuddin Ahmed of the Dept. of Peace and Conflict Studies, DU and finally Mr. Bidhan Chandra Pal a cultural activist volunteered the overall supervision of the publication and made my life easier. Mr Osman Goni the proprietor of the *Agami Prokashani* gladly accepted the responsibility of publishing the book. I express my profound gratitude to them all. Besides, I also acknowledge the sincere encouragement of our friends and colleagues from BARD, Comilla and in the Political Science and Public Administration Departments of Chittagong, Rajshahi, Sylhet (SUST) and Kustia (Islamic University) to bring out the revised edition of the book. I am not sure, how the new generation academics will accept the work? I am eagerly waiting to see their attitude towards this publication.

I will be failing in my duties if I do not mention two other names; my wife Masuda A. Chowdhury and our daughter Shadia Ahmed whose relentless endurance and unconditional support enabled me to devote endless amount of time in all my academic pursuits. However, as author I will remain responsible for all the limitations and shortcomings of the work. No other person or institution but the author alone will also remain liable for the opinion expressed in the book.

Tofail Ahmed

Foreword

It has been my proud privilege to be associated with the development of ideas which find expression in this book. I first got to know Tofail When he registered here as a Ph.D study fellow and I was nominated by the University to be his Supervisor of Studies. What had begun as a routine relationship between a teacher and a student soon matured into at least for me, an immensely enriching partnership of minds and shared perceptions. Tofail's Ph.D. work had turned out to be a focus for us to engage in a series of discussions in which we often questioned and challenged each other's ideas and views. During this three year long period of our partnership, Tofail had contributed at least as much, and probably' more, to the development and shaping of my views of the realities and implications of the shifting contours of class configurations in South Asia, than I might have had to his. I would be failing in my professional duties if I did not publicly acknowledge that, on many aspects of the discourse on the nature of states and social formations in South Asia, he was constantly helping me to find new insights, thus enabling me to move my ideas forward from the blind and sterile alley-ways of the theoretical terrain in which some of them had got locked in.

This book is a product of Tofail's labour of love for the people of Bangladesh, and indeed for the people of the subcontinent of which Bangladesh is a part. He situates the problematic of decentralisation in Bangladesh on a broader canvas of the globally extensive system of capitalism and the specific manner in which the system works, and gets embedded in the societies at the periphery of that system. The progression from the general to the specific, from the abstract to the concrete, is achieved with great skill and sensitivity of perception. The discourse incorporates, within its ambit, an analysis of the nature of the state as an agency of action as well as of the complex terrain of class conflicts and alliances in which that agency is rooted and out of which it derives its motive power. The book makes the crucial point forcefully and affectively, that decentralisation will continue to remain an empty concept drained of any real meaning until it is addressed in the broader political economy context of specific societies.

The book also represents an act of courage. It was written at a time when the government in Bangladesh was still controlled by the military, which was not particularly tolerant to the views it regarded as unhelpful. Tofail demonstrates, yet again, that scholarship in this subcontinent will not be muffled by autocratic regimes.

In writing this book, Tofail has made a major contribution for advancing the cause of the continuing struggle for empowerment by the broad masses of Asia, Africa and Latin America in general and the people of Bangladesh in particular. He combines vision with realism and creates a paradigm of action for building new institutions of power which will be the agencies for securing the interests of the broad masses currently excluded from the equations of power. The book deserves to be read widely by academics, researchers as well as practitioners of politics and public administration.

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Background and Contradiction in the Theory

Over the past fifty years, decentralisation has become one of the most widely used, abused and confused terms in describing and prescribing something related to the administration and development of less developed countries. The process began to emerge in the late fifties and is still continuing, albeit under different 'brand names', theoretical frameworks and paradigms, according to the changes in the literature on administration and development. During the mid fifties and early sixties, the concept was advocated by those concerned with the theory and practice of development administration (Goswami 1955, Riggs 1956, Swerdlow 1953 and Weidner 1963) as a new approach by which to study and analyse the society and public administration of the newly emerged 'nation states' which desperately sought 'development' and 'nationhood'. During the same period, the contributions of Hicks (1961). Maddick (1963), and the United Nations (1962) supplemented these feelings, emphasising the expansion of local government as a means of 'democratic decentralisation'. As a result, .many of the developing countries adopted prescriptions of United Nations and donors by creating or recreating local government structures (Rondinelli 1985). At the turn of the decade, the experiments produced frustrating results and a marked silence was observed for some years, particularly in the Third World countries. The concepts reappeared with added vigour and enthusiasm in the late seventies and early eighties with different forms and strategies. Conyers (1983) observed the phenomenon as 'the latest fashion' in development administration. Cheema and Rondinelli (1983) analysed the emergence as consequence of the discouraging results of centralised planning and management followed in the previous decades. So, the new concern for growth-with-equity, people's participation in administration and planning through effective decentralisation in favour of the people at the grass-root level was considered the remedial measure to overcome the setback. Similarly, the concept of participation also became one of the 'latest fads' in a long line of attempts to focus attention on particular concepts, or terms which guide development assistance in a particular direction (Oakley and Marsden 1984:1). Among the proponents of popular participation were the US congress (1973), the United Nations (1975), USAID (1975), the ILO (1976) and the World Bank (1975). These agencies took the lead in the 1970s in what appeared to be a radical shift of strategy which abandoned the accepted ideas of the preceding decades.

New development strategies such as 'Redistribution with Growth', the Basic Needs Approach and 'People-Centred Development,' identified participation of the beneficiaries in the planning and

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Chapter One

Introduction: The Problematic of Studying Local Government

'Decentralisation' and 'people's participation' are two-of the popular panaceas that have caught the attention of academics, donors, various United Nations (UN) agencies and subsequently many of the Third World Governments during the last few decades. Their impact and influence became so widespread that there appeared a mushrooming of reforms and reorganisations in the structure of local government and rural development, in which the two concepts of decentralisation and participation played a high-profile role. It was believed that economy, efficiency and equity could all be achieved through this new strategy, whereas results had been disappointing in the growth-oriented centralised planning and management of the decades before. Many academic disciplines and development projects added 'decentralisation' and 'participation' adjectives to their titles: 'Decentralised Development', 'Decentralised Budget system', 'Decentralised, Administration', 'Participatory Planning', 'Participatory Management,' 'Participatory Action Research'. 'Participatory Evaluation' and recently with 'good governance'. Thereby attributing new meanings and dimensions to the original areas of interest on decentralisation and local governance.

The simultaneous emergence of the two concepts is not just a historical coincidence. The concepts are very much interrelated and also share the common concern of development theory and practice. During the last three decades the relationship became closer, for example, where participation was identified as one of the goals of development, decentralisation increasingly considered as a means to achieve it. Again when decentralisation formed the key element in a reform package, participation was regarded as one of its vital objectives.

implementation process of the programmes as the desirable and appropriate alternative to centralised administration.

Participation, as a concept, still lacked a systematic theoretical basis, agreed common criteria and empirical bases of judgment in the social sciences. It is very often endorsed on normative grounds and as an ideological doctrine. Participation sometimes was equated simultaneously with basic needs and human rights (Streeten 1980). Theorists and practitioners alike considered it a pre-requisite of sound development (World Bank, 1975). Modern management scientists considered participation an efficient and effective management tool, with a group of employers motivated by enlightened self-interest using it as one of the more productive and profitable ways of managing enterprises and maintaining 'industrial peace' (ILO, 1981). Many authoritarian governments in the developing countries have utilised the concept as a tool of political mobilisation to consolidate their power base. Taking all these views together, the concept of participation remains rather elusive and diluted.

Conceptualisation and analysis of the decentralisation is also not a simple task. The main problems and complexities start with the empirical observation of decentralisation, where contradictions between its rhetoric and reality surface very quickly and prominently. During the 1970s, India, Pakistan, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Malaysia in Asia; Algeria and Libya in Africa and Latin American countries such as Argentina. Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela, all adopted policies of decentralisation. Most of the countries in this list shared a common decentralisation discourse, involving such terms as 'relevant development', 'responsive and responsible administration', 'local democracy[1] and debureaucratisation'. in their policy documents (Conyers 1886a). But many of these programmes ended in recentralisation and rebureaucratisation (chikulo 1982). The academic imperative to study the frustrating results of this experiment is enormous; unfortunately most students have lacked the appropriate perspective from which to address the core issues of the problem. Many of the previous studies have looked at the issues from an ostensibly value-neutral technical perspective, and so the underlying 'political economy', i.e. what lay underneath the 'technical blanket', was ignored. As a result the application of ahistorical and apolitical institutional and technical approaches has obscured rather than illuminated the shifting interests of the main social forces, and the way in which their interests have at times come into contradiction. Decentralisation is a process for the dispersal of power and authority form the central state to the lower levels of its apparatus. Thus the nature of the state and its class basis needs to be recognised as a vital factor in assessing the real nature, extent and impact of decentralisation in any society.

The Relevance of Studying Bangladesh and Related Problematic

The present study addresses the problematic of decentralisation and local government from the specific societal context of Bangladesh where, decentralised local government initiatives have long been favoured by the state policy as a strategy of strengthening the position of a dominant class in society. Successive regimes in the different historical phases of their rule (both in colonial and post- colonial eras) faced a dilemma in establishing their hegemony over the whole of civil society because of their weak socio-economic base. As a result, ruling regimes were compelled to erect some structure for people's participation in government to solidify and broaden the socio-economic base on which to establish themselves as the dominant class. Besides, as most of these regimes captured the state through military coups, *palace conspiracy, short-lived electoral victory, mass upsurge* and civil violence from *the period extends over 1950-1990*, the character and progress of the corresponding crisis also constituted one of the factors that necessitated the formation of new alliances and coalition,[1] Local government institutions provided a reasonable ground for such alliances in the rural areas and all regimes tried to exploit the associated advantages. The local 'participatory institutions' primarily reinforced the *status quo,* strengthened the position of the dominant classes at the local level, while at the same time cementing the relationship between locals and those in control at the centre, solidifying in the process the position of both (Sobhan 1968 and Blair 1985). The dominant groups, by using state power and resources, created and recreated certain production relations to consolidate their economic and political position. Thus all the reformist attempts to build local institutions in the past can be regarded as administrative devices of the state to enable it to extend its ability to manipulate both civil society, economy and polity in favour of the ruling class.[2]

The British colonial policy of local administration strengthened the disintegrated feudal structure which was then adapted to facilitate colonial exploitation. Subsequently, Pakistani semi-colonial rulers in Bangladesh attempted to transform the feudal or semi-feudal state into a dependent capitalist state.[3] The advanced capitalist countries helped to accelerate the process in various ways. The massive food aid and other technical support to the implementation of Pakistan's Basic Democracy and 'Rural Works Programmes' in the 1960s is the best example (PARD 1963). Once independent, Bangladesh nevertheless, carried the same legacy for one and a half decades to date. Local government and other decentralised and participatory institutions have

not been developed as relatively self-governing autonomous people's institutions, but rather as dependent 'territories', or landing strips' for the national leadership. Local leaders are seen as interlocators and intermediaries between the dominant national elites and the rural masses assisting the state in reaching the rural masses, to mobilise political support (Rahman 1981: 4-5). The state faces a chronic crisis of legitimacy which threatens its power through continued unrest and violence. As a result, short term crisis management takes priority over longer term goals of developing decentralised local institutions.

Bangladesh is a country of scarce natural resources, high inequality in asset and income distribution, low productivity and stagnant agriculture and industry, with a disproportionately high rate of population growth.[4] Inequality *is* also alarmingly persistent in access to social services such as state provision for health care, education, housing between the rich the poor.[5] Moreover, natural calamities such as flood, drought, cyclone and tidal waves take a heavy toll of life and property every year, in which the poor suffer disproportionately. The flood in 1988 alone caused damage to property assets and physical infrastructure equal in value to entire GNP of one whole year, a sum which the country would only be able to recover over ten years of domestic savings, investment and growth at the rate of the corresponding years *(Janamot,* Octobers 12, 1988). Development in such a country cannot take place without the participation of its people. Thus building participatory institutions is no longer merely a benevolent choice of a given regime, rather a socio-economic and political imperative in any future survival strategy.

There are mainly two ways of ensuring people's participation in the attainment of sustainable development. The first may be the proletarian revolutionary road by which the greater mass of people and available resources can be mobilised to meet social needs (many scholars opt for the Chinese example as most appropriate to the social context of Bangladesh (Rahman 1986). The other is the more gradual, incremental and reformist process of decentralisation, empowerment, conscientisation (Blair 1986) and capacity building (Conyers and Warren 1987). Both approaches have their own advantages and disadvantages. Revolution is often perceived to have been more effective in providing for basic human needs, attaining equity and better quality of life for the poor. The question then comes of whether Bangladeshi society possesses or fulfils the necessary conditions for a revolutionary transformation of its present domestic and geo-political conjuncture. The answer is in the affirmative: the all-pervasive pauperisation and immiserisation experienced by Bangladesh leads society towards ever sharper social differentiation and ultimately

revolutionary confrontation (Jahangir 1979). This view can be criticised in as much as the objective social situation is not complemented by the subjective condition of revolutionary consciousness and organisation. Lack of organisational initiative and an accompanying ideological vacuum ensures that the revolution is not *only even an immediate but remote* possibility. On the contrary, rising 'lumpenisation' of politics has forced progressive political activists into a corner both in cities and in the villages. 'Mafia' and 'gang' violence in politics has increased the influence of the petty-bourgeois dominated political parties, in which ideology, policy and the programme play a less significant role in the formulation of party strategies (Jahangir 1986:7). In such circumstances, the second option is currently the only viable alternative; in the medium run, it may prove capable of filling the organisational and ideological vacuum.

The existing local government system in Bangladesh, because of its long historical existence, has attracted much criticism. There are good reasons to see local government as repressive institutions which reinforce the power and privilege of the central state and dominant classes. Locally as well many of them got absorbed in the rent seeking culture of clientelist politics. Nevertheless, room still remains for 'positive manoeuvres' to transform it into an effective institution of social change and economic development.

So far as the existing trend of intellectual contributions on the rural local institutions of Bangladesh is concerned, one can put the various studies into four major categories. The first category comprise the practitioners (i.e. members of the bureaucracy), professionals of specialised government agencies, technical experts and consultants working in the field of local government and rural development These studies avoid the social-structural issues, concentrating rather on legal, organisational, managerial and functional aspects, mostly reflecting the positivistic "official discourses".[6] The second category of contributors take a diametrically opposite view to the first group, concentrating more on macro level political perspectives and mostly portray local institutions as corrupt and inefficient from their western 'new right' theoretical position.[7] Another faction of the same negativist category has adopted a radical Marxist view and has made sweeping generalisations on the basis of highly sophisticated abstractions, with the entire weight of theory very often resting on a narrow or no empirical basis They deny any possible positive role of local government under the present conditions, except that of defending and extending the repressive and exploitative apparatus of the state.[8] The third category also seemingly involves practitioners of a different sort; their theoretical position swings between 'neo-populism' and the 'new

left', in as much as they emphasise local initiatives on the one hand and negate the role of the state on the other. They prefer to use the label 'group' in place of 'institution'. Since the late seventies there has been an explosion of this category of contributions as a result of the upsurge of voluntary development agencies in Bangladesh. Some of them deliberately by-pass the issues of local government and other traditional local institutions in their discussions.[9] A new generation of activists – cum academic emerged in Bangladesh as 'Local Government Champions' since late nineties from and amongst the NGOs, who are mainly supported by various multilateral and bi-lateral donor communities. They work under soft strategy called "Advocacy" their own synonym of movement.

Despite all these failures and criticisms, *rural and urban* local government institutions nevertheless are the only representative-democratic political, administrative and social organisations that people find within their reach and vision not least because it has constituted over the years the only albeit limited experience of political involvement of the masses. Because of the situation discussed above, there exists an intellectual gap to fill if a realistic assessment of the potential of local government in Bangladesh is to be made. Lack of understanding of local government is persistent in all respects, Critics often measure the shortcomings against an imaginary 'Ideal type' of local government supported by a 'romantic view of democracy',[10] Some other critics view local government as merely an isolated institution[11] without relating it to the totality of 'social relations' at a particular time and at a given point in space.

Local Government in other Countries: A Comparative Historical Perspective

Local government is one of the universally accepted political and institutional arrangements within the framework of modern states, irrespective of geographical, ideological and political variations. Despite this universal acceptance and existence, the role, functions, effectiveness and strength differ substantially between the countries of the first world (core capitalist countries) and the Third World peripheral countries. The local government of the latter group of countries enjoys very little power, authority and capacity to meet the overwhelming responsibilities attributed to them by the society in which they live. The corresponding institutions in the core societies enjoy authority and power of adequate quantity along with the corresponding capacity to exercise that power and authority.

In post-war Britain, the major responsibility of implementing 'welfare state' activities at the local level was vested in the decentralised local government institutions and various local authorities. The *cliché* that 'local government looks after the British citizen from the cradle to the grave' (Stocker 1988:5) is inadequate to express the range of activities performed by the local state. Gradual expansion of local government activities were such that by 1975 a total of 30 percent of total public expenditure, which constitutes about 15 percent of GDP spent through local government in the UK. In 1986, even after many 'cuts' local authorities spent approximately 40 billion pounds and employed nearly three million people (Table No. 1.1 and Stocker 1988: 5-6). These enormous expenditures and employment figures are the manifestation of the capacity and strength of local government in Britain, In contrast, the share of public expenditure rural local government in Bangladesh has been constantly maintained at the level of less than two percent of the total for five years (1975-1980), which in per capita real expenditure terms amounts to Tk. 3 (three) for the last ten years from 1972 (Alm 1984: 211, Asaduzzaman 1985 and Roy 1984 : 8-9). It did not improve in 2010, still LGIs have been contended with less than 2 % of the public expenditure. It may sound ridiculous and naive to compare the experience of Britain and Bangladesh because of their very different economic and political situations, but there are some common historical contexts which provide some comparable situations for understanding the weak position of the latter country. Much of the mechanisms of modern British LG were evolved in the 1880s. In India (of which contemporary Bangladesh had been an integral part), the 1880s also saw the dawn of modern local government. But evidence has proved that it was a 'false dawn' for India (Tinker 1968: 42) because, ultimately, the colonial state used local government merely as one of the instruments for the administration of colonial exploitation.

The present emaciated and feeble local government structure in Bangladesh owes much to its crippling childhood under the colonial power. Countries formerly ruled by any of the colonial powers (such as the Spanish, Portuguese, French. English or Dutch) share the common characteristics of 'incapacity' and 'underdevelopment' in local government. All colonial powers followed a set pattern in establishing local administration to reach the more remote inaccessible areas of the countryside through a generalist administrator. The English did not establish their own domestic tradition of local government in their colonies. They preferred the French 'prefectural system' for India where generalist District Magistrates and Collectors became the ultimate authority. The experiment was later replicated in other countries of

Anglophone Africa (Alderfer 1964). In India, LG reform also came at the wrong time. The belated LG reforms coincided, or rather collided, with the anti-colonial nationalist movements which destroyed much of the legitimacy of the system in the beginning and created a dilemma for the native nationalist elements, namely the choice between a complete and abrupt decolonisation on the one hand, and a staged and slow process of withdrawal on the other. As a result, the nationalist elites accepted the LGIs half-heartedly on the basis that they offered a safe vehicle from which to launch the fight for home rule. They did not take them as viable institutions to promote democracy and development in general (Alderfer 1964: 72 and Subramanium 1980: 1964). In the post-colonial era, heavy emphasis was put by new national elites on 'nation building' and 'national integration', though in India the *'Panchayati* Raj" still carried some populist rhetoric regarding the virtues of a *Gandhian-style Villagisation.* The post-colonial situation did not favour LGs in many countries where violence (state and civil) and military takeovers accompanied the remaining stages of decolonisation. The LGs and representative institutions were the first casualties of any political crackdown, whether as a victim or as an unpopular instrument of state suppression and repression. Some military governments in French speaking countries even tended to take a 'Gaullist approach', i.e. using local government as a method of enlisting free or cheap labour for public works (Bryant and White 1982: 260). Many Third World autocratic regimes used LGs as the organisational unit of their political parties. These negative interventions of colonial and post-colonial regimes in many developing countries destroyed the traditional autonomy enjoyed by these institutions and at the same time alienated the organisation from the mass of the population. On the other front, there has been a massive growth of government agencies and parastatals over the last four decades. The dominant tendency of 'projectisation' of development assistance in the Third World promoted the idea of single-purpose specialised agencies for "implementing" specific projects designed by donors. In most of the cases these types of projects by-pass the existing local institutions (Bryant and White 1980: 261). Nowadays the proliferation of these outside agencies has led to the outnumbering and overpowering of the LGIs in each locality. Most of the supposed role and functions of LG are performed by bureaucratically organised central government agencies. The national elites favour the growth of the state sector because it permits aspiring petty bourgeois elements who are politically volatile (and therefore risky) to be recruited and rewarded by the ruling elites via the creation of the state sector jobs (Kasfir,1983: 39).

Table: 1.1 : Local Government spending in the United Kingdom 1950-85.

Yea r	Local government expenditure as % of GDP	Local government expenditure as % total public expenditure
1950	9.9	1.6.7
1960	9.9	23.3
1965	13.4	30.6
1970	14.9	31.5
1975	17.6	29.5
1980	14.7	25.3
1985	13.7	22.9

Source: Duncan and Goodwin (1988) p. 99.

In spite of the generally frustrating situation regarding Third World LG performance, some of the Indian states have shown moderate successes where positive and progressive steps have come from regional states and regional political parties. It took long and careful nurturing over thirty to forty years to attain the necessary maturity to overcome the structural limitations. In the 1980s local government in many states of India [West Bengal, Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra) sloughed off their previously weak role by ensuring effective participation of the majority of the people (Blair 1983 and Westergaard 1986), The politicisation of local government and local issues is one of the means that has empowered poor villagers to reverse the dominance of larger landholders and upper caste members. The present level of politicisation was not envisaged by the original architects of *'Panchayati Raj'* such as Gandhi, Nehru and S.K. Dey (Ghose 1988b). Numerous middle peasants, members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and people from other backward communities began to win seats in all the three levels of local panchayets (village, block and district). More and more peasants, rural poor, share croppers, marginal farmers and landless labours began to get involved in political activities. In West Bengal the proportion of the share of votes by Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the left front in general and particularly the number of seats won by those representing backward communities, castes and tribes registering a constant rise in the last three Panchayet elections from 1977, 1983 and 1988 respectively (Lieten 1988).The situation in 2009 has changed substantially; the CPI and alliance clearly loosing grounds in the panchayets and the municipalities. It also manifests the relative autonomy and political strengths of LGIs and grassroots level masses (Frontline, June 2009) .

Breaking new ground in India has not always been a smooth process however. There was resistance from upper caste gentry, non cooperation from the bureaucracy, and negative manipulation from central government, In Maharashtra, the central government delayed the local election of 1977 by two years and that of 1984 by one year for fear of defeat (for a detailed account, see Jadav 1988). In spite of all these adverse circumstances, because of the changes in the nature of the regional states, the system of local government began to play a positive role in stimulating greater social changes. The above change in the position of local government has not yet solved all the problems and how far-reaching has been the impact of these social change-remains debatable. At the same time it cannot be denied that a new prosperity and awareness has come in many parts of the countryside: aggregate grain production has increased, minimum wage issues have been raised successfully, employment guarantee schemes have been gaining popularity and 1.5 million landless have received land in West Bengal (Blair 1983 and Ghose 1988a). In short, a promising beginning has been made which did not seem possible during the early years of the *'Panchayeti Raj'* in the 1950s and even in the 1960s (Blair 1983). The positive direction of changes in the role of local government was the result of the changed conditions of class alliance and the nature of regional states. In West Bengal and Kerala, the Left Front government was instrumental in transforming the local and regional level states to favour the exploited classes of peasants, workers and lower sections of the middle classes.

Potential for Developing Effective Local Government for Bangladesh

The social formation, class structure and power relations in Bangladesh in many respects seem more favourable than in many of the Indian states in promoting the objective conditions of participatory local institutions. Bangladesh is a unilingual country, having virtually no rigid caste system; moreover, the nationalist movement, war of liberation and other subsequent anti-martial law and pro-democracy popular movements have provided sufficient foundation of raised political awareness among the greater mass.

Bangladeshi rural and urban both the societies are undergoing changes in many respects which are not yet adequately documented.

First, the trend in land concentration shows a decline in the number of land holdings in the holding category of 5-12 acres which is among the highest two categories. The holdings above 12.5 acres fell from 3.5 percent of the total in 1960 to 2.6 percent in 1968 and further down to 1.2 percent in 1977 (GOB 1977, quoted in Wood. 1981). The reasons are many, some of (.them may be as follows : the factor of high population growth, the Muslim Law of Inheritance (resulting in the fragmentation of holdings), the comparative profitability of investment in the non-agricultural sector, and the constant threat of land reform prevent the rich from extending their landownership beyond a given threshold. Second, changes are also visible in the rural power structure. Traditional rural leaders are relinquishing their previous role in rural institutions such as cooperatives, LG and from *'Salish'* and *'Samaj'* (method of dispute settlement). New social forces are rapidly replacing them who are characteristically more mobile and dynamic, though their 'class position' still needs to be investigated (Arn 1986). Cities and towns are growing with an accelerated phase. The economic growth is steady the generation of industry and services are attracting rural worker in a greater numbers. They are creating a new contour for efficient urban governance through a new urban LGI system. Considering these circumstances, Bangladesh possesses the potential to develop viable LG to enable a 'new social order' to be forged in favour of the poor , the oppressed and also for new productive socio-political forces provided that a radical transformation of the state at the central and local levels could bring about a change in the subjective conditions for social progress.

Decentralisation and people's participation at the organisational level of LG has occupied an eminent position in the political agenda of the Bangladesh state for more than five decades (1960-2010). Apart from the attempts made in the post-colonial phases, it has had a statutory LG structure since the mid nineteenth century. In Spite of a long historical tradition, the institution still maintains an antediluvian and puppet like existence administered through remote control mechanisms by a central state, having no basis in the productive or political forces at the grassroots level.

In exploring the potential for viable LGIs as engines of progressive social change in favour of the mass of citizen, the study attempts to analyse the nature of the contemporary state and its class character, and the populist programmes of ostensible decentralisation, people's participation, and development of the institutions of local governance which central governing class hold and behold.

Core Issues of the Study

Concentrating mainly on the political economy of LG under the current policies and programmes of reform, the theoretical focus of the present study will be on the nature of the state and the role of different classes at both central and local levels, which will be based on the following hypotheses:

1. LG in Bangladesh has a hundred years of history' behind it; especially in the last five decades, many reforms/ reorganisations have been initiated to strengthen its role and functions. In spite of all these efforts it has remained a very weak and ineffective social and political organisation in dispensing goods and services to the intended beneficiaries. The institution has lost the traditional role it used to play in the formerly feudal and semi-feudal social relations while it has not been able to assume a new role in the changed capitalist social relations by integrating the local productive forces within its folds.

2. The central state in Bangladesh is founded on a very weak and fragile class base due to the absence of a single dominant class in society. As a result, hegemony is in fact exercised through a loose coalition of several fractions of the nascent bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie, however, this coalition is embroiled in perpetual crisis, each fraction seeking to safeguard its own interests. The coalition is very often threatened by its own internal strife and lack of wider legitimacy. In this situation, local government is used as an instrument to revitalise the weak coalition, cement new social relations and overcome the legitimacy crises of the bourgeoisie.

3. Decentralisation and people's participation initiatives are constantly used as mechanisms to ease the crisis of capitalist reproduction and legitimation. These attempts do not aim at achieving any authentic participation and empowerment of the impoverished masses of peasants and workers. Genuine popular empowerment and participation may prejudice the already weak hegemony of which the alliance disposes. Due to strategic considerations, all reforms in the name of decentralisation are undertaken with a view to forming vertical class alliances through co-option and clientalist recruitment in an attempt to manage the crisis faced by the ruling classes.

In view of the above hypotheses, this study will focus on the analysis of the background features and impact of the reforms initiated in 1982 under the banner of decentralisation at two institutional levels (sub-district and union). More specifically the study will seek:

i. to understand the causes of the inherent weakness, underdevelopment of LG and its incapacity to become an effective decentralised institution;

ii. to analyse the nexus between state and dominant classes in perpetuating this weakness; and

iii. to explore the potential ways to make local government an appropriate institution for bringing progressive social change through the participation of the general masses.

Achieving the above objectives would involve answering the following questions:

i. Does the reform help the hitherto dependent rural local government apparatus to reconstitute itself as a real and autonomous institution or does it simply reproduce the same old dependency relationship between central and local government?

ii. Does it bring about changes in the class configuration and power relations within local government, and does it have implications for the formation of a hegemonic coalition to manage the state at both local and central levels?

iii. How much relative autonomy does the local government'/local state enjoy in its relations with the central state compared to that of the dominant classes?

iv. What type of social relationship are the local government institutions promoting in their productive activities?

v. What are the natures and specific forms of people's participation as envisaged in the reform package, particularly as regards the choice of leadership and the exercise of the right of universal franchise?

vi. Exactly what do public services and developmental projects consist of, and who receives what (central elites, local elites, bureaucracy and common people) out of these service provisions and projects?

vii. What roles do the national political parties play in rural local government?

viii. In which direction is rural politicisation progressing? Does this trend favour the underprivileged masses or does it create new avenues' of dominance for the propertied over politicised lumpen classes?

ix. What potential does the present reform hold for the future of the poor and the under-privileged?

Chapter outline

The first chapter discusses the limitations of Bangladeshi local government and its structural vulnerability, as well as the inadequacy of the approaches adopted in recent studies to address the appropriate issues.

The second chapter deals with the general theoretical dimensions of decentralisation from its institutional as well as structural perspectives. The chapter provides a new theoretical framework of decentralisation, summarising the existing paradigms under three distinct analytical headings: decentralisation and democracy, decentralisation and development and decentralisation and the state.

Chapter three concentrates on the implications of the theory of the local state under peripheral social systems and the corresponding nature of the state interwoven in the particular class-capital-crisis management nexus. As far as the decentralisation and local state is concerned, the experience of peripheral societies involves two separate set of agenda; one is based on ostensive public policy rhetoric, and the other pursues the state's hidden real agenda of capitalist accumulation, class domination, legitimation and crisis management. In so doing, instead of achieving the ostensible objectives of decentralisation such as debureucratisation, democratisation, destatisation, in fact; recentralisation, rebureaucratisation, disenfranchisement and restatisation take place.

Chapter four reviews the local government reforms in Bangladesh from a historical perspective to support the general analysis suggested in chapter 3 in which (in Bangladesh) *a military-civil bureaucratic oligarchy* used local government on behalf of the dominant coalition in order to legitimise bourgeois class rule under military dominance.

Chapter five provides the background and the detailed outline of the local government reforms initiated by ex-president Ershad's military regime in Bangladesh in 1982. On the basis of which, the analysis in the subsequent chapters is presented.

Chapter six provides a description of the methodology followed in collecting field level data for empirical analysis.

Chapter seven divides the total eight year period of the latest military regime (1982-1990) into two distinct phases, namely the pre-civilianisation era (1982-1986) and post-civilianisation era (1986-1990). It attempts to substantiate the historical trend and continuity outlined in chapter 4, emphasizing the fact the local government institutions have basically been used in the process of civilianisation and legitimisation of military rule via the introduction of a seemingly democratic model.

Chapter eight examines the dilemma of the positivist theoretical notions of decentralisation (which assume deregulation, destatisation and debureaucratisation will result) by reviewing the basic legal framework and the way in which decentralisation was implemented. The chapter concludes that the process instead ended in reregulation, restatisation and rebureaucratisation.

Chapter nine, in line with the previous chapter, examines the relationship of local democracy and decentralisation by presenting detailed case studies of three different local elections which had been characterised by the widespread subversion of democracy, through violent exclusion and disenfranchisement of the masses.

Chapter ten mainly presents the process of private accumulation through the local state by examining the impact of state-induced development programmes and social services, as well as the income and expenditure patterns of the local state in Bangladesh. The analysis shows that the local! Partners of the dominant coalition in the national *'power bloc'* are the principal beneficiaries of all those efforts and that the central state fosters a subordinate allied class through a patron-client network, using the institutions of the local slate.

Chapter eleven focuses on the nature of the dominant class relations of the central and local state, starting from the process of their formation, through their quest for power, and their continuous attempts to maintain the class alliances corresponding to accumulation.

Lastly, and in conclusion, the study recommends that greater attention be devoted (both by analysts and activists) to the mobilisation of the hitherto neglected masses of peasants, workers and middle class in order to stimulate citizen level demands for authentic decentralisation, without which all attempts at institutional reform will be futile.

Notes:

1. Among four of the longest serving regimes in former East Pakistan and Bangladesh three of them (Ayub. Zia and Erashad) came to power by direct military take over, later their regimes were civilianised by massive use of oppressive and manipulative state machinery. The only civilian regime came to power after 1971was very short lived.

2. Resorted to violence too by using both oppressive state apparatus as well as militant party cadres specially in preventing opposition from constitutional means of politics (Lifsultz 1979).

2. For detail see Blair (1985).

3. Islam (1988: chapter 2) in which Pakistani regime in Bangladesh is described as semi-colonial ruler and the mode of production 'in Bangladesh as semi-feudal (Chowdhury 1978).

4. Growth of food production and population is in disproportion. The total production of main staple cereal rice stagnated between I6 to 18 million tons over 20 years where population has almost been doubled from 70 to 112 million from 1979-1991) (Khan & Hossain 1990).

5. Because education, health and other modern facilities of daily necessities such as electrification, gas connection, housing and sanitation all are concentrated in the urban areas. Rural areas are virtually deprived of those social services (Ahmed 1988).

6. Ahmed (1980), Ali et al [1985], Hoque (1986) . Hye (1985). Faijullah (1988) etc. mainly represent the view of the elite civil service of Bangladesh which is closer to the international dimensions of official discourse suggested by Slater [1989].

7. Khan (1985. 1986 & 1987) Hoque (1986 & 1989) and most of the academics specially from the universities while opposing the bureaucratisation take a view which is close to the 'new right view' in the UK but leave the discussion in between 'bureaucratic reorientation' and vague 'political commitment' of the regimes without emphasising grassroots level political mobilisation,

8. Rahman (1980 & 1986) and Jahangir (1979 & 1989) represent the radical left's view on local government.

9. Wood (1980a and 1980), Blair (1985. 1987 and 1989) and Westergaard (1985) mostly suggest the strengthening of NGOs.

10. See Feslor (1965).

11. Tinker (1968) and Duncan and Goodwin (1981).

Chapter Two

Decentralisation and Local Government: Conceptual Dimensions

The study addresses the issues which have themselves been addressed in the past from multiple and diverse conceptual perspectives ranging from the populist-reformist domain of decentralisation-participation to the Marxist terrain of state, class and political economy. As the study will finally concentrate on the aspect of the political economy[1] multiple theoretical discourses directed at local governance and development will best serve the aim of attaining definitive and clear results, rather than confining the analysis within a closed 'framework' or 'paradigm'. The term 'dimension' is a deliberate substitute for that of 'framework' or 'paradigm', since the purpose of this exploration of new theoretical discourses is to understand a specific empirical situation i.e. that of the state at central and local levels in Bangladesh.

Concepts like decentralisation, participation, state, class, and LG (Local state) have acquired, over the last two decades, their own specific theoretical implications. In this study interrelationships of these concepts will be explored and they will be applied as both dependent and independent variables. For example, where the political economy of LG is the independent variable, the remaining conceptual tools will become dependent in relation to it; similarly, LG will become a dependent variable when the nexus of state, class and decentralisation is explored.

In this chapter, theoretical dimensions of decentralisation and LG will be discussed first. In the next chapter, further exploration, will be made of the theories of state and class in their central and spatial locations and along with their relationship to general capitalist accumulation and subsequent crisis under peripheral social formations. That will lead to an examination of theory of decentralisation and its association with the theories of the state and to an identification of appropriate variables for empirical observations in the Bangladeshi society.

1. Decentralisation: Meaning, Types and Levels form Institutional Perspective

Decentralisation is a seemingly simple term ostensibly carrying a correspondingly simplistic meaning: 'the transfer of authority from a higher level of government to lower levels' (Conyers 1986b). Even within this simplistic formulation, decentralisation holds rich conceptual and empirical implications simultaneously designating static fact and dynamic process that from pure 'ideal type' system to 'moderate incremental change' (Fesler, 1965:536) and also to 'revolutionary mobilisation'. The appeal of decentralisation has become so universal that the values of it have been embraced by the 'left (both with reformist and revolutionary labels), 'liberals' and even the 'radicals or the 'new rights (Furniss 1974 and Smith 1980:137). In political theory it competes with the theory of democracy (Smith 1980) and also 'provides a convenient peg' on which most of the Ideas about interventions in the name of 'development' are hung (Marsden 1986:141). Similarly, anti-interventionists also hang their weapons of deregulation, privatisation and market forces on the same peg. The cross-national appeal of decentralisation reached its climax in the decade of the 1980s, extending to both the industrialised countries of the West and the developing and the least developed countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. As a result of varied uses and applications, the form, content, objectives and impact have become more complex and often contradictory in theoretical precision (Conyers I986b),

The core epistemological and indeed ontological problems were addressed from different traditional branches of the social sciences as well as from interdisciplinary perspectives of politics and administration. Fesler (1965) summarised them initially in terms of three key variables, namely linguistic, mensural and differential deficiencies.

The problem of language in the study of decentralisation has also been recognised by many others in line with Fesler (Riggs 1964; Apthorpe and Conyers 1982 and Uphoff 1985). Decentralisation in its abstract form merits consideration as a good antidote in principle to the adverse effects of centralisation. A language of dichotomy plays a central role: the concept of decentralisation and centralisation are to be found at the polar extremes of a value laden continuum of ends and means. Uphoff (1985:54) suggests that this confusion of language has been solved to some extent for the first time by Fesler (1962) who differentiated the concept by introducing two additional terms : of deconcentration and devolution, into the literature, a device which did

not however satisfy other scholars like Riggs, who brought the term 'derogation' (1964:341) in between the two. Conyers (1986) argues that the definitional problem regarding the concept of decentralisation is now passed. However, it should be noted that this aspect of debate finally solved many of the linguistic confusions that had plagued development studies and gave new authority and relevance to development administration in the 1980s.

Two other problems identified by Fesler (1965), the problems of measurement and jurisdiction, were closely related with the first deficiency- the clarity of language. Smith (1980) suggested as many as ten variables to solve the problems of measurement in decentralisation. Mawhood (1983:2-9) attempted to simplify the language by making decentralisation and local government synonymous and also suggested a model which proves equal to the task of measurement and expressing clear meaning in both functional and' territorial terms.

Decentralisation is not now seen as an end result in itself. A consensus view on the definition of decentralisation is summarised in the following text.

> "...decentralisation must be seen as a process not a condition (so it is) futile in policy terms, to compare states by the extent of decentralisation, , or to rank them on a (single) continuum. What is at issue is a question of dimensionality. Hence we emphasize the verbs -to decentralise, or to make decentralising moves, or to introduce decentralising moves, or to introduce decentralising policies, and not an adjectives such as decentralised state or even a decentralised delivery system." (Cohen et al 1981:5)

So decentralisation is regarded as a process rather than an end state or a particular system of government. In the traditional disciplines of political science and public administration it is no longer regarded as a dichotomy or dilemma, but as a continuum with no finite poles or more accurately as a series of continuums.

Though the above clarifications solve the initial definitional complexities and ambiguities within the parameters of Public Administration, new problems are arising with the changing times when new meanings and dimensions are attributed, new objectives are set and new institutional arrangements are made to harness the potentials of decentralistion, especially as major activity of the state in the field of development. Discussions on the forms of decentralisation is but one of the attempts to systematise the epistemological contributions to the issues of decentralisation in recent years within the same institutional approach or framework.

Types and Forms of Decentralisation

Scholars interested in decentralisation, as an institutional and administrative process, have shown considerable interest in distinguishing one type of decentralisation from another, because as 'blanket' term it may mean anything and everything. We need to discuss some of the representative forms and types in order to reach an operational version of the concept.

After the problem of the centralisation- decentralisation dichotomy was resolved, the concept confronted a new phase of the 'dimensional' controversy, of decentralisation centered upon the twin concept of territorial and functional dimensions (Hilhorst 1981). The territorial aspect includes the creation of various sub-national governmental administrative and political structures such as counties and districts in England and Wales, departments and communes in France and states and provinces in federal systems together with other sub-state levels. This process amounts to a uni-dimensional, top-down vertical slicing of the whole national territory into governable units,

The functional aspect is more far-reaching and comprehensive. Decentralisation in the functional sense demands separate national and sub-national agencies for specialised functions and further dispersal of power and authority inside and outside the agencies, rather than the integration of functions within a territorial multipurpose organisation. In modern times, the creation of various parastatal agencies, specialised institutions and in many respects, private and voluntary organisations, is regarded as the functional dimension of decentralisation.

As time passes the parameters of territorial and functional dimensions are less and less clearly demarcated and become mutually inclusive and, as a result predictable new parameters and typologies are emerging from the works of scholars. Author like Mawhood (1983:1-2) restricted his typology to only two:deconcentration and decentralisation. By deconcentration he refers to a process in which, within centrally directed hierarchy of administration, (some) power is transferred to various territorial and functional locations; however, any power enjoyed by the lower rungs of the hierarchy is that which is transferred only or the performance of specific tasks assigned by the central authority. One of the objectives of this type of transfer of authority according to Mawhood is to ease 'bureaucratic constipation' or congestion. Decentralisation on the other hand, is defined as authority conferred by legislation on a local body by virtue of its local character, with the assumption that political power and authority are enjoyed locally. Authorities like Fesler (1965) and Maddick (1962)

used the term 'devolution' instead of decentralisation, unlike Mawhood, to describe the political category of power transfer by legislative means. Among the contributors on the forms of decentralisation, Cheema and Rondinelli (1983) Rondinelli and Nellis (1986) and Uphoff (1985) came up with a systematic model with four distinct dimensions, adding 'privatisation' to the original three classical dimensions of public administration classification. The form suggested by Cheema and Rondinelli (1983) is accepted by many as an appropriate theoretical basis for discussing decentralisation. The four forms are:

> Deconcentration
> Devolution
> Delegation and
> Privatisation

Each form and type is different from the others measured in terms of nature, extent and degree of the transfer of power that has taken place. The first two of the categories are the oldest of the forms applicable to both territorial and functional aspects with qualitatively different conditions. The last two are only applicable in functional terms. Although the discussion of forms becomes irrelevant when discussing decentralisation from the political economy perspective of a particular country, however, some discussion is presented here in order to give an overview of the traditional public administration model of decentralisation.

Deconcentration

Deconcentration has been the most frequently used form of decentralisation adopted by many of the African and Asian countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Pakistan, The Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand in the past decades (Hyden 1983; Rondinelli and Nellis 1986). This form involves the redistribution of administrative responsibilities within the agencies of central government at the sub-national and local level. Often, it is regarded as the 'shifting of workload' form headquarters to field staff without transferring final discretion. The field unit or local administration which acts as a central government's agent at regional, district, and sub-district level, enjoys and exercises a position of conferred authority under this arrangement. Usually, it implies the transfer of less significant powers to the local arms of the central government by administrative means rather than by a legal arrangement (Conyers 1987).

Devolution

Devolution creates or strengthens sub-national units of governments outside the direct control of central government, by legal means (Rondinelli and Nellis 1986). Conyers (1987) defined devolution as the transfer of significant power, including law making and revenue rising, to the locally elected bodies. Cheema and Rondinelli (1983) identified five fundamental characteristics in explaining the purest form of devolution. <u>First</u>, powers are transferred to autonomous units governed independently and separately without the direct control of central government. <u>Second</u>, the units maintain control over a recognised geographical area. <u>Third</u>, the units enjoy corporate status and power to secure their own resources to perform their functions. Fourth, devolution implies the need to develop local government institutions. Fifth, it is an arrangement of reciprocal, mutually beneficial and coordinative relationships between central and local government.

Delegation

Delegation is considered to be a form of decentralisation which implies the transfer or creation of 'load authority' to plan and implement decisions concerning specific activities-or a variety of activities -within spatial boundaries to an organisation that is technically and administratively capable of carrying them out without direct supervision by a higher administrative unit (Cheema and Rondinelli 1983). Compared to deconcentration, 'delegation' involves transfer of power, although ultimate power remains with the central authority. For example, many developing countries utilise this practice in the creation of boards, authorities, corporations or any other separate agencies for carrying out specific functions like water supply, power generation and distribution, agricultural development, rural development and road transport. Therefore, delegation of authority to semi-autonomous agencies outside the normal ministerial structure is considered decentralisation in the form of delegation.

Privatisation

In many countries, the transfer of some of the planning and administrative responsibilities of public function from government to private or voluntary agencies facilitated the process of decentralisation. When 'debureaucratisation' considered as one of the implicit objectives of decentralisation, more and more things are allowed to happen by

spontaneous social and political process through the concept of decentralisation. Parallel organisations such as trade associations, professional or ecclesiastical organisations, political parties, cooperatives and other voluntary agencies, shoulder responsibilities which are normally, performed by government alone. In some countries, like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, non-government organisations (NGOs) play a significant role in rural - development. In many other countries, 'self-management' arrangements allow workers to manage enterprises without a central control. At this time, a privatisation element in a decentralisation package is important to some of the donors and western academics. The policy helps capitalist penetration by breaking state monopoly and protectionism in the emerging states. The proponents of decentralistion call more insistently for less and less state intervention in the name of averting bureaucratisation and promoting the development of the market forces for *fair competition*.

Uphoff (1985) considers the transfer of authority to local government to be a traditional mode of decentralisation, but added three further dimensions in the category of 'less conventional mode of devolution', which is in a real sense closer to privatisation than to devolution. From the late seventies and the early 1980s these new dimensions of the non-conventional mode quickly gained ground among international agencies of various types. Uphoff's three dimensional non-conventional mode of devolution consists of intermediation, philanthropisation, and marketisation.

Intermediation: This can result from a variety of organisations belonging not directly to the governmental structure, but through the local administration or local government, for example, the experiences of water user's association in collaboration with the irrigation department; health committees in rural areas of various Third World countries with health departments, race relations committees, women's action groups, youth action groups, tenants' associations working with local government in Britain may be cited.

Philanthropisation: This is a process by which state allows private voluntary organisations of national, local and international origin (such as BRAC, Proshika, OXFAM, CARE, CONCERN), Self-help membership organisations (mother's clubs, tenant's union etc.) and service organisations like the Red Cross, Red Crescent, Rotary Club and Lions Club to work directly and channel their own resources to perform tasks which the state might otherwise perform.

Marketisation: This may to some extent be considered as a retreat of the state from the organisation and management of social services

and other developmental activities and leaving those functions to the mercy of market forces and price mechanisms that cumulatively reflect local demands. This is regarded as an extreme form of decentralisation advocated by the 'radical right' group in Britain to some extent reflected in the Thatcher government's policy of introducing community charge, privatisation plan for national health services, and 'opt out' schemes for schools from local authority control.

This above discussion on the forms of decentralisation has focused mainly on four general criteria, (l) the level of decentralisation, (2) the powers and functions to be decentralised, (3) to whom to be decentralised, and (4) how those powers are to be decentralised. The whole discussion on the forms of decentralisation could be presented in the following matrix:

Figure 2.1 Decentralisation from its organisational dimensions

Criteria/ Forms	Levels	Functions	Whom	How
Deconcentration	National to Sub-national	1. Administrative 2. Developmental	Field Officials	Executive order
Devolution	National to Sub-national	1. Developmental 2. Revenue raising 3. Service delivery 4. political	1. Local bodies 2. Elected representatives	Act/ Ordinance
Delegation	Within old Govt. Agency or newly created agency	1. Administrative 2. Technical 3. Promotional	1. Local bodies 2. Spatial authority 3. Field Agency	Ordinance/Act. Executive order
Privatisation and marketisation	Power to groups and Undefined units & levels	1. Production 2. Distribution 3. Service delivery 4. promotional 5- Developmental	l. NGO 2. Voluntary Association 3. Consumer	Grant/Aid and other incentives

Levels of decentralisation: Any meaningful discussion of decentralisation requires an investigation on the question of levels at which decentralisation could be located. This is because decentralisation, irrespective of types and forms, needs to be location specific in order to make interactive contact with the target population. The concept alone has no validity in an organisational vacuum and hence many institutions are created to give the process an operational

structure. This structure embodies various levels, which led Uphoff (1985) to identify ten analytically distinct levels at which both decentralisation and centralisation may have an impact emanate. These levels range from the global to the individual at the bottom (p.45), and consist of the following:

1. International level (donor governments & agencies)
2. National level (central government and its agencies).
3. Regional level (state in India, provinces in Indonesia and divisions in Bangladesh)
4. District level (district administration, district council etc.)
5. Sub-district level (upazila in Bangladesh, block in India and tehsils in Pakistan)
6. Locality level (Union Parishad in Bangladesh, Village Panchayet in India or the collectivity of a community often centered around a market town)
7. Community level (natural cluster of houses of natural village in Bangladesh which may be called para/somaj).
8. Group level (neighbourhood, economic enterprise, occupational or caste group)
9. Household level (farm, non-farm, poor or rich)
10. Individual level (men, women, youth &old).

Though Uphoff's classification and identification of levels are not exhaustive, these are merely some of the devices of technical organisational arrangements. In our discussion {in chapter 3) these levels will be examined in terms of the class structure of society instead of locating them superficially according to institutional criteria.

Conventionally, discussions on decentralisation have followed the four-fold typology with various levels of national and sub-national governmental structure as a basic framework. Attempts to compensate for the inadequacies of this framework were made by introducing the non-conventional mode. However it is not yet proven by any empirical experiences that privatisation and marketisation produce any better results in achieving the ostensible objective of decentralisation such as participation, debureaucratisation, empowerment, relevant development and maximisation of the benefit of social services.

The other serious limitation of this framework is that it isolates itself from the world of human interaction in society in which all administrative and developmental efforts are always political in nature. The proponents of this framework unrealistically consider decentralisation only as technical and institutional initiatives. As the study of decentralisation has, by this time, become inter-disciplinary

and has absorbed new ideological and political connotations derived from different types of social changes, new approaches are also evolving in this field of study. For examples `fiscal decentralisation' is one of the concepts gets special attention side by side with administrative decentralisation in contemporary practices.

Approaches to the Study of Decentralisation

There exists confusion and complexity in the articulation of the study of the process of decentralisation. The early American theorist Fesler (1965) suggested four approaches to the study of decentralisation namely, (1) the doctrinal, (2) political, (3) administrative and (4) dual-role approaches. Smith (1985) representing the British contributions and also addressing the issue from his wide acquaintance with the third world experiences, presented the theoretical discourses broadly from three perspectives (1985:19-45) : (1) the liberal, (2) the economic and (3) the Marxist traditions. Hambleton and Hogget (1984) summarised the decentralisation debate in the British Isles in terms of three overlapping and closely related areas of discussion as (1) ideological attempts, (2) multiple and conflicting aims and (3) wide variety of means. Jennifer Dale (1987) divided the ideological trends in the contemporary British decentralist movement into three categories, (1) the pragmatist, (2) the populist and (3) local socialist.

In both of the last two categorisations (Hambleton and Hogget 1984 and Dale 1987) the authors highlighted various tensions within the British decentralisation movement. The .local government leaders, professionals and other providers of local services expressing their concerns as reaction to the constituting central government intervention and resource cut which is a threat to their autonomy and maintenance of the quantity and quality of services. The other tensions are mainly rooted within the ideological sphere of decentralisation which include the contradiction within the 'labour movement' between the traditional centralist labour leadership and the local socialists at the one end and also with the community activists (such as Peter Hain and his followers) who believe in 'community value' and grassroots perspective of democracy on the other.

Diana Conyers (1983, 1984 and 1986) dealt with the issue from a uniquely third world perspective and observed that the introduction of various reforms in the name of decentralisation is essentially 'developmentalist' in nature; in other words the explicit objectives of decentralisation by third world governments are focused on the single objective of attaining development defined in the perspective of

improving the quality of life or poverty reduction. However, because of other implicit objectives, additional political and administrative aims may be included on the agenda, but still the major stated policy option remains 'development'. Scholars like Cheema and Rondinelli (1983), Maddick (1962), Hicks (1961), Hyden (1983) and numerous publications from United Nations agencies continue to emphasise the single notion of development, albeit from various different angles and using different definitions.

This official and 'agency' view has been strongly contested by many writers (e.g. Slater. 1990 and Smith, 1985), among whom Smith (1985) considers decentralisation to be essentially a political phenomenon (p.201) and therefore sees its political dimension and implication as a more appropriate conceptual framework for an exploration of the nature of conflict within the state which sets the objectives, means and the agenda of decentralisation.

However, it is only after the contributions of O'Connor (1973), Offe (1973), Castells (1975. 1977 and 1978), Cockburn (1977), Saunders (1979), Cawson (1978), Cawson and Saunders (1983) that the approach of studying decentralisation achieved a proper perspective. They did not bring the political dynamics only into their interpretation as a reified phenomenon, but as a corollary to the basic social system of production, distribution and forces behind it. Discussing politics without discussing production relations, the role of different classes and their relationships with the state, provides only a partial and confused analysis. As a result, the popularity of approaches of using Marxian theoretical tools to the study of decentralisation and local government received a boost in the seventies and eighties. However, this approach in the context of third world societies is still in its initial stages except for the ground works of such writers as Shivji (1978), Samoff (1979) and Rakodi (1986 and 1988).

For the purposes of this study, and before attempting to develop an appropriate approach to apply in the specific situation of Bangladesh, it is desirable to summarise briefly the dominant currents in the existing approaches, to gain a better understanding of their respective deficiencies. For the convenience of presentation all writers who have so far contributed to the study of decentralisation are grouped together under three broad categories corresponding generally to the various approaches and trends identified from their writings and included in each group. The three groups are referred to by the broadly classified relational terms of (1) decentralisation and democracy, (2} decentralisation and development and (3) decentralisation and the state. It may have been advantageous to subsume certain models under a

fourth heading, namely decentralisation and Marxist views of political economy. However, it was decided to present Marxist and non-Marxist views under the common heading of the state and various Marxian theories of *local state* in the capitalist society are added later. Since many of the contributions did not categorically deal with decentralisation as such, relevant studies of local government are also included where they bear on the question of decentralisation. In many of the theoretical discussions, decentralisation, local government and the local state are used interchangeably.

A summary of the categories of different main theoretical perspectives, their dimensions, objectives and methods of operation are provided in the matrix (Figure 2.2), which will be later elaborated in subsequent part of the chapter.

Decentralisation and Democracy

The coupling of the terms decentralisation and democracy broadly corresponds to what Fesler (1965) called 'the doctrinal approach', Bulpitt referred to as 'traditional orthodoxy' and Smith (1985) termed the 'liberal tradition' of decentralisation and local government. In essence, these three writers, drawing on their different historical approaches, showed that the nineteenth century liberal and orthodox theorists followed the instrumental path to local government in order to achieve democracy at the national level. They believed that only sound democracy at the national level through representative government could provide stable and efficient rule for the whole population. So democracy was regarded by them as an end value and an 'article of faith', it was indeed predefined as a national value rather than as a human or political right at a sub-national level, and decentralisation was a means to achieve those end values by involving local communities. The strongest case for decentralisation was made by the 19th century liberals by focusing attention on community' as the fountain head of democracy. The autonomous community was often idealised in attempts to revive the imaginary 'golden ages' of the past. Fesler termed the tendency as a 'romantic view' of decentralisation with a marked tendency to assume that decentralisation would develop within an ostensibly socially undifferentiated community (p.541). Bulpitt described the same trend as the traditional orthodoxy of territorial democracy (p. 282) which was composed of one major and three minor thesises. The major thesis was that the elected local (traditional) governments are essential for the working of the modern democratic state. This major thesis was demonstrated by way of three

sub-thesises which were the importance of the community in the democratic system, the involvement of community members in running local affairs, and a system of decentralisation as a guaranty of involving the local community. The community used to be considered as having a natural unity, stemming from the economic and social life enjoyed by the people living in a defined territory; and true democracy could only be achieved by allowing full autonomy to the community. Fesler rejects the idea of united organic community by citing historical evidence as well as examples from the contemporary practices of local government in developed countries like Britain and America and developing countries like India (p. 540). Bulpitt also dismissed the view on the ground that community itself is not a homogeneous entity and traditional orthodoxy is ambiguous about the eternal characteristics of the power structure of the community.

Figure 2.2: **Summary of the Theoretical Perspectives and Dimensions of Decentralisation**

Main theoretical perspectives	Different dimensions of the main perspectives	Objectives	Means
Decentralisation and Democracy	1. Old orthodoxy of Territorial Democracy 2. Idealist and Romantic perception of Democracy 3. Liberal tradition of National and Local Democracy 4. Workplace Democracy	1. Promote participation 2. Promote Liberty and equality of community 3. Local Democracy 4. Democracy in real life situation	1. Territorial governmental structure 2. Orientation on community value 3.Cconstitutional authority
Decentralisation and Development	1. Developmental State and Development Administration 2. Populism 3. Empowerment, Awareness and Conscientisationn 4. Dcbureacratisation, Privatisation and Marketisatlon	1 State Intervention 2. Development from below/ popular participation 3. Creating critical mass 4. Minimal state	1. Centralised plan 2. Rural development/NGO/ cooperative/ Villagisation, etc. 3. Group activity/ social activism/ NGO activism 4. Privatisation of state services
Decentralisation and the state	1. Pluralism 2. Elitism 3. Marxism	1, Ensure political representation of all classes, races, creed, profession, sex, caste etc, in the state 2. Visionary state with organised minority	1. Election 2. Personal and Individual network 3. Political consciousness through class struggle/

Main theoretical perspectives	Different dimensions of the main perspectives	Objectives	Means
		3. Direct involvement of all citizens to ensure equitable share in the process of production and consumption	Revolutionary overthrow/ Reformed state / soft state/ Emergence of local state
Dimensions of Decentralisation under Capitalist Societies			
Local State	3a. facilitate capitalist accumulation and reproduction of labour power 3b. Legitimation of bourgeois state and management of the crisis of bourgeois accumulation 3c. Collective consumption 3d. Dual state and Local Socialism	Capitalist Reproduction, Bridge between the market and the state, conflict management through local participation, Minimise social cost of production/ ensure supply of labour, Division of functions between the central and the local slate/Worker's class control on the local state.	Corporatist management, Welfarism, Social investment, Social Consumption and social expenses Action Group movement Arena of class struggle

Smith (1985) derived the same implications of decentralisation in liberal thinking from two distinct perspectives. First, local government and decentralisation is appreciated for its contribution to the good health of national democracy and second, it promotes local democracy by promoting individual liberty and choice on the one hand, and responsive and responsible community government on the other (pp. 19-33). Local government provides adequate political education, leadership training and political stability for sustaining the efficient running of national democracy. So decentralisation is considered doubly effective as much as it clears the path to democracy at both national and local levels.

A close relationship between democracy and decentralisation vis-à-vis local government, traces its conceptual origin in the famous nineteenth century' grand theorists' like John Stuart Mill (1859 and 1861), De Tocqueville (1835), Jeremy Bentham (1977). The nineteenth century legacy was carried through to the middle of the twentieth century by Harold Laski (1931), C.H. Wilson (1948), Finer (1957) and more recently Mackenzie (1961) and many others. Contemporary Fabians, syndicalists and socialists also added some new dimensions, but those influences remained confined to UK applications only.

British liberal thinking on decentralisation and local government, however, was practiced and directly experienced in the British colonies (in a rather distorted form), first in India and later in Anglophone Africa, as a means of preparing the native population for self-rule of giving political education and leadership training (Tinker 1968 and Subramanium 1980).

Mill recommended a decentralised body of local government on the grounds that it is an integral part of stable and sound democracy. It provides political education by offering extra education for political participation both in electing and being elected (Smith, 1985:21) Tocqueville wrote town meetings are to liberty what primary schools are to science (1835: 63). Wilson (1948) reinforced the idea by saying that national democracy entails local democracy as a means of administration (p. 13) and also by providing the-necessary teaching about the risks of using power. Emphasising the training role of local government for political leadership, Bentham said that local government constitutes a nursery for the supreme legislative body (quoted in Smith 1985). Laski commented that to serve three years in a local body would give participants the feel of membership of the national parliament (1931).

The educative benefits of local governments are; however, open to debate, because political education and awareness is a part of wider socialisation processes. These may include general education, participation in class and community organisations like trade unions, neighbourhood associations, political parties, social action groups, wider social movements, etc. The evidence also shows that very few legislators started their political career in local councils: moreover local politics tends to follow the trend and issues of national politics. Election results for local councils in Britain predominates the national issues in question (Stewart 1984; Dunleavy and O'Leary 1987}.

The liberal arguments linking democracy and local government to decentralisation are contested for their many theoretical inconsistencies as well as on the ground of inadequate empirical evidence. Firstly, neither democracy nor local governments as concepts possess any universal and uniform pattern of their own. For example, Mill's own views on the composition of 'representative government' became totally unacceptable when he advocated proportional representation on the basis of property to resist the rule of the majority of non-propertied labourers (Hill 1974: 28). Secondly, the traits of liberty, equality, responsiveness and accountability attributed to local government and local community have yet to be substantiated either in concrete historical experience or empirically. Neither the behaviour of the

chieftain of a traditional tribal community nor the elected local governments in the third world countries conform to those traits in the absolute sense. Many liberal studies indicated that power structures are often oligarchic and conservative in policy attitudes (Bulpitt 1972:287) and largely dominated by those who wield economic power (Fesler, 1965).

As far as community participation is concerned, Almond and Verba (1962) showed from their cross-national participation data that people take less interest in local elections than in national ones. LGIs in many countries, instead of promoting universal suffrage and political education, are used as a method of disenfranchisement and depoliticalisation of the masses. Pakistan's indirect system of elections through Basic Democracy (1960-70) and the Nepalese Panchayet elections are two examples where mass participation and universal franchises were arranged under central control (Jahan 1972 and Borgstrom 1980). In Pakistan the local government served the purposes of a military dictatorship (General Ayub from 1956-1969) and similarly, in Nepal's case, the loyalty of the non-partisan Panchayet was towards an absolute monarchy (King Birendra). In both the cases the conventionally used terms participatory democracy and local government are mere misnomers. L.J. Sharpe (1970) nevertheless defended the values of local government as promoters of liberty, equality and participation.

Democracy is one of the most desirable human values cherished by mankind from the dawn of civilisation, and the struggle for democracy has been relentless throughout that history. It has also long been expected that any decentralised sub-national representative government unit would promote democracy. As a result there was little cause for disagreement with Mill when he claimed that democracy was the only just form of society and representative government was its best practical expression. But regarding the character of representation he said that working class majority would mean class legislation in their own interest and recommended that the franchise principle should be based on property qualification. It is here that his ideals can be seen to be in conflict with his ideology. Since he assumes the bourgeoisie (guided by higher & less material principles) would not legislate in favour of its own class interests. Historically property occupied the core of the liberal political thinking rather than democracy as such. Another nineteenth century protagonist of democracy, Bentham (1894) Considered state, law and other institutions of democratic practices to be required to provide external political guarantee to property relations in the society (Saunders 1979: 141) thereby suggesting subordination of democracy over the interest of property.

Late nineteenth and early twentieth century contributions on local government and democracy especially those influenced by the Fabians and socialists show changes from the positions adopted by liberals. The Webbs (1920) and others of the Fabian school favoured local government, as a movement giving ordinary people much needed expanded social services. They went further to say that 'municipal socialism' would replace private profit from public services and should be trusted to local control with minimum central supervision. Carole Pateman (1970) and A.M. Birch (1959) place emphasis more on 'workplace democracy' and reject the idea of community democracy as the best form of decentralisation. In Britain during the 1980s, some labour party controlled councils like Walsall, Sheffield, Islington, Liverpool and Hackney, have adopted radical policies which shattered not only the conventional mould of local government operations but are also seen as a challenge to the 'centralist faith' in the Labour Party policy and as a new decentralisation' initiative seeking to build democracy from the bottom (Hambleton and Hogett 1984: 8). The younger generation of socialist views the town halls as a fighting authority against Whitehall's domination (Gyibrd 1983] and sometimes see representatives of their own party as exercising precisely that domination. In recent years the West Bengal experience of local government in India" suggests that with the assuming of power by a left government, the transformation of the regional level state produced an unconventional use of the term democracy, whereby the poor majority exercise their rights (Ghose 199Sa). This experience strengthens the view that considering democracy from the view point of a hollow and ritualistic representative form of government without considering the property relation and class composition cannot have any bearing on the real issue of democracy, in that it becomes an ideological facade for the legitimisation of the rule of the economically powerful section of the society. So all decentralisation efforts do not favourably relate to the process of democratisation rather, where class and property interest is valued most, decentralisation merely becomes a process of demobilisation of democratic forces by giving more power and authority to the locally dominant classes.

Decentralisation and Development

The developmentalist approach to decentralisation could loosely be defined as an approach in which decentralisation is seen as a process instrumental to bringing some form of social, economic and political change rather than merely a descriptive term referring to the forms of government (Conyers 1986a : 599) or merely the developmental result

of other policies. Decentralisation has been posited by many authors in terms of highly positivistic overtone of participation democracy, humanism, empowerment, conscientisation, debureaucratisation, responsiveness and many other desirable objectives (Muillard 1987; Conyers 1986a). In many of the developing countries decentralisation is regarded as a necessary condition for development which has been found ideologically indispensable and seen as politically attractive. As a result many third world countries variously present their programmes of institutional changes and reforms under the banner of decentralisation.[2] The international agencies also put forward packages of institutional change for those countries emphasising decentralisation and participation as both means and ends. As a result, we have experienced the explosive emergence of a new generation of literature on development and decentralisation during the last four decades

Dimension of Literature

The theoretical tradition of decentralisation from the developmentalist perspective has progressed in three distinct dimensions (Conyers 1984), namely the temporal, disciplinary and geographical dimensions. In its time span dimension, the develomentalist approach is identified mainly with two periods of time since the Second World War. The first period covers the decade from the 1950s to the early 1960s and the second period from the 1970s and throughout the 1980s. The disciplinary dimension includes a wide range of interdisciplinary contributions over the last four decades. The contributions and writers on public administration, especially local government experts (such as Fesler 1962 & 1965; Hicks 1961; Maddick 1962; Smith 1980, 1981 and 1985; Falton 1981; Davey 1983: Hyden 1983 and Mawhood (1983). Later these were joined by others such as lawyers (Ghai 1982, 1983) sociologists and anthropologists (Apthorpe 1982; Warren 1981; Uphoff and Esman 1974; Cohen and Uphoff 1977; Uphoff 1979 and 1985; Korlen and Klauss 1984); experts on national and regional planning (Rondinelli 1980; Cheema and Rondinelli 1983; Conyers 1981. 1983, 1984 and 1986), with enormous volumes from various United Nations agencies (UN 1962; FAO 1981; ILO 1981; UNCRD 1981; UNESCO 1980 and World Bank 1975), bilateral donors like US AID, and other agencies such as the Commonwealth Secretariat (1983) as well as the agencies of many Third World governments (literature review from Conyers 1984).

As far as the geographical dimension is concerned it can also be considered under two broad categories-literature on developed

industrialised countries of the west and literature on the many geographically and economically diverse countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. In developing countries decentralisation is regarded as a process of wide-ranging socio-economic and political changes while in developed countries it refers to the reforms within urban local authorities in favour of communities and neighbourhoods (Conyers 1986a and Hambleton and Hoggett 1984). In its pure form however, the developmentalist approach to decentralisation has emerged exclusively in the context of its application in the developing countries.

Background of Developmentalist Trend in Decentralisation

The multiple terminological expressions of the approach as listed in Figure 2.2 are a tentative summarisation of many distinct trends in the developmentalist tradition. They are often found overlapping but showing a straight temporal continuity from a single theoretical source with a substantial degree of fluctuation over time. Kitching (1982) argues that the developmentalism in its various forms as apparent in third world countries for the last few decades is the continuation of a much older theoretical tradition of populism promoted by Sismondi, Proudhon, Owen and Gandhi, proliferated in the neo-populist thoughts of Schumacher, Lipton, ILO and African Socialism of Nyerere. Kitching concludes that both populism and neo-populism proved unsuccessful as theory as well as in practice. The capitalist aspiration of national development (development of a national bourgeoisie) through industrialisation overtook the ideological romanticism of non-industrial, relatively self-sufficient small scale production.

In the 1950s and 1960s the 'old orthodoxy' (Kitching 1982) of development based on the concept of economics of scale and growth of GNP was predominant and the newly independent countries quickly adopted those ideas for their national development. The Soviet style of central planning and Stalinist state as a means of mobilising resources also impressed many of them. For their part the international development agencies also put strict insistence on coherent plans for national development (Mathur 1983:59). The colonial states transformed themselves in the post-colonial era into developmental states (Dutkiewicz and William 1987) justifying greater expansion of the state as the instrument of economic management. Growing state intervention gained wide scale legitimisation in the name of nation-building and national integration. The administrative and bureaucratic structure was paraphrased as 'development administration' to carry out the functions of the newly created states. Public enterprises were

created for the development in the vital sectors like agriculture, industry and business.

During this predominantly centralist era, decentralisation in the form of various administrative reforms and local government reorganisations were primarily aimed at creating a support base for national development plans both politically and administratively at the local levels. The strategies in the sixties shaped the policy of the nineteenth century liberal view of local democracy (for promoting stable national democracy) and Keynesian economic management through state intervention which was further blended with a Soviet model of central planning and the prescriptions of international donors to pass through the Rostovian stages of growth and development. Decentralisation was thus conceived of as necessary administrative (through decentralisation) and political infrastructures (through devolution) to meet those goals. In the late sixties these initiatives were proven to be merely rhetorical. The evaluations of decentralisation programmes revealed that instead of providing balanced growth and development, the strategies had created gross inequalities, poverty and deprivation. A clamour of disillusionment was raised by an increasing number of economists and policy makers calling for the dethronement of the strategies pursued in the 1960s and their replacement with new ones which could take measures against the growing poverty, inequitable income distribution and the specter of rising unemployment. In the 1970s pressure was mounted to define the concept of development. Professor Dudley Seers posed a basic question about the meaning of development when he asserted,

> 'The questions to ask about a country's development are, therefore, what has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? ...If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result development even if per capita income doubled' (1969).

Pakistani economist Mahbubul Hoq (1971) instituted an assault on GNP oriented development by saying succinctly that, 'we were taught to take care of our GNP as this will take care of poverty. Let us reverse this and take care of poverty as this will take care of GNP'. These turbulent academic concerns produced a number of new development strategies within the same old parameters of capitalist development. The ILO (1969) devised a programme of participatory development strategy under its World Employment programme in response to the failures of the United Nations Development Decade (1960-1970). US AID shifted its technical assistance programmes to participatory rural development programmes to direct benefit towards the poor and needy and to implement the newly amended Foreign Assistance Act of 1973.

Among others the Basic Needs Approach (Ghai 1977; Streeton 1980); Redistribution with Growth (Chenery et al 1974), People centered Development (Korten and Klausss 1984), Reduction of State, Marketisation and Privatisation (Bates 1981; IBRD 1981; Berg Report and IBRD 1984) have been significant in influencing subsequent developments in the theory and practice of decentralisation.

Strategies of Developmentalist Approach

In response to the changed context of development thinking decentralisation emerged in the 1970s with a new image which was particularly relevant to meet the needs of the poor, enhance their participation and promise local level involvement in planning. Generally, rural development became a basic thrust in the developing countries to meet all the challenges of the alleviation of poverty, eradication of inequality and generation of additional income. It was argued that if development was to mean eradication of poverty, inequality and material deprivation, it must involve and mobilise the poor (Rondinelli 1983). Decentralisation would help the poor to get involved in politics and political involvement would strengthen their material Position (UN 1979). Over-centralisation of planning and administration has caused non-participation (Rondinelli, 1983 : 14) and decentralisation constitutes an effective way of meeting local needs with people's participation by taking administration and planning nearer to the people. Secondly, decentralisation was expected to improve the 'access' of poor to the administration. In the previous decades of 'the developmental state' and 'development administration' services and benefits of development efforts could not create proper 'access situations' (Schaffer 1986). Decentralisation could provide the means of breaking open access channels, bringing about a change in the position of target groups from passive clients to prime actors.

Thirdly, state structures in the third world countries are regarded as rigid, inefficient, over-staffed and corrupt-thus they exploit their privileged status in service delivery and extract monopoly rents from their clients. The condemnation has become so extreme that new ways of development are looked for by avoiding the state structure acting as the prime mover. Debureaucratisation, empowerment and conscientisation are some of the alternatives devised and practiced by some state apparatuses through voluntary development agencies and United Nations agencies. The World Bank and IMF devised the policy of 'structural adjustment'[3] as' a package with the emphasis on market forces, the liberation of the price mechanism and privatisation of' major services to reduce and circumscribe the role of state.

Debureaucratisation is a form accepted by many as one of the prime objectives of decentralisation (Cheema and Rondinelli 1983: 275). This places great emphasis on the non-governmental developmental agencies to-carry out developmental and social services work for the poor outside government structure. Uphoff (1985) pointed out three distinct dimensions of non-conventional mode of decentralisation which he referred to intermediation, philanthropisation and marketisation and which in turn, lead to debureaucratisation.

Empowerment is another concept gaining greater' currency as an objective and strategy in the process of decentralisation and is one which recognises the need to build up the capacity of the poor by ensuring the maintenance of assets in their possession (Marsden 1989). The concept was previously used to emphasise the need for greater participation of the poor in decision making (Oakley and Marsden 1984). The issue of empowerment now goes beyond mere participation as it implies the transfer of resources to the poor to enhance their bargaining power. The major thrust now premised the transfer of power from those with vested interests to those who were traditionally disenfranchised [Gupta 1986 and Alfanso 1986-quoted in Marsden 1989]. The concept does not advocate any radical or revolutionary move against the state rather, suggests some modifications which Brett (1988) thought could occur under a 'flexible state', where there is devolution of power within the state organisations and also the empowerment of those outside them whether as client or citizen.

Empowerment is supplemented by another concept of conscientisation which entered into the development vocabulary in the 1970s. Paulo Freire (1972) defined conscientisation as a process in which men not as recipients, but as knowing subjects achieve a deepening awareness both as sociological reality which shape their lives and their capacity to transform that reality. The Frerian concept of conscientisation is different from that of the 19th century liberals who preferred democratic decentralisation to enhance civic consciousness and political education. The difficulty with Freire's concept is that the nature of transformation is not clearly spelled out. The concepts of empowerment and conscientisation have become popular with some non-government development agencies (BRAC, Proshika, Gana Shaija in Bangladesh and 'Liberation Theology Movement' in Latin America) that organise the poor as a target group within the context of incremental reformist attempts for poverty alleviation. Instead of promoting awareness about the nature of economic exploitation and political domination, poverty alleviation programmes confine their (NGOs) activities to the supply of small amounts of credit, and small-scale employment and income generation efforts. A new sort of

dominance and patron-client relationship is developing between NGO professionals and poor groups. While analysing the "*Bhoomi Sena Movement*" of Maharashtra in India, De Silva and others (1979) posited the concept of conscientisation as something much closer to class struggle in its primordial form. The *Bhoomi Sena* Movement was directed against the landlord's tyrannical exploitation of hired labour and their monopoly of other means of production, i.e. land, plough and bullocks. The process of mobilisation in the *Bhoomi Sena* Movement empowered the *Adivasis* of Maharashtra district of 'Junglepatti' to become a countervailing force (p.64). In this case concientisation culminated into class struggle.

Politics of International Capital and the Paradox of Decentralisation

In this multi-dimensional gamut of developmental implications of decentralisation, the latest and most fascinating ingredient has been taking shape from the late seventies, with the initiative of supra national agencies with strong support from the major industrialised countries. Among the international agencies the IMF and World Bank and among the industrialised countries Britain and America have taken the lead. The main thrust of their programmes is to pressurise third world governments to liberalise their markets, abandon the policy of protectionism and align their prices with the international market. The package programme imposed by the IMF and World Bank is known as 'structural adjustment'. The explicit rationale behind this policy came from: (i) widespread dissatisfaction with international development strategies of the 1950s and 1960s and (ii) the depression of the 1970s and the rising price of energy and subsequent debt crisis of the third world. There are also implicit objectives not found in official documents and which involve the creation of a more favourable atmosphere for the free movement of international capital and commodities into the third world markets.[4]

The programme of structural adjustment through privatisation, maketisation and the liberalisation of price mechanisms proved disastrous for many of the third world countries in its political, social and economic consequences. It brought widespread political unrest, economic instability and social decline. A UNICEF evaluation disclosed that the post adjustment period of the early 1980s (1980-85) showed a reversal of the trend towards the progress attained in the previous three decades, especially in the field of child welfare (Cornia, Jolly and Stewart 1987: I) On the other hand, growth records also

showed sharper decline in average GDP per capita from 1976-80 to 1980-85 from 2.7 to 1.1 percent per year (p.19). To meet the grave consequences of crude economic 'maladjustment' another adjustment by other agencies rephrasing it as 'adjustment with human face' (Cornia, Jolly and Stewart 1987) has been started. Decentralisation as a concept has experienced a renaissance with the new initiative of expanding social services (Rondinelli et al 1989) as it provided a convenient peg on to which the interventionist approach could be re-hung, after the partial backfiring of policies favouring market forces. More and more programmes and resources are directed towards the vulnerable groups by providing low cost basic services, promoting informal economic sectors, public works for creating employment, but still the basic and major pre-occupation is to promote private sector initiative.

Critique of the Developmentalist Approach

Experiences of decentralisation from the developmental approach can be evaluated from two view points. One is from the success of the governmental initiative of a particular country in bringing about development by improving the initiatives induced through marketisation and privatisation by donor initiative.

The developmentalist approach to decentralisation has been found to be full of rhetoric and ideological overtones. Instead of eradicating poverty and income inequality such programmes have made the conditions of the masses more vulnerable. The resources channeled have been distributed through the hands of the powerful sections of society which created further 'access' problems for the powerless. In most cases it reinforced the traditional patron-client relationships and made the rich politically more powerful (Blair 1980). So decentralisation did not make positive impact on poverty, income and employment and it also did not promote the political power of the less privileged as the forging of political alliances and the creation of mass support largely depended upon economic strength defined in bourgeois property owning terms. It also included the political use of the masses through the weapon of newly acquired economic powers. It may also be noted that political parties recruit their local leadership on the basis of a property owning background from among people who command support from a large client group (Smith 1985: 192).

In many cases where powers are delegated to local agencies, local governments and other field organisations, these efforts merely increased the size and numbers of a bureaucracy which is already over-grown. Expansion and strengthening of local government correspondingly expanded the arms and wings of local administration. In many cases field administration substituted for and even overpowered the local government (Cheema and Rondinelli 1983). Decentralised development strategy was used as a normal and natural justification for 'bureaucratic reproduction' (Wood 1982). In Africa the programme is used as a mechanism to enfold an agitating petty bourgeoisie within a greater bourgeois axis (Kasfir 1983). In Tanzania the 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie' played the dominant role in pursuance of their vested interest in the name of their professional expertise in managing development (Samoff 1979}. So, in essence, instead of decentralisation and debureaucratisation, recentralisation and rebureaucratisation took place (Apthorpe and Conyers 1982 and Khan 1987). Both the principles and policies of participation, conscientisation and empowerment have also been prone to erosion from above.

The well celebrated non-governmental efforts in this direction also produced the same discouraging result. It also created a parasitic group of so-called 'catalysts' with vested interests (guardians of the poor corresponding to the public bureaucracy) who live on foreign aid. Bangladesh is a developing country with one of the highest NGO concentrations and is considered as a 'test case' for the NGO approach to rural development.[5] Recent studies reveal that these agencies are fully dependent on foreign assistance for all kinds of services they provide and/ 60 about percent of the total assistance received is absorbed within the agencies themselves in the form of salaries, allowances, overheads, transport, foreign travel etc. (Sattar and Abedin 1984, Ubinig 1985).[6]

These NGO activities have created a new regime of donor recipient relationships outside the government structure. But in pursuance of deriving economic benefits as well as social and political power, they continue to adopt similar policies to those of the state bureaucracy. At the apex of the complex inter-and intra-organisational structure, the state bureaucracy and NGO executives have no clear distinction. An analysis of the management committees of a few Bangladeshi NGOs has shown that these committees are composed of high ranking bureaucrats and professionals. Many of them draw large tributes in the form of consultancy fee and honoraria for being associated with these organisations (Ahmed 1986). Mullard (1987) points to the chaotic situation of private organisations of Britain. When the dialectics of decentralisation through privatisation and/or philanthropisation are examined closely, we can conclude that the policy contributes more to disabling people than to empowering them.

It has created a new class of social and political elites with no accountability to the rest of the society. Having said this from general systemic perspectives, NGOs successfully initiated some innovations in the service delivery and management processes which have to be widely acknowledged.

Considering the wide spread contradiction between the theory and practice of decentralisation and difference between policy rhetoric and reality, it became imperative to employ a new approach to study and implement the policy of decentralisation. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s the distinction of centralisation and decentralisation (Apthrope and Conyers 1982) and the distinctive concepts of devolution and deconcentration (Hyden 1983 and Mawhood 1983), territorial and functional dimensions and implicit vs. explicit objectives (Conyers 1986b) provided the framework for analysing decentralisation from the conventional vantage point i.e. that of enhancing administrative efficiency, managerial performance and maximisation of development effect. These frameworks proved grossly inadequate for viewing the phenomena in their complete context, as the approaches were 'apolitical and isolated from the broader societal environment. How, on the basis of this conventional approach, could we explain, for example the demonstrable eagerness of a non-elected military regime to establish the process of 'democratic local government' 'in Bangladesh (GOB 1982); the commitment of an autocratic monarchy in Nepal for *'Panchayet democracy'* (Borgstrom 1980), or Pretoria's apartheid government's determination to establish *'municipal democracy'* in 1989, or the Indian central government's supersession of state government's jurisdiction over local government (Jadav 1988), if decentralising policies are merely seen as synonymous with democracy and development? In each case political and economic rationales have predominated over all other technical or rhetorical issues of democracy and development.

Decentralisation and the State

At a theoretical level the study of decentralisation needs a proper understanding of the nature of state (Mallard 1987) and its ramifications (in time and space) on class actors of a particular society. Even liberal authors like Smith (1985) also find that the perception of decentralisation and any normative stance to be taken of it, will be coloured by whatever theory of the state is - held, implicitly or explicitly (p. 202). The linked analysis of politics and state has generated a wide and varied theoretical tradition. The first current may

be labeled the pluralist School, which is the combination of the sociological tradition of Talcott Parsons and the political tradition of nineteenth century English Liberals founded by Mill. The second current may be found in the elite theories of Mosca, Parato and Michel and rationalism, managerialism and professionalism, as influenced by the writings of Max Weber. While elitism and Weberian managerialism are not the same, there is a much closer connection between the two than between liberalism and Marxism. The third theoretical current is obviously the Marxist-with two broad dimensions of 'Instrumentalist' and 'Relative 'Autonomist 'schools of thought.

Pluralist Theory of State

The pluralist school has a holistic view of society, with consensus as the guiding principle for its management. Politics is viewed within this theoretical tradition as a process of interaction within the society in order to reach such consensus, and Pluralists believe in the neutrality of the state and the need for it to adopt a low profile in the pursuit of social change (Dunleavy and O'Leary 1987). Each level of government institution is seen as responsive to the wishes of the citizenry expressed through the mechanisms of representation and electoral competition, culminating in strong interest groups and participatory political culture (Dunleavy 1980). Decentralisation and local government is highly valued in pluralist thinking for its complementary role in promoting a flourishing national democracy.

Pluralist theory can be criticised with regard to three of its fundamental notions, i.e. the neutrality of the state, democratic legitimacy through 'electoral chains' and the almost unmitigated virtues of pressure and interest group activities. Even within the tradition of pluralism many analysis do not fully accept the neutrality of the state, because the state does not always mediate and compromise in a conciliatory and dispassionate fashion; rather it often becomes biased and indeed may even become 'colonised' by the strongest pressure group (Dunleavy and O'Leary 1987, p. 43). Dahl (1963:50-51) an ardent supporter of pluralism, describes the state as a 'pawn' controlled by certain groups of actors who enforce their decisions with the help of the state. In the contemporary corporatist patterns of the industrialised west (in all its diverse forms) the state serves the corporate interest of capital. The unorganised and unaware masses cannot hold the balance of power in a system where pressure group lobbying can influence the self-interested bureaucracy and politicians.

At the other end third world autocratic and dictatorial regimes, civil or military, single party or multiparty, can hardly be analysed within the pluralist theoretical paradigm. So far as democratic legitimacy is concerned, Lukes' (1977) observation is that many democratic rights are merely political rituals which endow undemocratic and inequitable political systems with a spurious legitimacy. They are only valuable at a symbolic level. 'Pilgrimage to a polling booth' after four/five year's interval cannot uphold a participatory political culture, in which the ideological significance of the right (or ritual) to vote is considerably greater than the political or participatory significance of the act of voting (Saunders 1979:23).

Elite Theory

In the post war period elite theory attempted to provide the principal alternative to pluralism. The Italian theorist Pareto (1935) and Mosca (1939) and French theorists Michel (1959) are regarded as the classical elite theorists who were greatly influenced by Plato's 'The Republic', the Indian political philosopher Kautilya's 'Arthashastra' and Machaveilis 'The Prince'. Pareto and Mosca divided society into 'elite' and non-elite, ruler and the ruled. Pareto, Mosca and Michel all made strong claims that rule by a small elite over the rest of the society is inevitable (Dunleavy and 'OLeary 1987: 136-140). They regard liberal democracy as a system in which the ascendancy of a new elite of industrialists and bourgeoisie is a must and also regarded socialism as the 'iron rule of oligarchy', in as much as the socialist republics are controlled by their own ruling elites who exercise power in a more tyrannical way (Mosca 1939:286).

Max Weber and Joseph Schumpeter synthesised some of the key elements of elite theory, pluralism and also Marxist ideas, giving the whole a more pragmatist complexion, whereby the concepts, of 'bureaucracy' in the latter's writing (1944) appeared as institutions for achieving political power. In some ways, this softened the position of 'classical elite theory (summarised in Dunleavy and O'Leary 1987).

Elite theorists' major preoccupation with an individualistic approach ignores the power of the masses and of mass movements. Local government and other sub-national organisations are given very marginal and peripheral considerations. Conventional elite theory simply points to the loss of functions by local government to the higher levels at the state apparatuses as indicative of a linear centralisation of power (Dunleavy 1980). In respect of community power, elite theorists agree with the Marxists that the local level powers are concentrated in

the hands of economic and social elites. But they are ever pessimistic about the reversal or redress of the situation. For them the structure of national elite rule depends on the maintenance of pervasive control of local elites. Local and regional elites both control the social and political life in ways favourable to the perpetuation of the national elitist's position (Dunleavy 1979). The theoretical formulations and empirical basis of elite theory are very weak in respect of the total perspective of the state and its progressive transformation. The opposition of elite concept in the vocabulary of state and politics added a new dimension, but as a theoretical category it is not complete and comprehensive, as progressive political change has no place within this theoretical paradigm, it can contribute very little in terms of the historical process of social change.

Marxist Analysis

Marxist approaches to the interpretations of the role of the state in general and the local state (local government) in particular, are fundamentally different from the views of pluralists as well as the elitists. The Pluralist view of the neutrality of the state and their holistic view of society and the elitist view of individualistic elite network of the power relationship of the state is refuted in Marxist analysis. Marxists rather concentrate on more sophisticated theoretical discourses to unfold the underlying social relations instead of focusing on individuals, groups and their superficial organisational forms. They accept neither the broad consensus nor the narrow elite conspiracy approaches but consider conflict as the driving force in the formation of the state. It is said that society is divided into opposing and antagonistic classes; politics in any society is the expression of those class conflicts. The state also expresses itself in this same nexus of class conflict. Thus the nature of state is always class specific and its policies also reflect the dominance of one class over another. The state in a capitalist society represents the interest of capital whereby it comes in conflict with the working class. However, the Marxist view of the state itself does not represent a single and unified school of thought.

Most contemporary Marxist contributions on the state in general and also with particular focus at local level have tended to adopt one or other of the two dominant theoretical positions usually the instrumentalist perspective of Miliband 1969) or the relative autonomist or structuralist perspective of Poulantzas. Both of these schools support their arguments by claiming to be based on the original texts of Marx, Engels and Lenin. The instrumentalist school

represented by Miliband (1969) argues that the state always acts as the instrument of the bourgeoisie to sustain the accumulation of capital. In pursuance of bourgeois interests in the accumulation process the state is used as a repressive and coercive force to assure the appropriation of the surplus from the unpaid labour which Marx referred to as 'surplus labour'.

The structuralist or the relative autonomist school represented by Poulantzas (1973, 1975 and 1976) differs from the two previous views of the pluralists on the one hand and Instrumentalist Marxists on the other. The latter consider the state to be neither an instrument of class domination nor a centre of power independent of class domination, rather a representation of classes in a particular time in a particular society. In the present epoch of history the state necessarily represents the interests of capital, since capitalists are the dominant social forces.

Nevertheless, according to Poulantazs, other classes are not absolutely powerless. So state policies are designed to contain conflict in the short term to serve the long term accumulation interests of capital. In short, the state is relatively autonomous of any particular class. Oppression and coercion are minimised by introducing the various ideological facades which legitimate the bourgeois dominance by non-violent means. New institutions are created of the political levels as specific class projects. These institutions serve the purpose of legitimating bourgeois rule and broadening its class alliances. These social class projects of institutional ventures help to manage the crisis arisen in the processes of capital accumulation, social relations and class domination.

Marxist interpretations of the state at the local level

Previously, Marxists used to see the state as a unity that did not need to be differentiated geographically. In recent years, however, they have offered a more completed analysis of the state at the local and regional level, particularly as it has become manifest in contemporary capitalism being conditions of economic crisis (Smith 1985 : 37). These theoretical contributions attempted to identify the specific roles of the 'local state' in general 'capitalist reproduction process' as well as the new foci and terrains of class struggle which the 'local state' and its activities may stimulate. The pioneering works aimed primarily at describing the urban political situation of advanced or 'metropolitan' capitalist countries of the west; the applicability of these interpretations may need to be carefully assessed in the specific context of peripheral capitalist countries. As the present study is primarily concerned with the peripheral capitalist setting it is appropriate to review the theories

developed in the west and then to proceed to examine their relevance when applied elsewhere.

The functions of the state have undergone significant changes in the advanced capitalist countries; some of these changes are reflected in the developing social welfare systems and the growing significance of the state at the local level (Saunders 1979:142-143). The state in all capitalist societies normally addresses four basic questions: guaranteeing the security of property; providing a minimum level of subsistence for the poor; retaining a domestic system of control or repression for maintaining order; and regulating relationships with other countries. In order to maintain its dominance and influence the four functions continually cause the state to intervene even in private sector activities. State planning increases its role in sectors such as housing, education, welfare, roads, electricity, disaster relief etc. Side by side with the social functions it also takes on police function for maintaining order in society using both violent and non-violent methods. The local state supplements three of those four functions of the central state which is seen as part of regulating class relations and sustaining the conditions for capitalist production process (Saunders 1979: 143). The theoretical discussions of the local state have been largely dominated by the relative autonomist school but Cockburn (who first coined the term 'local state') is regarded as adopting a more instrumentalist perspective (1977). By adopting the term 'local state' she intended to cover all state institutions operating at the local levels such as local authorities, local offices of the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) and other governmental and quasi-governmental agencies. But as her own work focused on the elected local government of Lambeth Council, it was relatively unproblematic for her to use the terms local state and local government, since in practice they have come to mean the same thing (Stocker 1988 : 218). Cockburn views local government as a *'key part of the state in capitalist society... (which) looks after bourgeois interests as a whole and sets up and maintains the cultural and political domination of the working class that capitalism as a whole needs if it is to continue (p.4 and 47)'*. The prime role that the local state plays is to assist in the physical reproduction of labour power, hereby enabling the capitalist production system to continue. The local state also promotes an ideology which institutionalises class and tries to create the illusion of social harmony by making dominant capitalist values acceptable to all classes. Cockburn's view has been criticised by Marxists and non-Marxists alike for its alleged crudity and simplicity- Some of them are not happy with her model because it did not allow local instances of class struggle or political maneuver to be analysed with any greater

clarity than before. However, her use of the 'local state' has added a distinct theoretical category to the study of local government in later Marxist writings and paved the way for other analysts to adopt this process and further refine and elaborate the concept by contact with various empirical realities.

The Marxist analysis of the local state in the present epoch of monopoly capitalism and corporatism received a boost from the theorisation of James O' Connor and Claus Offe in the 1970s. Both of them attributed their writings to the crisis of 'late capitalist' system in their own countries (America and Germany) and on a world scale.

O' Connor (1973) highlighted that the crisis of the present capitalist states are arising from two of their fundamentally contradictory functions - accumulation and legitimation. This means that the state's efforts are continually channeled towards maintaining and creating the conditions in which profitable capital accumulation is possible. On the other hand the state must also try to maintain and create 'the conditions for social harmony and adjustment (p.6). The theoretical emphasis on the increasing involvement of late capitalist societies in local state activities and welfare functions stems from those two basic objectives of capitalist accumulation and the legitimation of bourgeois rule. Crisis is a recurring theme which dogs capitalist society at every turn. Consequently, the management of crisis occupies a prime concern of capitalism. whatever its conjunctural form, in the present epoch of monopoly capitalism the 'fiscal crisis' of the state is leading the whole system into an ever deepening social and political crisis that breeds politicisation and radicalisation of the workers in various sectors as well as clients of the state and various action groups.

The basic cause of the fiscal crisis, according to O'Conner, stems from the inherent contradiction of the capitalist production system itself where production is social but the means of production are owned privately (1973:40). While the owners of the means of production appropriate the surplus, the state bears the major social costs of production. Both monopoly capital and organised labour of the corporatist-monopoly sector were supported by the growth of state-financed social benefits for the maximisation of their personal corporate benefits. This eventually throws the state into acute fiscal crisis. The state's underwriting of certain social costs of capital accumulation and the legitimation needs of the state are prescribed by O'Connor as three types of state expenditures-(i) social investment, (ii) social consumption and (iii) social expenses (p.41).

Social investment and social consumption are described as two components of social capital expenditure. Social investment is considered to be constant capital (i.e.) investment in machinery and equipment) while the latter constitutes 'variable capital' such as wages and services provided to labour for 'servicing' the physical reproduction of labour power on a 'daily and generational basis'. Social investment is further sub-divided into two components - physical and human capital. Physical capital consists of expenditure incurred on economic infrastructures of a physical nature - for example, roads and highways, airports, railways, seaports, post, telegraphs, telephones, electricity, gas, water etc. Social expenditure on human capital involves education, research and training. These two major expenditures are met socially for basically two reasons: (i) to enable private capital to use goods and services on a permanent basis and (ii) to socialise costs, since often these exceed the resources of or are regarded as a financial risk for those of private sector companies who will be immediately affected (p. 101). Like social investment, state expenditure on social consumption is also divided into two sub-categories 'goods and services' consumed collectively by the working class, and social insurance against economic insecurity. The first group included: (i) suburban development projects (e.g. roads, elementary and secondary schools, recreation facilities, residential, mortgage subsides etc.), (ii) urban renewal projects (e.g. mass transit, parking, garage etc) and (iii) other related projects such as day care centers, maternity and birth control clinics etc. The second group includes workers' compensation, old age pensions, unemployment, insurance etc.

O'Connor adds "in general the greater the socialisation of the costs of variable capital, the lower will be the level of money wages, and *(ceteris paribus),* the higher the rate of profit in the monopoly sector", (p. 124). Socialisation of costs also helps to redress the traumas of declining value of workers' wages during inflationary situations and keeps them tied to the capitalist production system (Saunders 1979: 145). For this reason monopoly capital actively supports the expansion of social consumption expenditure.

O'Connor's third major category of social expenditure is called 'social expenses' by which he mainly means non-productive outlays undertaken by the state to maintain order and stability by means of both warfare and welfare. Welfare systems subsidise acute under-consumption on the part of the 'surplus population' by enhancing the purchasing power. While seeking market for a country's 'surplus product' of affected households and diversifying overseas investment requires the expansion of military installations (p.15), O'Connor considers that for the stabilisation of the world wide capitalist order, these expenses are necessary both at home and abroad to support client ruling classes by aid, donations and if necessary by outright military intervention (p. 168). All these initiatives of welfare at home and

warfare abroad increase the overall expenses of the state and may ultimately lead it into a crisis more acute than the social expenditure was originally intended to defuse. A new social polarisation grows out of the state's financial crisis, as a result of the rise of movements demanding better and more equitable consumption. As a result accumulation and legitimation both face inevitable challenges.

Offe (1975) has seen the emergence of the Welfare State during the post Second World War period as a consequence of the historical crisis of capitalism at that stage of its development. The welfare state, in effect, provided a convenient formula for the management of the crisis, it guaranteed for the time being, the survival of capital and also recognised the legal transfer of resources to various groups whose life chances were damaged systematically by market exchange processes. But in the present time, the Welfare State faces fundamental contradictions within its own mode of operation which Offe describes as the 'cumulative self-obstruction process of the welfare state'. One of the manifestations is seen in the chronic fiscal crisis and loss of mass loyalty and erosion of the legitimacy of the state. Contradictions become irreversible in the precise sense that accumulation of capital and maintaining the 'quality of life' of the vulnerable social classes are incompatible and this gradually generates destabilisation and further dependencies towards crisis. Whether these situations could be turned into social struggle is dependent upon the right kind of political maneuvering. Welfare State institutions at various levels (including local government) could be viewed, according to Offe, as both the medium and outcome of the struggle over the distribution of power between state and society (Chapter 8). Offe opts for 'democratic socialism' as an alternative to monopoly capitalist and statist socialism. In the process of attaining such an alternative, he prefers more actions and movements from various social and professional groups rather than through the political activity of conventional party or along traditional, parliamentary roads (p. 188). In his opinion the local state and other local level organisations can take the lead in developing a countervailing network of democratic communication and mobilisation to achieve democratic socialism.

Manuel Castells, a French sociologist further applied the concepts of socialised cost of capital and social consumption which had been developed by O'Connor and Offe in more specific situations of what he termed the 'urban question[1]. In his book. The Urban Question (1977), he developed a distinctive thesis of 'Collective Consumption' and identified a new domain of social contradiction in urban areas under contemporary capitalism. Castells argues that the city and city life are not technically spatial units but the creations of the capitalist mode of

production, with industry as the locus of production and that city as the locus of the reproduction of labour power. There is a clear general division between the consumption and production processes within the capitalist mode of production as well as a more specific division which manifests itself in the sphere of urban politics. As an indication of this, political movements and class struggles grow and spread in the urban sphere of capitalism around consumption questions. Classical Marxist theory identifies the labour process and capital as key variables in the contradictions of the capitalist system. But Castells argues that in the contemporary urban question, the class contradiction (1975:6) loses something of its centrality, i.e. something is added to the traditional dichotomy between wage labour and capital. Instead, new sources of contradiction and political tensions arise out of the structural contradictions of advanced capitalism in its new domain of collective consumption'. The traditional social inequality based on income and endowment in the means of production, inherent in capitalism, becomes expressed in the form of new social cleavages, related to the accessibility and use of certain collective services (ibid). The crisis of 'late capitalism' in the urban context is felt within the framework of collective consumption, comparative deterioration of the 'quality of life' and the disparities between the users of collective services (pp. 6-7). The outbreak of the events of May 1968 in Paris, popular unrest in Italian cities in the 1970s and municipal-socialist movements in Britain in the 1980s gave new significance to Castells arguments. Castells takes a Leninist position and suggests that effective and organised communist parties are one of the major pre-conditions for making a success of these urban struggles over collective services.

Dual State Thesis

The 'dual state' thesis has attracted considerable academic interest in recent years as a theory of studying local government and decentralisation. Though Cawson and Saunders (1983) are regarded as the main proponents of the thesis, they do not claim to have originated it. The theory is influenced by O'Connor's (1973) theory of social expenditure and social expense, Offe's (1975) work on the crisis of the welfare state, Castells's (1977 and 1978) focus on the urban question as the locus of capitalist reproduction of collective consumption and finally by Poulantzas's theory of the state which Cawson and Saunders have reformulated. Credit is nevertheless due to them for coining the term 'dual state' to deal with local government within the structure of modern capitalism. They located the specificity of the central and local state by separating their production (accumulation) and consumption

(social reproduction) functions under modern capitalist system. The politics of production related to capital and the labour process is managed by central state through its corporatist strategies. Consumption related functions are discharged through the local level state apparatuses in a relatively more open and pluralistic way. People at the local level are organised and mobilised not on class-lines but on the basis of interest group perspectives. Consequently the specific nature of politics in the local state is located not in class conflict or division but rather in alliances among various social groups on the basis of the shifting consumption patterns provided by the local state. For example, people of different economic and social strata may feel concerned about the deterioration of the quality of education, drinking water, public roads and environmental conditions. Local government has become synonymous with the provision of the means to satisfy community needs and concern with the quality of life, which determine and dominate the agenda of local politics (Saunders 1984:29).

Saunders (1981) did not categorically state that central and local functions and levels are independent of each other. The functions are continually determined by the dominance of the corporatist[7] politics of the centre. He mentions firstly, that social consumption functions are necessarily subordinated to social investment functions since the latter's functions are crucial in maintaining the conditions in which production may continue; secondly, democratic accountability to a local population is necessarily curtailed by corporatist strategies at the centre; and, ideologies of social need take second place in a capitalist society to the ideology of private property (p. 34).

Because of the above situation Cawson and Saunders (1983) did not totally rule out the appropriateness of the instrumentalist perspective of Miliband as a means of locating the accumulation process of capitalism at its central level. But in studying local politics they consider it appropriate to concentrate more on consumption activities than productive functions. Because of this autonomy from production, local radicals and anti-capitalist interests may also gain control over local authorities.

Decentralisation and the Left: The Movement of Local or Municipal Socialism.

Local politics has long been a highly dynamic, concrete and passionate issue for those activists who by incrementally or conjuncturally mobilising working class opinion and action, have sought to challenge ruling class hegemony and bring about social change. In the United

States, socialists gained control of many cities after 1900 and the trend was revived to some extent in the 1950s and 1970s in some of the cities (Clavel 1985). During the 1980s, Britain also experienced such a movement with more militancy. They were labeled by opponents in Britain as the 'Lunatic Left' and proponents and sympathisers called them 'local socialist'. The rise of local socialism in Britain is seen as reaction to two distinct trends of British politics, firstly it is considered as a reaction against the new right politics of conservative government, where clashes between political democracy and economic power of private corporatism developed an acute crisis (Blunkett and Jackson 1987); and secondly, the labour values of centralist strategy of establishing 'egalitarian socialism' led the movement to the road of statism and increased bureaucratisation and professionalisation which has given rise to a new breed of socialist activist to fight it from within the labour movement (Hoggett 1984; Wright 1984).

The first labour council to adopt local socialism as a central aim was Walsall Borough Council which won an election in May 1980. They promised wider decentralisation in every sphere of council activity encouraging people to take part in the decision making process of the council. The underlying philosophy of participation was openly declared to be socialist. Before long, it became more generally accepted on the British Left that socialism was more Likely to be achieved (in Britain) through this participatory democracy (Hombelton and Hoggett 1984 : 8).

The younger generations of socialists argue that the new style local government is changing the relationship between the public and those in authority. Previously people used to see themselves in the role of passive recipient or applicant, now people are having the sense of the ownership of the local services and they are ready to fight and protest against central government if any attack on local government comes from that quarter. The left claims that their efforts transformed local council into authorities fighting side by side with the provider of services (Hambelton and Hoggett 1984). Gyford (1986) notes that to theoretically relate socialism with decentralisation is a very ambiguous approach. The aims of breaking of departmentalism and professionalism are merely a change of form which does not necessarily challenge existing social relations. New neighbourhood councils or committees may curb the bureaucratic excesses, but the relation of production and distribution may remain unaffected. On the contrary, the proponents argue that the movement helps to raise class consciousness and mobilise support for the overall labour movement and socialist politics - particularly among the party's alienated working class base (Dale 1987). Wright (1984) and Stocker (1988) suggest that

the contemporary urban left movement is the evidence of the resurgence of traditional British Radicalism, revolving round the twin aims of (i) mobilising the power of local government to challenge established interests and redistribute resources and (ii) democratisation of local politics. Hain (1975) addressed the issue from the strategic point of view to mobilise the people against established interest vested in state: "

> .... a new synthesis of socialist strategies which on the one hand recognises the problems associated with the state, and on the other sees the need to use part of the state machine to challenge the power of private capital."

The radical urban left movement supports trade unions and workers and explores socialist policy alternatives within the locality. It poses challenges to local private capital and has sometimes been able to dictate economic activities on its own terms. Local socialism is Interventionist in challenging private capital and responsive in safeguarding the interest of the workers.

Urban left programmes and local socialism met with a number of difficulties and dilemmas which virtually halted its further progress. Firstly, the opposition of the ruling conservative government at the centre applied all legislative and executive means to discredit the newly constituted councils. Secondly, from the left within the labour movement, they have been criticised as a diversion from class politics, and from the Centre Right elements of the Labour Party such councils and programmes were seen as electoral liability (Stocker 1988: 214). Thirdly, the obstacles from within the local authority system have also been formidable. The professionals, bureaucrats and trade unions all put up great resistance to the new system. All these difficulties and dilemmas bore down on 'Local Socialism' within a decade of its emergence and caused a constant draining of enthusiasm. Nevertheless, the architects of the movement claim that local politics have set an agenda for what should be done and what can be achieved through it (Blunkett and Jackson 1987:5). Gavin Kitching (1982) in his 'Rethinking Socialism' put the matter in the following way:

> "A persistent and apparently insoluble tension exists between [1] the centralising tendencies which seem to be inherent in the desire to substitute planned control at macro levels for the market forces which determine these macro outcomes under capitalism, and [2] the apparent need to make economic and social decision-making under socialism much more decentralised and small scale in nature if it is to have any hope at all of being genuinely democratic and unalienated" (Quoted in Wright 1984).

Wright himself thinks that a model of socialism is available now which incorporates the British tradition of democratic socialism and which can reconcile the need for both socialism of macro and micro levels of state and society.

Summary and Conclusions

The Discussion on the theoretical dimensions of decentralisation, local government and local state has led to several conclusions which may eventually be helpful to premise our discussion on the concrete structure of society which we are going to explore in the next chapters. Decentralisation as a normative theoretical concept embodies many positive social values. Most of which could be covered within two broad approaches of studying decentralisation, namely 'democracy' and 'development'. Democracy and development cease to be abstract concepts and become concrete through the action of the state at various levels. As the action of state depends on the complex class structure and the production and reproduction process of a particular society, so the discussion of decentralisation can only be seen in proper perspective if these factors are incorporated into the analysis.

The review of the two approaches to the study of decentralisation has given rise to many questions which are not consistent with the traditional positivist notions normally attached to them. The liberal democracy of nineteenth century philosophers instead of viewing democracy as a basic human right to satisfy human needs, viewed it from the instrumental perspective of providing political guarantee to private property relations under the ideological blanket of democracy and participation. Similarly the developmentalists for the last sixty years (from the 1950s) are also doing the same to pursue the common capitalist interest in the global, national and local contexts. Both of these efforts provided a theoretical and philosophical basis to strengthen rich and powerful sections of the society to promote their interests. Current emphasis on privatisation, marketisation, and structural adjustment within the theoretical discourse of decentralisation reflects the same strategy of the promotion of capitalist interest in peripheral societies. As a result, the approaches of studying decentralisation within the theoretical framework of democracy and development are considered inadequate.

The approach of looking at decentralisation as a political process may answer many of the questions raised in two of the previous approaches. Politics here is not considered merely the interaction of state apparatuses, but rather in relation to the totality of social interaction generating from production structure and class relations. In exploring the theoretical dimension a brief review has been made of the development of the local state and the politics that has arisen around it. In the developed capitalist countries of the West. The focus was on the state as the basic unit of analysis and the role it plays to protect the interest of capital. The specificity of the local state was explored within

the framework of capitalist state. In pursuing the dominant interest of capital, the local state supplements the activities that the central state is performing in servicing the capital and capitalist system in many different ways i.e. (a) directly controlling subordinate classes by extending the apparatuses of central state, (b) managing general crises of capitalism such as market failures, inflation, over production and violently conflicting situations between labour and capital through the welfare provision by creating a dual state structure and also to keep continuous reproduction of labour power to sustain the capitalist production system and (c) the decentralisation process contributes to the legitimisation of the capitalist system by creating ideological facades (democracy, Participation, social justice etc.) to maintain control over [e] civil society. Lastly, urban politics and the movements of the last two decades have highlighted the prospect of a new dimension of decentralisation which can contribute to reforming as well as smashing the oppressive and exploitative nature of the state at the local and central level. A new politics has been evolved from the grassroots level centering around the structure of the local state and it has emerged as an arena of class struggle precisely as a result of the decentralisation process.

Notes:

1. Political economy as an approach of studying social phenomenon has various dimensions. For simple understanding, it is adopted here as a method of relating and appreciating political events in its relationship to economics and vice versa.

2. A list of the countries adopted decentralisation as their State Policy can be seen in Conyers (1984) and also in Cheema and Rondinelll (1983).

3. Structural adjustment is a condition of sustaining the access of client government to international credit system-public and private, pressing the governments to reduce spending on public services and to cut real wages of workers, to raise interest rates and lower the exchange rates of currencies. Also to free trades internal and external from government control and to allow prices to be set in line with the cost of services and the supply and demand of commodities (Dukewiez. and William 1987),

4. A secret Anglo-US plan for the privatisation of nationalised industries in the Third World is already underway. The ODA (Overseas Development. Agency), UK and USA1D (United States Agency for International Development) through their missions overseas and also through diplomatic efforts impose privatisation as a condition of bilateral aid on the Third World countries (The Guardian October 3, 1988], In case of the

UK, aid and trade conditionally goes almost in one package (The Independent November 7. 1987).

5. Total number of Non-government Development Agencies (NGOs) receiving foreign aid/donation stands nearly 400. Another one hundred also applied for government registration (Registration wing of the Department of Social Services (DSS), Government of Bangladesh (1989).

6. DSS's internal evaluation also supports the view, the executive summary of which appeared in the Vernacular Press in February 1989 (The Daily *Sungbad).*

7. Cawson (1978) elaborately discussed the various dimensions of corporatism and its implication in local state.

Chapter Three

Structure of Peripheral Capitalism and Theories of Central and Local State

Section I: Structure of Peripheral Capitalism

The discussion of this section of the study is based on the hypothesis that the phenomenon of the local state and others associated with it (such as decentralisation, local democracy, local development etc) can adequately be understood if the study is premised in the context of the structure of contemporary capitalism and the general crisis it faces in the process of its reproduction and expansion.

In the previous chapter of this study it has been shown that the local state plays a vital role in the continuous process of capitalist accumulation and the management of the crisis that emerges from it. The local state is instrumental on the one hand in the relentless process of accumulation by creating appropriate physical and social conditions for reproducing labour power. On the other hand, it also contributes by dissolving the legitimacy crisis of the capitalist state in a non violent way by creating ideological facades of democracy, participation and welfarism. So, the institutional materiality of local state could be located in its crisis management ventures in favour of capitalist accumulation.

Though capitalism is a world system, it is not one and the same all over the world. A wide range of variabilities make up the contours of capitalist development depending on the historical specificity, spatial location and structural linkages with the outside world which characterise the country in question. For example, capitalist development under colonial domination is different from capitalist development under the post-colonial society, as Alavi (1975) has

shown in the historical process of the development of capitalism in Russia and India. For our purpose of discussion and without entering specifically into that debate we simply want to divide contemporary world capitalism into two-developed capitalism of the West including Japan and underdeveloped capitalism of non western southern societies. To specify the non-western underdeveloped capitalism from the capitalism of the developed world, Frank (1969) introduced the concept of 'metropolis' and 'satellites' on the basis of dependency relationship which brought underdevelopment to the latter as a result of the development of the former.[1] After the pioneering work of Frank, Amin (1974) also drew a line to divide the world into two - 'capitalism of the center' and 'capitalism of the periphery' embedded in a complex relationship (p. 30).[2] The theme of periphery connects itself diagonally to one or several centers under a complex relationship of dependency. This dependency is not reciprocal. It is very asymmetrical involving only the dependence of the periphery on the center. This external relation transforms the internal structure of the periphery but its specific superficial features are retained. In the present discussion the role and nature of the local state will be discussed with the structural conditions of the peripheral social formations which shape the nature of central state, structure of classes and subsequently responses to crisis management ventures.

The Specificity of Peripheral Capitalism

The structural specificity of peripheral capitalism is analysed by different authors at different levels of theoretical abstraction. The two general levels of abstraction developed to analyse the concrete class phenomenon consist of the nature of state and analysis of crisis, as well as the concepts of 'modes of production' (MOP) and 'social formations' (SF) (See the Figure 3.1).

The MOP is an abstract concept lacking any precise definition. For instance, Marx himself did not provide us with any precise definition except in designating the various historical epoch of social development such as the 'Asiatic', the 'ancient', 'the feudal' and 'modern bourgeois' (Preface to the Critique of Political Economy).

Figure- 3. 1: A Framework of the theoretical objects and levels of abstraction in the analysis of class, capital, crisis, nexus of the state.

Levels of abstraction	Objects of Analysis		
	Class structure Class formation	Nature of the state	Nature of Crisis
Mode of production	Polarised class relations and struggle between two classes proletariat and bourgeoisie	Serve the Interest of dominant class In capitalist accumulation	- Conflict between labour & capital - Over production - Market failure and legitimacy crisis - Struggle in the sphere-of collective consumption
Social formation	Coexistence of classes in different modes of production and different stages of development of a given mode, Class structure is complex and fluid, sometime based on non- property basis of Class alliances are common	State occupy the central position in the formation of classes and accumulation of capital Relatively autonomous from economy Internally dcpendent on metropolitan capital	- Economic crisises are condensed at political level (state) - Competition within the same class and coalition and often contradiction between the class - Low level of production and consumption and over exploitation

Source: Revised from wright, E.O (1985) Classes. Veseo Press, New York.

Later, Marxists constructed a definition of MOP drawing support from Marx's 'Capital' - the monumental work of Marx which is devoted to the vigorous and systematic analysis of the capitalist Mode of Production (CMP). These attempts of various later Marxist writers also could not solve the problem, and in fact generated many new ones. Each of these later studies put emphasis on one or the other of the particular numerous aspects of Marx's ideas instead of giving a comprehensive view of the whole of the structure. For instance, Hindess and Hirst (1975) defined the MOP as an articulated combination of relations and forces of production structured by the dominance of the relations of production (p-9). By relations of production they mainly emphasised the nature of ownership of the means of production, control over the means and corresponding appropriation of surplus value. The Indian Marxist Banaji (1973) emphasised the 'relations of exploitation' rather than relations of production to analyse the specific conditions of 'colonial plunder' where the whole accumulation process was geared to accelerate the production process in the metropolis without unleashing the development of corresponding productive forces in the colonies, instead of categorising it as feudal or capitalistic mode of production, he called it 'Colonial mode of production'. Patnaik. (1976), another eminent contributor to the MOP debate on India, extensively used

labour exploitation as the prime criterion to define differentiation of peasantry. But like Kay (1975) she premised her characterisation of the CMP on the theoretical basis of the character of capital alone. The existence of a reinvestible surplus in agriculture was considered as a pre-condition for characterising Indian agriculture as capitalist. On the contrary, Chattopadhyay (1972) instead of stressing capital or 'reinvestible capital' put emphasis on the stages of commodity production and labour process. On the other hand, some of the most influential analysts of third world capitalism such as Frank (1969), Wallersterin (1974) and Arnin (1974) grounded their concept of MOP/CMP on 'relations of exchange' and 'circulation of capital' through unequal exchange and trade rather than relations of production.

Because of the above controversies it seems that the level of abstraction adopted in the MOP formulation has created more confusion than clarity. Very often, instead of analysing the specificity, it has led to an over generalisation of the situation on the basis of one or two key variables. No variability of various modes within a single structure is recognised. The discussion of the MOP in most cases has been premised on the logic of the historical development of societies through some pre-determined stages of social development such as primitive, feudal and capitalist. Even in the case of the CMP there is an intrinsic tendency to pass through and observe all the different prescribed stages (primitive accumulation, competitive capitalism, monopoly capitalism etc.) each with a distinctive form of capitalist social relations. Social phenomena of development do not occur in a linear fashion but rather may change their configuration and direction due to many conjunctural reasons. As a consequence, the current rigid theoretical framework of the MOP, is inappropriate for the analysis of the peripheral societies.

The social Formation (SF) is a concept accepted by many Marxists to supplement those deficiencies in analysing the state and class phenomenon of peripheral societies, like the concept of the MOP the concept of the SF also belongs to the Marxist theoretical discourse. The term SF generally refers to a level of abstraction, whereas 'society' itself is taken as a unit of analysis. The SF derives its meaning from the analysis of societies as specific combination of distinct modes of production or relations of production (Wright 1985:11). Poulantzas (1973) provided a rigorous justification for the use of the SF concept against that of the MOP. He wrote,

"the mode of production constitutes an abstract formal object which does not exist in the strong sense in reality... the only thing which really exists is a historically determined social formation i.e. a social whole, in the widest sense, at a given moment in its historical existence: e.g. France

under Louis Bonaparte, England during Industrial Revolution ...presents a particular combination, a specific overlapping of several pure modes of production. In this way a historically determined social formation is specified by... its different economic, political, ideological and theoretical level of instances (pp. 13-15)".

According to Alavi (1975), the MOP is a theoretical construct which defines a coherent and historically defined set of relationships of production and appropriation, whereas in a social formation more than one mode of production may be present, in a dialectical opposition to each other (normally), one in ascendance and the other in the process of dissolution and disintegration (p-1253). To avoid possible sources of confusion, Alavi (1982) further made it clear by saying that MOP and SF are not the concepts of two kinds but of two orders, both the concepts belong to the same theoretical discourse while the MOP deals with the 'general structure of social relations of production analytically' the SF denotes 'an actual and specific social entity with all its particularities, products of past developments, and structuration and restructuration result of accidents and designs, and all historical legacies of the past and potentials for the future' in a descriptive way (p-178). From the level of the theoretical abstraction of social formation, the structural specificity of peripheral capitalism can be observed from the Figure 3.2 provided by Alavi.

Capitalist development in a peripheral social formation is neither pure nor unmixed, nor the simple repetition of capitalist development that took place in 'core capitalist' countries, or in the present day 'socialist' countries which did not experience colonial domination. The differences are rooted in the specific historical passage of a given society or group of societies during the colonial period and indirect neo-colonial and imperialist domination in the post-colonial stage. This distinct historical situation shapes the process of accumulation, the formation of the classes, the nature of state and emerging crisis of state in the peripheral societies.

Alavi (1982a) while specifying the structure of peripheral capitalism mentioned three distinct features, because those three features encapsulate the main structural differences between the colonised and non-colonised societies. Firstly, the classes in peripheral societies are not only formed purely at the economic level, but the state (political forces) plays a crucial role in directing the formation of classes. Secondly, as a feature of capitalism, generalised commodity production indeed succeeds localised production in peripheral societies, but the 'circuit of production' is not internally complete. It is only completed by virtue of the link with the metropolitan economy though exports and imports. Thirdly, though 'extended reproduction' of capital

is in ascendance over simple reproduction, in the specific case of peripheral capitalist societies, surplus value generated in the periphery is appropriated by metropolitan capitalism, which leads to a growth of productive forces not in the periphery but in the metropolis. The reproduction of capital internally within the periphery is achieved by the actions of the state.

Figure- 3.2: Difference between various modes of production and specificity of peripheral capitalism.

Feudal mode of production (FMP)	Capitalist mode of production CMP]	Peripheral capitalism
1. Non-free labour; Direct producer in possession of means of production [land], etc.	"Free' labor : (1) free from feudal obligations (2) dispossessed separation of the producer from means of production.	As In CMP
2. Extra- economic compulsion for extraction of surplus.	Economic coercion of the dispossessed producer	As in CMP.
3. Localised structure of power; the fusion of economic and political power at the point of production a necessary condition of coercive extraction of the surplus.	Separation of economic (class) power from political (state) power; creation of bourgeois state and bourgeois law.	Specific colonial Structure.
4. Self sufficient localised economy supplemented by simple circulation of commodities.	Generalised commodity production (production primarily for sale; labor power itself a commodity).	Specific colonial Structure.
5. Simple reproduction where surplus is largely Consumed.	Extended reproduction of capital and rise in organic composition of capital.	Specific colonial structure

Source: Alavi. H (l982a) P-179

In this way the state occupies a central role in the whole process of capitalist reproduction in a peripheral society. A concrete capitalist social formation in the periphery will subsume according to Amin's (1974) thinking, dissolving segments of several antecedent modes of production, namely, (a) primitive community, (b) slave owing mode of production (c) feudalism and (d) tributary mode of production.[3] All these separate modes are rearticulated into peripheral capitalist mode (pp 132-42). Peripheral capitalisms also differ from one another according to regional variations, different historical background and

time of incorporation into the world capitalist system. Despite their differences, Amin identified three distinct common features of peripheral capitalism in all the three continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America. These are: (1) the predominance of agrarian and commercial capitalist relations in the national economy (2) the creation of a local bourgeoisie in the wake of dominant foreign capital and (3) the tendency of a peculiar bureaucratic form of development (p-378). Alavi and Amin differ in their analysis of the structure of peripheral capitalism with regard to the nature of accumulation and also in the process of reproduction. In Amin's schema the process of accumulation has already happened on a world scale and in the periphery 'politics is dominant' over the economic domain, because the production process is basically primitive in nature and expanded reproduction, cannot necessarily take place. Amin regards 'primitive accumulation' not only as belonging to the 'pre-history of capital' but as something permanent and contemporary (p-22). While in Amin's schema, primitive accumulation is basic to the capitalist social formation of the periphery, in Alavi's schema it is not the circuit of primitive accumulation but that of capitalist accumulation alone that is not completed internally. In the ultimate analysis, the structure of peripheral capitalism is neither like the capitalism developed in the developed world, nor a situation of primitive accumulation based on simple commodity production, but a peculiarly peripheral form of commodity production, capitalist accumulation and reproduction.

In the 'social formation' of peripheral societies, according to Zienmann and Lanzendorfer (1977) "the state is both the 'midwife' of the capitalist mode of production and also provides a 'crutch' for non-capitalist modes, and also both modern capitalist conditions as well as social political anachronisms are produced and reproduced (p-164)". Other aspects of the centrality of state in peripheral condition are that the state itself direct the formation of classes (Thomas 1984:56) and concentrate at the various levels of state through alignments and realignment, and at the same time state also acts as an arena of class struggle (Alavi 1982b:291). Most of the debate on the nature, role and functions of the state in peripheral societies has focused on the state at the national level, by contrast very little effort has been made to examine and theorise the same at the local level, although some discussion of the structure and functions of local government in general and the increasing "need" for decentralisation has taken place. Any attempt to extend and deepen the debate on local government and decentralisation and to analyse the policy of local development must involve an examination of the forms and function of the state at the local level.

The concept and theory of 'local state' is virtually non-existent in the context of peripheral societies because the theory is relatively of recent origin and only applied in the context of urban politics of 'core' capitalist societies in the late seventies and the early eighties. To build up a theory of local state in the peripheral societies, it is necessary to review some of the relevant literature on the form, function and role of central state in peripheral societies which can provide a context for such a theory.

Theories of state

Modern state theories before wider proliferation mainly owe its origin to two of the main opposing orthodoxies (Wood, 1982: 2). The first one presents the state as an impartial mediator between particular interests, whereas in the second, the state is regarded as the ruling instrument of the dominant class. Now-a-days the original form of these orthodoxies is almost unrecognisable. New traditions have developed and new classifications have emerged. The first orthodoxy has been transformed into corporatism and managerialism and the latter into the relative autonomy thesis, Bonapartism and capital-labour relation of state. Philip Cooke (1983) summarises some of the recent developments in the theories of the local state under three headings: class theories of state, crisis theories and capital theories.

Class theories of the state are defined in terms of the identification of the nature of state action with a particular political role in which state's central problem is to resolve class conflicts (p-167). Cooke regards Miliband and Poulantzas as two of the representatives of the class theories of the state with two different dimensions: instrumentalism and structuralism (see also brief discussion in the previous chapter). Crisis theories of the state are summarised from the works of Offe, Habermas and O'Connor, which emphasise that the content and form of state actions are derived from its reaction to the breakdown in social, political, ideological and economic aspects of 'late capitalist' society (pp 170-76). The capital theory of state is based on the works of Muller and Neususs (1978) that place the changing capital-labour relations at the center of their analysis. Capital theorists hold that changes in the form of state are derived from and explained by struggles over the coercive (mainly legal) rights, which in themselves enable capitalist social relations, individual citizenship, private property relations and wage labour to be secured (p-178). None of these theories has been categorically or exclusively used in the analysis of the state in-underdeveloped capitalist societies; rather, analysis has been made in a relatively undifferentiated way, picking

salient features from all three theories. For example, the theory of 'post colonial state' developed by Alavi (1972) and Saul (1974) and the theory of 'state in peripheral society', by Ziemann and Lanzendorfer (1977) dealt with the elements of three of the theories in an undifferentiated way, while Shiviji (1976) and Samoffs (1979) discussion include class analysis and class struggle as the main item on the agenda, and subsequently dealt with the issues of capital and crisis from the viewpoint of class struggle.

In the discussion which follows an attempt will be made to organise the materials from their present undifferentiated form into the three separate categories and to use those categories as theoretical benchmarks in more precisely locating the role and function of the local state in Bangladesh.

Section II: Class and State under Peripheral Capitalism

In the course of this discussion in chapter 2, specially the section on decentralisation and the state, it has been revealed that local states under developed capitalist system play a vital role in the whole process of capitalist accumulation and reproduction by contributing to reducing the 'variable cost' of capital, management of the crisis of capital-labour relations and legitimation process of an exploitative system through the ideological mantle of welfarism. On the other hand, local states also possess enormous potentiality to be used and organised as an arena of class struggle through which labouring classes may attempt to further the causes of democracy and freedom.

In exploring the situation of local state (local government) in the peripheral situation the nature, role and functions of the central state should be explored first. Because 'the state'[4] at the top is very central in the whole gamut of capitalist development in the peripheral society, even the classes (specially the dominant one's) are to a large extent formed at the direct patronage of the state. So the role of the state in organising local government could be understood properly by analysing the nature of the central state in relation to the nature of the dominant classes, their coalitions and alliances[5] as existing in the historical specificity of a particular state as well as the dynamics of relationship between the dominant and the dominated classes.

The Class Problematic of State

In the study of the nature of the state the problematic of class is one of the most hotly contested concepts. It is often remarked that Marx never

systematically defined and elaborated the concept of class in spite of its centrality in his works (Wright 1985: 86, and Bardhan 198:167). Later on, various Marxist theorists attempted to define the essential properties of the concept of class by drawing on various writings of Marx. These discussions often took the wrong direction. One of the often-repeated mistakes is that of diluting the concept of class with the 'social stratification' theories of 'bourgeois social science'. This tendency to 'dilute' the class concept derives in part from a similarity between the two approaches. In social stratification theory, ownership of wealth, levels of income, education, social status and the like are regarded as some of the basic criteria. Similarly in some of the Marxian analysis, ownership of the means of production is considered the only determining factor for categorising of social groups as classes.[6] The ownership of the means of production is indeed important but isolating ownership from the social relations of production make the class concept as static as the 'bourgeois theory' of social stratification. By quoting Marx (Capital-vol-1 and Grundrisse), Kitching (1980:439-41) and Shiviji (197:5-8) argued that the concept of class is more firmly premised on the social relations of production than on juridical property relation, though the property relations is an essential component of class composition. The use of the phrase 'ownership' in Marx is (according to Shivji) is meant to convey the idea of a social relationship of man to man not man to object (p-6). To be used coherently by Marxists, the concept of ownership has to be consistent with the Marxist concept of the control and appropriation of the surplus by one group from another. So, the class concept is basically relational', referring to relationships established in the sphere of production, circulation and exchange. Those relationships are rooted in exploitation, and exploitation makes the relationship antagonistic.[7]

This relational view of class also tends to be reductionist when classes are defined merely in economic terms i.e. as a function of determinate relations of production and circulation located in the historical development of two polarised classes of masters and slaves, lords and serfs, bourgeoisie and proletariat at opposite ends of the social spectrum. The ambiguity arising from this orthodox view is manifold. Firstly it denies or ignores the complex picture of the class relationship which Marx described as 'fractions', 'factions', 'social categories' 'strata' and other actors in the social and political spheres. For example he referred to the following social and political actors: 'large landowners', 'peasants', 'petty bourgeoisie', 'lumpen proletariat', in the various stages of social conflict.[8] Secondly, the orthodox view undermines the role of classes in political and ideological struggles, 'contradictory location of classes' in political and ideological

movements, alliance and coalition of classes, compromise and conflict within the coalition which change the nature of regimes and state in the social formations where more than one mode (s) of production exist in mutually contradictory and conciliatory conjunctural relationships.

It is important to consider property relations (either in their juridical form or in terms of ownership patterns), in determining the class position, but reducing it to the economic domain, and ignoring the political and ideological factors is misleading. In determining the nature of the state on the basis of the character of dominant and dominated classes within the state, one should make effort to overcome this limitation, especially in the peripheral social formations where classes are formed and struggles for class domination are located at the political (super-structural) levels (Figure 3.1) too.

In order to understand class in relations to the forms of state and the ruling regime, Poulantzas (1973:229-252) provided a complex model of class relationship. He divided classes into four categories according to their relation to state power: the 'hegemonic class', 'reigning class' 'allied classes' and 'supporting classes'. By 'hegemonic class' he means the one which in the final analysis holds 'political power ' and by 'reigning class' Poulantzas refers to those who occupy and control the state apparatus by virtue of their high political, military and administrative positions. These two classes together constitute the 'Power Bloc' who accommodate each other politically, economically and ideologically. Sometime their interests are not identical but competing and contradictory. The other two broad classes are composed of heterogeneous elements. The allied classes are linked to the power bloc at one or other specific economic, political or ideological level and find it opposing the power bloc at others. The supporting classes support the dominant bloc either because of fear of oppression or on account of certain concessions they receive. The entry of an allied class into 'power bloc' or withdrawal of support by supporting class may sometime change the form of a regime and composition of power bloc but the form of state remains the same.

In the context of the peripheral state, the absence of a clearly visible hegemonic class means that a fraction of the 'reigning' class' and or allied class fills this gap with the help of foreign capital from the metropolitan bourgeoisie. Our analysis of class phenomena in the central and local state will focus mainly on the interaction between the power bloc and the other two classes-allied and supporting classes. Class formation and class action themselves change along with the various phases of the state, such as in the transition from a colonial to post colonial state and post-colonial to peripheral capitalist stages.

State and classes in Post Colonial societies

The debate was initiated by Alavi (1972) after his seminal essay on the state in post-colonial societies. The essay drew on empirical evidence from Pakistan and Bangladesh. As the present study also concerns Bangladesh, and despite the nearly four decades that have passed since its publication, the Alavian model of the state has been chosen as a starting point. However, the theory of the state in post colonial societies has undergone many changes as contributions from different dimensions (particularly from the African and Latin American contexts) have been added.

Alavi chooses to follow a distinctly different theoretical path from two of the established Marxian models of the state: 'the Executive Committee Model' and the 'Bonapartist Model'.[9] His third line has been termed 'the-post colonial state' model, in which the formation of capitalist society and the state is deeply rooted in the post colonial domination exercised by the 'metropolitan bourgeoisie'. In metropolitan societies, the indigenous bourgeois class has played the vital role in the creation of a nation state, while in the colonial societies; the state-super-structure was imposed on the colony in order to 'exercise domination over the indigenous classes'. As a result classes were not formed at the level of production but at the level of the political superstructure. One of the major theses Alavi developed out of this analysis is that of the 'overdeveloped' nature of the colonial and subsequently also the post colonial state (p-61) in relation to its own structural requirements. In the colonies, the civil-military bureaucracy was over-developed in the sense that while the coercive and administrative structures were made stronger, the other social structures such as political parties, pressure groups and other social classes were given little scope to develop. The second thesis put forwarded by Alavi is the 'relative autonomy' of the post colonial state. Because of the absence of a single hegemonic class, these contending and competing classes' i.e. the metropolitan bourgeoisie, indigenous bourgeoisie and civil-military oligarchy, all have a share in controlling the state. As the indigenous bourgeoisie is underdeveloped, the 'Civil-military bureaucratic oligarchy' assumes the role of mediator between all the contending classes, including the land owning classes. The other classes accept the autonomous role of the state and bureaucracy because they are able to pursue their class interests within this arrangement (p-60). So the state, instead of being used and occupied by a single class, offers a locus of mediation between the different classes in the coalition.

Further to these two main thesis the centrality of the bureaucratic oligarchy is elaborated by adding two more factors which are specific to Pakistan and Bangladesh. Firstly, the post colonial state directly appropriates a large economic surplus and deploys it in bureaucratically directed economic activities in the name of development. This extends bureaucratic dominance over subordinate (Supporting' and 'allied') classes such as peasants and workers (p-62). Secondly, the autonomy of the bureaucratic oligarchy is not violently challenged by politicians and political parties. As Alavi pointed out the relationship between the two is complementary, and political parties play the role of a partner i.e. as a 'third component of the oligarchy' (p-63). Thirdly, the metropolitan bourgeoisie attaches great value to strengthening the role of the bureaucratic oligarchy, because this helps the former pursue its economic interests with minimum political risk (p-75). Alavi considers the metropolitan bourgeoisie as the greatest beneficiary of bureaucratic military rule in the third world (p-70).

Critique of Alavi

Alavi's theory of the state has been the object of considerable debate. Among the writers on Africa, Saul (1974) felt able to associate the Tanzanian state with the two principles Alvian state characteristics of 'overdevelopment' and 'relative autonomy', and added a third feature- the special 'ideological' role of the post-colonial state. To Saul, the ideological function of the post colonial state bears special significance, because it creates a hegemonic position within quite artificial territorial boundaries (p-351). The state thus creates an environment of legitimacy of rule within a given territory by using various ideological notions such as language, religion and culture. In the first twenty years of Pakistan's independence, the state fought a relentless ideological battle, placing religion above everything else as the basis for territorial unity. In contrast, in the Eastern Wing (now Bangladesh), it was nationalist (i.e. anti-Pakistani, pro-separatist and pro-liberation) forces that played the cards of economic discrimination, language and culture. Like Alavi, Saul also placed greater emphasis on the 'centrality of state', which led him to focus on the importance of those who staff the state apparatus, to whom he refers as the bureaucratic military oligarchy (p-351). However, Saul does not quite agree with Alavi about the role of the bureaucracy: it cannot be appropriately fulfilled merely by virtue of being members of bureaucracy, but by virtue of being and effective class, and as a result of the specific position of that class in the existing production relations (p-354). Another critic Colin Leys (1976) totally rejects the theoretical premise of the 'overdeveloped state' as

misleading and superficial (p-41). He understands that to underscore the significance of the state one must start from the premise of class, and not move analytically from the state to class. Ley considers the idea of the overdeveloped state in both Alavi and Saul's account is the reversal of proper 'order' and 'procedure' (p-43).

Regarding the relative autonomy thesis, Wood (1977:307-323) having studied rural development in the Indian State of Bihar concludes that since the capitalist mode of production has become the dominant mode, the administrative behaviour in the post colonial state of India has become increasingly instrumental. The 'relative autonomy'[10] of the state apparatus is undermined as a response to the emergence of legislatures, political parties and new forms of class differentiation and, finally, with the ascendance of the capitalist mode of production over other mode (s). Bardhan (1984) on the other hand does not seek to refute either the 'over development' as well as autonomous aspect of the state. In his view, overdevelopment even goes back to pre-colonial days during the peak period of Moghul rule (p-37). He also holds the view that the Indian state is indeed relatively autonomous in its regulatory (and hence patronage dispensing) role (p-39).

In view of the above discussion, it is generally agreed that attention should be focused on the 'centrality of state' and the dominant role of the bureaucracy. Another necessary item in that agenda has to be to locate the precise class nature of the so-called bureaucracy in relation to other classes, which ultimately perpetuates the phenomenon of overdevelopment and relative (state) autonomy, as well as examining whether relative autonomy is really undermined as Wood indicated. On the other hand, Alavi's three-class coalition (metropolitan bourgeoisie; indigenous bourgeoisie including landlords; and bureaucratic oligarchy) is too simplistic and naive to rely on and requires further elaboration (not to refute but to strengthen it) to take account of the contemporary formation and differentiation of classes in the 'power bloc' of the central state as well as at the local level. For example, the growing role of petty bourgeoisie and 'lumpen proletariat' is a phenomenon which is not quite taken care of in Alavian model.

The formation and differentiation of the classes prominent in the broader power coalition progressed in such a complex manner due to the far reaching changes which had occurred in society. First of all, the sizes of the civil society in the periphery increased to significant extent due to simple demographic growth; population almost doubled from the colonial to the post colonial era.[11] These demographic increases gradually exhausted the capacity of hegemonic coalition formed by the metropolitan bourgeoisie and civil-military bureaucratic oligarchy to

keep a firm hold on the state without further extending its alliances. Secondly the creation of the nation state opened the floodgates for the emergence of a new generation of intermediate classes (petty bourgeoisie of different varieties) with the expansion of education, the professions, the state sector as well as the market in their own protective style (Jahangir, 1986). Thirdly, the greater penetration of capitalist production and exchange relations sharpened differentiation among the peasantry, separating a great number from the basic means of production: their land (Rahman, 1986). To the extent that Bangladeshi capitalism was peripheral and unproductive in nature, it tended to create a disposable mass, a 'surplus population' of 'paupers' and 'lumpens' rather than a 'proletariat' proper. The displacement of peasants from agriculture was not followed by their absorption in industry. This phenomenon of the emergence of the petty bourgeoisie and lumpen proletariat as distinct social classes in the peripheral societies has contributed to the new class configuration in the power relations of peripheral states. The study will examine in detail the nature of local state in its various dimensions under peripheral capitalism on the basis of emerging new social classes and their coalition.

Emergence of the petty bourgeoisie as a ruling class in the peripheral societies.

Due to the inherent weakness of Bangladesh's own bourgeoisie and the strong influence of the 'metropolitan' or international bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie emerged as ruling class (albeit politically) in the post colonial phases of most of the countries of peripheral societies.[12]

The petty bourgeoisie is neither a fully formed class nor a homogeneous body of people. It is basically a class-in-formation, composed of people engaged in wide range of economic activities, such as small and medium scale farming, petty trade, small industries, salaried and professional jobs.

Sometimes many of these types of employment are combined in one family of a hybrid class. Petty bourgeoisie is not regarded as a partner of dominant classes by the size of their wealth and property in economic scale but by their bourgeois aspiration and pursuit of hegemony along with the bourgeoisie. As far as the detailed stratification within the petty bourgeoisie itself Shivji (1977) provided a diagram (Figure 3.3) from his experience of the Tanzanian Society which is almost identical to other societies of peripheral nature.

Though the petty bourgeoisie is not an entirely new phenomenon in post colonial society, its presence in the developed capitalist

societies is also felt strongly[13] not as a ruling class but mostly as a reigning class or as part of the allied classes.[14] it is only under the social formation of peripheral capitalism and specifically at its immediate post colonial era that the petty bourgeoisie of different strata,[15] because of their acquaintance with the former colonial and present international bourgeoisie and also because of strong affiliation with the mass of workers and peasants during the anti-colonial struggle, is able to command the post colonial state. The ruling fraction of the petty bourgeoisie gradually assumes the scale of a hegemonic class jointly with the international capitalists in the neo-colonial[16] power bloc. In Regis Debray's words, the petty bourgeoisie "does not possess an infrastructure of economic power before it wins political power, hence it seeks to transform the state not only into an instrument of political domination but also into a source of economic power. The state culmination of social relations of exploitation in capitalist Europe becomes in a certain sense the instrument of their installation in these countries."

Figure 3.3: The Petty Bourgeoisie: As stratified by Shivji (1978. p.88)

Bureaucratic' Bourgeoisie	Politico-Administrative	Political heads of government ministries and departments (central and local) and their top civil servants: heads and top functionaries in the judiciary, police and security: and the top leadership of the party.
	Economic	Heads and higher functionaries of parastatals, public corporations, and other quasi-economic, either state-run or state supervised Institutions (co-operatives, marketing boards, higher educational institutions. Included).
	Military	top military officers
Upper Sector	General Intelligentsia	Intellectuals, teachers. higher civil servants. professionals;
	Others	prosperous traders, farmers, transporters, businessmen, executives in private firms, etc.
Middle Sector		Middle-level government and parastatal salariat; middle level salariat In the private sector; teachers; urbanized rich farmers; soldiers; police and other security cadres and middle -level bureaucracy and the Parly cadres.
Lower Sector		Small shop-keepers, self -employed craftsmen including mechanics, tailors, shoemakers, etc.; lower salaried in the tertiary sector and generally the lower grades of the salaried.

In Kenya and Tanzania, the petty bourgeoisie 'parachuted' themselves in the private sector of the economy by using the state's access to special financial arrangements, training programmes and through manipulation of licenses (Saul 1974:354). Mahmood Mamdani (1975) and Issa shivji (1977), while analysing class formation and class struggle in Uganda and Tanzania respectively, drew similar conclusions. According to Mamdani, the

> "Petty- bourgeoisie located both within the state (bureaucracy) and outside of it (landlord and traders) accumulate capital in two different ways but ultimately reach the same goal. One group prefers to create public property and establish indirect control through its control over the state and the other group uses the state to expand private property. Thus they initially transform themselves into a commercial bourgeoisie."

Shivji's (1978) petty bourgeoisie also through the same process reincarnate them as 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie' (pp 49-97). While accepting the petty bourgeoisie as a ruling class in a specific historic conjuncture, many of the theorists do not term them a 'class proper' but a 'class-in-formation' i.e. in transitional phase (Thomas 1984:70).

Proletarianisation and lumpentsation under peripheral societies

Instead of using the terms i.e. proletariat and lumpen, the verbs proletarianisation and lumpenisation have been consciously used so as to reflect the fluidity of a social and political process, which classic concepts such as proletariat and lumpen-proletariat are less well-equipped to elucidate. Marx used the term proletariat basically for attributing a revolutionary character to the working class of industrial origin. Later Lenin[17], Mao-Tse-Tung (1962) and other Marxists reformulated the concept to apply it in the agrarian context in which social differentiation was continuing a pace. Room is still left for a reformulation of the concept in relation to state and society under peripheral capitalism. In the present study our enquiry is directed at the fuller exploration of the concept of 'Lumpen Proletariat', which is assumed to be an aberrant or subversive section of the proletariat and takes a reactionary role in class struggle. As a corollary to the concept of 'proletariat' is also identified by Marx with industry and the city (see especially his views of the 'slum proletariat'. Marx 1926:141). As a result of its original treatment, the analysis of the emergence and subsequent political behaviour of the `lumpen proletariat' in the agrarian and rural context suffers from substantial theoretical inadequacy. To resolve the problem, 'the process of lumpenisation' here has been reformulated on the basis of Marx's theory of the 'relative

surplus population' and 'industrial reserve army'. This may help to elucidate the struggle for political dominance in the impoverished non-industralised societies of the world and the use and abuse of the so-called lower classes in pursuit of bourgeois interests. The concept of 'Surplus Population' is used in Marx (capital vol-3:796) to locate precisely the floating mass of labourers expelled from agriculture and industry. However, a distinction is made between the 'industrial reserve army' and 'relative surplus population' with regard to the historical process of their integration into capitalism (Gerry 1979:51). The surplus population is only considered as a reserve army 'on the point of their passing over' into the 'manufacturing sector' (Capital vol-3:796). The special significance of the industrial reserve army as characterised by Marx is that its existence keeps the wages of the worker at minimum subsistence levels (p-796). Marx identified the lumpen proletariat, as composed of 'the lowest sediment of the relative surplus population which dwells in the sphere of pauperism' i.e. those unable to find employment even at subsistence wages, and, categorically included vagabonds, criminals, prostitutes, the demoralised, the ragged etc. (p-797). According to Marx, pauperism is both the cause and effect which reproduces the lumpen proletariat; the consequences of this process affect other classes such as the petty bourgeoisie and the working class. He wrote,

> "Pauperism is the hospital of the active labour army and dead weight of the Industrial reserve army ...pauperism forms a condition of capitalist production and of the capitalist development of wealth. It forms part of the *faux frais* (incidental expenses) of capitalist production: but capital usually knows how to transfer these from its own shoulders to those of the working class and petty bourgeoisie (Capital vol 3:797)."

The dimensions of pauperisation and lumpenisation of the surplus population of underdeveloped peripheral societies is far greater than Marx had in mind for 19th century Europe. Mao Tse-Tung (1962) addressed with great anxiety the dilemma of proletariat and lumpen proletariat in one of his seminal essays. He wrote that, while the overwhelming majority of semi-owners, poor peasants and farm labourers (along with the small handicraftsmen, shop assistants and peddlers) compose the largest segment of the proletarian masses of Chinese society, there was also a fairly large number of lumpen proletarians who had been 'difficult to handle'; they were 'brave fighters but apt to be destructive' (p-9). His preoccupation deepened when he wrote that they could easily be controlled and utilised by landlords, the petty bourgeoisie and finally the oppressive state. In this way, lumpen proletarians can become of their 'blind destructiveness'. For instance

Chiang Kai-Shek made use of them in his counter revolutionary *coup d'etat* in 1927 to destroy the communists in Shanghai (p-13): the 'lumpen proletariat' in China was organised in many secret as well as open organisations and some of them used arms for both offensive and defensive purposes.

Through the present theoretical focus on the Third World process of lumpenisation, we want to address the issue of the 'blind destructiveness' and 'reactionary role' of a section of the lower classes which is constantly being used and abused by the dominant classes for their own economic and political gain. While this emerging surplus population can be described by many names i.e. 'lumpen proletariat', 'marginal class' (Quijano 1974), or 'underclass' (Johnson, 1973); its members after all constitute a separate social class (Roxborough, 1979: 86). The Political behaviour of any class or group is not an inherent function of the class itself; but rather a result of its interaction with other classes in the context of the overall political system (Roxborough, 1979:87). In today's peripheral capitalist societies Bonapartist regimes frequently employ the destructive and reactionary potential of the lumpen proletariat in pursuit of their own accumulation (discussed via empirical evidence in chapter 9, 10 and 11).

The contribution of Frank (1972) in this respect has further clarified the phenomenon of lumpenisation from a peripheral capitalist perspective. Lumpenisation in the peripheral capitalist context carries a wider meaning which transcends the boundary of the lower classes or surplus population. Frank also characterised the bourgeoisie of the dependent capitalist countries as a "lumpen bourgeoisie". Thus "lumpen", used as an adjective, characterises certain subversive responses and behaviour patterns of dependent bourgeoisie in peripheral societies. In the contemporary peripheral societies violence of different kinds plays a prominent role, especially in establishing control over the state and state resources. The 'criminalisation of politics' and the emergence of 'gangsterism' have become very familiar aspects in many of the peripheral states.[18] The exploration of the effects and causes of lumpenisation on the nature of the local and central state in Bangladesh may be an interesting development to be observed in the subsequent empirical chapters.

The Bangladesh Experience

The state of Bangladesh has presented a classic case of a petty bourgeois regime throughout its 40 years of post independence existence since 1971. The ascendance of the traditional and new petty

bourgeoisie to state power as a conjointly dominant class, was facilitated by many different historical factors. One of the reasons is summarised by Lindquist (1977:15)

> "Bangladesh is perhaps unique for having deported its feudal landed class-which was mostly Hindu - to India in 1947, and then for having deported its bourgeoisie mostly from West Pakistan to Pakistan at independence in 1971. The leading class that remained could roughly be termed as the petty bourgeoisie.[19]

The Bangladeshi petty bourgeoisie was created and developed to its present level of power during the twenty five years of Pakistani rule. This was partly due to wishes of the West Pakistani 'power bloc' to create an 'allied' and 'supporting' class in East Pakistan, and partly due to the local struggle against semi-colonial Pakistani rule (sobhan 1980). The main segments of the Bengali middle stratum started to grow, firstly through entry into education and thence into government jobs; and secondly, through retail and wholesale business, petty contracts and sub-contracts, small import licenses and the like. However, up to 1960, the share of state patronage was still very disproportionate. East Pakistan shared less than 10 percent of civil and military appointments, 7 percent of import licenses, 18 percent of Bank deposits, 10 per cent of insurance ownership and unto 1960 only 3 per cent of Pakistan's industrial assets.[20] The Pakistani government after 1960 under the compulsion of a party-building initiative, made a conscious attempt to create subordinate ally out of the rising Bengali petty bourgeoisie. Entry of Bengalis into the state bureaucracy was facilitated. By 1969 the entire provincial administration was manned by Bengalis, Government expenditure also increased from Rs. 1970 million in 1959-60 to Rs 11060 million in 1969-70, which expedited the growth of the bureaucracy and also a small group of compradors through associated trade, business, and construction and supply contracts.[21] On the other hand, this pattern of protected patronage of semi-colonial relations was gradually alienating the vast bulk of the growing 'Eastern' petty bourgeoisie, making them the natural leaders of the nationalist movement. The nationalist movement culminated in independence and separation from Pakistan; the creation of Bangladesh on 16th December 1971, was a triumph for the growing petty bourgeoisie of Bangladesh.

Within three months of independence, all industrial units of asset value over TK. 1.5 million were nationalised by an ordinance. Besides the industries banks, insurance companies and the like, the houses, business and other small properties of Urdu speaking Pakistani citizens were also nationalised and confiscated. The private investment ceiling was frozen at TK 2.5 million. The administration and management of nationalised industrial, commercial and property units were vested in

most cases in political appointees. State control on exports and imports was also tightened; similarly import and various trade licenses were distributed among party stalwarts. Thus nationalisation benefited on a massive scale those among petty bourgeoisie who belonged to the ruling clique. Within two years the investment ceiling was raised from 2.5 million to 30 million to enable the ruling petty bourgeoisie to reincarnate themselves as the country's new bourgeoisie. Far-reaching nationalisation had opened up the opportunity to the ruling factions of the petty bourgeoisie to accumulate huge private fortunes.

A bloody military coup toppled the first Bangladeshi regime in 1975. Thereafter, the investment ceiling was raised to 100 million and a policy of denationalisation was adopted, under which 60 percent of nationalised industries, banks and insurance companies were privatised within 5 years (Akash 1987). These disinvested mills, factories and businesses were acquired by the same groups who were initially benefited by nationalisation.Since 1971, the ruling regime has been changed seven times, but the state has remained in the hands of the same petty bourgeoisie which has rapidly transformed itself from a petty bourgeoisie to a new commercial and state-sponsored bourgeoisie.

In championing the class interests of the petty bourgeoisie, the state confronts many tensions and crises caused by its weak class base, especially when its decisions or actions alienate the allied classes, or creates serious conflict within the existing coalition of petty-bourgeoisie fractions, In all those crisis situations, the ruling faction of the petty bourgeoisie has both used the services of lumpens and coopted some lumpen elements into the coalition. On such occasions, the state has gradually divided itself territorially and functionally to diffuse the tension concentrated at the centre. Territorial and functional expansion (e.g. taking the form of 'decentralisation') of the state at local level helps to consolidate and reintegrate the alienated faction and revitalise the vertical class relations between the upper and lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie. In this way the coalition of petty bourgeois fractions is repaired and strengthened.

Section III: Capital and State under Peripheral Capitalism

Capital theorists of the state emphasise the centrality of the accumulation of capital which in their terms (Hirsch 1978, Muller and Neususs, 1978 and Blanke et al 1978) determine the class relations and thereby change the nature of the state. In short, the logic of capita accumulation determines the logic of state action. The State is seen as an appendage of capital. The Capital theory of the state was advanced in opposition to the problems associated with the crisis theories of the state, which gave greater emphasis to the crisis of capitalist accumulation (O'Connor 1973 & 1987, Offe 1975 & 1976 and Habermas 1976). Capital theories of the state were premised on the theoretical abstraction of the relations of production and the process of social reproduction.

According to the capital theory of the state, capital assumes different forms at different historical stages of the social development of production. The dominant form of capital shapes the state and society according to its own image. For example, state and society differ substantially from one social epoch to another. In one stage, merchant capital is dominant, while in other stage industrial capital subordinates it. Merchant capital does not produce any commodity; it only transfers the commodity from one hand to another without adding any new value to it. On the other hand industrial capital revolutionises production and in the process of production increases the value of the commodity by creating and recreating it (Kay 1975:87). With the development of industrial capitalism, merchant capital took on a subordinate role in the core capitalist countries. The situation in the underdeveloped peripheral societies is quite different from that of the core capitalist countries. Capitalist penetration in these peripheral societies did not release their productive forces. As a result merchant capital, instead of being smashed by industrial capital, became subordinate to it or existed in parallel.

Peripheral capitalist systems are generally related to the global capitalist system mainly through trade and commerce. The industrial capitalism of the developed world, without destroying its inherited empire of merchant capital turned the periphery to the advantage of its own 'core' industrial growth (Kay 1975: 97). The periphery was left as the final outpost of merchant capital as the subordinate agent of 'core' industrial capital (Kay 1975:97-100).This type of dominance of merchant capital in the peripheral societies is associated with a relative lack of social and economic development. In Marx's view

> "the independent development of merchant capital ...stands in inverse proportion to the general economic development of society (Marx, Capital Vol-3:328).

As Alavi pointed out (1982a) it inhibits the growth of productive capacity and productive forces in the periphery as virtually the entire circuit of production'is retained in the core societies. By this way many of the post colonial societies are turned into a merchant state and protected market of neo-colonial powers. A comprador bourgeoisie

and a trading class emerge under the patronage of metropolitan capital which, in collaboration with international industrial capital, occupies and manages the peripheral state.

Merchant capital makes a profit by controlling the market without making a substantial contribution to production. Exercising a general control over the market is of key importance because the greater the control merchant capital can impose, the higher is the profit it can make (Kay 1975:96). For this reason, merchant capital tends to develop a tendency to rely more on the support of the state, whereas industrial capital develops its own base outside the state, in civil society. The predominance of merchant capital in society makes the state authoritarian and interventionist. In analysing Kenyan development, Kitching (1980) found merchant capital to be the dominant form of capital which had shaped the policy of the state. The accumulation of capital is performed mostly through merchant capital; this structure of dominance is largely controlled by the petty bourgeoisie as a class, by its occupation of the important positions in the state or in exchange relations. The state stands at the key interaction in the network of all exchanges between commodities and money, and between national and international capital (p-413). The state itself derives its surplus from its classic middleman role and the petty bourgeoisie through the state machinery appropriates its share of those surpluses. The Kenyan petty bourgeoisie thus made the state an indebted appendage of world capitalism.

In Bangladesh, because of the predominance of the petty bourgeoisie in the power bloc, merchant capital rules over nascent productive capital. When merchant capital comes into conflict with industrial capital, in most cases the former wins (Umar 1986:21-26). Under increased pressure from international capital the state very often sets the import policy in such a way that the terms of trade favours commercial and merchant interests over both nascent industry and traditional agriculture. As a result, surplus generated from various economic activities even from agriculture is not reinvested in agriculture, but rather transferred into usury, petty business and other speculative areas. By this way 'unproductive and antediluvian' capital constantly transforms the society (Wood: 1981) in its own image.

Like the Kenyan state, the Bangladeshi state largely depends for its own reproduction on the appropriation of surplus generated by mercantile activities. Seventy percent of the state revenue is collected from license fees, import duties, sales taxes and other indirect taxes paid by the consumer in the market.[22] Since independence, though a section of the petty bourgeoisie has acquired enough wealth and

material resources to start a process of 'embourgeoisement' by establishing industry, still the process of direct plunder and quick gain through various trade manipulations predominates. As a result, new industrial ventures started after 1976 show clear signs of distress. Productivity, employment and credit repayment are all showing downward trends.[23] The new industrialists through over invoicing and under invoicing of import and export transactions, have been transferring credit to foreign countries instead of using it to invest in industry. Industrial credits are diverted to non productive ventures like construction of houses in big cities, sending children abroad for higher education, buying houses and investing in foreign banks for secure income. The situation has become so desperate that during the financial year 1989-90, foreign exchange reserves reached an all time low level and all import credit licenses were suspended. The Finance Minister admitted that large scale transfers of foreign exchange had been undertaken by powerful sections of society and resigned from the cabinet.[24]

The Petty-bourgeois process of the accumulation of capital does not depend on productive investment, rather on speculation, authoritarian control of market and even in many cases direct plunder through fraudulent practices and robbery and also spend them in conspicuous consumption rather than productive investment. Productive capital either in industry or in agriculture is forced by its productive imperative to behave in a civilised manner (Kay, 1975:101) because of its inherent necessity of expanded reproduction and to ensure the constant supply of labour power. The growth of the labour force, along with the development of production, also acts as an antidote to the 'civilised' behaviour of the state and the dominant classes. The west's adoption of welfarism and liberal democracy was one response to the changing role of capital towards a productive non-mercantilst mode of accumulation. The local state under this system performs the essential 'servicing role' to the capitalist accumulation process by sharing the variable cost of production (Cockburn 1977) which also saves the labourers from the exploitation of absolute nature. On the contrary, merchant and trading capital do not need productive forces for its direct reproduction. The reasons are many. Firstly the growing surplus population make labour cheap and abundant in those societies for which capitalists require no social investment for the reproduction of labour power except the maintenance of the *status quo* of subsistence agriculture and authoritarian state (which is enough for the extraction of absolute surplus value). Secondly, the process of accumulation which is predominant in those societies does not require labour to add any additional value to the commodity; it only needs

them as buyers or consumers. As a result, these societies need a structure of local state which can maintain the *status quo* so as to enable the central ruling class to continue its process of accumulation. An autonomous local state as a constant source of healthy, educated and skilled labour is not the social imperative for the accumulation process which is being pursued in most peripheral societies.

Section IV: Theory of Crisis and State under Peripheral Capitalism

The term 'crisis' carries more weight in popular use than in scholarly theorising.[25] It generally refers to any major abnormality, disorder, dislocation or other critical situation in the day-to-day of individuals, communities and nations. Crises may develop in government or, in the stock market. In spite of its loose and popular use, the term 'crisis' has a long historical pedigree as a theoretical concept, going back as far as the pre-scientific contributions of the Ancient Greeks. The theory of crisis was finally given a scientific sociological basis by Marx (Habarmas 1976:364), however, before and after Max many Marxists and non-Marxists added new dimensions to it.[26] The common object of analysis in 'crisis theory' is the growth of the crisis as a result of capitalistic expansion and the ways and means deployed to combat those crises.

In our present discussion we will concentrate on the growing crisis of the state (specially the peripheral state) and its subsequent management. Particular attention will be paid to the role of local state and local government in such crisis management ventures. Before going on to the specific crisis in peripheral capitalist society, a brief review will be given of the theory of 'the general crisis of capitalism' and the 'crisis of legitimatimacy' in the 'late capitalist societies'.

The General Crisis of Capitalism

The periodic recurrence of crisis is a common phenomenon indissolubly linked to the existence of capitalism itself. The key to this crisis tendency is the falling 'rate of profit', which poses a threat to the ever growing need for capitalists to accumulate. The processes of appropriation of surplus value over time give rise to two contradictory and irreconcilable results. On the one hand it witnesses continuous growth and development of social productivity and the social character of production. On the other hand there is a contraction and decrease of the consumption capacity of the producers because of the ever higher rate of exploitation; as a result there is a danger of commodities

remaining unsold or to be at low price which ultimately will bring down the rate of profit (Arrighi 1978). In that situation the greater the level of production, the more will be the fall in profit. On the other hand, cuts in production are to be avoided as they lead to stagnation. Labour conflict arises as a reaction to both exploitation and stagnation. As capitalism is a world system, it brings about a global crisis for the growth and expansion of capitalism. This global crisis necessitates state intervention in various ways. The experience of global economic crisis since 2008 may be an example to be cited.

Measures taken to combat the crisis

The prime measure the bourgeoisie adopts to resolve the crisis is assigning the state the role as a kind *of deux ex machine*, to avert the danger by suppressing labour conflicts, expanding public spending and imposing structural reforms to root out the parasitism lurking in the cores of capitalist society (Arrighi 1978:8). The state simultaneously tends to intervene by increasing society's power of consumption and, in combating labour conflicts, deploys 'legal' as well as 'violent' means. It attempts to extend the base of consumption through the expansion of unproductive consumption (military expenditure, growth of the state and state bureaucracy, maintenance and defense of parasitic income such as rent, interest and usury) which ultimately throw the capitalist state into a new phase of crisis which O'Connor called the fiscal crisis (1973). As capitalism is a world system the general crisis (over production and under consumption) and other subsequent crises of labour unrest, fiscal crisis, recession and inflation have global implications from which the peripheral capitalist countries cannot escape. Moreover, such crises affect those of the peripheral countries more severely because of their weak production base.

Aside from the general analysis of capitalist crisis, based mainly on the objective economic aspects of production and consumption, a host of new ideas have also been put forward (O'Connor 1987) which combine subjective political, social and cultural aspects in parallel with an objective analysis of the economic basis of production. One group (Arrighi 1978) holds the view that capitalist crisis is inevitable and perpetual, as 'the state is the product of contradictions of society, its ability to overcome these crises is strictly conditioned by the very contradiction on which it is supposed to act' (Arrighi 1978:8). Another group (Habermas 1976, O'Connor 1973, Offe 1975) thinks that 'the principle on which 'late capitalism' is organised has changed so much that the process of accumulation no longer produces such problems which threaten its existence' in totality (Habermas 1976:365).

Crisis of late capitalism: problems of legitimation

The free, competitive market ideology was the 'Jesus' and 'Moses' of classical capitalism, which was grossly eroded due to its dysfunctional side effects. In the late capitalist period, the state stepped in to replace the gap created by the free development of the market. With the occasional collapses of the market, bourgeois ideology also collapses. The ideological gap left capitalists in a so-called crisis of legitimacy. The state now had to play the vital role of continuing the accumulation process by guaranteeing the conditions necessary for the production process. But it also needed its expanded area of intervention to be seen as legitimate (Habermas 1976:367). Offe (1973) described the phenomenon through an input output matrix. As capitalist societies face this ideological crisis in their advanced or later stages, the gap has to be filled by the state. The state as a system needs legitimate forces to deploy. The 'output' then consists of autocratically executed administrative decisions by the state for which it requires mass loyalty as an input. The need to achieve and maintain this loyalty and obedience, frequently pushes a 'normal' capitalist crisis into deeper crisis of bourgeois legitimacy' (Habermas 1976:367).

The legitimating process could be arranged in many ways. One of the ways may be the promotion of a 'universalistic' view of civil rights and the right to participate in general political activities (such as elections and meetings). This type of formal democracy will meet both the above needs: it gives the administration or state a sufficiently autonomous role to execute decisions of its own choice. On the other hand it secures the loyalty of the masses by cultivating a sense of passive participation (Habarmas 1976:367).

According to Habarmas, the state draws together three areas of interests i.e. individual capitalist interest, total capitalist interest and generalised interest, in order to pave the way for compromise between competing claims. In order to attain the first two objectives the third one is reflected in the initiatives of organising ideological (popular participation and democracy), cultural (establishing schools, planning curriculum etc) and marginal social benefits (National Health Service & social security). Urban Sociologists such as Castells (1975, 1977 and 1978). Saunders (1979), Cawson (1978) and Cockburn (1977) have concentrated on the function of the local state from these basic legitimating and crisis management functions of capitalist state. Others like Gyford (1983), Stewart (1984) and Hambleton and Hogelt (1984) looked at the crisis as transforming factor for using the local state as an arena of class struggle through which working class can occupy and reform it.

Nature of crisis management in under-developed capitalist societies

In underdeveloped capitalist societies, where capitalist accumulation is dependent, the market mechanism is imperfect, the structure of classes is fluid and production and consumption are both at the lowest level, crisis takes a different route. Clearly its management by the state needs detailed and concrete analysis. However, the concept of legitimating could still prove useful at the political level. Aside from the crisis of legitimating, the principal contributing factor that make the crisis of underdeveloped capitalist countries or peripheral societies were acute, is the fragile and fluid nature of the structure of its ruling class, which manifests certain crucial weaknesses. As the ruling class of the peripheral societies is predominantly petty bourgeois, its intermediate position strung out between bourgeoisie and proletariat and its petty bourgeois individualism make it very difficult for it to organise politically into a specific party of its own (Saul 1974:15). Moreover, the 'swing' and 'pendulum' nature of movements between right and left, between bourgeoisie and proletariat make the state permanently 'unsteady' and 'unstable'. This instability attracts the petty bourgeoisie towards the *status quo*: the threat of revolution leads it to support strong states and Bonapartist regimes, bourgeois aspirations cause it believe in the neutrality of the state and to support measures to minimise social tension through the creation of supra-class populist ideologies such as community participation, local development and decentralisation.

The crisis of petty bourgeois regimes becomes especially acute when a small section elevates itself through forward linkage while the majority fallback and their backward linkage alienate them from the rest. The former get richer the latter get poorer. The fighting within the coalition makes the state more unstable. In most cases the military is brought in to 'rescue' the richer group. All three military coups in Bangladesh from 1958 to 1982 came at such crucial points, and restored the threatened ruling petty bourgeoisie. This made the different factions of petty bourgeoisie- the traditional (small scale traders, producers and property holder) and the new petty bourgeoisie (non productive salariats) cooperate as a single class in pursuit of their common interest of ensuring a stable and strong Bonapartist state.

Local government plays a vital role in petty bourgeoisie's management of the crisis. It is used primarily by Bonapartist regimes to create a political framework or political party (which Alavi (1972) termed as third component of the oligarchy), to recruit some local clients from the lower and middle strata of the petty bourgeoisie and from the surplus population to provide itself with greater support in civil society and to put a mantle of democracy over its own oligarchic rule.

Section V: Specificity of Local State Nexus to Class. Capital and Crisis

The theory of the local State is embedded in the specificity of the state as a particular form of capitalist social relations (Duncan and Goodwin 1982, especially when social relations transcended to a 'local dimension' and culminated to a local level of state institution. Just as the nature, role and levels of capitalist development is very different in the core from the periphery so the nature, role and functions of the local state also vary enormously. The content and context of state activities in the periphery is so different that the concept of the local state (in the 'Western' sense of the term) is inapplicable. The central states in the periphery are so authoritarian and so centralised in their operations that the development of autonomous local social relations centering on state activities at the local level cannot crystalise. The local government institutions which develop there are nothing more than satellites operated by 'remote control' from the centre. The term local state could still be used but it cannot be casually transferred from the core capitalist societies to those of the periphery.

Nature and function of the local state under developed capitalism.

In developed capitalist societies, where society is highly polarised between the large working class and the small dominant minority class of industrialists, the class struggle takes its corresponding shape. The local state is placed here in between the two contending classes. In one sense the local state represents a symbol of victory for the working class movement to share more surpluses from the exploiters class in respect of forcing them to spend more in social consumptions. On the other hand it has also been accepted by capitalists as a means which can be used to restructure and reshape antagonistic class relations by absorbing part of working class and giving them a sense of belongingness with the state, instead of portraying state as an alien force to the workers. This is the capitalist in the ultimate analysis that indirectly benefits the most from the welfare provision of local state. Local state is adopted by them as 'servicing agency' to the general capitalist production process through its contribution in the process of capitalist reproduction. It ensures continued reproduction of educated, healthy and skilled workers by providing the necessary services for the present and future generation of workers. The local state also has its built-in crisis management machinery. When the crisis tendencies of capitalism increase, the burden of legitimising state-induced efforts

falls on the local state, which acts as the 'filter and buffer' between the ruling class and popular demands (Hirsch 1981 : 603). Also, through local politics, the local state assumes the role of a 'symbolic conflict-processing mechanism' (Hirsch 1981: 604).

The local state in developed capitalist societies functions under central legislative, financial and political control. Because of the strength of the organised working class, it remains relatively autonomous in many spheres of its activities. The capitalist does not feel threatened by this autonomy and, as a result, the positive effects of decentralisation take place. Demand for further expansion of local services, or the rising momentum of action groups culminating in local democracy or a municipal socialist movement, can unleash the power of working class through decentralisation.

In short, the local states under developed capitalism perform essential functions in the process of capitalist reproduction and also provide an arena of class struggle to further the interests of labour class.

Local states in peripheral capitalist societies.

Due to the difference in the development of the class structure, the process of capital accumulation and crisis accompanied by them, the nature, function and role of local states in peripheral capitalist countries take shape in a different way and form. The class structure is multi-polar and fluid. The fully formed dominant economic classes do not control the state; classes are formed at the behest of the state and maintain their dominance by using the state as a crutch. The accumulation of capital is also not entirely based on established and stable production requiring skilled labour. As a result, the bourgeois imperative of reproducing a continued supply of labour power is absent from the agenda of the dominant classes in the peripheral social formation. In the absence of an organised productive sector, the working classes are scattered throughout the urban informal sector like 'peasants in the city' and the rural mass or peasantry remain as 'potatoes in a sack'. Capitalist accumulation is primarily based on the circulation of capital through trade and commerce which is regulated by the strong state in an authoritarian manner. As a result, the productive and reproductive imperative of the local slate is virtually absent in the peripheral societies. On the other hand, the dominated or exploited masses are also not able to break the mould of class struggle. Sporadic attempts are ended in most cases in petty bourgeois opportunism. Because in most cases the peasant and workers movements are led by the petty bourgeois elements of so called 'labour

aristocracy' who ultimately betrays with the main objective of the movement (Ahmed 1985).

In spite of the absence of both the developed capitalist imperatives and working class presence, the formation of the local state or extending state activities at the local level still occupies the major agendum of peripheral capitalist states. The initiative generally comes from the chronic crises, which in turn derives from the fluid and weak class base and non productive mode of accumulation. In the absence of sound and fully formed classes, the ruling class is composed of a coalition of various contending classes which are continually striving one against the other (such as civil-military, bureaucracy- politician, rural-urban commerce-industry, commerce-agriculture etc.) These internal struggles weaken the coalition compelling the state to devise some method to keep control of the process of accumulation. The Bonapartist solution of lumpenisation of politics and subjugation of propertied classes take precedence which force the state to resort to violence and institute *coup d'eta*t. One party rule by civil legislation or the direct military intervention in politics (via *coup d'etat* and military rule) and frequent resort to violence are some of the manifestations of this crisis in Bangladesh. The erection of the structure of the local state in those situations is merely to share up or extend the authority of an authoritarian regime in crisis and to legitimise their unconstitutional rule. The new institutional devices of local state or local government merely look for clients among the allied and supporting classes for creating a patron-client network in the polity.

Dilemma of decentralisation and local government - the case of Bangladesh.

The ideals of decentralisation on which local government in Bangladesh is based, is contradicted by its reality and impact. The whole local government initiative is undertaken as a project of the dominant classes (new bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie) to perpetuate their domination over the mass of peasants and workers. The reform of local government ultimately has strengthened the grip of the traditional and new petty bourgeoisie on state power. The hidden objectives were implemented under the rhetorical and ideological cover of 'democracy', 'development' and 'neutrality of state action' all of which were conspicuous by their absence. In order to study Bangladesh's decentralisation effort in its conceptual, political and policy dimensions, a matrix is provided in Figure 3.4. The conceptual level is represented by the rhetoric normally reflected in the formal government policy documents. 'Policy' here refers to the implementation of the

political agenda of the regime hidden behind the formal policy rhetoric. The third level represents from the outputs of the conceptual and policy inputs, which grossly contradicts the ostensibly expected results.

Areas of contradiction between the theories and practice.

1. Decentralisation entails a positive notion of the promotion of democracy, accountability and participation as its theoretical property, whereas the classes and regimes which hold state power cannot afford to allow democracy to function. They consider democracy and participation as a threat to their political power as well as to the process of accumulation. The process of decentralisation which gives more power to the dominated mass of peasant and worker and politicise them may pose a threat to end the process of exploitation as a whole. So the decentralisation process favoured by the ruling class of the peripheral societies in most cases is to depoliticise and disenfranchise the dominated classes, so that they cannot use the local state institutions against the dominant classes.

2. The different factions of the petty bourgeoisie and nascent bourgeoisie solely depend on the actions of the state to serve their class interests. So the contraction of the state (through debureaucratisation, deregulation and decentralisation) goes against their established class interest. The expansion of state sponsored employment, the regulation of the market, and the continuation of a strong state, all help to resolve the crisis with or without using force. As a result, an 'overdeveloped' state, an overgrown bureaucracy, control of market and other process of surplus extraction constitute the real intention of the ruling class, as against the deregulation. debureaucratisation and marketisation as embodied in its policy statements and rhetorical programmes of decentralisation.

Figure 3.4: A Matrix for understanding the impact of decentralisation at micro level macro Levels

MACRO LEVEL

	Conceptual input	Policy input
	Rhetoric of Decentralisation	Hidden class agenda of state behind the policy
1.	Democratic Rhetoric a. Local democracy b. Accountability c. Participation	1. Class project of ruling classes to broaden and consolidate their hegemony
2.	Developmental Rhetoric a. More social services b. Debureaucratisation, Deregulation and Destatisation c. Empowerment; conscientisaton and capacity building from the below	2. Make smooth the process of surplus extraction by using state aided reproduction system
3.	Political Rhetoric a. Neutral state and b. Arena of class struggles	3. Management of the political crisis of the consensus politics regime for its legitimisation

MICRO LEVEL POLICY OUTPUT

Impacts as reflected at the micro level
1. Recentralisation of authority, rebureaucratisation and reregulation
2. Depoliticalisation, disenfranchisement and non participation
3. Loss of traditional accountability and democracy
4. Monopolisation of services and benefit by a coterie of clients
5. Restructuring of class relations by forming vertical alliances

3. Delivery or dispensation of social services to all is also not really on the agenda of the state in the peripheral societies and also in the reform initiative of decentralisation. The allocation of resources and services is used as a channel to register clients to create a basis of support for the central ruling classes. As a result services, do not equally reach to the really needy clients who are politically weak. Services or benefit of decentralisation are destined to benefit the politically more powerful sections of local population.

4. The process of decentralisation, instead of promoting class struggle, is used to form class alliances in favour of the dominant class which are then used to suppress real class struggle and pro-democratic movements. 'Decentralising reforms' as a cumulative result of the peripheral capitalist imperative are generally geared to recentralise, rebureucratise. reregulate and depoliticise the development process. Before moving on to the detailed analysis of the decentralisation process in Bangladesh since 1982, which illustrates the contradictions listed above, next chapter will give an historical account of decentralisation and local government. This will enable the reader to see the general historical trends which not only support the theoretical approach adopted in the present study, but which have prepared the ground for successive local government reform initiatives.

Notes:

1. Andre Gunder Frank has stated the distinction between the two worlds of capitalism in very general and radical terms.

    "As a photograph of the world taken at a point in time, this model consists of a world metropolis (today the United States) and its governing class, and its national and international satellites and their leaders - national satellites like Southern states like Sao Paulo. Since Sao Paulo is a national metropolis in its own right, the model consists further of its satellites, the provincial metropolis like Recife or Belo Horizonte and their regional and local satellites in turn. That is taking a photograph of a slice of the world, we get a whole chain of metropolises and satellites which runs from the world metropolis down to the hacienda or rural merchant who are

satellites of the local commercial metropolitan centers but they in turn have peasants as their satellites. If we take a photograph of the world as a whole we get a whole series of such constellations of metropolises and satellites". (Frank 1969: 146-7).

2. The term peripheral capitalism here does not represent a spatial category but the concretisation of an historical development as well as the contemporary process of production and reproduction of capitalism in non western societies.

    The capitalist mode of production in the centre is based exclusively on the internal circuit of production and therefore the pre-capitalist production relations disintegrated, but in the periphery capitalist development came from without and remained deeply anchored in the market relations of the centre. Therefore pre-capitalist production relations are not destroyed but transformed and subjected to that mode of production which predominates on a world scale as well as locally. (Amin 1974: 38).

3. Tributary mode of production: Amin defined the Asiatic mode of production as 'tributary' i.e. very close to the feudal mode of production, but all feudal characteristics are not to be found in their classical sense. It is characterised by its organisation of society into two main classes: the peasantry organised into communities and the ruling class which monopolises the functions of political organisation and levys a (non - commodity) tribute from the rural communities. The feudal mode of production is constantly threatened with disintegration: gradually tenants separate themselves from the land and are proletarianised. In contrast to this, the fundamental right of the peasant in a village community to use land makes such a cleavage impossible under the tribute paying mode of production, (p-140).

4. The state has become a very fashionable theoretical construct in many of the Marxist theoretical writings. Sometimes the distinction between state and government tends to be confusing. The 'state' refers to the permanent institution of government and concomitant ensemble of class relations which have been embedded in these same institutions. The permanent institutions include those which exercise a monopoly over the means of coercion (army, police, judiciary. bureaucracy), as well as those that control economic levers of the accumulation (Petras. 1989. JCA Vol. 19 NO-1) for more detail Roxborough (1979:118) and Milliband (1969: 54).

    The "government" on the other hand refers to those officials that occupy the executive and legislative branches of government and are subject to renewal or replacement. The distinction between the two becomes clear when we consider that governments or regimes may change but the nature

of the state and the ensemble of class relations it represents may remain the same.

5. The state in its abstract and impersonal expression cannot have a character and colour of its own unless this derives from the character of the class or classes on whose behalf it acts and reacts. This is the concept of ruling class which says, "A ruling class is one such that policies pursued by the state, objectively and in the long run serve to further the interest of that class, at the cost of the interest of other non ruling classes (Rudra, A. '1989 EPW Jan 21, P-143)". In the absence of one single dominant class, two or more classes may form a coalition to rule. This phenomenon of coalition has been explained by Poulantzas (1973) as a 'power bloc'. He distinguishes classes into four categories in their relationship to state power: the hegemonic class, reigning class, allied class and supporting classes. By hegemonic class' he means the one which in the final analysis holds political power and reigning class which hold state apparatus by providing high political, military and administrative personnel. These two classes together constitute the power bloc, and also accommodate each other politically, economically and ideologically. The supporting class either endorses state policy or remains silent, out of fear of repression or as a result of having received some concession.

6. This category of Marxist analysis is mainly based on the following passage of Marx's "Capital" vol. III."...the owners merely of labour power, owners of capital and land owners, whose respective sources of income are wages, profits and ground rents, in other words wage labourers. Capitalists and landowners constitute the three big classes of modern society based upon capitalist mode of production" (pp. 863-4).

7. The polarised view of class concept derives support from the Communist Manifesto' "Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other : bourgeoisie and proletariat". (Marx and Engels. 1967).

8. See for details excerpts from the class struggle in France, 1848-1850 (Marx). Excerpts from the Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (Marx) and Excerpts from "The Civil War in France" in 'Basic writings of politics and philosophy' of Marx and Engels, edited by Lewis S. Feurer. Collins. The Fontana Library (1969) London.

9. The Executive Committee model is a view widely hold by the instrumentalist group of Marxist theorists of the state, mainly drawing the views as expressed by Marx in his 'Communist Manifesto' to the effect that state is the 'executive committee of the ruling class'. The implication is that the 'state functions as a class state' i.e. in the interest of dominant

class. They posses the state in the same way they possess the means of production (Roxbourough 1979 p-121).

The Bonapartist Model: In a situation in which the dominant class is internally divided and neither faction can impose its will on the other, some third force such as one military leader may occupy state power and rule on behalf of the dominant class as a whole. This is the phenomenon which Marx described as Bonapartism in "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" (Marx 1926. Alien and Unwin, London).

10. Autonomy is defined in most of the dictionaries as 'independence' or even in more concrete sense 'self-government'. This is not exactly what the state theorists wish to convey when they use the word. They normally use the word to convey the idea that where competing and contending class interests exist, the state apparatus derives its power from some independent source other than the power it derives from its role as the instrument of ruling class [Moore. 1980, Development and Change Vol-2 No-1).

11. Rahman. Atiur (!986) found in his study-villages that number of households increased from 138 to 173 between 1951 to 1981 and population increased from 566 to 1183. As a result per capita land decreased from 1.00 to 0.37 acres (p.99).

12. This could be taken as a thesis valid for many African countries. Countries in which it has been adequately substantiated are as follows: Tanzania (Saul 1974. Shivji 1977 and Samoff 1979). Uganda (Saul 1976 and Mamdani 1974), Ghana (Murray 1967), Kenya (Leys 1976. Kitching 1980, Shivji 1978). Mali (Meillassoux (1970), Guinea (Cabral 1969) and on Latin America (Debray 1967). Not all of these contributions necessarily take the same theoretical position as the starting point for their analysis, but the dominant presence of the petty bourgeois element in the state structure is the widely accepted consensus view.

13. Wright. E.G. (1985) Classes. Vesco Press. New York.

14. Footnote '5' may be seen for the analysis of Poulantzas (1973) on the category of classes in Power Bloc.

15. Petty bourgeoisie has been stratified and defined by almost all the theorists listed in footnote '12' as well as Marx himself. Poulantzas also classified the position of the petty bourgeoisie in his 'social class and political power'. Marx in Communist Manifesto described the petty bourgeoisie as follows: "In the countries where modern civilization has become fully developed, a new class of petty bourgeoisie has been formed, fluctuating between proletariat and bourgeoisie and even renewing itself as a supplementary part of bourgeois society". Though Marx predicted their disappearance with the development of

modern industry, but still they exist even more prominently in the modern industrialised societies as executives, professionals and small traders (Wright 1985). Poulantzas broadly classified them as traditional and new petty bourgeoisie. Generally people in small business, trade and production are classified as traditional petty bourgeoisie and people in salaried and commission jobs are classified as new petty bourgeoisie.

In most concrete sense, in the context of a peripheral society; Shivji (1978 : 88) provided detailed stratified chart (in Figure 3.3) dividing them into various hierarchical strata i.e. upper, middle and the lower and the bureaucratic bourgeoisie at the top who elevated themselves from their previous petty bourgeois class position. Asoke Rudra (1989) also presented a thesis by identifying 'the intelligentsia' as a ruling class in India who in ultimate analysis matches Poulantzas' new petty bourgeoisie.

16. A Neo-colonial state is a formally independent state in which foreign imperialist capital is able to influence the hegemony exercised by the indigenous petty bourgeoisie. The indigenous petty bourgeoisie rules through an alliance with other locally dominant classes by creating a clientelist network.

17. In this connection Lenin's Development of capitalism in Russia [1977] progress (Moscow) and Marxist view on the agrarian question in Europe and Russia (collected work vol-Vl) may be seen.

18. For some of the detail account of political violence and role of lumpens especially in Bihar see CP1 [ML] document 'Report from the Flaming Field of Bihar', in Subodh Dasgupta [1984] Gouribari, What Next EPW p-1696; K, Balagopal (1989) Rise of Gangsterism in politics (EPW:225 - 229). To observe the Bangladesh situation it is worth mentioning that two members of parliament (MPs) faced criminal charges, for alleged smuggling and illegal foreign currency dealings ; the other one (Lutfur Rahman Farutk of Faridpur) for manufacturing arms illegally and selling them to various parts of the country. Criminal proceedings were also drawn against as many as 30 MPs for using fire arms illegally at different times. These include A.S.M. Abdur Rob, leader of the opposition group in the fourth parliament and Major |Rtd) BazluJ Huda. MP of Freedom Party. {Holiday February 5, 1988).

19. Alan Linquist (1977) Rehman Sobhan (1980) and M.M. Akash (1987, 47).

20. Sobhan (19801, CSS Journal.

21. Ibid.

22. An analysis of budget 1989-90 shows that out of total tax revenue of TK 703 crore. 496 crore (70%) is estimated from the import duty, sale tax and excise collections.

23. The target for industrial growth for the third five year plan (1985-90) was 10.1 percent; however growth had not reached 5.1 % by the end of the fourth year of the plan period. (Weekly Bichitera July 28,1989). On the other hand the repayment of loans by new investors has been slow, low and delinquent. A BIDS survey shows that in 1983-84, out of 423 industrial debtors only 3.5 percent and in 1985-86 only 11.16 percent maintained regular repayments of bank loans. The total of loans overdue exceeds 85 million which prevents banks carrying out further loan operation (Bichitra October 7, 1988) for want of liquidity.

24. Among the overdue loaners the majority are from the category of retired army and civil bureaucrats and political stalwarts. Industrial credits, it seems, are diverted into the import-export business and even into smuggling in many cases (Birchitra October. 7 1988).

25. Crisis in common parlance is often used to denote stress, panic catastrophe, disaster, violence and potential violence (International Encyclopedia of Social Science vol-384 David L. Sills (ed) 1972 Macmillan, London pp-510-517). The classical Greek meaning of crisis is the moment for deciding between uncertain or arguable evaluations of a disease or illness (O.Connor 1987: 3). In the pre-scientific period the Greeks used to use the term as a phase in the development of an illness in which it is decided whether the organism's own power of healing was sufficient to cure it (Harbarmas 1976 : 563).

26. James O'Connor (1987) summarised theories of crisis into four different schools, firstly the 'Bourgeois economists' those who are working within the mainstream of neo classical Keynesian or post-Keynesian thought. Secondly the Neo-Orthodox Marxians. Who (such as Ernest Mandel) remain more or less within Marx's own political economy, Thirdly, the Neo-marxians (such as Claus Offe and O'Connor) work within a reformed Marxist paradigm which generally neo-orthodox Marxist found unacceptable and fourthly the post Marxist theories who developed a social psychological approach of everyday capitalist life.

27. One explanation of the rise of fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany is that it was the result of the weakness of their respective capitalist social structures, on whose basis no stable bourgeois democratic forms could be constructed at that conjuncture.

Chapter Four

Role of Local Government in Legitimising the Authoritarian Regimes : Historical Perspective

The territory which now constitutes the Bangladeshi state has experienced many political changes since 1947. Before 1947 it was an integral part of Colonial British India. With the end of colonial rule, when two sovereign states-India and Pakistan came into being, dividing the Indian subcontinent, Bangladesh became a province (East Pakistan) of Pakistan. The colonial legacy in Bangladesh did not end with the exit of the British: Pakistani rule soon took the form of 'internal colonialism'[1] which continued for 23 years. The movement against internal colonialism began in the early 1950s, and culminated in a war of liberation, which created the new nation state of Bangladesh in 1971.

During the second, 'Pakistani' decade from 1958, and the subsequent four decades (up to 2010) of independent Bangladesh, the nature of the state and its institutional and constitutional structure has not changed much. The class background of the ruling faction, economic policy, political movements and class alliances maintained a continuity with the past.[2] The state institutions manifested the executive supremacy of the president, and the constitution supports a highly centralised executive government of one man rule from 1958 to 1990 four successive regimes came to power three of which (Ayub: 1958, Zia : 1975 and Ershad: 1982) through unambiguous military coups.4 The only civilian government (Mujib: 1971) which was established by popular choice through elections, committed political suicide by instituting a 'constitutional coup' (1975) transforming itself into a single party authoritarian state seeking legitimacy in socialistic rhetoric.[5]

Bangladesh witnessed unprecedented quest for returning to democracy and civilian government through credible elections. The military backed presidential form of government structure was over-thrown by mass uprising and through all party consensus civilian regimes were restored and reestablished since 1991 and continued with break of two years (2006-2008) for last 20 years. It is expected that, there will be no more discontinuation of the civilian governments and peaceful transfer of power in Bangladesh in future. The analysis so far done in this book covers the period from 1960- 1990 and focused specifically on the process of legitimisation of military regimes. The regimes that came to power after 1990s and their legitimation are not covered in the current study in precise sense but analogy will be brought at end in the post scripts regarding the nature of state as reflected in the local governance and decentralisation policies..

The three military regimes ruled Bangladesh from 1960 to 1990 (Ayub, Zia and Ershad) followed a common political pattern after launching their coups; first justifying their moves by righteous rhetoric and then selling further legitimation by going through a process of civilianisation. In justifying their coups they even followed a uniform chronology of steps and events in the process of post-coup-civilianisation. In the first phase, there was a general condemnation of politicians and bureaucrats for alleged corruption, mismanagement and the deterioration of law and order followed by arrests of some politicians and businessmen and lastly formation of committee/ commissions of inquiry. In the second phase, a referendum was arranged in support of a martial law proclamation, a new political party under the direct patronage of the military was formed and in the third phase, the presidential and parliamentary elections were held to give a fully civilian facade to the regime. In this whole process of civilianisation and legitimisation, local government restructuring was used as centerpiece of the strategy by all three of the regimes. It would seem that the post-colonial Pakistani state as well as its successor, the Bangladeshi state, were essentially Bonapartist in nature; in both the petty bourgeois and the aspirant bourgeoisie of the trading and the business classes, emerged as a dominant coalition (Jahangir 1986 : 20). The state apparatus, however, remained under the firm control of the new petty bourgeoisie. The new party bourgeoisie used local government institutions to spread out into the interior areas of the country in order to reproduce and consolidate the authoritarian state and petty bourgeois hegemony in those areas. The reforms and reorganisations of local government by various regimes, therefore, repeatedly followed the same course, namely that of building a network of 'allied- and 'supporting' classes to strengthen the position- of the central 'power bloc'. Understandably, the three different states the British colonial, the Pakistani semi-colonial and the three subsequent nationalist - petty bourgeois regimes in Independent Bangladesh (Mujib, Zia and Ershad), initiated similar local government reforms. In real terms these reforms did not reflect much more than the political

imperative arising out of the nature of state, the emerging process of accumulation and the attempted management of the crisis stemming from the contemporary social conflicts in the count of the dominant coalition selling to establish its hegemony over the civil society. In spite of a wide range of variations in the contours of class configuration, the nature of accumulation and the stages of the general development of society, all the post-colonial regimes were consistent in setting the same hidden objectives behind the reorganisation of local government. The implicit objectives of all local government and administrative reforms in first phase in from1960-1970 in the second phase from 1973 to 1990 could be summarized as follows:

1. to devise an administrative mechanism to establish the center's hegemonic control over the periphery in the national context so as to facilitate its accumulation of surplus under conditions of relative political stability,

2. to restructure local class relations as well as overall social relations by creating a vertical class hierarchy by channeling patronage and regulatory control simultaneously.

3. to create counteracting forces to use against the whole range of radical anti-establishment movements which are perceived as threats to status quo; also to create a 'buffer zone and filtering mechanism' to neutralise and to "let the steam out" of anti establishment movements and any crisis that might develop, and

4. to enhance the states credibility in the eyes of the people at large as an effective means of delivering services, as well as appearing to secure their participation in the process of governance even though the real purpose was to distribute patronage to a surrogate group of local power brokers.

Changes wrought in the institutional structure of local government by different regimes brought many new configurations because of contingent social situations; but the underlying purpose in setting the agenda for reforms remained the same. Though the main thrust of this study is to analyse the nature and consequences of the local government reform initiated in 1982, a review of the earlier history of reform has been added to confirm many of the present trends as inevitably embedded historically in the nature of state and its class relations.

Local Government in pre-British and British Period

In 1873, the formation of municipal committees in three of the large Indian cities and the enactment of the *Chowkidari Panchayat* Act in 1870 marked the beginning of a formal or statutory local government system respectively in the urban and rural areas of the Indian subcontinent (Tinker 1968). Thus local government in India can trace

its origin back to distant times. Furthermore, Hindu religious books such as the *Vedas,* the Epics, the *smrities* and the *Upanishads* refer to the existence of organised villages and village institutions in ancient India (Roy, 1934). Despite changes of kings, monarchs and dynasties, the village panchayets (council of elders) remained unchanged in their power, function, and status. Those councils were spontaneous and self-sustaining institutions, independent and free from all outside interferences. Metcalf described them as 'self-sufficient village communities' and 'little republics'. The degeneration of these institutions occurred with the penetration and imposition of foreign dominance in the medieval period. The first disturbances in the status of these institutions began when the Muslim rulers developed their administrative methods with two main objectives in mind:

1. Conquering more lands and consolidating their rule in conquered areas by crushing all rebellions, and

2. maximising revenue for the royal treasury.

The administration from the center down to the villages was developed in order to pursue these two objectives.

The British brought no major changes to the spirit and tradition of Muslim administration. The colonial interests of the British in India, in many respects, coincided with those of the Muslims (Tinker, 1962).[6] The British had added one more objective in ruling India in addition to the maintenance of law and order and the collection of revenue to support the industrial revolution at home. The British wanted to create a market in India for their manufactured goods and to use India as a source of cheap industrial raw materials. Whatever administrative reforms and changes the British government had introduced in India were aimed at the realisation of those objectives.[7] The Permanent *Settlement Act of* 1793 was one of the major reforms which exerted a far reaching impact on Indian administration.[8] This Act created a new landed class of zamindars that paid to the government an amount of revenue fixed in perpetuity and, in return, the zamindars were given the right to collect rent from their tenants and the responsibility of maintaining public services and law and order in rural India This newly created class destroyed the traditional autonomy of the *panchayets* and indigenous village institutions and replaced them with the new institution of landlordism. The landlord class remained loyal to the government and acted as their faithful agents. This class provided the British government with a sound revenue base, policing the rural area without directly affecting the royal treasury and a permanently loyal class for providing political support.[9]

A policy shift away from the *zamindari* system was considered necessary when the 'sepoy mutiny' of 1857 seemed to shake the foundation of the British Empire in India. Organised armed resistance, urban political agitation, agrarian unrest and famines threatened colonial rule.[10] Due to the disruption of law and order, revenue collection had also gone down which threw the government into a situation close to bankruptcy. On the other hand, the newly emerged western educated elites in the urban areas started to demand the right of participation in the administration at the central level. Against this background, the government tried to broaden its base in the rural areas and the institution of the *Chowkidary Panchayet* was created for this purpose. These Panchayets were placed under the control of district magistrates; membership was restricted to the propertied classes, while their function was confined to the maintenance of law and order and the facilitation of revenue collection.[11]

From the *Chowkidary Panchayet* Act of 1870 to independence in 1947, many acts, rules and provisions were made which affected local government and local administration. In this connection special mention should be made of the acts and rules passed in 1885, 1909, 1919 and 1935 respectively.[12] If the implicit objectives of all these reforms are critically examined, the following conclusions may be drawn. When Indians became politicised and began to demand the right of participation in the decision making process at the central level, the British government talked of decentralisation and lauded the role of local government. Against a background of urban political agitation and rural agrarian unrest, local government with full government control was devised as a strategy of depoliticisation and intended to prevent polarisation on key national political issues (Subramanum 1980 : 1964). Indian political aspirations at the time did not generally focus on local government reform, what they wanted was a greater role in provincial and national legislature. Again, local government organisation was put completely under the control of the bureaucracy, as part of an attempt to extend the administrative arm of the central government down to the rural areas.

In short, in the initial years the Permanent Settlement Act of 1793 and subsequent enactments created a system of rural local government which contributed substantially to sustaining the *British Raj* in India. Also, in the later years of Pakistan's and Bangladesh's independence, local government reform became a favourite subject of the military rulers, because they found the associated institutions helpful in pursuing their own goals of hegemonic rule.

Local Government and Politics in Pakistan

Pakistan did not bring about any substantial structural change in its local government system until the first successful *coup d'etat* by Field Marshal Muhammad Ayub Khan, in 1958.

Pakistan was created by a Muslim nationalist movement based on Pan-Islamic ideals, to which the common muslim felt some sort of emotional and spiritual attachment. The landed aristocracy together with the western educated professionals, religious leaders, an aspirant Muslim bourgeoisie and a civil-military bureaucracy provided the leadership and their specific economic and political interests were carefully pursued behind the religious and spiritual rhetoric. The Hindu community constituted the majority of the Indian population, and so the leadership of the Pakistan's independence movement took it for granted that the future Indian state would be a Hindu one. Because of their historically antagonistic social and political relationships, the Muslim petty bourgeoisie (both its 'traditional' and 'new[1] components) and the commercial bourgeoisie felt that their future would be at stake in an all Indian state dominated by the Hindu bourgeoisie. A separate Muslim state would permit their free development, with no competition from their Hindu counterparts who were economically, educationally and politically more advantageous situation. But, after the creation of the new separate state for the Muslims, Pakistan could not resolve the problem of divergent and competing interests among its ambitious petty bourgeoisie, traditional landowning class, indigenous bourgeoisie and *'overgrown bureaucracies'*. These conflicts were manifested in the crisis of making a constitution and in the emerging regional and linguistic issues of the 1950s (Ahmed 1963). These crises were further aggravated when the issue of the dominance of West Pakistan over East Pakistan (Bangladesh) surfaced in a semi-colonial fashion. Since 1951, the crisis of the state gradually dragged the civil and the military bureaucracy into the political offices and the *'civil-military oligarchy'* gradually increased their role in political affairs. In 1958, as a last resort, the army took over the government. A group of civilian politicians drawn from the landed aristocracy, commercial bourgeoisie, and traditional and new petty bourgeoisie, supported direct army rule as the only viable rescue operation for them. Deeming their chances of winning political power by competing in the ensuing general election of 1959 to be remote (Westergaard 1985). Because there were mass uprisings in East Pakistan, Sind. Baluchistan and in the frontier provinces. The military in Pakistan was made to capture state power with the intention of transforming Pakistan into a capitalist satellite. The metropolitan bourgeoisie and the aspirant national bourgeoisie

(transformed petty bourgeoisie) also wanted to see Pakistan transformed into a capitalist state, a goal that was successfully pursued by the army in Pakistan for a decade.

Local Government and Legitimisation of Army Rule

The role the newly promulgated local government system played in transforming the state was remarkable. Ayub came to power as leader of the coup *d'etai* and established himself as a civilian president and politician. Army rule was legitimised and stabilised with the help of a civilian power base created through the institutions of local government.

Ayub came to power in October, 1958, and ruled the country with full army stature for one year. A ban was imposed on political activities and political leaders who might have challenged him were put behind bars. He swept the political ground clean by vilifying Pakistan's previous politics and political leaders and preparing the way for his own brand of politics. In October 1959, the seed of a new political system was shown with the promulgation of the 'basic democracy order'. The order established a four-tier local government system. The lowest tier, the union council, covered an area of 10 to 12 square miles, containing a population of 8000 to 12000.The council was composed of ten councilors, each representing an 800 to 1,500 person constituency. The whole of Pakistan was divided into 80,000 such constituencies, 40,000 from each province. Above the union council, the thana council consisted of an ex-officio chairman Sub-divisional Officer (SDO). Chairmen of the constituent union councils and an equal number of locally posted central government officials as members which normally covered 8 to 15 unions (Rashiduzzaman, 1968).

The district councils and divisional councils were situated further up the hierarchy. The members of union councils indirectly elected 50 percent of the members of the councils of both types and the government nominated the other 50 percent. The chairmen of all the three councils above the union were junior government officials at their respective levels. Similar types of arrangements were made in the cities by town committees at the bottom of the hierarchy (Rashiduzzaman. 1968). After the promulgation of the 'Basic Democracy Order' in October 1959, union council elections were completed by January 1960. They were held on a non-partisan basis, the regime promised a 'strong Pakistani state' and a 'sound political system' with these 80,000 elected councilors. He regarded them as the true representatives of the

country, representing the people at the grassroot level. In February, 1960, just after the election of the union councils in January, a presidential referendum was held and the 80.000 councilors were given the right to exercise the verdict. President Ayub was the only candidate and 95.6 percent of the votes were cast in his favour. In this way, the referendum legitimised Ayub's presidency in accordance with his own form and definition of democracy (Jahan. 1972). A commission for drafting a 'suitable constitution' for Pakistan was formed and, according to the recommendations of the commission in 1962, Ayub finally provided Pakistan with a constitution whereby the president of the country was the supreme ruler and the keystone of the system. The constitution provided for an 'electoral college' system: local councilors became members of the electoral college and exercised their franchise on behalf of the whole population in electing the representative members of the district Councils, the divisional councils, the provincial assembly, the national assembly and the President of the country.By April, 1962, the elections for provincial and national assemblies were held on non-partisan basis. In June, 1962, the session of the national assembly began and the great task, the first phase of civilianisation of military rule was complete (Jahan 1972).In the second phase, the consolidation of power at the macro level and at the center, set in motion by specific economic policies and supported by massive US aid and technical assistance. The macro and micro level political processes were simultaneously manipulated to secure greater political stability (Jahan, 1972). A political party was formed during the initial sessions of the national and provincial assemblies. Gradually, local councilors were recruited to the new party, called the 'Convention Muslim League', which Ayub had split off from the old Pakistan Muslim League. By 1962-64, the Rural Works Programme (RWP) and the Thana Irigation Programme(TIP) had been carried out all over East Pakistan, strengthening the economic power of the local councilors, and opening the way for their own personal enrichment. The political power they enjoyed was unprecedented, and the group of people associated with the councils and councilors became the direct clients of Ayub's new system (Sobhan 1968).During the second phase of Ayub's ten year rule, the local councilor's role became more important. In 1964, the second election of the union councils was very keenly contested. Only 6 percent of the seats were declared uncontested whereas, in 1959, 25 percent of councilors had been elected uncontested (Westergard, 1985).

Ayub, by this time won the full support of the new national bourgeoisie which had been created out of various factions of the petty bourgeoisie in the urban areas and the landed gentry who controlled the

rural areas of both the 'wings' of Pakistan. The system apparently gave political power and a greater development role to the members of local government through 'popular participation' but, in reality, the system imposed governmental control more closely on the people. Here, with the cosmetic mantle of popular participation in decision making in place, the central state established its full control over the political, economic and developmental processes using the bureaucracy as its tool. The local council officials were considered, in every respect, as subordinate to the bureaucracy. The power of dismissing local councilors on the grounds of corruption and incompetence was given to the bureaucracy. The unaccounted and un-audited money channeled to the local councils corrupted most of the councilors, un-audited use of money helped government to control these councillors, threat of expulsion induced fear of loss of financial privileges. The formal official power and informal control of bureaucracy went hand in hand to such an extent that, during the election of provincial and national assemblies in 1964 and the presidential election in 1965, interview data showed that a large majority of voters were directly approached by government officials and asked to vote for a specific candidate (Sobhan, 1968:251). The stability and continuity of rule enjoyed by Ayub's government helped to establish a new national bourgeoisie with state patronage. Many of the army generals and civil bureaucrats were also incorporated into the elite groups of big business and industry (Alavi 1982).

Akhter Hameed Khan, one of the architects of Pakistani local government and rural development strategies during the 1960s, wrote in one of his memoirs.

> "The first programme we dabbled in was local government. It was then supremely important because it happened to be our president's favourite concubine... he wanted to put down the townees and lift up the rustics. He aspired to find a political base in the countryside.His Basic Democracy made the local councilors electors of president and parliament. Local government can hardly survive such inflation. It was an attempt to cover the sheep of local government with the bull of national politics" (1983: 163).

A limited franchise system restricted and confined political democracy. Basic democracy bore the pressure of national politics and this brought about its downfall. However, local government reforms played an important role in Pakistan in civilianising and consolidating Ayub's rule for ten years. Subsequently, in Bangladesh two military rulers revived the tradition of Ayub in managing the Bangladeshi state, by also seeking political legitimacy for their regimes by utilising the institutional potential of local government.

The State and Local Government in Bangladesh under Mujib

The state of Bangladesh emerged (1971) from the mass political mobilisation of the Bengali petty bourgeoisie on the basis of Bengali nationalism. This took the form of a prolonged political movement and culminated in armed struggle against the semi-colonial Pakistani military rulers. The *Awami League*, a petty bourgeois mass political party (Jahangir, 1986 and Umar, 1987) led the movement and, later, some of the left wing parties also supported the main cause. Major international powers such as the Soviet Union and the United States took opposing positions for and against the movement, because they themselves were globally and politically at odds at that time. This resulted in the temporary defeat of American diplomacy in the subcontinent with Bangladesh being created under the aegis of the power bloc of an Indo-Soviet axis (Blackburn, 1975:358-378). The historic mass movement, armed liberation struggle, the role of the superpowers and finally participation of the left in the liberation war, differentiated the nature of the Bangladeshi state significantly from that of Pakistan, which was mostly controlled by civil-military bureaucrats. Various party sections and subsections began to play roles previously exercised by local bureaucracy and local government institutions. The Awarni League strategists realised the necessity of vigorously building up party cadres and therefore channeled economic patronage and informal political and administrative power along party lines. The party organisations, in many cases, subordinated or overtook the bureaucracy,gradually, party leadership and the state became one.

During the Awami League period (1971-75), local government institutions did not play a significant political role. The new regime did not trust the traditional local leadership, the clients of Ayub's former basic democracy system. On the other hand, the traditional rural leadership did not support or sympathise with the Awami League. In the very first year of its rule, 1972, the Awami League made several attempts to replace the traditional local leadership with their local party rank and file. By presidential order No. 7 of 1972, the first government in Bangladesh abolished the Pakistani local government system and formed 'union panchyets' with nominated members to replace the union councils. 'Union Relief Committees' were also formed with the nominated members and these played a vital role in distributing material benefits to the citizenry in the post-independence reconstruction and rehabilitation period. The nominated members of union panchyets and union relief committees were selected virtually by the local members of parliament and the local party bosses of the ruling

Awarni League. In this way, the Awami League absorbed the local government Institutions in their entirety. In summary, the Awami League's objectives were;

1. to consolidate its position in the rural power structure.

2. to uplift the economic and social status of party supporters by distributing economic favours.

3. to create permanent support for the Awami League at the village level, (i.e. the same aim as Ayub's basic democracy).

4. to reward local party officials by distributing public offices.

This step of *'Awamicisation'* of local government affected the image of the regime very badly in the rural areas. People became very critical of the activities of the party members in the 'Relief Committees'. The radical political parties launched a movement against the Awami League government and the activities of its relief committees on the grounds that they systematically indulged in corruption of various types. In 1973, the first election of the local councils were held. In most cases, anti-Awami League (former Basic Democrats, non-partisan groups and in some cases a few radical elements and sympathisers of left politics) were elected (Rahman 1981). Therefore, the first venture of the Awami League to establish itself into the rural power structure failed (Rahman 1981). The government changed its policy with this failure. They turned their back on the local government institutions and continued to channel state resources through the party hierarchy. They organised a student front, a youth front, an ex-freedom fighter's organisation, women's groups, and other volunteer wings down to the village level. The power of these centrally sponsored groups in the locality virtually eclipsed that of the local government officials. Finally, by the first half of 1975, Sheikh Mujib instituted a 'constitutional coup' which placed all the power of the state in the hands of the party leader. He abolished the multiparty parliamentary system and replaced it with one party presidential rule. The Bangladeshi state transformed itself into a 'totalitarian state' under the dictatorship of a multi-class petty bourgeois-dominated party. During Ayub's time, gradual potiticisation of the local government institutions had begun, and they were used as the main political front in the absence of regime's own party. Mujib replaced local government with his own, better organised, more loyal, reliable and militant party machinery. Although Mujib allowed their formal existence, local government institutions were ignored, as the machinery of Mujib's party was transformed into *de facto* local government units.

State and Local Government under Zia (1975-81)

The Awami League had managed to antagonise the army bureaucracy axis, radical pro-socialist and conservative pro-capitalist political elements, as well as the traditional rural power structure during its three and a half years of rule. The western super powers, especially the Americans, fell more and more concerned about increasing Indo-Soviet influence. Finally, the establishment of one party rule deepened this concern. The general economic situation, famine and the devastating flood of 1974 added fuel to anti-government sentiments in Bangladesh. In the midst of this situation, the *'midnight massacre'* staged by the army on the 15th of August, 1975, resulted in the brutal killing of Sheikh Mujib, his family, relatives and trusted political companions. General Ziaur Rahman, an army general, took control of the government (for detail see chapter 11). No political party or group formally expressed instant solidarity with the coup. But all the anti-Awaml League forces breathed a sigh of relief, though the suddenness of the occurrence stunned everyone for the time being. Zia cautiously planned that his regime should utilise the conflicts and contradictions which made the Awami League unpopular. The contradictions encompassed national, local and international issues. China, Pakistan and some Muslim countries, including the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, formally recognised the new government. American food supplies, which had been held up for some time, were released (Sobhan 1984). The revival of the pro-Pakistani political movement was encouraged. Within the first year of the coup, the regime sought legitimacy through civilianisation. In organising this long term process, General Zia followed the path of his predecessor, General Ayub. The task was easier for him because the institutions built by Ayub provided a very solid foundation. Mujib had by-passed these institutions rather than destroying them, causing utter frustration among their officials, who began to look for a 'new Ayub'.

Zia started his first public relations campaign with the chairmen and members of union councils within six months of assuming power (Islam 1988). He met and addressed local councilors in the four divisional headquarters of the country, using government officials in the districts, thanas and unions to mobilise them. He tried to convince the councilors that there was to be more development in the rural areas that local councils would bear the entire responsibility of implementing those programmes. The US government continued to increase its economic assistance (Anderson, 1977). In 1976, a record quantity of PL 480 food aid was received and distributed among the union councils which helped Zia to earn the trust of local councilors within a short

span of time (Westergaard, 1985:90). Zia's quest for political legitimacy resembled that of Ayub. He revived Ayub's state in Bangladesh and carefully considered the changed socio-political and economic situation.

On November 11 1975, Zia made his first political broadcast. On November 30, 1976, he altered his position from *Deputy Chief Martial Law Administrator* to *Chief Martial Law Administrator* and, by the end of the year, the Union Parishad (Union Council) elections were held. He allowed some relaxation of the total ban on political activities and 'parlour polities' was allowed. In April 1977, he declared himself President of the country, forcing Justice *Sayeem* to resign on the grounds of ill health. By this time, Zia had completed the restoration of the power to the civil-military bureaucracy and enhanced defense expenditure from 7 percent to 20 percent of the national budget. The size of the armed forces and police service, as well as the civil bureaucracy increased through fresh recruitment (Islam, 1984) and, simultaneously, political training of both party and local government officials of the population at large continued. He declared a nineteen point policy of reform and development that promised the promotion of private sector, self-sufficiency in food, population control and agricultural development.

In May, 1977, Zia arranged of referendum (as had Ayub before) to assess the support of the people for his programmes. He fully deployed the civil administration in staging the referendum. Zia won a massive confidence vote of 99.5 percent from an 85 percent voter turnout (Islam, 1984). No one at home or abroad believed these figures; even when candidates keenly contested the seats, the turnout had never reached 60 percent at any earlier election and Zia's referendum was held at the peak of the monsoon. The actual turnout was hardly 2 to 5 percent.[13] The bureaucracy, along with the help of union parishad (UP) members, inflated the turnout. Each member along with ten members of the corresponding Village Defense Party (an organisation created by Zia to support UP in executing its policies and programmes) engaged in organising the referendum under the supervision of one thana level government official. Zia's supporters bribed the officials or threatened punishment, if smaller turnouts were reported.

The controversial referendum result threatened the legitimation of the civilian image of the regime. Zia suffered bitter criticism and, a few months later, announced an election for the presidency and lifted the ban on political parties. Before lifting the ban, however, he organised a pro-military political front (Nationalist Front) and, on June 3, 1978, he contested the presidency as a candidate of the Front. Zia won a landslide victory securing 86 percent, with voter turnout of 53 percent (Khan and Zabarullah. 1979). Within three years (Aug 15, 1975- June 1978) Zia had transformed himself from a soldier into a politician (Islam, 1984).

From the beginning of 1976 to the presidential election of 1978, Zia used and abused the full potential of the local councilors. He kept the local councilors busy during these three years in meetings, conferences, orientations and training courses and, also in implementing various PL 480 supported local development programmes. He maintained the legacy of the populist tradition of Bangladeshi politics previously established by Fazlul Huq, Bhashani and Mujib, by addressing huge public gatherings throughout the country. Those predecessors had their own party organisations and admirers created by their long political careers. Zia had none of these. Instead, he utilised the government officials and local councilors to organise such public meetings to create his own popular base and populist image.

Zia created a new organisation, the Village Defense Party (VDP) in every thana (the lowest administrative unit covering 8 to 15 unions). A troop of several hundred people was organised in every union; these people were not on the regular payroll of government, but they were entitled to receive a handsome allowance when called on to perform any duty. One of the major duties of those members of VDP was to attend the meetings of the president and the ministers. Normally, they met in thana headquarters on a particular day for a weekly parade. For rest of the period they remained at the disposal of the UP. Zia provided every village with a VDP office that had a regular supply of newspapers and all kinds of indoor and outdoor games and sports equipments. The thana education officer instructed and mobilised the school students under his jurisdiction to attend meetings of the president or to at least stand along the roadside chanting slogans, waving hands and garlanding the president during his visit.

The cooperative officers usually asked the members to cooperate by taking out processions, carrying banners and placards, and by attending the president's public meetings. The local councils coordinated the job of managing the gathering of audiences for meetings and paying the attendees, although they were, in actuality hired persons. Normally, they used to cover the hiring cost from cash and payments in kind provided to the councils for such things as project grants, relief funds, works programme allocations and 'food for work' supplies (personal interview with chairmen of union parishads). In 1976, Zia began a public relations campaign with the civil military officials and local councilors and, by 1978, he addressed on average one public meeting

every day (calculated from newspaper reports of three months in each year), so the local government officials (district, sub-divisions and thana level officials) and local councilors played a vital role in creating a populist and charismatic image of Zia enabling him to succeed where his predecessors had failed.

After the presidential election of 1978, a shift in the policy from local government can clearly be seen. From 1978 onward, Zia prepared a political party for the parliamentary election to be held in 1979. Thus, the emphasis shifted from local councilors to his newly formed political party, the 'Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)'. Zia looked for allies in the urban and semi urban setting and among his youth and student organisation, the *Youth Complex*. The Jubo Mahila *Sangstha, Juba Sangstha,* and the Freedom Fighter Command Council were formed and supported by the government with state resources.

The UP leaders started feeling neglected (Alam, 1980). The anti-Zia political movement also was rising to its peak. The BNP began to use terror tactics to sabotage the movements of the opposition. This resulted in a split in the allegiance of local councilors. When compared with the programmes of Ayub, Zia's programmes took more and paid less to the councils. Some of the councilors interviewed during fieldwork expressed the feeling that Zia compelled them to snatch voting papers and stuff his ballot box during the referendum and presidential election, which is something Ayub never did. The councilors felt that they enjoyed more respect and reward from Ayub's officials than from those of Zia (Ahmed. 1983). So a shadow of frustration, disarray, and distrust grew after the presidential election and in 1979, the suspicion was confirmed when the BNP won in the parliamentary elections. In 1980, Zia's strategists were well aware of the growing frustration among the UP chairmen and members. By the end of that year they had introduced a new broad-based structure of rural institutions, *Swanirvor Gram Sarkar* (Self-Reliant Village Government) further down to the UPs into 68,000 Bangladeshi villages to cope with the situation (Hoque 1986). Gram Sarkar comprises of eleven members headed by a village chief (Gram *Pradhan)* chosen at a village meeting held under the chairmanship of a thana level official. The selection process was criticised because, in most cases, the committees were formed with the members of ruling BNP party (Arn, 1986). The president of the country and the chairmen of the central committee of the BNP also accepted the chairmanship of the *National Swaniruar Bangladesh committee* (Hoque, 1986) and the MPs of the ruling party took the chairmanships of District and Thana level Gram *Sarkar coordination committees*. People began to speculate that Zia was trying to build a broad based party structure through this Gram

Sarkar initiative. The existing 4300 UP's were to some extent superseded by 68,000 Gram *Sarkars.* The government claimed that those institutions would ensure people's participation in the development process at the grassroots level. But the move was not generally welcomed by the people; rather it created a dilemma and caused confusion among the rural population. In 1982, the succeeding government of General Ershad stopped the unpopular movement.

The state of Bangladesh under Zia clearly reestablished 'civil-military bureaucratic oligarchy' with the help of subordinate political elites. Civil bureaucracy, technocrats and military officials occupied a significant position in the BNP, Zia's parliament and in the cabinet. Zia placed more and more army officials in top civil jobs, in diplomatic missions, corporations and other civil functions of the government (Rahman, 1985). Primarily, he transformed a Bangladeshi state which had been dominated by the 'traditional petty bourgeoisie' into one in which a civil-military bureaucratic oligarchy ruled and the 'new petty bourgeoisie' occupied the dominant position. The rhetorical programmes of popular participation helped to mobilise and manipulate the rest of the population (especially the rural population).

Zia was killed by his own army within two years of the civilianisation of his regime and a new general, H.M. Ershad took control of the Bangladeshi state. Ershad benefited tremendously from utilising the experiences gained by Ayub and Zia and the contradiction created by Mujib in the polity. He maintained the tradition of Ayub and Zia in utilising local government functionaries in the civilianisation process and carried through the economic reforms initiated by Zia towards the development of a capitalist state. This suited the class interests of the dominant faction of the petty bourgeoisie by opening up new ways for them to transform themselves into a new bourgeoisie.

Notes:

1. The concept of internal colonialism implies a process of domination by one ethnic, linguistic cultural group over another within a state or nation. For a detailed analysis of the concepts see Michael Hechter (1975) Internal Colonialism : The Celtic Fringe in British National Development. Many of the writers in analysing the structural relationship between western and eastern wings (Bangladesh) of Pakistan used the term 'Quasi Colonial' 'Semi-Colonial' and 'Direct Colonial' (Eilot Tepper. 1976:40 Richard Nations 1975:272).

2. A detailed study of the class background of the ruling parties, personnel and executives of the government shows that from the very beginning of

Pakistan, political party executives of the Muslim League were dominated by the intermediate classes of lawyers, petty businessmen, rich farmers, petty officials (Burki 1980:19). With the end of civilian rule in Pakistan military and civil bureaucracy (new petty bourgeoisie) become prominent over the traditional petty bourgeoisie of traders and professionals. Papanik (1967:79] shows that about 70 percent of civil and military official of Pakistan come from the family of civil servants. Again, with the civilian regimes In the post liberation Bangladesh, new petty bourgeoisie was replaced by traditional petty bourgeoisie of professionals, petty businessman, small traders, surplus farmers (Jahan 1972). for *a* brief period after the liberation of Bangladesh who were again pushed-back to the subordinate position of the military civil oligarchy after the military coup of 1975. Almost 70 percent of the members of (Anderson 1977. Ahimad E. 1980 and Huq, A.F, (1980) Zia's cabinet was dominated by the members of civil service, military personnel, professionals and technocrats. Though in later years bureaucrat turned businessmen and newly enriched traders made some in roads. After 1982, Ershad's cabinet was also dominated (70%] by civil and military bureaucrats, lawyers and Technocrats (Rahiman, 1985).

3. Three military sponsored civilian governments of Ayub. Zia and Ershad ruled under the constitutional coverage which firmly supported presidential supremacy. President was made the keystone of the constitution of 1962 under Ayub. After the fourth amendment of Bangladesh constitution in 1975 the only civilian regime in Bangladesh, the ruling party Awami Leagues turned multiparty political system into single party and Sheikh Mujib was made the chairman of the party and the President of the Republic. Later when he was killed in the 'August Coup' of 1975 two successive military regimes of general Zia and general Ershad not only retained the provision of all powerful executive status of president but also successfully utilised the institution for perpetuating military bureaucratic rule until the amendment of the constitution In 1991.

4. For detail history of coups In Pakistan and Bangladesh please see Khan, Z.R. (1984) and Lifsullz (1979).

5. The Initiation of Fourth amendment to the constitution of the people's Republic of Bangladesh by turning the multiparty state into one party, parliamentary form of government into presidential, imposing strict censorship on news media and abolition of parliament by a parliamentary legislation has been termed by the constitutional historian as 'constitutional coup'. For a detailed analysis see Abul Fazal Huq (1983).

6. In Moore's description "The fundamental features of the traditional Indian politics (under Moguls) were a sovereign who ruled, an army that supported the throne and a peasantry that paid for both;" (Moore. 1966, p. 317).

7. Timm (1983) pp. 8-9.

8. Premen Addy and Ibne Azad (1975).

9. The aim of British Government in imposing the permanent settlement was clearly stated by Wiliam Bentinck in 1828 in the following words:

    "If security was wanting against popular tumult or revolution, I should say that the permanent settlement, though a failure in many other respects and in most essentials, has this great advantage at least of having created a vast body of rich landed proprietors deeply interested in the continuance of British dominion and having complete command over the mass of people".

    (Speeches and Documents on Indian policy 1750-1921 edited by A.B. Keith VOL. l-p-15. quoted in Addy and Azad. 1975)

10. Majumdar (1962)

11. Tinker (1968).

12. All. S.M. and others (1983), pp 38-45.

13. The author completed the assignment of Assistant Presiding Officer in the Nandirhat polling centre under Hathazari thana of Chlttagong where a contingent of police along with a group of UP members and chairmen compelled the Presiding Officer to cast 98 per cent of ballots In favour of president Zia.

Chapter Five

Background and Contents of Decentralisation Programme Initiated By Ershad Regime in 1982

Background

To understand the political economy of local government and decentralisation in Bangladesh after 1982, one needs to assess the political context in which the reform took place before analysing the reform itself and its impact from 1976 to 1981 until the assassination of General Ziaur Rahman the first military president of Bangladesh. The bureaucratic (military and civil) faction of the petty bourgeoisie reached the height of its state power during his presidency. Justice Abdus Sattar's election as president in 1981 and the subsequent renaissance and ascendancy of civilian politics under his presidency made the army-bureaucratic axis suspicious of its future role in politics. This was because the new president attached more importance to the civil bureaucracy than to the military in the day-to-day running of the state. His ultimate notion seemed to be to limit the role of army to their conventional defense responsibilities. General Ershad in his first political venture, urged the government to ensure a constitutional role for the army in the administration and development of the country, and ultimately prepared the ground for the 'second coup by overthrowing Justice Sattar.'

The army was anxious even before Sattar's presidency; on May 20, 1981 a group of senior army officials met Zia, criticised his 'over politicisation'[2] and urged him to bring the military back into the civil administration, on the grounds that corruption was rife among politicians (Franda 1981). Ten days after that meeting, in the second year of his civilianised rule, general Zia was killed. So, the overthrow of Justice Sattar did not come as a surprise, it was only a matter of time. On March 24, 1982, on the eve of the celebration of the eleventh anniversary of the proclamation of independence, General Ershad

declared martial law for the second time in Bangladesh's short history and seized power.

Every military leader justified military rule almost in the same language all over the world, though the process of 'withdrawal' or 'civilianisation' differs according to the local conditions.[3] In justifying its rule, the military regime directed its attention to two interest groups. One was the native Bangladeshis of different strata and the other was the international bourgeoisie. The appeals to Bangladeshis were carefully phrased, to simultaneously treat the poverty stricken masses to popular and populist rhetoric regarding the need to curb corruption and political indiscipline; to send a clear message to the bureaucracy (new petty bourgeoisie), various factions of the traditional petty bourgeoisie and nascent bourgeoisie, emphasising the need to promote more growth, development and to launch a programme of privatisation.[4] On the other hand, public speeches and statements had to respond to the priority issues of devaluation of the currency, liberalisation of markets, rationalisation of the administration and a firm commitment to the market economy (by way of increased private foreign investment, for which IMF and the World Bank had long been pressing).[5] Lastly, to calm anti-military sentiments, the military regime also expressed firm determination to restore civilian government with due democratic process within a short span of time.

Though the public in general was skeptical about the intentions of the new government, the dominant faction of the petty bourgeoisie (traditional and new), the nascent bourgeoisie and the international community (metropolitan bourgeoisie) all heard these messages loud and clear. The government's first initiative was to devise the methods and strategies that would permit its gradual legitimation and civilianisation. In the past, the military regimes of Ayub (1959) and Zia (1976) relied on local government institutions to aid them in this process. The path followed by the third military regime that of general Ershad was identical in this respect. Local government reorgnisation and the resultant restructuring of social relations to form new alliances and a new power coalition continued for four years (1982-1986) which provided the military regime with a comfortable environment in which to firmly establish its civilian credentials.

The Content of the 1982 Decentralisation and Local Government Reform

In April 1982, within 35 days of the coup, the martial law government formed a committee known as the Committee for Administrative Reform/Reorganisation (CARR) ostensibly to review and identify

existing inadequacies of the system in the provision of services of the people, and to recommend an appropriate, sound and effective system based on the spirit of devolution (GOB 1982a: 3-10)

The committee submitted its report after less than two months, identifying the following major inadequacies in the administration which were responsible for bottle-necks in the effective provision of necessary services and retarded people's participation (GOB, 1982a : VII-VIII) in developmental activities.

a. Lack of appropriate, consistent and uniform public service personnel policies with regard to recruitment, promotion and training.

b. The predominance of the *Tadbir* or lobby-based approach to decision making.

c. Difficulties experienced by the common people to comprehend the compartmentalised functions and complexities of government activities and decisions.

d. A weak local government system rendered weaker by the lack of appropriate political direction.

e. The absence of a sound and durable political process to formulate appropriate, consistent and uniform policies with regard to public welfare.

f. A vertical functional departmentalism that vitiates area based coordination.

g. Weakening of traditional administrative and representative institutions at different levels.

h. The creation of parallel political and administrative institutions, leading to conflict in jurisdiction.

i. The reluctance on the part of the political authorities to devolve power to representative institutions at the local levels.

The Committee strongly felt that the people's participation in the process of governance and development was a must for establishing an effective decentralised administrative system. To ensure people's participation it was considered essential that the devolution of authority take place in a framework of elected local government (GOB 1982a : II).

On the basis of its findings, the Committee made the following important recommendations (GOB 1982a: 147-48).

i) The Chairman of the Zila Parishad (ZP) and the Thana Parishad (TP) would be directly elected by the people, (ii) The elected Chairmen of the ZP & TP would be the chief coordinator for development activities, and all officers would be placed under them, (iii) All elected Chairmen of the Union Parishad (UP) would be members of the TP and

the Chairmen of TPs would be members of the ZP.(iv) There would be adequate devolution of administrative, judicial and financial powers in favour of the ZP and TP.(v) The existing Sub-divisions would be gradually upgraded into Districts and the existing Sub-divisions and Divisions would be eventually abolished as units of administration.(vi) Development of infrastructure at the Thana level would be undertaken in order to make the development of adequate authority possible.

The CARR further recommended that a National Implementation Committee be appointed to ensure implementation of its recommendations. The specific tasks suggested to this Committee included: (a) selecting the mode and methods of transferring power to the local bodies (b) to work out a system of decentralised budget and planning (c) to work out the principles of control mechanism of the elected parishads over government functionaries and (d) to assess training needs and facilities and sources of revenue and other financial matters (GOB 1982a: 173-74).

As envisaged in the Report of the CARR, the government appointed a high-level National Implementation Committee for Administrative Reorganiation/Reform (NICARR) to implement the measures recommended in the Report. The responsibilities of the Committee were:[6]

a. The identification of the different phases according to which the reorganisation will be carried out.

b. To determine the minimum strength of officers and staff of different categories and other facilities to be made available to each Thana under the reorganisation plan.

c. The identification of the Thanas to be taken up for development in the first phase, based on the infrastructural facilities available in the existing thanas.

d. To prescribe a timetable for development' of thanas in phases, elimination of the Sub-divisional administration, creation of new districts etc. along with providing personnel and other facilities in the thanas and districts, according to the above timetable.

e. The provision of guidelines to the government's Establishment Division and Law and Parliamentary Affairs Division to plan recruitment and posting of proper personnel in the thanas and districts, according to the above time table.

f. To provide guidelines to the Ministry of Works, Ministry of Local Government and Land Administration and Land Reforms Divisions regarding the acquisition of land, construction of buildings and roads, etc. for thanas and the districts.

Upazila Parishad (UZP): a new organisational framework

On the basis of the recommendations of NICARR the government took the decision to reorganise the administration at the Thana level. Under the reorganised set up, each Thana was to be the focal point of all administrative activities and a new local government unit as TP. The responsibility for all development activities at the local level has been transferred to the TP (GOB 1986)[7] which were later renamed the Upazila Parishad (UZP). An organogram of the former UZP administration can be seen in Figure 5.1.

Consequently, the government promulgated the 'Local Government (Thana Parishad and Thana Administration Reorganisation) Ordinance, 1982' which provided the legal framework for a new local government institution at the Thana level.[8] On the basis of CARR recommendations and Cabinet Division's Resolution, 460 Thanas were upgraded and renamed as Upazilas (Sub-District) in 10 phases over about 13 months, starting from the 7th November, 1982.

Figure 5.2:_Phases of Upgradation of Thanas_into Upazilas

Phase	Slart	Number of Thanas Upgraded
1	November 7. 1982	45
2	November 15. 19S2	55
3	March 24. 1983	55
4	April 15. 1983	57
5	July 2. 1983	52
6	August 1. 1983	47
7	September 14. 1983	50
8	November 7. 1983	37
9	December 1, 1983	18
10	February 1. 1984	45
	Total	460

Source : M.M. Rahman."Decentralisation and Bureaucratic Response", Unpublishised Ph.D. dissertation. IBS, University of Rajshahi p-270 [1989]

The Composition of the UZP membership was as follows,

a.   A chairman directly elected by the people of the Upazila.
b.   Representative members-chairman of union parishad.
c.   Three women members-nominated by central government.
d.   Official members (non-voting) - officers of various departments
e.   Chairman of the Upazila Central Cooperative Association, and
f.   One nominated member from freedom fighters. (GOB 1982b)

Later on, in the process of upgrading of Thanas into Upazilas, the UZPs gained overall responsibilities for development activities (such as agriculture, irrigation, fisheries, livestock, cottage industries, physical infra-structure such as roads, bridges and culverts) and the provision of essential social services (such as supply of drinking water, sanitation, health care, population control and family planning, primary education, social work, poor relief, promotion of cooperatives, other voluntary activities in the spheres of sports, culture, environment and children and women's welfare). Only the essential regulatory and nationally important developmental activities were retained by central government.9 he spheres over which central control was maintained were:

1.   Civil and criminal law.
2.   Administration and management of central revenue (income tax, customs and excise, Land Revenue, Land Tax etc.)
3.   Maintenance of law and order.
4.   Registration of land and other property.
5.   Maintenance of essential supplies including food.
6.   Generation and distribution of electric power.
7.   Irrigation Schemes involving more than one district.
8.   Technical education above primary level, viz, agricultural, engineering, medical etc., education, High School, College and university education.
9.   Modernised district hospitals and hospitals attached to medical colleges.
10.   Research organisations such as the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (C.S.l.R.) Laboratories.
11.   Large scale seed multiplication and dairy farms.
12.   Large scale industry.
13.   Inter-district and inter-thana means of communication viz, posts, telegraphs, telephones, railways, mechanically propelled road and inland water transport, highways civil aviation, ports and shipping.
15.   Marine fishing.
16.   Mining and mineral development.
17.   Compilation of national statistics.
The Local Government Ordinance, 1982 mentioned that,

"every Parishad shall be a body corporate, having perpetual succession and a common seal, with power subject to the provision of the Ordinance, the rules to acquire, hold and dispose of property, both movable and immovable shall by its name sue and be sued" (GOB 1982b)

Figure 5.1: Organisation of Upazila Administration (1982-1992)

| Judiciary | Upazila Parishad | Upazila Magistrate |

Upazila Chairmen

| Assistant Judge | Upazila Nirbah1 Officer |

| Upazila Coop. Officer | Upazila Education Officer | Upazila Agrl. Officer | Upazila Livestock Officer | Upazila Fishery Officer |

| Upazila Engineer | Upazila Health & F. P. Officer | Upazila S.W. Officer | Upazila R.P. Officer |

| Health Services | Family Planning | Agrl, Extension | Input Supply. & Services |

| Hospital In & Out Patient | Domiciliary Services | Medical Officer (MCH- | Family Planning Officer |

| Public Health | Civil/Elect. Engineering | Rural Work Programme |

Upazila Nirbah1 Officer

| Upazila Accounts Officer | Upazila Revenue Officer | Upazila Magistrate | Upazila Food Officer | Upazila Statistical Officer | Upazila Ansar and VDP Officer |

Officer in Charge Police Station

14. Flood control and development of water resources,

The Second schedule of the Local Government Ordinance listed 17 functions of the UZPs, these were:

i)   All development activities at the thana level, formulation of Upazila level development plans and programmes and implementation, monitoring and evaluation thereof.

ii)   Preparation of upazila development plans on the basis of union development plans.

iii)   Giving assistance and encouragement to UPs in their activities.

iv)   Promotion of health, family planning and family welfare.

v)   Provision for management of the environment.

vi)   Training of chairman, members and secretaries of UPs.

vii)   Implementation of government policies and programmes within the upazilas.

viii) Supervision, control and coordination of functions of officers serving in the upazila, except *munsifs* (local judge of civil court), trying magistrates and officers engaged in regulatory functions.

ix)   Promotion of socio-cultural activities.

x)   Promotion and encouragement of employment generating activities,

xi)   Such other functions as may be specified by the government from time to time,

xii)   Promotion and extension of the cooperative movement in the upazila,

xiii) Assistance to the ZP in development activities,

xiv)   Planning and execution of all rural public works programmes,

xv)   Promotion of agricultural activities to maximize production.

xvi)   Promotion of educational and vocational activities,

xvii) Promotion of livestock, fisheries and forests. (GOB 1982b:19)

The tenure of office of the Chairman, women and nominated members was five years. The Chairman of the UZP was made responsible for the conduct of the day to day administration of the Parishad and the supervision and control of its staff. The chairman had enjoyed the status of a Deputy Secretary to the government, a monthly honorarium of TK. 1250, residential accommodation and a government vehicle. The Chairman also enjoyed the authority to dispose of the following business of the UZP.

a. Appointment, transfer, punishment or removal of any servant of the parishad, not being a government servant;

b. Collection and recovery of all taxes, rates, tolls, and other dues, levied by the UZP:

c. Receipt of the amounts on behalf of the Parishad;

d. Incurring of expenditure on any item within a sanctioned budget, not exceeding such a limit as may be specified by the Parishad;

e. Conduct of all correspondence on behalf of the parishad;

f. Issuing of notices on behalf of the parishad;

g. Compounding of all offences under the ordinance;

h. Writing of Annual Confidential Reports (ACR);

i. Such other business as may be specified by the government. (GOB 1982b: 29).

The Bureaucratic Structure of the new Upazila Parishad.

The administrative decentralisation process, centering on the creation of upazilas, laid the foundation in Bangladesh of a huge bureaucratic establishment for the first time in its administrative history. Since then many new departments have been created and officers posted at upazila level. On the other hand, UZPs were also given power to appoint officers and employees to assist in the discharge of their functions (GOB I982b:9). There were about 18 officers directly involved with development activities and a large number of staffs of different categories in each Upazila (Organogram-in Figure 5.1).

The key executive person in the Upazila was the Upazila Nirbahi (Executive) Officer (UNO) who used to assist the Chairman in implementing government policies and the Parishad in preparing a comprehensive and integrated development plan for the Upazila. In addition, he was entrusted with the responsibly of supervising revenue and general administration. As a member of elite bureaucratic cadre i.e., Bangladeshi Civil Service (BCS: Administration), in fact he was the representative of the central government in the upazila administration.

In order to make the UZP more effective in discharging its duties and functions, government decided to depute all government officers including UNO, Assistant commissioners and other Upazila Staffs dealing with the transferred subjects to the respective UZPs who were previously directly working under central government.

In addition to the UNOs, there were about 17 officers working at the Upazila belonging to various cadre services, most of them were professionals or specialists. All these officers used to draw their pay and allowances from the respective UZPs and were subject to all the terms and conditions applicable to government officials on secondment. Government and respective departments were responsible for the appointment, transfer and promotion of these officials. In practice and for all practical purposes, the 'field bureaucracy' was totally dependent upon the central bureaucracy, and thus developed a sense of 'belonging' to the central bureaucracy, instead of acting like an authentic decentralised institution. Most of the officers of various 'nation building departments' had been recruited and trained under central bureaucratic management system, and very often showed bias in favour of central views and decisions. Moreover, the majorities of the supporting staff of the upazila administrations previously worked in the Central Secretariat and hence suffer from additional centralist tendencies. All these factors of centralist nature had resulted in a strong field bureaucracy at -upazila level (Rahman 1989: 217).

A Cabinet Division memorandum was drawn up to give ample supervisory and controlling authority over the UZP to the Deputy Commissioners.[10] In the name of regulatory control and efficiency the district bureaucracy had been given the authority to interfere with the functions of the UZP. In respect of 'retained' subjects the UNO's and the Assistant Commissioners had to work under the strict control and supervision of the Deputy Commissioner. The central bureaucracy also exerted a great deal of control over the developmental departments of UZP through the district bureaucracy. This was not only because of the traditionally predominant position of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) in the affairs of the district in question, but mainly because the UNO was directly subordinate to the DC (Hye, 1985). Thus the bureaucratic structure of the upazila administration became an articulated adjunct of the central bureaucracy, which by way of the upward and downward paths of orders, guidance and accountability always tried to keep them under control. One of the most sensitive areas of governmental intervention in the UZP, that constantly had created tension between the national-level bureaucracy and the UZP and, in particular, its chairman, was the extent of the limits imposed on the power and authority local officials may exercise.

The issues raised in this chapter will further be examined in subsequent chapters on the basis of empirical evidence.

Notes:

1. General Ershad as Chief of Bangladesh Army issued a statement after the presidential election of 1982 to ensure the army's role in running the state.

2. 'Over politicisation' means increasing reliance on political party than on army i.e. appointment of more civil ministers and allowing more and more civil politicians to play important role in governmental affairs.

3. For a detailed account of the process of military withdrawal in different country see Talukdar Maniruzzmaii 'Military Withdrawal from Politics - a comparative study (1988)', University Press Ltd, Dhaka.

4. In the first address to the nation justifying the coup. General Ershad said

   "the national security independence and sovereignty was threatened due to social and political indiscipline, unprecedented corruption debased economy; administrative stalemate, extreme deteriorating law and order and frightening economic and food crisis" (The Bangladesh Observer March 25. 1982). Some of the ministers of former government were also arrested for alleged corruption,

5. Soon after the coup the regime declared following five point economic objectives of the government.

   1. Achievement of 7.1 per cent annual growth rate.
   2. Decrease in public sector overhead cost.
   3. Encouragement of private sector investment and denationalisation of nationalised industries.
   4. Attainment of self-sufficiency in food, and
   5. Development of effective population control measures.

   The number of ministers were brought down from 42 to 17, reduced number of Divisions of the ministry from 52 to 47.

6. GOB, CMLA Secretarial Notification on the constitution of N1CAR No 7002/3CIV -1 31 August 1982.

7. GOB, Resolution on Reorganisation of Thana Administration, Dhaka, Cabinet Division (October 23, 1982). Thana Administration Vol 1. Cabinet Division,

8. GOB. The Local Government (Thana Parishad and Thana Administration Reorganisation) Thana Administration Manual Vol.1 (Cabinet Division).

9. CMLA Secretarial Memorandum No 71 31/2/1 mpl-2540 1st April 1985. Other subsequent additions came in the planning commission guide line issued in 1988.

10. GOB. Cabinet Division (1985) Memorandum on Relation of Government Officials with the Upazila Parishad (No. CD/DA-2/1 -22/85/294 dated June 30, 1985).

Chapter Six

Methodology

The methodological chapter provides a description of the ways in which data were collected and analysed in order to test theories and real achievements against the rhetoric of decentralisation and local government adopted by the peripheral capitalist state of Bangladesh.

Most studies when addressing the problematic of decentralisation and local government in a peripheral capitalist state like Bangladesh in the past have not gone beyond a self-imposed naive institutional framework of analysis which was essentially apolitical and ahistorical in nature. Decentralisation as a political discourse and local government as its institutional/ organisational manifestation, is merely an offshoot of deeply rooted and wider philosophical construct of 'state and society'. As a result any discussion confined within a purely institutional/organisational framework without relating to wider social-structural implications and vice versa, tends to produce misleading conclusions. Considering those implications, the present study premised its enquiring those implications, in two specific spheres: Firstly the theoretical dimension of decentralisation in its institutional guise as debureaucratisation,' deregulation, destatisation, self-reliance and delivey of public services. Secondly, wider structural issues rooted in contemporary capitalist imperatives but hidden behind the above mentioned institutional initiatives, in which the role of the central and local state becomes instrumental within the structural as well as spatial location of the society in perpetuating the general process of capitalist accumulation.

Furthermore, the study addressed the central problematic of decentralisation, from the stand-point of several theoretical traditions, encompassing 19th and 20th century grand theories of liberalism and their contemporary Marxist counterparts. On the one hand, and the lesser theories built up around 'developmental noises' in the decades since the second world war, on the other hand. As a corollary to the multiple theoretical discourses the study has to pursue the practical dimension of the study necessitated 'methodological pluralism' as

means of examining Bangladesh's real social and institutional reality. This methodological pluralism has been constructed from a number of interpretive qualitative methods such as review of historical events and discourses, recording of oral history, ethnographic study, social-anthropological observation, case studies combined with the quantitative method of social survey to complement each other.

Specific Empirical Premise

Through the four initial chapters, the study attempts to reach tentative conclusions from wider theoretical considerations by relating them with the specific historical situation of Bangladesh. Chapter five describes a specific reform package initiated by the government of Bangaldesh in 1982 in which the UZP came into prominence as the local state institution. The methodology outlined in this chapter concentrated mainly on the study of two UZPs in particular and the local state in general in Bangladesh. The main method followed here is case study approach. To strengthen the value of case studies, various other methods were added subsequently. Generally case studies make no claim to be representative, the method attempts to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of a particular group, institution or situation which was the intension of the present study too. Nevertheless, to overcome the inherent limitations of the method, the present case study of UZPs has been supplemented by social surveys commensurate with the information of national-level surveys and studies.

Data Sources

Data have been collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included the quantitative data collected through social surveys as well as qualitative information gathered through personal observation, case studies, ethnographic accounts and the recording of oral history. In the same way, secondary sources also combined qualitative data from published sources and unpublished official records as well as key historical developments interpreted by others.

Criterion and *Location of study area*

The micro level, empirical information (primary and secondary, qualitative and quantitative) has been collected from two UZPs and two UPs purposively selected according to the following criteria. According to the scale of development, all the 492 upazilas of the country were divided into three different categories[1] such as
1. developed upaziias (34)

2. less developed upazilas (80)

3. underdeveloped upazilas (378)

To assess the impact of the local government reforms across the country, two UZPs were selected from different ends of the spectrum, i.e. one from category 1 (developed UZP) and another from category 3 (underdeveloped UZP). The developed UZP belongs to the greater district of Chittagong and the underdeveloped UZP to Comilla. Similarly one UP from each UZP was also selected in order to collect an identical set of information as well as enabling a detailed survey to be made of the impact of decentralisation at the grassroots levels.

The real names of the UZPs and UPs are not disclosed because of security reasons. The UZPs and UPs are referred to as 'Chittagong UZP', 'Comilla UZP', 'Chittagong UP' and 'Comilla UP' respectively. Similarly, for the same reasons, the names of persons mentioned in this study also been changed.

Classification of respondents and information

Information was collected basically from two different levels. At the first level, information was collected from the UZPs and UPs through formal questionnaires, informal interviews and by consulting office records. Respondents included representative members, users, beneficiaries and officials. At the second level in order to observe the impact of decentralisation at the grassroot level, a comprehensive house to house survey was conducted within a geographically contiguous part of both the UPs covering 88 households from Chittagong and 59 from Comilla

The cluster of households from a contiguous part of UPs were selected after considering the long history of their settlement in the area, long tradition of homogeneous living by sharing common social facilities such as a rural link road, natural water resources for irrigation and a weekly market.

Besides the head of the families of the above cluster of households, 100 women from each area were also selected from the voter list of the area and interviewed by a separate questionnaire. They were asked about their participation in the UZP election in 1990.

In addition to these four formal group of respondents (UZP members, UP members, rural households and women voters), a large number of other persons such as local political leaders, gangsters, contractors, ration dealers, lessors of village markets and government officials were also interviewed by informal method of discussion through check-list, the detail of which (classification of respondents,

number of respondents', mode of interview, object of observation and enquiry etc) may be seen from the table 6.1.

Time Scale of the data collection

Data from the study area have been collected at three different stages since 1983. In the first stage (from 1983-85) an initial idea was formed regarding the functioning of UZPs and UPs through occasional visits, through participation in the monthly meetings and maintaining a diary of important events to follow up later. The second stage begun with the UZP elections of 1985. In order to gain more insight into the UZPs and the process of decentralisation, a national -level survey of the socio-economic background of UZP chairmen was conducted. The author also participated in four training Workshops with the UZP chairmen and UZP officials so as to develop a more detailed understanding of the local government system. Attendance of workshops and conducting the survey altogether took 65 days and was completed in July 1986. The third and final stage lasted for five months from November 1989 to March 1990.

Table 6.1 : Survey Units, Types and Number of Respondents

Units of Lccal govt	Respondents Interviewed by structured quesdonnalre	No. of Respondents		Respondent Interviewed with checklist	No.of Respondents		Docunents and records consulted	Objects of 0bservation
		(1)	(II)		(1)	(II)		
UZPs	Representative members	11	9	-UZP officials -Ratron dealers -Contractors -Suppliers -Lessor of Hats & Bazaars, -Local politicians and key informants	30 7 2 5 5 5 5	31 4 3 3 2 5 5	-Budget -Project Statements and procedings of last five years UZP meetings	-UZP meetings -court eases - Election -Accumution process
UPs	-Chairman and members of UP -All household of a geographically contigouous part of the UP -Women voters	9 88 100	9 59 10	-Local politicians -Gangsters -Key Informants -Local staffs of government departments	10 15 10 3	5 5 5 10	-Budget -Project statement -Tax Register, -Case Register	Election UP meetings

(I) Chittagong

(II) Comilla

Limitations

There are two major limitations of the study which caused great anxiety: one was the lack of an identical set of data for the two UZPs and UPs. This was primarily due to two reasons, one was that the UZPs

are different in their socio-economic and political settings and the second was the poor record-keeping system in the local government offices. The other source of anxiety was author's prolonged involvement in a particular location; this may simultaneously be both a strength and weakness. It is a strength in the sense that he had developed a deep insight into the social dynamics of the area chosen for field-work over a prolonged period of involvement. It might be a weakness on the grounds that the researcher might become too partisan or personally involved. However, all the time, he was aware of the need to retain objectivity in the enquiry, despite rather pessimistic hypotheses regarding the main motivations behind and impact of decentralisation. Throughout the study, the author, nevertheless remained a 'partisan' with regard to local government and decentralisation, and searched for the factors that would permit such institutions to really serve the poor.

The data and information generated over the years was huge and at times seemed unmanageable. For the convenience of interpretation, they were arranged thematically in successive chapters and each chapter contains a methodological outline of its own distinct form but consistent with the general methodology of the study.

Notes:

I. For a detailed list of the various categories of upazilas see A Momin Chowdhury Industrial Policy of Bangladesh, Bangla Academy. Dhaka, 1987 (Bengali).

Chapter Seven

Decenralisation : As a Process of Civilianisation and Legitimisation of Military Rule of General Ershad (1982-90)

Military rule[1] in the third world peripheral societies is not an ahistorical and isolated phenomenon. From the early forties until 1984, 60 countries of Asia, Africa and South America experienced the rule of military regimes, the duration of which ranged from few weeks to 30 years (Maniruzzaman 1988:221-231). Furthermore 56 percent of third world countries have undergone military rule at least once during their post-colonial lives (Maniruzzaman 1988:17). After successfull coup attempts, all military regimes gradually end their direct military involvement in state power, either transferring power to an allied civilian regime or civilianising themselves. In the history of military rule in Pakistan and Bangladesh, instead of transferring power to an allied civil government, military governments have transformed themselves into civilian regimes.[2]

As Finer (1982:17-18) has pointed out 'the cardinal weakness of the military as a political force' (or class) is that it does not have 'legitimate basis to hold on to power' for an indefinite period. In his opinion, rule by force or through direct violence invites other forces to challenge it in a violent way. In order to avoid direct confrontation, military regimes in most cases innovate or renovate many institutional devices, political formulas and ideological facades to achieve civilianisation (Maniruzzaman 1988:4-5). The fact that civilianisation takes place does not mean we should attribute a supra-class and neutral character to the regime in question: the process of civilianisation draws the regime deeply into the structure of the social formation and its existing class relations. One of the devices introduced in Pakistan by General Ayub was the restructuring of class relations in rural areas. This required and represented an ideological and political watershed in

Pakistan, and succeeded in legitimising and consolidating not only the personal rule of Ayub. but also the general class rule of the nascent Pakistani bourgeoisie, the aspirant petty bourgeoisie (new and traditional category) and the interests of the metropolitan bourgeoisie. This ideological and institutional device took the form of the so-called 'Basic Democracy', i.e. the rural local government-system implemented during Ayub's time. The same institutional mechanisms and ideological methods were successfully used by two of Ayub's successors- Zia and Ershad in Bangladesh, in civilianising their military rule and restructuring class relations to consolidate their power.

As the military coup of Ershad in 1982 could not command sufficient popular support for its overthrow of a popularly elected government in the first six months after it assumed power, the civilianisation process became the immediate priority of the regime. On the other hand, civil resistance to martial law was strengthening each passing day. Gradually the government's capability and political strength were outweighed in the big cities by the united movement from students, workers and combined opposition alliances.[3] Up to the end of 1984, all government attempts to weaken this mass upsurge by the use of 'state violence' (i.e. using the police and military) and softer tactics of dialogue and negotiation with the opposition. Neither did its attempted to organise its own (government) political party and front succeed (Rahman 1984). The mounting political upsurge against Ayub's martial law rule erupted after eight years (1968-69); the crystallisation of a credible opposition to Zia's martial law regime came after four years whereas in Ershad's case it did not take even six months. The more the government failed in the public's eye to curb urban based anti-military agitation, the more desperate the government became to find an alternative approach to rural local government which could absorb and neutralise much of the heat and impact of the opposition's agitation.

For convenience of analysis of the dynamics and relationships between the civilianisation of the military regime of Ershad and the institutional reorganisation of UZP and ZP under the decentralisation programme, the period of General Ershad's rule from 1982-1990 can be divided into two phases:

1. The pre-civilianisaton period (1982-1986) and

2. The post-civilianisation period (1986-1990)

The pre-civilianisation period covers from the day of the coup (March 24, 1982) to the opening of parliament in 1986. During this period decentralisation and reorganisation of UZPs was the main political programme of the government. UZPs as institutions and UZP

members and chairmen as persons enjoyed enormous legal and extra-legal powers and were of considerable political importance to the regime.

UZPs in the pre-civilianisation period (1982-86)

It seemed that the process of civilianisation pursued, during the period 1982-86 was part of a blueprint prepared much earlier to consolidate the army's bureaucratic dominance over the state (Umar 1987). During this period, the regime gradually progressed towards its final stage of civiiianisation through the following successive phases of action;

1. Mobilisation and reorientation of the bureaucracy (1982-83)

2. Mobilisation of the dominant social classes in the rural society (1983-85) through local elections, and

3. final stage of civilianisation (1985-86) by holding national elections. In all these three crucial operations UZP and local government institutions remained very central.

a. Mobilisation and reorientation of the bureaucracy

With the success of the *coup detat*, the martial law administration took over all the tiers and levels of civil administration. The Chief of Bangladesh Army, became the Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA) and chief executive of the state, the constitution having been suspended, along with the right and jurisdiction of civil courts to challenge any order under the martial law regulations. The military administration began to function both in central administration and down to the field levels (Divisions and Districts) at all times taking precedence over its civil counterparts. The whole country was divided into several zones and sub-zones. Each zone was headed by one senior military official holding the rank of Major General, and known as Zonal Martial Law Administrator (ZMLA). Sub-zones were headed by an officer normally holding a rank not below Colonel, and known as Sub-Zonal Martial Law Administrator (SZMLA). Similarly Majors and Captains were given charge of Districts as District Martial Law Administrators (DMLAs). SZMLAs enjoyed equivalent status and power of Divisional Commissioners, - the traditional civil administrator of the divisions. The ZMLAs were holding the rank of Major General which, in the government's protocol list, is equivalent to the rank of Secretary in the civil service (though in India it is equal to

joint secretary in the central government) and many of the senior major-generals on active service held cabinet positions as well. Besides the administrative system, martial law courts were also established in every district. Under the new arrangements, the civil administration and bureaucracy at the field level were subordinate to the military administrator. Later, when the civil administration was restored, the martial law administrators still acted as their watch dog.

Within 35 days of the coup, a high powered committee was formed with the naval chief, Rear Admiral M.A. Khan, as its chairman to suggest measures to reorganise the local government system of the country. The committee submitted its report within less than three months. The government accepted almost all the recommendations of the report. The legal, administrative and financial arrangements were completed with great promptness and the scheme (Popularly known as the 'Upazila Programme') was put into operation from November 7, 1982.

Each of the four hundred and sixty upazilas was inaugurated formally with a public rally. The CMLA himself attended more than twelve upazila 'openings', the remaining ceremonies being attended by ministers, ZMLAs and other high military and civilian officials. All the upazilas have since been 'upgraded' by their passage through ten different phases. The required personnel, along with the logistical support, were mobilised through massive transfers, additional recruitment and in some cases even changing the civil service structure and rules.[4] The officials formerly posted in the urban areas resisted and delayed their movement to the new 'rural' postings. The central government's policy was so strict that such dissenters finally bowed down to the government's wishes.[5] The senior civilian and army officers were ordered to visit the upazilas regularly to boost the morale of junior officials, to know the real problems in the field and also for effective supervision. Every senior civil servant up to the rank of Joint-Secretary was assigned a maximum number of five upazilas to visit and report on regularly.[6] The CMLA secretariat and Cabinet Division used to receive monthly reports from the visiting officials, Divisional and Deputy Commissioners regarding the functioning of upazilas. The National Implementation Committee for Administrative Reform/ Reorganisation (N1CARR) held meetings at least once a month to review the situation and to approve the necessary changes. The committee was chaired by the DCMLA and its membership included cabinet ministers and Secretaries. A NICARR decision was normally the final one in the decision making process as far as each ministry, division and department was concerned (GOB 1983a). Massive financial grants were sent straight to the Personal Ledger Account (PL

account) of the UNOs under a new planning commission guidelines (GOB 1982b).

During the period under review, generalist civil servants, designated as TNOs (Thana Nirbahi Officers), became ex-officio chairmen of the UZPs. According to the new organisational and hierarchical scheme, they were supposed to be supervised by the Deputy Commissioners but the chairmen of the UZPs were virtually independent of all control. The TNOs (later redesignated as UNOs) combined in themselves the three most vital dimensions of power i.e. administrative, political and judicial (as UNOs hold the power of magistrates). This made them comparable in power only to the District Magistrates and collectors of the British colonial days. This power and authority enabled a UNO to control and mobilise the upazila level government functionaries as well as the UPs effectively. At one point, the technocrats and professionals in the upazilas went on strike for several days in protest against the 'tyranny' of the UNOs.[7] Senior civil servants also expressed their concern regarding some of the alleged 'excesses' of the UNOs. Ultimately, the situation was brought under control by some minor modifications in the rules and regulations.

Vigorous training and orientation programmes were arranged for all upazila level officials at the CMLA Secretariat in Dhaka, the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development, Comilla (BARD) and the Rural Development Academy, Bogra (RDA) respectively. The syllabus was prepared centrally at the CMLA Secretariat. Nearly 1400 officers of Dhaka and Chittagong Division attended training programmes at BARD and a similar number from Rajshahi and Khulna Divisions at RDA (Ahmed. Obaidullah and Huq, 1984). Before the training commenced, the trainers were oriented by the CMLA himself, and other related persons in the highest policy making bodies. Then they were assigned the task of orienting the upazila level officials. This was carried out successfully for the whole of 1983 (Ahmed et al. 1984), with the training and orientation helping to stabilise the administration of the Upazilas.

The Upazila-level officials soon came to realise that, under the new arrangements, they could lose nothing. Their power, authority, and jurisdiction increased, their pay was enhanced and new avenues for promotion were created. As the government put more money into the upazilas, they started handling more money than ever before. Though some of the inter-departmental rivalries and specialist-generalist controversies were still present, the officials gradually adjusted themselves to the system. In special cases such as those of doctors, engineers, agricultural officers and police officials, some concessions

were made to free them from the absolute control of the UNO. In December, 1983, the upgradation of the 460 upazilas was completed and the required technical and general personnel were posted. Seventy percent of the construction work in the upazila complex necessary to provide office and residential accommodation was also begun.

b. The Mobilisation of Rural Leadership (December 1983-Jime 1985)

The next year's programme began with the election of the UPs (December-January). The massive inflow of resources aroused much enthusiasm among the rural population and each and every seat was keenly contested (Schroeder. 1985). From June, 1982, the political climate in the urban areas, especially in Dhaka, became more volatile day by day. It took a serious turn in September-October, 1983, when students of Dhaka University took to the streets and began breaking martial law regulations. During that time, the announcement of the UP elections acted to disperse the concentrated political tension in the urban areas which had developed against military rule. Rural and semi-urban folk were soon infected by election feaver and engaged themselves in preparations for the elections. The UP election issue overshadowed the importance of national political issues. Thus, for the first time since March, 1982, the military government successfully diverted the attention of the people from a major political issue to a connected but nevertheless, less prominent local issue.

In the capital, the opposition parties remained busy preparing a mass movement through alignments and realignments among themselves. They showed no interest either in opposing or in rejecting the election. So for the first time, the rural masses and the urban political movement began to move into two different directions. The election was fought by individuals on 'non-partisan' issues. After the election, the elected representatives were closely integrated into the government policy of introducing the upazila system. Training, orientation, and frequent conferences were arranged for the newly elected UP members and chairmen, which aided the process of alignment and realignment. On the other hand, the government floated its own political party, *Janadal,* in February, 1983. By this time, opposition alliances intensified their efforts. The government did not adopt its normal strategy of countering opposition moves by ruthless police action; rather it followed a soft policy of promising an early election as well as proposing 'dialogue' with the opposition parties. On the one hand, they started encouraging rank and file splits between the

opposition political parties and accommodating them within the government sponsored Party *Janadal.* A large fraction of the BNP joined Ershad's new party. Internal contradiction also surfaced in many of the parties such as the JSD, the UPP and the Muslim League, over the conduct of anti-government movement. Ershad declared the poll date of the elections for the upazila chairmanships on March 24, 1985.The combined opposition pressed for a parliamentary election and withdrawal of martial law. Soon after the UP election of December 1982, opposition groups realised that they were going to lose many of their rural party bases and bosses. Many who were successful in the previous UP elections adapted to the changed political situation, particularly by transferring their allegiance from the underdogs of the opposition to the leaders of new regime. Such changes of political affiliation by the rural rich are not new in the history of Bangladeshi politics. In the 1960s, early 1970s and late 1970s, changes of allegiance towards ruling regimes paid huge dividends for the rural elites (Arn 1982). To offset such a risk, which threatened to erode the opposition's fragile and unstable support base, it concentrated its call for free parliamentary elections and the withdrawal of martial law regulations. The opposition was against all the local government reform measures. For its part, the martial law government was determined to create an alternative power base at the local level, by creating a new local government institution to flourish. The opposition intensified its resistance to government preparations for the upazila elections planned for March, 1984.

There was a call for a general strike on March 1, 1984, in protest against the holding of upazila elections. One person was killed and 200 were injured in clashes between the police and protesters.[9] A twenty-two day programme of action was launched from March 2 to 24, 1984, to seriously impede the submission of nomination papers. Finally, the government postponed the upazila elections and declared a poll date for a parliamentary election on May 27, 1984 (Ali, 1985). The postponement of the upazila polls seemed an apparent success for the opposition and a defeat for the government. But the trend of political dynamics was the other way around. The opposition, in trying to block the upazila elections, opposed the system itself, it was said that the military government had no right to bring in such a major change without an act of parliament. The opposition termed the upazila reform a gross violation of the democratic principles of the constitution. This opposition stand created suspicion and panic among the aspirant candidates for upazila chairmanships and the elected members and chairmen of the UPs, all of whom had already benefited immensely from the upazila system. Ultimately, the rural leadership moved toward

the government and the opposition finally started losing their support and sympathy.

The government directed its entire campaign to earning more of the confidence of the dominant classes in the rural areas by showing its firm commitment to a strong rural local government system. The opposition move against the upazila elections brought a section of the rural elite closer to the government. The newly formed *Janadal* party looked to utilise such opportunities. An estimate in February 1984 showed that among the 1,337 candidates for 262 upazila chairmanships, only 10 percent and 6 percent respectively disclosed sympathetic attitudes to the *Awami League* and the *BNP,* the two leading opposition parties in the country. The rest, directly or indirectly, looked to *the Janadai* (Bertocci, 1984) for their future political career. In 1984, no election was held either for parliament or for upazilas. In March, 1985, the president and CMLA in his address to the nation expressed his intention to call a referendum in support of his policies, programmes and his continuation as President till the elections were held. The date was fixed for March 21, 1985. Martial Law was tightened; martial law courts and the post of regional marital administrator's offices were revived. The Army was mobilised in support of the civil administration and the government. The pro-upazila forces had a free hand to develop their role in Bangladeshi politics. They saw a clear future for themselves in the consolidation of General Ershad's power, as he established the upzila system and channeled huge resources to the rural areas.

The legal framework for holding the National Referendum was arranged. Officials and the people of Bangaldesh had experienced two such referendums previously-in February, 1960 and in May, 1977, respectively, under Generals Ayub and Zia. The whole responsibility of its administrative as well as the campaigning arrangement including constituting the referendum committees, holding public meetings, publicity and propaganda was shouldered by government officials in the districts and upazilas. The referendum committees were formed at district, upazila and union levels. At district level, the Deputy Commissioner chaired the committee and other district level officials were members. UNOs became the chairmen at the upazila level. The members of the committee included the UP chairmen, upazila level officials, headmasters of local schools, representatives from the Freedom Fighter Command Council, and other persons considered suitable. The chairmen of the UPs and members drawn from Village Defense Party, teachers of local schools, and local notables, led the union level committees (Ali, 1986).

A briefing session for the senior civil servants was arranged in the CMLA secretariat at Dhaka where they were asked to visit at least two upazilas. They were further instructed to hold meetings in the upazilas to persuade people to participate in the Referendum and also to supervise the official arrangements.[10] Over a million posters with General Ershad's portrait were printed at government cost (Ali 1986: 79). The national media started special programme and General Ershad began attending public rallies daily throughout the country. The referendum was held on the due date.

The total number of valid votes cast was 34,572,154 out of total 49,710, 964 registered voters. General Ershad received 94.47 percent of the votes cast. The turnout of the voters was about 72 percent (Gazette Notification, March 26, 1985) inexplicably higher than the turn out figures of all previous elections since 1946, except for Zia's presidential referendum in 1977. The total cost of holding the referendum was TK 700 million, excluding the cost of maintaining law and order which would amount to a further TK 100 million (Ali, 1986 : 27). Turn-out figures of previous elections can be seen in the following table (Table 7.1).

The author visited polling stations in the Bijoypur union of Sadar Upazila in Comilla on the day of Referendum in 1985; the situation was found to be almost identical with that of the referendum held in 1977. In a post referendum address at the meeting of the military high command on April 7, 1985, President Ershad expressed his desire to hold the Upazila elections which had to be postponed before (Holiday. April 12, 1985). Accordingly, the election Commission called the two phase Upazila elections for May 16 and May 20, 1985.

The 15 Party Aliances, the 7 party Combine and the Jamate-lslami Coalition launched a movement against the upazila election threatening their members with expulsion from the party if anybody filed nomination papers to contest the upazila polls. In early May, as the upazila election campaign was gaining momentum, violence was reported from every corner of the country. In spite of the resistance, in all 3,095 candidates filed nomination papers for 460 seats and finally 2,372 contested the election. The firm anti-election move of the opposition pushed aspiring local politicians to join hands with *Janadal* as they desperately looked for a political career in the UZP. The election was held in two phases. The first phase included polls in 251 upazilas on May 16 and the second phase was held on May 20th in 207 upazilas, the incidence of violent clashes, snatching of ballot boxes, injuries and killings were reportedly widespread on both the dates.

Table No. 7.1: Turn out figure of various national and local elections and Referendum in Bangladesh.

No.	Election	Year	Percentage of the total voters of die country
1.	The last legislative council election undivided India	1946	54.81
2.	Election of East Pakistan provincial assembly	1954	56.1
3.	Parliamentary election (National Assembly of Pakistan)	1970	62.59
4.	Parliamentary election (under Mujib) (Jatiya Sangsad) in Bangladesh	1973	64.12
5.	Parliamentary election (under Zia)	1979	50.90
6.	Presidential election (Under Zia)	1978	54.25
7.	Presidential election (under Satter)	1982	55.00
8.	Upazila Parishad election (under Ershad)	1985	54.17
9.	Presidential election (under Ershad)	1986	54.00
10.	Parliamentary election (under Ershad)	1986	54.00*
11.	Parliamentary election (under Ershad)	1988	54.00*
12.	Referendum on Zia's Presidency	1977	90.00
13	Referendum on Ershad's Presidency	1985	72.00

- *Sydur Rahman (1990) estimates the turn out in the Parliamentary Election 1988 at about 10 percent*

Sources: Compiled from Khan and Zafarullah (1982).   Chakrabarty and Naraen (986), Hossain (1988) Harun (1986) and Ali (1986) pp. 72-84.

The overall official estimate of voter turnout was 54.17 percent. A large number of UP chairmen and members contested seats in the election and ninety-one out of 460 (i.e. almost 20%) of the chairmanships were occupied by the former UP chairmen (The Ittefaq, June 12, 1985). Another estimate showed that 385 UP members and chairmen were on the contestant's list. According to survey results, the government-backed Janadal party won 45 percent of the total chairmanships and about 27 percent of those reported to be independent. The remaining 28 percent went to the supporters of other parties (Awami League, 12 percent; BNP, 7 percent; JSD, 5 percent and some other parties such as the National Awami Party (NAP), the *Bangladesh Krisak Sramik Awami League (BAKSAL)* and the Muslim League (Ahmed, 1986).

So the three consecutive phases during this time-the UP election, Presidential Referendum and the Upazila Election - strengthened the alliance between the military government and the rural elites and ultimately absorbed them into the fold of *Janadal,* the newly floated political party under government patronage. On the other hand, growing suspicion and distrust grew up between the mainstream opposition and the rural elites. The above statement does not necessarily mean that the general rural masses were fully integrated or that they identified themselves with Upazila politics. It was only a section of the rural elite whose interests collided with the opposition's anti-martial law movement and coincided with the policy of the military regime in establishing linkages with the rural elite.

c. Entering the Final Stage of Civilianisation (1986)

After successfully conducting four major political tasks namely the UP elections (December, 1983), the Presidential Referendum (March. 1985), the formation of the *'Janadal'* party (1984) which was later renamed as *Jatiya Party* (JP) (1986), and finally the holding of the Upazila Elections (1985), Ershad and his government planned to begin the final stage of the civilianisation process by holding parliamentary and presidential elections by 1986 and 1986 marked a unique departure from the past four years in politics. The military regime's absolute dependence on cantonment and civil bureaucracy was no longer necessary: the party and political base had been already made ready for the switch over to 'parliamentary rule'. Eventually, a transition from four years of martial law to a 'constitutional military rule' was assured.[11] There were three remarkable achievements in 1986: the parliamentary election in May, the presidential election in October, and the seventh amendment of the constitution in December. These were very important to the regime in order to ratify its assumption of power in 1982, its declaration of martial law and to indemnify all actions of the government during the previous four and a half years.

From 1986, the newly formed JP began resisting the anti-Ershad movement using political rallies and processions, preemptive violence and counter-violence. In addition to the statements and counter statements in the newspapers, there were many street encounters. Before formally announcing the parliamentary election date, General Ershad met the UZP chairmen on several occasions at divisional headquarters as well as in Dhaka. The issues of the opposition movement and parliamentary elections were discussed. The UZP chairmen organised themselves into national organisation, namely, the

'Upazila Chairmen Parishad'. The parishad issued statements in the newspaper supporting various government steps and condemning bureaucracy and opposition political parties. The president was sometimes accompanied by some of the leaders of the 'Upazila Chairmen Parisad" during his state visits abroad and they were always found beside the president in most of his domestic public appearances. A memorandum was issued at the end of 1985 stating that upazila chairmen should be invited to all the state functions as a 'state dignitary'. In the absence of a parliament, the UZP chairmen, being public representatives, enjoyed most of the power, prestige and status of 'de *facto* MPs'. The period before the parliamentary election may be termed the 'honeymoon' period for the upazila chairmanship, as far as its role in the political and administrative process was concerned.

The UZP chairmen and other members of the local level leadership repeatedly were urged by the inner circle of the government to accept that, for the greater good, benefit and stability of the system, a parliament was needed. The Upazila Chairmen Parishad as an organisation, and the chairmen as individuals, was very skeptical about the election of a parliament. Their logic was that, though a Member of Parliament and upazila chairmen would be representing in many cases the same constituency, the former would enjoy more power and status. Again, they would be the persons who could change the general rules and regulations of the upazila system in parliament. Further more, the MPs might, in future, also seek some accommodation within the upazila system which might result in the curtailment of the power of the chairmen. Another genuine concern of the upazila chairmen was the fear of losing the political role which they had enjoyed in the past years.

The president personally assured the upazila chairmen that, so long as he remained in power, no power could destroy the upazila system. He urged the upazila chairmen to work for an overwhelming majority of pro-upazila forces in parliament.[12] The upazila chairmen after their briefing sessions with the president, disclosed to the author that the new parliament would be a 'rubber stamp' of presidential decisions. Even if the opposition gained a majority, it would not be able to change anything without the consent of the president.

Finally the upazila chairman cooperated fully with the government in organising parliamentary elections. The government backed the JP (less than two years old), and won 153 seats out of the total 300. Later, its strength rose to 208 seats, adding twenty-three independents, thirty reserved seats for women and two more seats won through by-elections. A clear absolute majority in parliament was assured for the government (Islam. 1987).

The elections did not generate much public enthusiasm. In fact, there was no public excitement or election fever. Instead of interaction between the candidates and voters, polling day was marked by widespread interaction between candidates and 'musclemen' in and around polling areas, unprecedented violence and the hijacking of ballot boxes (Islam, 1987). In Comilla, all but one upazila chairmen supported the JP candidate. Riots, several killings, innumerable injuries and gunshots took place, but none of the contesting parties bothered to report the incidents to the police. Everybody relied on their own might. The opposition, the government party and the independent candidates were all involved in the violence to the extent their resources would allow.

A three member British observer team consisting of Lord David Ennals, Martin Brave, M.P. and David Lay of the BBC was invited by the *Awami League* to form the Philippines style People's Commission. The team considered the election as a 'tragedy for democracy' and a 'cynically frustrated exercise' (Asia Week. May 18). The Far Eastern Economic Review (May 22, 1986) headlined their election story with the words 'Violence and Foul Play, or an Arranged Game'. The Awami League leader, Sheikh Hasina, accused the government of 'Vote piracy'. The BNP leader, Begam Khalida Zia. called the election a 'meaningless' exercise (Islam, 1987).

Ershad arranged for a presidential election as soon as possible. On the 31st of August, he voluntarily retired from the post of Army Chief of Staff which he had held for the previous eight years and joined the JP as a member. The party offered him the chairmanship of the party and he readily accepted it. As Chairmen of the JP, he contested the presidential elections of October 15, 1986. The main opposition parties and alliances boycotted the election, so offered no rival to Ershad in the election. Ershad won a landslide victory, securing 83.57 percent of the votes cast (turnout was 54 percent). The opposition called the election 'another farce'.

Just after the presidential election, the first session of the parliament was convened and the *Seventh Amendment Bill* proposing changes to the constitution was placed before it by the ruling party. The bill validated all martial law proclamations, orders and actions since March, 1982. The parliament session was adjourned after four hours of the session and president Ershad, in an address to the nation declared the withdrawal of martial law and the revival of constitution. A five years struggle for the civilianisation of military government had ended.

The post civilianisation period (1986 onward)

The Civilianisation process was completed after forming the JP (January 1986), the holding of parliamentary elections (May 7, 1986), the presidential elections (October 15, 1986) and the passing of the Seventh Amendment to the constitution (November 10, 1986). In all these efforts UZP leadership and UZP bureaucracy was widely used, especially during the polling process. Because of this, the year 1986 marks a turning point in the government's process of attaining the legitimate mantle of democratic civilian rule. On the other hand, the UZP system entered a new phase: that of decline. From 1987 the UZP began losing its importance and facing serious obstacles both on the political and the bureaucratic front.

The Upazila system, especially the chairmen, started losing their strong and dominant position after the parliamentary election, in spite of no fundamental legal changes in its power, authority and status. The presence of MPs and JP in the political system of the country shifted the upazila chairman's political role to a secondary position, weakening the chairmen. The contradictions between local power factions and the bureaucracy surfaced in many upazilas as well as at the national political level. In the Comilla upazila, newly elected MP forcibly occupied the office of the upazila chairmen for a few days. In Rangunia (one of the Chittagong upazilas) the chairmen went 'underground' to avoid arrest on charges fabricated by his rival, a newly elected MP (Ahmed 1987). There were even open clashes and conflicts within the party between the upazila chairmen and MPs of the JP. These conflicts and contradiction were reflected in the deliberations and discussions of the parliament (Daily Ittefaq March 20 1981). The opposition (AL) fiercely attacked the role and functions of upazila chairmen and complained of gross misuse of power and mismanagement in UZPs. When the opposition was bringing these issues up in parliament, the MPs of the JP showed no enthusiasm to defend the upazila (The Daily News, May 28, 1987). Even the MPs of the JP who had held the position of upazila chairmen before being elected as MPs, joined the others in condemning the upazila institution and its functions.

The system offered a free hand to the upazila chairmanship to establish command over vast government resources, government officials and influence general members of the public. On the other hand, MPs wield no formal control over the administration, development and resources in the UZP which is simultaneously the electoral constituency for both of them. So, irrespective of party identify, the MPs were looking to cut the upazila chairmanship down to size, and to take control over government resources at the local level.

Some of the MPs from the opposition bench started crusade in the parliament against the alleged excesses of UZP chairmen. A Muslim League MP from Rajshahi (Ayenuddin) said that MPs need to seek permission from UZP chairmen before entering the constituency. (The Ittefaq March 20, 1987). The Association of UZP Chairmen met the president, issued many public statements against this accusation, but finally lost in the battle against the MPs.

High level meetings were held to sort out a formula that would satisfy both UZP chairmen and MPs. In one of the meetings the idea was mooted that the Zila Parishads (ZP) should be revived with chairmen of the parishad to be elected from among the MPs, exercising supervisory power over the UZPs (Ali 1987 : 196). Finally, the *Zila Parishad Bill* (District Council) was introduced in parliament (July 12, 1987), which contained provision for the appointment of MPs and army representatives from the nearest district garrison. Inclusion of military in the ZP unleashed an unprecedented protest, at least 10 demonstrators died and another 100 were injured during a 54 hour general strike (Islam 1987: 165). In August, the bill was sent back to parliament by the president and was never discussed. However, the retreat of government for the time being was purely tactical.

Finally the government party moved the *'zila parishod bill'* in parliament, integrating MPs into the parishad. The bill was passed (without the inclusion of the military component) with provision for a large number of nominated members and appointed chairmen (Gazette notification June 4. 1988). In due course, the MPs of the respective districts were permitted a share of the power of local government institutions alongside upazila chairmen,

Thus the dominant political role of the upazila system and chairmanship went into decline after the election of Ershad's parliament. The decline in their political role also brought about a decline in their other developmental and administrative roles. The direct political role was considered important during the initial years of Martial Law. After the civilianisation the emphasis had shifted back to its original locus. The military bureaucratic oligarchy and their supporters in the political party leadership 'the third component' have assumed the prime role. Local government in general and upazila government in particular have been given a subordinate position as baseline supporters to the central 'power bloc'.

The central and local bureaucracy also asserted their power by curtailing the authority of the UZPs, by way of various administrative means, combined with drastic cuts in the allocation of resources[15] as further discussed in the subsequent chapters. The rural elite had no

other alternative, but to remain satisfied with its subordinate role as they did not possess the will to break the vicious circle of dependency and patron-client relationships established by the central state. The government's financial grants, political patronage and administrative support were more important than anything else to them in maintaining their privileged position over the rural masses.

Notes

1. Military rule here does not mean a supra-class rule. Military as an apparatus of state and part of bureaucracy represent dominant hegemonic class in the 'power bloc'. On the contrary, civilian regime also does not mean the rule of exploited classes. The class rule and nature of state in both cases remain unchanged only the later enjoys some democratic mantle of legitimacy.

2. General Ayub Khan (1958-69), and in Pakistan, General Ziaur Rahman (1975-1981) and General H. M. Ershad (1982-1990) in Bangladesh in the later years resigned from the post of army and become president of their respective countries after being elected in general election. In addition they also become the chairmen of political parties of their own

3. The student political parties under the leadership of Dhaka University student's union, all trade unions *formed Sraniik Karmachari Olkka Parishad* (Employees and worker united council), 12 political parties under Sheikh Hasina (president of Awami League) and 8 other political parties under Khaleda Zia (president of Bangladesh Nationalist party) jointly launched movement against the military government of General Ershad with a common programme of 5 point demands. The five point demands are as follows:
   i. Immediate withdrawal of" martial law and lifting of ban on politics.
   ii. Release of political prisoners.
   lii. Ending of press censorship.
   iv. Holding of parliamentary elections before any other elections and
   v. Trial of those responsible for killing students in February 1983.

4. As many as 174 orders on various issues were circulated from 18 different government departments to the upazilas from 10 February 1983 to April 1984 (Ali 1986 : 111).

5. The NICAR discussed the matter and expedited the movement of officials to the upazilas.

6. Mahbubur Rahman (1985] AMM Sawkat Ali (1986).

7. For detail account of specialist generalist controversy see Rahman (1989) and Ali (1986: 95).

8. Detailed of which may be seen in the subsequent chapters. The annual allocation of development fund cash and kind per upazila exceeded TK one crores which was 10 times higher than the pre upazila allocation (Hye 1983).

9. The Daily Bangladesh Observer (March 2. 1984).

10. Memo No. NU CDIDA-V 1197) 85-41 dated March 7. 1985 Cabinet Division. President's Secretariat.

11. Establishing constitutional role for the army in the administration and development process of the country was one of the objectives of 1982 coups [Address of General Ershad March 24. 1982-The Bangladesh Observer 25th March 1982).

14. Author discussed the issues at personal level with three upazila chairmen after their meeting with president Ershad.

15. The allocation of fund under Annual Development Fund gradually decreased.

Chapter Eight

The Dilemmas of Deregulation Destatisation and Debureaucratisation

Decentralisation, as envisaged both by theoreticians in general as well as from the philosophy of the government of Bangladesh in particular, is meant to transfer power and authority from central government to local government to make the later strong enough to dispense the goods and services according to the needs of the local areas. The terms of reference of the Committee for Administrative Reform /Reorganisation (CARR) emphasised the 'spirit of devolution' (GOB/CARR 1982a:2). The committee, while preparing the report, also identified many of the inadequacies of the existing system of local administration, of which centralised bureaucratic control and the weak local government system were the crucial ones (GOB/CARR 1982a : VH-VIII)[1]. Accordingly CARR recommended that the existing local government be strengthened by devolving more power and authority in favour of the representative members at upazila level, and to abolish two superfluous bureaucratic administrative structures, namely Divisions and Sub-divisions, thereby reducing the number of levels in the present administrative structure from five to three (District, Sub-district and Union). It was hoped that this measure would permit a substantial reduction in both bureaucracy and bureaucratic control over the local administration (GOB/CARR 1982a:147-148). The Report further recommended that departmentalism and compartrnentalisation of administration be eliminated by bringing all local level government officials and experts under one authority to be headed by an elected executive instead of multiple bureaucratic controls of respective line departments. The local government system at the deregulation, destatisatlon and debureaucratisation, 181 upazila (sub-district) level was the culmination of all those recommendations which in spirit were intended to avert Bangladesh's endemic centralisation and bureaucratisation. An attempt is made in this chapter to assess the situation at the upazila-level after the implementation of the new

reform package in respect of debureaucratisation, deregulation, and destatisation with a view to comparing real impact with the predictions of theory.

The empirical situation, after careful examination, reveals that as a result of local government reform rebureaucratisation, reregulation, restatisation and recentralisation took place on a massive scale. This conclusion has been drawn firstly on the basis of an examination of the legal framework of the 'decentralisation programme' which shared much of the philosophical rhetoric of decentralisation and secondly, the administrative practices in two different phases (pre-civilianisation and post-civilianisation) of the implementation of the UZP programme.

The legal framework consists of the laws, acts, rules and regulations relating to the constitution and function of new local government. Similarly, administrative practices were delineated in the day-to-day orders, circulars and notifications issued from the various line ministries, departments and corporations, as well as the dynamics of conflict observed at the local level between the bureaucracy and the elected members.

The policy guidelines of the CARR and the rhetorical commitment of the government encountered real problems when they were put into operation along the lines outlined above. As the reality of recentralisation came as a cumulative result of all the factors associated in principle with decentralisation, these apparently contradictory processes are not mutually exclusive. Still, for the convenience of discussion, the two aspects are dealt here separately.

The Centralisation Tendency within the Legal Framework of Decentralisation.

As the country was under military government from the 24th of March 1982, Bangladesh's basic legal framework (namely the constitution of the counlry) remained suspended; in its absence, the decrees, orders and other promulgations of the military authority first gained and then dominated the force of law. The first legal framework for the creation of new local government came out on 23rd December 1982 under the title 'The Local Government (Thana *parishad and Thana* Administration *reorganisation) Ordinance 1982'.* The ordinance declared all Thana Parishads (later renamed UZPs) to be *'bodiey corporate',* each being an autonomous body having power to acquire, hold and dispose of property and other legal support as body corporate (GOB 19821: section 3) The ordinance vested all the executive powers of the UP in a directly elected chairman (section 4, subsection 2 and

section 27) who is made responsible to the parishad (Section 27, sub-section 3) for his activities. In the same ordinance, all powers of removing chairmen in case of their mental and/or physical incapacity and / or 'misconduct'[1] was ultimately vested in the government (GOB, 1982b: Section 13). Though the representative members of the parishad have the power to move the motion to remove the chairmen with a four fifths majority, final discretion was left to the government in endorsing or rejecting the resolution. In a case cited in Ali (1986 : 128) in spite of a parishad's decision, the minister responsible for local government decided in favour of a chairman against whom a 'no confidence motion' had been carried by the UZP. However, on its own initiative, the government frequently endorsed suspensions, framed charges and threatened to suspend many UZP chairmen, who were considered to be politically insubordinate or disloyal to the ruling regime. More than a hundred cases of this nature were still pending in the Ministry of Local Government in March 1990.[2] These pending cases were used to permanently threaten and occasionally discipline rebel chairmen. Only the most resistant or recalcitrant were suspended and prevented from attending meeting.[3] The ordinance gave the central government almost unlimited powers in the spheres of general control and supervision, special inquiry and overturning UZP decisions (GOB, 1982b: Section G9 '50' 59 and 52).In practice, the central government's authority to intervene in the affairs of upazilas was also almost unlimited (Faizullah 1987: 45).Though it was not specified in the ordinance, a later circular from the Cabinet Division, gave Deputy Commissioners (DCs) at the District level the specific authority to conduct the proceedings of removal of UZP chairmen (All 1985 : 219).[4]

So far as the total administrative structure of the upazila is concerned, the major bottle-neck created by the legal framework was the dual administration system of the upazila. Two chief executives were required within one organisation: one to deal with the 'transferred subjects' that only central government had authority over and another for 'retained subjects' over which local government was to retain authority (for detailed observations see chapter five. Figure 5.1) within one organisation. The chairmen had no power or authority in the matter of retained subjects, but in the case of the transferred subjects and other activities of the parishad (which were supposed to be within the domain of elected chairmen) the UNO, the upazila's senior-most civil servant from the central administrative service, had crucial role to play. Gradually, and over time, various administrative orders were used to impose the control of DC and other line government departments over the UZP. One such order was issued on June 30, 1985 from the Cabinet Division. This took place at the time when the chairmanship was

transferred from UNO to elected chairmen, in which the role of the UZP and its relations with the DC and other district level official was described. There had been no apparent need to define the DC's role as long as the UNO was acting as chairmen of the parishad i.e. from 1982 to May, 1985. The consolidation and reassertion of the central government's bureaucratic stronghold only became necessary when the elected chairmen took office after 1985. While this circular was vehemently opposed by the newly elected upazila chairmen (Ahmed, Quddus and Huq 1985: 7), they failed to achieve any substantial changes.

The constitution of the UP provides for four nominated members (GOB 1985b: Section 4). Later. however, the DC was empowered to nominate them on behalf of the government, manifesting the centralisation tendency within an ostensibly decentralised local government set-up and re-establishing the control of central bureaucracy.

The Framework for Planning and Development Activities of UZPs

Besides all the legal issues concerning the constitution and function of UZPs, there were legal provisions regarding the undertaking of development activities and utilization of resources by upazilas (GOB 1983). Though it was clearly stated in the resolution of Decentralisation that, "responsibilities for all development activities at local shall be transferred to the Thana Parishad... (Central) government will retain the direct responsibility for regulatory functions and major development activities of national and regional coverage... (GOB 1983a}", later planning guidelines issued from the Planning Commission grossly undermined the spirit of decentralised planning by imposing a centrally determined framework (GOB 1983b). Again the same guidelines have been revised twice first in 1985 (just after the first upazila elections) and again in 1988. It was openly admitted in the revised guidelines that revisions were made according to the suggestion put forward by UNOs, DCs and officials of other government department (GOB 1985b : 1 and GOB 1988a : 1). On the other hand the views expressed in various public forums and even by the elected UZP chairmen did not get an airing (Ahmed, Quddus and Huq 1985 : 8). The guidelines followed during the period of non elected official chairmen (1982) were more liberal and flexible, while the revised guidelines issued after 1985 lightened central control as soon as a fully fledged elected council was in place.

The effect of central control was to limit the growth and development of decenralised planning by means of centrally determined sectoral priorities with a minimum and maximum limit of resources that could be allocated to each sector. Again, the frequent changes of deregulation, destatisatlon and debureaucratisation government priorities every year also created confusion in undertaking projects at the micro level. The sectoral resource allocation priorities imposed from the center can be seen in the following table.

Table No. 8.1: Changing Sectoral Allocation Pattern for Annual Upazila Development Plan (AUDP) in three guidelines issued by the Planning Commission

Sector of Development centrally Identified	1983		1985		1988	
	Min PA	Max. PA	Min PA	Max. PA	Min PA	Max. PA
1. Agriculture, Irrigation and small and cottage Industry	30	40	20	35	17	30
2. Physical Infrastructure	25	35	27.5	37.5	35	42.5
3. Socio-economic infrastructure	17.5	27.5	12.5	27.5	18	•10
4. Sports and culture	5	10	2.5	7.5	2.5	7.5
5. Miscellaneous	2.5	7.5	2.5	5	2.5	5

Min P.A--- Minimum Percentage of Budgetary Allocation Max, P. A—Source: GOB (1983b). GOB (1985b) and GOB (1988a)

In the sectoral priority list, the productive sector[5] (Agricultural, Irrigation & Industry, see Figure 10.1 in chapter 10) was gradually brought down from first priority to third, while the non-productive sectors (mainly construction and repair of roads, bridges, culverts and in some marginal cases development of market places) registered a constant rise, ultimately climbing to first place. Though the share of the socio-economic sector (the sector of social reproduction) in cumulative percentage terms showed a tendency to rise, in reality into six sub-components (GOB I988a:5), and the corresponding allocation of resources was as follows: Education (5-10 percent), Health and Social Welfare (5.5-12.5 percent). Child Development (7.5-15 percent) and Sports and Culture (2.5-7.5 per cent). This division of the socio-economic sector into various sub-sectors was mainly done to justify the creation of some superfluous central government ministries and department and their replication at the local level. Thus, in the name of policies to benefiting women, youth and children, new ministries and

departments were created, namely Women's Affairs, Youth Development. The National Children's Academy, Directorate of Sport and Culture at the center, and the jobs of their local officials thereby justified.

The guidelines also made it mandatory for all upazilas to spend 10 per cent of government grants or a minimum of taka five lakh (whichever is the higher) as the maintenance (GOB 1988a: 4) of upazila buildings and official residences. This further limited local choice. The other limitation imposed by the guidelines, was that no sub sectoral projects could under any circumstances absorb more than one third of the total allocation of the sector (GOB 1988a: Note 2 p-5).

In the first year (1982-83) the average government grant per UZP was TK 5 million; in the following year the total grant reached to TK 1.7 million per UZP; in the third year, total grant/aid to UZPs amounted to around TK 2 billion; averaging TK 4.4m per UZP. The average annual figure per UZP stands at TK 3.9 million for the five years from 1983-84 to 1987-88 (totaling TK 9.3 billion) (GOB 1985b: 1 and GOB 1988a: 1). This average figure of TK 3.9 million came down to 2 and 2.5 million respectively during financial year 1988-89 and 1989-90 ('Holiday' 26 March 1990) and declined to one million in 1990-91'.

After all these cuts in state allocations, UZP's planned activities (GOB 1988a) grounded to halt. With Tk. 0.5 million reserved for maintenance, what chance had a UZP to make any plan with the remaining TK 0.5 million for more than 10 sectors and 20 more sub-sectors of UZP development.[6] If the UZPs were to have full authority and control to determine their own sectoral priority and budgetary allocations according to their locally felt needs, the UZP plan could contribute something even within a context of severe financial crisis. Development needs and problems vary from upazila to upazila, but the central regulatory controls on plan framework were the same for all UZPs. An opinion survey among UZP chairmen regarding the sectoral priority they would give to UZP projects widely contradicted the official government framework imposed through the planning commission. One hundred and forty five UZP chairmen listed eleven sectors and ranked the following areas in descending order or priority;

1. Education

2. Agriculture

3. Physical Infra-structure and

4. Health, population control and family planning.

In a training conference held in July 1985, a group of 50 UZP chairmen from Dhaka and Chittagong Divisions also expressed their

concern (Ahmed et al 1985:25) about the limitation imposed by planning commission guidelines (p-:5). They also urged the government to introduce greater flexibility into the rigid sectoral priorities it had set (Ahmed et al 1985:32) so as to allow UZPs to adjust their plans to local needs. The central government also imposed a complete ban on UZPs undertaking of any profitable or income-generating project which could create permanent assets for the UZP (GOB 1985b: 13 and GOB (1988a : 15) and that would permit them to gradually become more able to finance local services and development initiatives from self.

Besides the central government grants provided under the Annual Development Plan (ADP), Food Aid from bilateral and other agreements (e.g. with the government of the USA, UK, Canada, Australia and agencies such as the World Food Programme, or CARE) also provided resources for UZPs to carry out infrastructural development (e.g. through food for work projects). In Blair's (1987) estimate, the total annual contribution under Food for Work (FFW), Emergency Relief, Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF), etc to each UZP, stands at approximately TK 4.5 million. A moderate estimate prepared on the basis of the Annual Report Published by the Ministry of Relief (GOB 1984-see table 8.2) shows that the average wheat allocation per UZP was 149 tones, the value of which stood at approximately TK 6.6 million. In addition, the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) and the Ministry of Food also utilised and distributed almost double the level of Relief Ministry allocations every year. Though the ADP allocation over the years had been reduced, the flow of wheat remained more of less stable.

A 94 page circular (Booklet NO RRD/PC-AC-1-62/85/264 dated 3rd. August 1985) centrally determined the overall management of FFW projects all over the country. The constitution of the project committee, the day-to-day management of activities and the size of the project were all decided centrally. Even the local wage rate of labourers (1985c: 8 and 58) and mode of transportation of wheat (p-20 and 331) were also decided centrally, though the wage structure and mode of transportation varied widely from one place to another. The executive ministry (M/O of Relief) and the donor agencies (WEP. CARE) reserve the right to suspend any project at any time on the charge of 'irregularity' (1985b: 10).[7] The FFW guidelines were very strict with regard to the rate of wages and also in the mode of payment of wages. The average wage rate was fixed to '5 seer' of wheat (about 4.50 kg) per worker to be paid in kind. The payment of wages in cash was prohibited.

This provision had been found virtually unworkable in the rural areas both at Comilla and Chittagong while the author visited some of the on going projects in those areas in 1990. Firstly, in both the areas there was a scarcity of labourers specially interested in doing earthwork. As a result the labour contractors were bringing labourers from other areas who were not interested in receiving wages in kind (wheat), because they cannot store wheat for future consumption and had to resell it to wholesalers at lower prices to be able to buy other necessities and/or send remittances to support their families in distant areas. Secondly, the project committee and the respective UPs also faced some additional problems of storage, transport and distribution of this FFW wheat. They all preferred cash which was easy for both project committees as well as for workers to handle.

Table No. 8.2: Food Assistance to Upazllas under various heads during the financial year 1983-84

Nature of Project	Total quantity of wheat in metric Tons (MT)	Average distribution to upazila (UZP) (N-460)	Total amount of value at the price of Tk 5000.1 MT	Share of Average upazila in Tk	Total no. of projects	Average no. of projects per UZP
Food for works (FFW) Earth works	388,922.98	845	1,944,610.00	4227413	4292	9.33
FFW, Structure	--	--	196,452.288	426143	1250	2.71
Road and embankment projects	--	--	16,896.00	36728	350	0.76
Vulnerable group feeding	103,602.00	225	518,010,000	1126086	--	--
Test relief	73,180.00	159	3,659,000	795434	--	--
Total	565,704.98	1219	3,041,867,288 (30.4 billion Tk)	6611804	5892	12.80

Notes: *Figures are drawn from the Annual Report of the Ministry of Relief (1984) : the national as well as upazila figures for funding, volume of wheat and number of projects may not correspond exactly to those found in government and agency publications. The figures presented here were calculated only to show the general trend.*

Source: *Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation, 1984*

Recentralisation and deregulation as observed in administrative practices

The central administration of the Bangladeshi government is composed of 34 ministries and 45 divisions within the ministries. A ministry is headed politically by minister (s) and administratively by permanent secretaries. Under these 45 divisions there are 192 attached departments and 120 autonomous bodies to carry out specific governmental functions (BBS 1986: 32-S6)[8]. Twenty of these divisions, departments and autonomous bodies are represented at the upazila level by 50 officials including four from administration cadre. Besides these 20 attached departments and autonomous bodies, the judiciary was also represented by one magistrate and an Assistant Judge with 10 staffs. All the Ministries, Divisions and Departments directly and through their district hierarchy tried to reach down to the upazila. On the other hand, the central government and central bureaucracy, through the UNO and three other officials with the power of magistracy used to exert to the authority of the central state by direct regulation or by indirect manipulation.

In this section we are going to analyse some of central government's official memos or orders which went against the 'spirit of devolution' and decentralisation as defined in the report of the CARR (GOB, 1982a) and as subsequently reflected in the resolution the government issued in 1982 (GOB 1982c). The issuing of orders and circulars from central ministries and departments to their lower units was a continuous process; for the purposes of our discussion here, we are dividing them into two categories. Firstly there were central government circulars applicable to all upazilas; in this case, a few departments have been randomly selected for review. Secondly, by concentrating on two upazilas (in Comilla and Chittagong) for closer scrutiny, the local level impact of central government's regulatory control which appears to have created obstacles in the functioning of UZPs as 'autonomous bodiy corporate' will be elucidated.

Recentralisation and Rebureaucratisation through administrative means- cases of selected departments

a. The Construction of Upazila Complexes

Just after the upgrading of old thanas into upazilas, the government initiated a plan to rebuild the local government offices, creating 'upazila complexes' to accommodate new officials. Besides the Development Assistance grants and FFW wheat, the following

amounts were also allocated to all 460 upazilas for the construction of offices and residential accommodation for officials.

1982-83	TK	1400	million
1982-84	TK	1723	million
1984-85	TK	2230	million
1985-86	TK	2250	million
1986-87	TK	1750	million
Total	TK	93530	million

Source: (M.M Zaman, 19871)

The procedures followed in implementing the project for the construction of upazila complexes completely ignored the original resolution (GOB 1982c) which says that the 'responsibility of all development activities at the local level shall be transferred to the Thana Parishad.' Just three months after the above resolution (on January 13, 1983) an order was issued from the secretariat in suppression of all previous instructions. It made the DMLAs the final authority in the selection of sites and in the approval of the layout of upazila complexes in their respective zones and districts (CMLA secretarial memo-7131/1/l/Imp/-2/23 and 125 dated 13 January 1983 manual on Thana Administration vol – 1, pp. 66-67). The funds allocated were also placed not at the disposal of the UZP but at that of the Department of public works, Roads and Transport, Posts and Telecommunications, to implementing the programmes under the scheme (CMLA secretarial memo 7101/11/Imp/-1/746 dated May 1983, manual- II p. 56). Thus the parishad had been totally by-passed from real involvement or participation in the very foundation work of the parishad. The UZPs have been denied a wide range of participation in planning, monitoring and supervision at all stages.

b. The Administration of Law and Order and the Police

The police have for over a hundred years in this part of South Asia discharged their responsibilities independent of any local authority control. Many previous administrative reform commissions and committees have recommended local arrangements to share responsibility and accountability of police organisation jointly with local authorities (Ali et al 1983: 245-271). For the first time in history, provision was made to this effect by establishing an administrative relationship between the Officer in Charge of police (OC) at upazila level, the UZP chairmen and head of regulatory department in the UZP, the UNO (CMLA secretarial memo No. CD7DA-2/20(2)83-254(1000) dated 18.7.83, manual II p. 84).

The provisions made in the memorandum were as follows:

1. The OC's Annual Confidential Report (ACR) will be written in three stages. Part one of the ACR will be written by the District Superintendent of Police and part two by the UZP chairmen, covering his general performance in respect of police-public relations and cooperation in the activities of the UZP. Both of these reports will go to the Divisional Inspector General of Police who after consolidating the two will write the final one;

2. UZP chairmen were made the final authority to grant casual leave to OCs at upazila level;

3. OCs were required to seek the permission of UZP chairmen or the UNO before leaving the boundary of the upazila;

4. The OC was to work in the upazila under the supervision of the UNO (a magistrate 1st class) and the UNO will regularly inspect the police station as the appropriate inspection authority. These provisions remained in force for two years. After the election of UZP chairmen in May 1985, provision 1-3 as outlined in the memorandum were withdrawn. The previous position of police administration has been restored and OCs started working virtually independent of any obligation to the UZP.

c. Reestablishment of Vertical Departmental authority and Withdrawal of Power from the UZP

According to the resolution of 1982 (GOB 1982b), the services of officers dealing with the affairs which had been transferred to UZP were placed at the disposal of parishad, making them accountable to the parishad (section 2). The Officers dealing with reserved subjects were also made answerable to the parishad on the basis of the power conferred on the parishad to carry out inspections, ask for reports and to summon such officers to hearing (Chapter 5 may be seen).

Subsequently these provisions of the legal framework were weakened and withdrawn by 1989 in the case of many departments. The central government divisions and departments undermined and deflected the formal commitment to decentralisation and removed many of the upazila offices from the control of the UZP by modifying administrative orders from time to time. The Public Health Engineering Department (DPHE) is one of the examples of the withdrawal of a key department from the UZP sphere of control and its return to its line department's sphere of authority. By an order of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperative Ministry on 2nd September, 1989 (Section 2/1E -6/49 (Part) 755) the DPHE of all upazilas of Bangladesh were brought back under the direct control of the DPHE. From then, on the corresponding activities at upazila level has become a 'reserved'

matter. The DPHE at upazila level is responsible for the supply of drinking water by sinking, re-sinking and repairing tube wells; further to that it is also responsible for providing and maintaining rural sanitation and sewerage services. Management of the supply of drinking water and maintenance of sanitation and sewerage systems was one of the most vital social services which the UZP should provide as a local government institution. Due to the changes in local government orders, the UZP lost its links with this department and thereby active involvement in this important service. Similarly, from these on wards many other departments start to initiate new projects and programmes in the upazilas without local authority control, by-passing the UZP in all important matters. Many new Projects were generated at the center and coordinated through the DC and other district level departmental officials. One example of these types of withdrawal and recentralisation was demonstrated in the 'Upazila Nursury Project' initiated by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. DCs were to become chairmen of the 'Afforestation and Nursery Project Committee', which had received the central allocation in implementing the project in the upazilas under the operational control of the Upazila Agriculture Office. In a memo (No. PBM - 3 (IBU) 7/90/115 dated 30.1.90), the Ministry approved this type of project for 9 upazilas in Rajshahi District, each receiving an average allocation of TK 0.02 million.

Similarly, after the withdrawal of the police from UZP's control, other departments such as Agriculture, Health, Population and Family Planning had also slipped out of UZP supervision/coordination by changing many of their previous rules and effectively becoming departments dealing with 'reserved' rather than 'transferred' matters.

d. Statisation and the Bureaucratisation of Private Schools and Colleges

Secondary schools and colleges in Bangladesh can be categorised as either government or Non-Government. Non-government schools and colleges predominate in the whole system of secondary and college education: ninety eight percent of secondary schools, 96 percent of the total students at secondary level, as well as 95 percent of the total secondary school teachers are to be found in the non-government schools. Similarly 82 percent of the total colleges and 66 percent of the students studying at colleges attended non-government colleges (Table 8.3).

A historical review of the 20 secondary schools and colleges of two upazilas in Chittagong and Comilla shows that all of those institutions (including two government institutions) were founded by the local educationalists, philanthropists or by the efforts of the general public. All land and initial construction costs were provided locally in this way. It had been the popular practice since the British colonial period (continued during Pakistan time) that the local philanthropist /donor, educationalists, parents/guardians and teachers formed the managing or governing body of the private schools and colleges.[9] The post of chairmen and secretary of the managing body was filled by indirect election from amongst the directly elected members. As a result, both chairmen and secretary were always non officials.

Table 8.3: Schools and Colleges, Students and Teachers in the Private and Government sectors in Bangladesh in 1981 [figures in brackets are percentages)

Government/ Private	Secondary Schools (1981)			Intermediate and Degree Colleges (1981)		
	No. of secondary schools	No. of students	No. of teachers	No. of colleges	No. of students	No. of teachers
Government	177 (2)	95,000 (4)	4.055 (5)	107 (18)	136,462 (34)	4,773 (38)
Non government	8.287 (92)	2,372,000 (96)	81,818 (95)	488 (82)	259,647 (66)	7,850 (62)
Total	8.468 (100)	2.467,000 (100)	88,873 (100)	595 (100)	396,109 (100)	12,523 (100)

Source : BBS (1984). PP 616-G22.

The system of appointing official (rather than community) members of the management committees of schools and colleges started in the mid seventies (Ali et al 1983:272). Gradually, the process of bureaucratisation of private educational institutions took a serious turn. After the decentralisation programme of the government in 1982, the UNOs of all upazilas were made the ex-officio chairmen of all the schools, colleges and *madrasas* (institutions of religious education) (Education Division memo No. SV/5C-3/83/128 (4) edition dated 2.2.1983; further memo VI/5C-4/81/13H (4) edition dated 21.12.1982 manual I, pp 123-124). Under this new order, the UNO of Chittagong Upazila, for example, became the chairmen of 31 secondary schools, 6 colleges and 30 *madrasas*; similarly, the UNO of Comilla Upazila also automatically assumed the chairmanship of 19 schools, 2 colleges and 9 *madrasas.* After the UZP elections in 1985, 239 UZP chairmen urged the government in a written appeal to replace the UNO on the management committee of schools and colleges by elected chairmen

(Quddus and Ahmed 1985:19). Later, government modified the order by replacing the UNO's chairmanship with that of the DC or his nominee from the district (Ahmed, Quddus and Hoq 1985:8). While decentralisation ostensibly encourages voluntary participations, *privatisation,* participatory management and sharing of costs, in this case, state control over private educational institutions denied most, if not all of these principles.

e. Restrictions on the expenditure of UZPS own revenue : Whims and Indecision

The ministry of Local Government suddenly came to realise at the end of 1988 that there were some loopholes in the prevailing regulations which allowed UZPs to actually spend their own revenues! The Ministry simply stopped or froze all the monies of those UZP accounts until further notice (Section -8/1/1C/85/759 (460) dated 10.11.J988). Within three months three different orders were issued, introducing modifications which threw the UZPs into disarray and confusion as regards the financing of their own projects.

The first modification (on 7.12. 1988) endorsed the freezing of funds but suggested that salaries could be paid to the staff temporarily appointed with prior government approval. A further order on the same subject (on 12.3.89) listed of 10 items which could be legitimately purchased, for the purposes of which corresponding sums would be 'unfrozen'. The fourth one issued within four days (19.3.89) of the previous one added two more areas which were ambiguous and misleading too.The purpose of the 'freeze' on UZP accounts and the subsequent three modifications within 3 months carried no substantial significance except as a manifestation of central bureaucratic manipulation.

f. Development of Primary School buildings

The development of physical facilities for primary schools in the upazilas is vested in a central government department called the 'Facilities Department'. The Upazila Education Officer and the respective primary school teachers and local management committee of the school had no role to play in the planning and implementation of those projects. The department concerned implemented the projects simply by appointing contractors. The design and quality of the work commissioned by the department was often found to be poor. While conducting the field survey in two upazilas of Comilla and Chittagong,

the author visited two schools *'Shalonal Primary School* in Comilla Upazila and *Dakin Fatehepur Primary School* in Chittagong Upazila. In both the projects, the quality of materials used in the buildings was poor. The design of the building seemed more that of a warehouse rather than a school i.e. merely a building of four brick walls and a tin roof. There are no passages in the front, the floor is left *kacha* (beaten earth) and with no heat protection from the roof. During the summer, when the average temperature rises to 30-35 Celsius, the temperature inside the house will exceed 40 degree.

The evaluation report of the Local Government Division of the Ministry expressed dissatisfaction regarding the quality of construction of the *Sholonal Primary School* in Comilla UZP (Nurul Islam Khan 5.5.87, Evaluation Officer, LGRD, LG Division). The UNO, while visiting the school in Chittagong with the author in April 1990 also expressed his anxiety about the unhygienic condition of the *Dakin Fatehpur Primary School* building.

Administrative and bureaucratic control at the micro *level - Case studies of two UZPs (Comilla and Chittagong).*

The two UZPs are very different in their geographical location, scale of development (especially in respect of levels of industrialisation), leadership pattern and also strategic political situation. The Comilla case has a predominantly agricultural setting with no industrial base; the leaders of the parishad (including the UZP chairmen) are active farmers, though business contributes substantially to their total income. On the other hand, the UZP studied in Chittagong is developed 'according to the government's own criteria, having a moderate industrial base and various government installations. The leadership consists of mainly urban dwellers with much less of an interest in farming. The age and educational characteristics also differ quite substantially between the two chairmen: in the former case, the chairman is over 60 years of age, having graduated in the 1950s and having pursued a political life. The chairmen of the Chiltagong UZP is in his early forties, left college in the early seventies, has no strong previous ideological or party affiliation, entered service in the police force direct from college and subsequently left to enter business. While the former lives at home in his village within the upazila, the latter lives in the city 15 miles away from the UZP center. The first started living in UZP 'complex' premises and regularly attends his office; the second one hardly attends, mostly depending on officials for the day-to-day running of the UZP. Politically, the first upazila was represented in parliament by a former AL member who joined the JP and had

clashed with the former UZP chairmen violently on several occasions. The second UZP is politically represented by a cabinet minister of the JP government who opposed the present UZP chairmen in the upazila election.

The activities of the two UZPs and UZP chairmen are reflected in the above differences. The chairmen and parishad of the first case constantly struggled with central and local bureaucracy while the second one just withdrew himself from potential clash and always depended on the local and central bureaucracy for all the activities of the UZP.

Case Study I (Comilla. Upazila)

In this study four different administrative 'encounters' generated out of the changes in various orders and circulars from the Ministry, or via local bureaucratic practices, will be discussed in more detail.

1. The Appointment of the UZP's own employees

The UZP complex is situated within an area of 14 acres with six ponds. After the UZP election in 1985, with the approval of the parishad, the chairmen started planting fruit trees surrounding the whole 'complex' and also started Duck-cum-Fish farming in the UZP ponds. For the proper maintenance of the plantation and duck-cum-fish farm, the UZP decided to appoint one employee purely on a daily basis as a gardener cum watchman. The UZP earned TK 1,35,271 from these activities over 5 years, as well as using the farm as a demonstration project for the villagers.

Under the Zila Parishad scheme the government constructed a community center outside the UZP complex, which was handed over to the UZP for the use of local people. The UZP provided the center with a television set and regular daily newspapers, which were widely used by the local people as their only recreational centre. Various government and non government organisations also used the Center to hold their meetings. The UZP appointed another watchman-caretaker on a temporary basis to look after the Center.

These two appointments were declared irregular and the chairmen as chief executive of UZP was served a 'show cause' notice from the Local Government Division of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (memo- No.-UZP-l/2/2P 170/87/607 dated 8.8.1989 and UZP-2/2P-170/87/837 dated 8.8.89). The Ministry ruled that the money paid as salary to these two employees was the chairman's personal liability. The chairmen was required to reply within 10 days why he should not be held liable and

be punished for breaking the rules of UZP ordinance of 1982. The exchange of letters continued for 4 years, without the Ministry withdrawing its objection to those appointments on the grounds of 'irregularity'.

In another letter (No. Section-81 p-1,70/87/265 dated 1.4.1989) the Ministry warned the UZP Chairmen that parishad money should only be spent according to the government's set rules.

2. The Maintenance of UZP vehicles

Like all other UZPs, Comilla Upazila received a four-wheel Jeep for the UZP transport pool. The vehicle was damaged badly when it became the victim of an anti government demonstration organised by the opposition. The angry mob attacked the vehicle and set it on fire.

The UZP chairman (by his memo No. 182 dated 16.3.1988) asked the permission of Local Government Division to use funds to repair the vehicle. Permission came after 4 months (4.7.1988) with the following conditions;

1. The Purchase and installation of new parts for the vehicle should be kept limited within the prescribed funding limits of the Government Motor Vehicle Inspector (MVI), an employee of the Ministry of Communications, as posted in the DC's office.

2. The firm for repairing the said vehicle should be appointed from among the approved firms already listed by the DC's office.

3. After the repair the inspector's certificate should be sent to the Ministry.

4. The amount of expenses should be kept within estimates made by the M.V Inspector.

After completing all the necessary formalities, the vehicle was sent to a firm for repair, it was found that in addition to the 18 items of repair work previously estimated by the MVI, the battery also needed replacement. Again permission was sought for the approval of the additional item (a battery) on 1.11.88 which was refused by the Ministry on 14.2.1989. As a result, for three years (from Feb. 1988 to March, 1990) the vehicle of Comilia UZP remained out of services. The activities of the UZP have suffered due to the non-availability of the only vehicle they had. On the other hand, the depreciation costs of the idle vehicle continue to mount. Meanwhile the UZP remained utterly impotent to use its own assets for this petty repair.

3. Food production programme and the purchase of a tractor attachment (Rotavator).

The Government set a target of enhancing food grain production from the present level of 16 to 20 million tons by 1990. Accordingly, the

Ministry of Agriculture (Agriculture Division) issued a long note (Section 12"/Irrigation (M1SC)-152/88/294 '(600) dated 14.6.1988) requiring all UZPs to establish at least one farm with a minimum area of 50 acres, on a flood free plain (item no. 5 and 8 of the memo). The memo also made a provision to purchase one power tiller and install two power pumps or one deep tube well (DTW) for irrigation purposes in each UZP (item 3,4 and 19). After receiving encouraging responses from the UZPs the Ministry of Agriculture further permitted UZPs to organise more than one farm depending on the availability of resources (dated 22.9.88). Accordingly Comilla UZP established several agricultural farms, two of which were visited during the field survey of the author and found to be quite successful.

Frustration set in when the UZP sought permission from the Ministry (by letter, dated 17.1.89) to purchase an accessory for their tractor instead of buying a new power tiller. It may be mentioned here that Comilia UZP purchased a tractor with a trailer before the new order on farming which can carry various agricultural inputs such as seed, fertilizer or FFW wheat to far of places in the upazila, and which has also been used in tilling the land of individual farmers. When the Ministry of Agriculture instructed the UZP to purchase a power tiller, this would have involved a cost of approximately TK 95000. Comilla UZP wanted however to purchase a 'Rotabeta' (a tractor attachment which could be used as plough) at a cost to the parishad of only TK 45,000, permitting an increase in the capacity utilisation of a tractor which they already possessed.

The Ministry of Local Government, in two of its subsequent notes (first one on 18.2.89 and the second one on 29.1.89) described the purchase of a tractor and installation of DTW as waste of government money and to be in contravention of government rules. The proposal to purchase a Rotabeta was turned down, and the cost of the tractor and two DTWs was identified as the personal liability of the UZP chairmen, with the corresponding sum to be deposited by him in Government Treasury without delay. In an interview with the author, the Chairmen of Comilia UZP commented that, if the tractor and two DTWs were sold on the open market as his personal asset he could still make a profit after paying liability fixed by the government. But he preferred to fight to protect his innovation in the agricultural development of his upazila.

Case II- chittagong upazila : passivity & external reliance.

Chittagong UZP did not try any noticeable innovation either in the field of farming or in providing any additional social services. While

reviewing the projects undertaken within the 6 years of its life (1984-1989), it was found that undertaking of projects in this UZP amounted to nothing more than the distribution of resources equally among the UPs. Every year, the method of distribution was left to the Upazila Engineer and Project Implementation officer (PIO). Depending on the availability of government resources, these two officials used to indicate the amount to be distributed to each of the unions. The UP chairmen normally formulated the projects in consultation with the Engineer and PIO submitted them to the UZP merely for formal approval. The UZP chairmen used to leave his part of the planning job to the UNO. On one of the occasion (at which the author was present), the planning meeting was held in the office of the UNO under the chairmanship of the UNO. The meeting lasted for nearly two hours. The UZP chairmen entered and stayed in the meeting for only 15 minutes and then left the premises apologising for his prior engagements elsewhere. As a result of the chairmen and parishad's complete reliance on officials, this upazila showed itself to be more of passive government department than a local government body of an innovative nature.

Notes:

1. 'Misconduct' means misuse of power, corruption, jobbery, favoritism, nepotism and willful maladministration and includes any attempt at or abutment of such misconduct (Section 13 of sub-section 2).

2. Daily Ittefaq, February, 1990.

3. Two of these rebel chairmen of Comilla (Barura and Chandina] remained out of office for nearly six months.

4. Deputy Commissioners memo No. DC/LG/XII-19/86/270 April 1986.

5. In the total sectoral division, the sector and sub-sectors of agriculture, irrigation, cottage industry agriculture extension and digging of derelict pond etc are considered as productive activity hence are considered as productive sector. The sectors of reproduction are divided into two Broad Sectors.

    i. The sectors of physical infra-structure which include construction and repair of roads, bridges, culvert, community center and other physical construction, and

    ii. The sector of Social Development such as education, health, social services, sports and culture.

    In the total development outlay of UZP in the first five years (1982-1987) while an average grant from central government under ADP was 39 lakh and the FFW provided 40 lakh. Out of total 80 lakh on average 50 lack i.e. 62 % were straight way spent on the projects of physical infrastructure.

6. Hypothetically If one UZP starts planning by following the guideline with a budget of TK 2 million, the situation will be as follows : TK 0.5 million will be allocated to maintenance. TK 0.8 million for physical infrastructure (which is the most favoured area observed so far in all upazila studies for example (Blair. 1989) and the remaining TK 0.7 million was left for all other sectors such as agriculture, irrigation, cottage industry, education, health, social welfare, child development, sport and culture, as well as miscellaneous expenses.

7. Irregularities are defined in terms of the non observance of the following Instructions (detailed in the booklet published by the Ministry of Relief):

    i.   Failure to display correct sign-boards.

    ii.   Major changes of alignment without prior approval from the directorate /WFP.

    iii. Formation of PIC other than in accordance with the guidelines;

    iv.   Cash payments/underpayments to labourers;

    v.   Non release of carrying costs and contingency funds of PICs

    vi.   Land disputes

8. One ministry/division has more than one attached departments and autonomous bodies; for example ministry of education has three divisions, 10 attached departments and 21 autonomous bodies,

9. The history has been confirmed by consulting the managing committee resolution book of Fatehabad Multilateral High School, Chittagong which was founded in 1895.

Chapter Nine

Dilemma in Decentralisation and Democracy: A Study on Upazilla Elections

Elections and the electoral system together constitute a device to operationalise the democratic principle of 'public choice' in selecting political leadership through which governments in turn seek public acquiescence to its policies and political decisions (Milnor 1969: I). In spite of the many established limitations of the electoral system such as low voter turn-out, political apathy, non-rational voting practices, lack of sophistication in judging the policies of competing parties and ignorance of complexities of governmental functions, elections are still considered a basic criterion by which to judge the practice of democracy and popular participation in government (Neuman, 1986). An election is in essence a process of choice, a means by which a number of electors act in concert to decide which of two or more candidates shall be chosen to fill some office or receive[1] membership of some organisation (Ross 1955: 57) Under a decentralised local government system, elections are supposed to be an exercise in upholding the 'local democracy', which ensures people's participation in decision-making.

Since the launching of the decentralisation programme in 1982, which promised democratisation of local government through the Upazila system, three elections have been held so far.[1] The present case study will analyse the extent and nature of public choice reflected in two of those elections held in 1985 and 1990. While also exploring the democratic principles of free choice as reflected in those elections, the study will nevertheless not use the traditional method of studying of voting behaviour, in which voter psychology, ideology, age, occupation, education, the personality of leader, and the role of media

are rigorously analysed. The two UZP elections in particular and the conduct of elections in general in Bangladesh since 1973 have become the arena for 'foul play' irrespective of whether one looks at the local or national level : the normal rules of the business of elections have been grossly contravened.[2] The contending parties, candidates and government officials did not observe the election rules either in the conduct of or their participation in the elections.[3] Election scenes war dominated by violence, vote-rigging and frauds. As a result, studies based on the background of voters, impact and influence of ideology, election issues, contesting personalities, or the assessment of official figures of voters turn-out do not give an accurate picture.[4] Due to those distortions, the present study focuses on the methods of voting rather than the analysis of results. The 'methods' under scrutiny are not the formal-legal procedures embodied in the statutory documents, but rather the .methods and procedures actually practiced by candidates, supporters, election officials and the government during the election in the year 1985 and 1990.

Methodology

The study of these Bangladeshi elections is solely based on the participant field observer method. Historical-anthropological methods were also used to strengthen the analysis of events took place during elections. Verbal accounts of previous elections, the background of candidates, nature of campaigns and causes of victories or defeats were recorded. These constituted an 'oral history' which aided the understanding of the current trend of events, emphasising the qualitative aspects of the election process. The case study of two upazilas in two different economic/ spatial locations have been' presented following the general methodology (as outlined above and in chapter 6 on Methodology). When the micro-data of voting methods and results were analysed, the two upazilas proved to be quite dissimilar. Due to the variation in both subjective and objective situation, there emerged two different trends in the two upazilas under study. In case No. 1, analysis is based on two UZP elections held in 1985 and 1990 respectively, Case 2 refers only to the second election (1990) because of the lack of consistent and comparable data on the previous election.

Limitations

In most cases, official sources of data are grossly inadequate. Data from polling stations are not published: the data analysed here was gathered from local polling officials or from the agents of the candidates. As a result, a valid comparison with previous elections could not be made, since it is uncommon to preserve the election data on the basis of votes cast in each polling centre. Information on local political parties is also frequently unavailable in print. As a result, 'oral history' and informal discussions were the only basis for some of the findings. The advantage which the author enjoyed was his broad and prolonged acquaintance with the localities and their people for nearly 8 years and they mostly helped to recover from quantitative data deficiencies.

A Framework for Contemporary Electoral Analysis

The review of the historical development of local government in Chapters 4, 5 and 7 revealed the historical continuity of the instrumental and strategic use of local government by the central state, as most of the regimes occupied the central state by direct military coups, gradually a new political culture has developed and become implanted within the existing social and political institutions and practices, especially those relating to the conduct of elections. This can be referred to as a 'coup culture'.4 The basic tenet of this new culture is the deployment of force to secure control over existing and potential economic, political and social gains, by defying the existing social norms and legal order. Interference in the pre-established norms comes suddenly as an act of 'gang violence' and continues until the transaction has been concluded in favour of the sponsors of the violence. This type of private violence was widespread after the emergence of Bangladesh. Jahangir (1979: 66) described the phenomenon as a consequence of the possession of illegal arms by youths of petty bourgeois and lumpen origin, who later saw the prospect of better economic possibilities for themselves if they used those arms in an organised fashion. This mafia style violence, instead of posing an armed threat to an oppressive authoritarian regime, helped the later to establish state authority in the rural areas by forging a new alliance between the petty bourgeoisie and lumpen elements. Moreover, state patronage is the main inspiration behind widespread and thriving gang activities (Jahangir: 1979). Anderson (1976) mentioned the pervasive widespread banditry in post-independence Bangladesh. Many of those armed bandits, having

secured enough cash illegally, subsequently entered both business and politics, and later became 'god-fathers' of gangs which had assumed a professional scale and character. Many of these 'godfathers' became members of parliament in the eighties.[6] This post-war phenomenon of political 'gangsterism' has been described by Jahangir (1986) as the result of 'lumpenisation' process and liberal sociologists have also coined the term 'mastanism'[7] to describe the phenomenon. The phenomenon of 'gang violence' in politics has been institutionalised as result of the process of political manoeuvrings of the last two military regimes, especially during the national and local level elections. Electioneering in the last two UP and UZP elections was dominated by internecine fighting between various gangs and goons in the polling centres. As a result, the general public abstained from the voting exercises in large numbers.

Types of gangs (pre-caretaker situation)

Gangs are generally of two kinds. One type is organised under the patronage of influential individual party leader and in very rare cases, may share the party's ideological position. Though many of the left parties previously in the early seventies had their armed wings, they had by now formally abandoned them. The right wing and centre parties such as JP, AL, BNP and the *Jamat-e-Islami* nowadays patronise armed groups in Dhaka as well as in the outside districts without according them formal recognition. The second type of arm gang is formed under the leadership of private individuals. They do not have any specific political and ideological ties. They act purely on a business terms.[8] On some occasions, it has been found that the same group has been hired by different political party candidates at different times. They are hired by individuals and groups for business as well as political gain. Normally, during the election period individual candidates make deals with these gangs for many different activities such as the kidnapping and killing of potential opponents, snatching of ballot boxes on polling day, and making forced entry into polling stations in order to stuff ballot boxes with bogus votes.

The leaders of such gangs either make a clandestine deal with the police, or take shelter under the ruling party to save themselves from police action. In the late seventies, many of the local *mastans* of Chittagong changed their allegiance from AL to BNP. Some convicts were released from jail on the understanding that they would help the ruling party against opposition gangs.

The intensive use of private gangs in elections normally increases after the civilianisation phase of a military regimes. During the Martial Law times, civil and military officials played the major role which the gangs played after the civilianisation phase. The intensity of 'gang violence' also depends on the strength and weakness of the individual candidates, the strength of the organisation to which he belongs and the financial solvency of the candidate. If the candidate is young, rich and supported by the government party, gangs are more likely to work on easy terms. If they were to work for a rich opposition candidate against the government, the risks would be higher, as would be the price of deal. Some very rich non-partisan candidates did very well in elections by employing gangs of 'vote pirates' to undermine the efforts of the partisan candidates. Normally, candidates with little political calibre and having no recognisable social reputation but with financial strength, mostly depend on armed gangs to help them secure electoral gains.

The Nature and Types of Ballot-Rigging

Ballot-rigging in elections has changed in type and scale over time. During Pakistani rule, and especially under the basic democracy Electoral College system, rigging was unknown at the local level: members of electoral colleges were bought and sold at higher levels. It was possible then because of the limited number of electorates.[9] From the seventies onwards, with the introduction of universal franchise, the electoral college system was abolished and the old system of buying "elector's heads" became unworkable. Three new strategies gradually were developed and applied, depending on the time, place and situation, as a means of influencing the outcome of election results. These three types of rigging strategies are as follows:

1. The proxy vote;

2. Terrorisation and occupation of polling centres;

3. Official-level manipulation of result during the final counting and declaration of results. which was also popularly known as 'media coup' and 'election engineering'.

1. The Proxy Vote

The Proxy vote is a system by which a fake person cast the vote of another person by cheating the polling officer. By this method the supporters of one candidate cast more than one vote by taking different

names too. As there is no system of voter identity cards with photographs attached, it was quite an easy method of rigging.

This method is widely practiced especially in the female booths. In Bangladesh, female voters cast their votes in a separate booth. The candidates adopt the following method of casting proxy votes. First of all, candidates erect their own election tents outside the polling stations, normally within a distance of 200 yards. In those camps, they keep a stock of *burkhas* (a loose gown with veil which the Muslim women in the villages wear to shield their bodies from the sight of adult males) and a number of women of considerable intelligence. These women, after wearing the *burkha,* cast the votes of absentee female voters one after another. The highest record of casting proxy votes in one of the centres of my study area in Chittagong was fifty by a single woman. To record proxy votes in this way, some kind of understanding between the candidates and polling officials is needed, for any accusation of cheating by proxy voting, if proved, would lead to conviction. As Haroon reports (1986: pp. 220-221) proxy vote was one of the rigging methods widely practiced in the parliamentary election of 1973.

The proxy method is slow, cumbersome and vulnerable to challenge. As a result many other new methods have been adopted since 1973 which are quick, need very few hands, and also yield very substantial gains in terms of additional votes.

2. Terrorisation and Occupation

While the previous method of proxy voting could be likened to fraud, confidence trickery or cheating, the second method is analogous to robbery. However, it is not as straight forward as a bank or train robbery. Polling centres are crowded places with police guards and voters; as a result, the capacity of individuals to occupy and terrorise the polling centre depends on many factors. Firstly one of the methods they use is to issue a warning to or circulate a rumour among the people beforehand that there will be a bomb outrage at the polling centre, with the result that people may voluntarily choose not to risk their lives on the polling day. In most cases masked gunmen enter the polling stations and compel the polling officers to cast all the as yet non-cast votes in favour of their own candidate. It takes barely half an hour to complete the whole operation. In other cases if it is assumed that majority of votes have been already cast in favour of the opponent, then the

gunmen may choose to hijack the ballot boxes. Again, it takes only a few minutes. The result of this tactic will be the postponement of the ballot at those polling centres, and a subsequent rerunning of the election. It has been common for the opposition and less popular independent candidates to adopt this method. In the study area during last three elections, adoption of this method also involves fatal risks: if the attempt fails, it may mean injury, death, arrest and conviction of the perpetrators.

In the study area it had been seen that the nature of electoral terrorism differs from one situation to another. If a candidate enjoys substantial support near to a particular polling centre in a constituency, he may prefer to have his unarmed supporters occupy the centre. The armed gangs are kept on full alert outside the centre to safeguard it from possible attack by opponents. The armed gangs provide long range 'artillery support' to the infantry who have occupied the polling centre in order to seal on blank ballots.

In most cases, electoral officials in the polling centres were either helpless or allied with the candidates who had adopted strong-arm tactics.

3. Manipulation *of Election* Result

The third method that of manipulating results is carried out at the highest official level during the counting of votes. This method is the absolute privilege of the government party. On instructions from the highest level of government, local officials responsible for conducting the elections change the result in the counting room. The government media then quickly broadcast the manipulated results. This was also popularly known in Bangladesh as *'media coup'*.

All three of the above methods were used in the Upazilia elections, the cases of which are presented in preceding case studies on election.

Case I: The 1985 Election in the Chittagong UZP

Background of the Election

The election to the UZP was first announced on March, 24, 1984. The last date for filing nomination papers was to be March 1, 1984. The political parties grouped into 15 and 7 party alliances announced a national strike on that very day to prevent last-minute candidates from filing their nomination papers. They also jointly declared anti UZP

election action programmes for the period March 2-24. During this period, the anti-election campaign in Chittagong was very intensive and violent. Bombs were set off in almost every union of the Upazilia and the JSD candidate and his supporters were physically beaten in the northern unions of the Upazila. In view of the nationwide protest, the government ultimately realised it would be impossible to hold the election and postponed it.

Fresh dates (March 16 and 20) were declared after the presidential referendum and a further tightening of Martial Law, Seven candidates finally filed their nomination papers for UZP election in the UZP under study. Formally, the opposition parties still opposed the holding of UZP elections, but many of their local leaders nevertheless filed nomination papers in their individual capacities.[10] In the Chittagong UZP, seven nomination papers were filed: none of the candidates was seriously involved in political activities, except one.

As the election date was coming nearer, local anti-election campaigners infiltrated themselves into pro-election activities. The armed youth groups of the AL and the BNP began to rally behind the stronger and more financially solvent candidates.

Of the seven candidates, three absorbed almost all the protesters in their electoral camps. The local armed sections of the supporters of the AL and the BNP, in order to seize new opportunities of earning cash by working for three of the richer and younger apolitical candidates shifted their allegiance to them.

Background of the Candidates

None of the 7 candidates were expected to stand by the people of the constituency nor had been seen as potential candidates to represent the Upazila as a whole on any previous occasion. Two of them (E and G in table 9.1) are Union Parishad chairmen, their educational level and leadership qualities were has to poor, however, for them to become candidates in UZP level elections (each of which /cover 16 constituent unions). Only one of the 7 candidates had a political party background; he held a Party position in the Chittagong district (C). He also lacked a broad electoral appeal throughout the Upazila, being known only to his party colleagues. The rest of them had neither a notable political career nor any social image or influence which reached beyond the frontiers of their own unions. As far as professional background is concerned, six out of seven (i.e. all except F) derived a large proportion of their

income from business (shop, contract, supply, middleman, rent from house and agricultural land). All seven had a 'second' home in Chittagong city, outside the Upazila.

The successful candidate and the runner-up (A and B) up to the time of their filing nomination papers held no political party position. Their names were never discussed in any previous elections, even as potential candidates. During the collection of oral accounts of previous elections and candidates, it was found that candidates in all previous elections were comparatively better qualified in academic terms than the present candidates; furthermore, their political careers had been longer and more notable, and their public profiles were much higher throughout the Upazila.[11] The less prominent and politically obscure candidates began to appear on the electoral scene of the Upazila at the time of the parliament election held under the military government of Zia (1979); from then on all subsequent elections were dominated by non-partisan and politically-obscure candidates. The background of the candidates contested in the UZP election of 1985 can be seen from the table below. The candidates' names have not been used; rather letters have been used in the interests of confidentiality and physical security. For similar reasons, unions and upazilas have also been kept anonymous, with numbers being used in both text and tables.

Nature *of* campaign in the election

The election was held in the fourth week after candidates had submitted nomination papers. The usual scenes of Bangladeshi election campaigns (mass meeting, processions and exhortations to the public through loud speakers) were conspicuously absent this time. Only one candidate (C) held public meetings in every union, explaining his own and his party's programmes. The others did not arrange any such meetings. They visited the main shopping areas and met important public figures. Posters with photographs of the candidates were hung in prominent places all over the Upazila. During the last week of the election campaign, five of the candidates (namely A, B, C, D and E) demonstrated their strength by parading through the main streets of the Upazila with a motorcade of jeeps, cars and motorcycles. During this show of strength, one person was shot dead and many were injured in different isolated incidents.

Table No. 9.1 Background of candidates in Chittagong UZP and corresponding number of votes cast (1985)

Candidate	Age in years	Education	Occupation	Political Party Affiliations	Voting situation after count		Home Union
					No. of votes	Percentage	
A	36	BA	Business (contractor & supplier) (entered into business in late serventes)	No Known political party membership	21538	27.51	16
B	52	BA (LLB)	(Law practitlonner) (inherited house in Chittagong city and land in village)	No Known political party membership but relative of a cabinet minister	17996	2299	4
C	38	BA	Business (Contractor & supplier)	JSD (District level leader)	12920	16.50	2
D	30	MA	Business (food dealer) (Inherited from father)	No known political party membership	8878	11.34	9
E	36	SSC	Business (Contractor & owner of a cinema hall)	BNP supporter now supports Ershad	8441	10.78	9
F	55	MA	Teacher	Former member of Najam-e-Islami	4716	6.02	10
G	56	SSC	Business (clock merehant)	Former member of Awami League	3716	4.82	12

These shows of power and the shooting incident made the general public antipathetic towards the election.

The rigging plan

Five of the seven candidates carried out their ballot rigging plans by way of 'muscle' and gun power. The upazila administration under the leadership of the UNO and the officer in charge of police also tacitly collaborated with the use of 'muscle power', a situation that was to be very rewarding for the officials, who received handsome bribes before the election.

According to local informants, candidates A, D and E made the largest payments to the police and the UNO, thereby enjoying the benign indulgence of the police during their operations in certain centres. The police and the UNO agreed to keep their distance by not interfering in gang activities during their operations at the polling centres. The candidates also promised not to make any complaints against the administration in case of any casualties. There were 79

polling centres all over the Upazila. Each of the 5 candidates (except F and G) applied their rigging plans to produce the required number of votes by controlling strategic centres.

Candidate A: 'A' fielded the majority of local thugs and armed gangs, who had taken up arms on behalf of the Awami League on previous occasions. The payments were attractive and security reliable. He mobilised the entire youth population of his own union (No. 16) and a neighbouring union (No. 12), the combined strength of which amounted to 300. He established a secret link with the Martial Law authorities which gave him behind-the-scenes assistance. He also managed to neutralise the local administration by bribing them. Four different armed squads were made ready to raid polling stations (especially those at unions Nos. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16) on the polling day.

Candidate B: Candidate 'B' was not a candidate by virtue of his own choice and desire for public office. His nephew, a civilian minister in the Martial Law government, pressured him into putting his name forward. The plan of candidate B was simple and straightforward. The minister was to keep the whole of the civil administration neutral, and the hired gangs would occupy and collect all the votes of unions Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 14 of the Upazila. Candidate 'B[1] hired notorious professional thugs from Chittagong city, preferring not to rely on local gangs. As most of the local 'muscle men' were controlled by the AL, they were attracted to the strongest non-partisan candidate in order to ensure the defeat of the government and also to earn money.

Candidate C: This candidate was a former freedom fighter and benefited from the support of some of his fellow veterans of the war of independence in 1971. Alongside his political activities, he organised a small group of armed men to keep control of a few key centres, especially union nos. 1 and 2. He relied on party organisation and Hindu voters in other areas. This strategy did not work as other unions (especially the populous polling centres) were foci of the ballot rigging plans of four other candidates (A, B. D and E. He could only establish control over 5 polling centres in 3 three unions (1, 3, and 11).

Candidate D: Candidate 'D' engaged an almost equal number of 'muscle men' as the candidate 'A' as he was contesting in his own village with candidate 'E'. He could not manage his own house well. He tried his strength in 5 other centres of three different unions (union nos.7, 8 and 9) where he partially succeeded. He mainly recruited his muscle men locally, but also hired some from outside.

Candidate E: This candidate had been involved in several violent elections in the past. He himself had used massive violence and vote-rigging to win the UP election in 1983, after failing on two previous occasions (1973 and 1976). He had relied on considerable urban as well as rural gang resources. But the Upazila was too big an area for him to control without any political image or organisation, and so on. On this occasion he lost 50 per cent control over his own union because of the hard contest from within. Many of his gang members were detained and weapons were snatched by the gangs of candidate 'D'. Some of his hired muscle-men were released after having had a 'mark of shame' cut on their noses and ears, as a life time sign of their discreditable behaviour.

Candidate F: As a member of the former Pakistan Nijam-e-Islami he confined his election campaign within his old constituency of few mosques and *madrashas* He did not engage any muscle-men and economically he was the weakest of the candidates. But in view of his age, education and political background he was locally regarded as better quality material than the other-candidates.

Candidate G: The candidate himself and his father both enjoyed popularity in their own union. The father and the son held the chairmanship of the UP for 30 years. In spite of popularity with the common people he had to accept defeat in his home union while his opponent pulled 80 per cent of the votes by capturing four of the centres of the union leaving only one centre for him where he pulled 11 per cent of the votes of his own union. He did not engage any muscle power and absolutely depended on people's judgment.

The Execution of the ballot rigging plans

The separate plans of the five candidate when put into operation on the Election Day, turned the whole Upazila into a civil war zone. In fact, what was taking place was a *coup d'état* attempt by muscle-men and armed gangs against helpless electors. The plans of other candidates (C. D, E, F and G) were overpowered by the strength of men, gun, youth power and strategic plans of the candidates 'A' and 'B'. Candidate 'A' got a free hand in the 5 most populous unions which were, at the same time, in close proximity to his stronghold. Proximity to the Chittagong city and good communications made the task easy for the muscle-men. Within four hours of the poll day, candidate 'A' managed to capture 14 centres of 6 southern unions. While candidate 'B' was fighting against 'C' and D for control of many of the northern unions, 'D' and 'E' were fighting to control their home bases as well as

to gain the upper hand in the neighbouring unions (i.e. 9, 7 and 8). Candidates F and 'G' were out of the contest as they had not deployed any such armed forces. An interesting development in this election war was the involvement of outside support (that of the state in the ultimate analysis) and the connections deployed by candidates 'A' and 'B'. As disclosed earlier, candidate 'A' had the blessings of the Martial Law authority, while 'B' was a member of the extended family of a civilian minister in the military government. As the Election Day approached, internal divisions in the ruling clique were also becoming clearer.

The night before the election day, acting on information known only to military, and at the request of candidate 'A', detachments of the local Chittagong garrison seized a large quantity of arms and ammunition, and detained youth supporters of candidate 'B', which made him vulnerable on the election day. This act of seizure and detention established the superiority of candidate 'A' and his forces over 'B' and his thugs. This incident also boosted the morale and confidence of the muscle-men of candidate 'A' and frustrated their counterparts. The armed supporters of candidate 'A' were also told that army patrols would protect instead of harassing them on Election Day against attacks by supporters of other candidates.

Four hundred and seventeen police, including 17 officers and 65 soldiers led by a captain were deployed throughout the whole of the Upazila. Nineteen youths were arrested with arms including 3 hand grenades, 1 gun, 3 pistols and three shotguns. Fifty other people were also arrested in various locations.[12] Most of these arms and arrested persons belonged to candidates 'B', 'D' and 'E'. Later when the police were contacted, it was found that all arrested persons had been released, some on bail and majority without any charge. The arms recovered or deposited with the police were sent to a government *malkhana* (a special store for arms); the whereabouts of the arms seized by the army were not known. Finally, when pressed by the author one year after the incident about details of number of persons arrested and arms seized, the police refused to make any formal statement, but privately disclosed that charges were dropped as per the direction of an 'unspecified higher authority'.

The figures of votes cast for different candidates in different unions are shown in the Table 9.2 as well as in the 'war map' produced on the basis of the operational plans of the candidates (figure 9.1) executed fully or partially.

A plausible explanation of why the local Martial Law authority backed candidate 'A' against the minister's relative (candidate B),

informed people believe that (key informants listed in chapter 6) they would consist of the following elements: Firstly, the military did not like the civilian minister's ambitious drive to monopolise all local power. The minister himself was one of the prominent politicians who had betrayed his own former party.[13] As a consequence, he had no local organisation or admirers in 'his constituency'. The Martial Law regime does not like very powerful civil politicians either, preferring to deal with those whose power base is sufficiently weak to make them depend on the military to give them direction. Whenever a civilian had tried to establish a position as a full-fledged political leader in the cabinet of the military regime, he had either been sacked or cut down to size.[14] In this case also the military just kept the minister in his own size for the time being.

Secondly, military intelligence reports noted that candidate 'A' was the strongest and personally most loyal to military, due to the fact that he was one of the enlisted contractors of cantonment. Thirdly, his candidature prevented the polarisation of anti-government politics in the backyard of cantonment as he informally absorbed AL and BNP muscle-men within his electoral politics, fourthly, the Martial Law authority wanted to see the development of countervailing forces within the constituency of the minister would keep him weak and dependent on the military for his future political career.

Table No. 9.2: Union-wise voting percentage of dominant candidates in Chittagong UZP

Name of (in No.] Union Parishad	Winner in respective unions Name of candidate	% of vote	2nd candidate in respective, unions Name of candidate	% of vote	% of vote shares by other 5 candidates	Total number of vote cast in UP
Union No. 1	C	60	D	28	22	4493
Union No. 2 (C)	C	78	B	8	14	8061
Union No. 3	B	83	D	6	11	8408
Union No. 4 (B)	B	82	C	5	13	5710
Union No. 5	D	27	E	24	49	1074
Union No. 6	B	40	D	24	36	3290
Union No. 7	D	49	E	17	34	5254
Union No. 8	D	40	E	30	30	6814
Union No. 9 (D & E)	D	49	E	38	13	2761
Union No. 10 (F)	F	50	B	28	28	6989
Union No. 11	A	35	C	18	47	4142
Union No. 12 (G)	A	84	G	11	5	11062
Union No. 13	A	55	F	21	29	1058
Union No. 14	B	32	A	31	47	2854
Union No. 15	A	50	E	23	27	2987
Union No. 16 (A)	A	76	C	9	15	5288

Note: Letter within parenthesis indicated village home of candidates in the respective union.

Source: Election result communicated to the author by UNO of the UZP by a letter No. 667 dated 01. 06. 85

Figure No 9.1
Rigging Operation Implemented By Various
Candidates in the UZP Election 1985
(Chittagong Upazila)

Case II: The Second UZP Election in 1990 (March) of Chittagong UZP:

Between 1985 and 1990, the national political scene as well as the situation in the UZP under review changed in many respects. By this time the minister had further consolidated his position in the Cabinet as well as in the locality. Since 1982, despite the fact that the Cabinet was reshuffled 60 times,[15] he survived them all. After the suspension of Martial Law in 1986, the local power base also gradually crystallised around him. Pressure intensified on the UZP chairmen, he was neither acceptable to the strong opposition (AL) nor to the ruling JP. He was indifferent as to which of these parties he joined. The AL could not accept him because of his role in the liberation war. His entry to JP was also blocked by the minister. In spite of his failure to join the JP, he gave public support to President Ershad's policies for tactical reasons. Throughout his five year term, the AL and the chairmen protected each other whenever danger threatened. Later at a convenient time UZP Chair joined the BNP and subsequently became MP, Whip of the Parliamentary group of the BNP.

After the UZP election, the minister carefully started restructuring local political power by using his ministerial position. Firstly he concentrated his attention on the UP chairmen of the Upazila by following a 'carrot and stick' strategy. He sanctioned transfers of huge quantities of wheat to the Upazila under the name of various projects of the Water Development Board, and distributed one lakh taka each to every High School, 2-5 lakhs to colleges. House building materials such as tin, cement, and rods were provided to clubs, *madrashas* and mosques.[16] Altogether the value of which was more than the allocations the UZP received under its annual development plan. On the other hand, the minister threatened indirectly on various occasions that dissident UP chairmen would be dismissed from office on the charge of non-cooperation with government programme, instances of which was created by another minister in Bhola.[17] A few of the UP chairmen were engaged in smuggling and illegal business transactions of grain and timber. They were warned that legal action would be taken if full cooperation were not given to the local JP. Thirty new food grain dealers were appointed under the *"Pally Ration Scheme"* (the rural rationing programme) by the minister himself;[18] all newly appointed food dealers promised to become JP workers and financier to the JP in their respective areas.

Secondly, the JSD had maintained its position as the second largest political party in the Upazila since 1972. Due to the many changes in national politics, it had lost direction at the national level

but still maintained a substantial degree of influence in local politics. Lucrative jobs and businesses were offered to the JSD local leadership; thus without formally switching allegiance to the JP they were able to provide considerable support to every local move the Minister made in the area.

Thirdly, until 1986, political violence in the locality was monopolised by the AL. The minister sought desperately to break that monopoly. At last, by the end of 1986, a ruthless political terrorist gang was formed under the leadership of a former convicted criminal[19] who was provided with a jeep full-time, adequate arms and the complicity of the police. Fourthly, changes also took place in the upazila administration. Officials sympathising with the UZP chairmen were transferred and a new UNO, a chief of police and a local magistrate were appointed on the basis of the Minister's own choice. The 1990 UZP election was held after all these changes in the politics and administration of the upazila had taken place.

Candidates and their Campaigns

Four candidates contested the 1990 election, including the sitting UZP chairmen. The ruling JP did not have an official candidate. The minister recruited a former JSD moderate, supporting and financing his candidature including the expenses. The two other candidates ('C' and 'D') were just hired and sponsored by the minister himself to make the candidates' list credible, and to press the sitting chairmen from three different sides of the upazila. An election campaigner confirmed the details of the above arrangements with the author. Candidate 'C', a former army Junior Commissioned Officer was a fierce supporter of the minister in the previous parliamentary election, and admires President Ershad (confirmed during an informal interview with the author). The last candidate (D) was the elder brother of the leader of the minister's political terror group. Because of the widespread violence and massive rigging in all the post in 1985 elections, people showed little visible enthusiasm for the election. The AL decided not to contest, particularly in this constituency. In another interview, a local veteran AL leader said that the result of the election had already been decided, and that it was a waste of time and energy to contest the election.[20]

There was a rumour during the election that a very high level agreement had been reached between the government and the AL not to oppose each other in certain seats. As a result, instead of putting up their own candidate, the local AL preferred to support the incumbent chairmen against the minister's candidate. The candidates' socio

political background and the numbers of votes cast in their favour are presented in the table 9.3.

The campaign Trail

Unlike the previous UZP election, the campaign was both intense and substantial. The two principal candidates began their campaigns by making strategic personal contacts, holding public meetings, distributing printed materials and through newspaper advertisements. There were 79 polling centres throughout the upazila. Almost an equal number of publicity offices were established each decorated with election posters and pictures of the respective candidates. During the two weeks following the calling of the election, the whole upazila took on a festive look. The services of unemployed youths, students and street urchins were in high demand. They were engaged in most cases to sit in groups particularly in the afternoons at the publicity offices, to arrange processions and attend meetings. Many day-labourers were also employed for similar purposes on a casual basis.

Table No. 9.3: Background of the candidates of 1990 UZP election and their votes in Chittagong UZP

Name of the candidate	Age in years	Education	Occupation	Political party affiliation	Vote scores alter count , No. of votes , Percentage of Vote cast, home UP of the candidates		
A	38	M.Com, *LLB*	Law Practitioner	Former local leader of JSD and the candidate was supported by JP	68713	60..52	Union No. 4
B	41	B.A	Business (contract, import, export supply)	Sitting UZP chairman, maintained informal relations with AL group and leader of the followers of a *peer*	39343	35..22	Union No. 16
C	48	Non Matric	Business (shopkeeper in local market]	A retired Junior commissioned Officer/ support JP	3141	2..81	Union No. 7
D	4O	Non Matric	Petty business in village (a tea stall owner)	No known political party membership, support JP	498	0.44	Union No. 10

Note: Out of total 184.309 votes 111.695 were cast which stands about 61 per cent of the total

The minister himself accompanied candidate 'A' to most of his meetings. Three full-time vehicles provided by unknown donors were put at the disposal of candidate 'A'. The minister gave confidential instructions to all UP chairmen to arrange at least one meeting in their unions which his chosen candidate could address. Were the minister to attend such a meeting, it became obligatory for all government functionaries, including the staff of private and government schools and *madrashas* to attend the meeting.

The local chairmen raised many demands in these meetings for the creation of public utilities in the localities, to which the Minister was instantly able to respond positively. In two such meetings attended by the author.[20] such calls were made, all of which the minister promised to fulfil within future UZP plans. In one such meeting in union no. 11, the minister was presented with bouquets by 15 different organisations. The minister's private secretary was able to announce before the end of the meeting to all the participating organisations that wheat, tin sheet and cash grants from the relief fund of the president would shortly be distributed among them.[21] Each and every Minister in charge of an upazila election campaign received a special quota of relief goods and cash from President's personal relief fund to distribute in their respective constituencies.[22] During his speech in Union no. 11, the Minister reviewed a list of projects already completed and to be started soon in the locality as a result of his personal endeavours. He also emphasised the generous grants given to local colleges and schools. He assured the meeting that many other projects were still in the pipeline. To ensure the effective use of all these resources, the Minister needed a trustworthy and able agent who could lend him assistance in the overall development of the upazila.[23] The candidate himself was not the focal point of all those election meetings. Neither the candidate nor the Minister himself ever mentioned anything good or bad concerning the opponent (i.e. the present Chairmen). The Minister and his candidate had no need to be accompanied by their own terror groups at election meetings, since the police force was deployed for their personal protection. No verbal or physical attacks were made by candidate A's campaign team or supporters against opponents, in spite of the constant instigation from candidate 'B'.

The sitting chairmen (candidate 'B') also began to address public meetings all over the upazila. The main themes of his speeches consisted of criticisms and vilification of the minister of his alleged harassment of candidate 'B' during his five year terms as the UZP chairmen; furthermore, the Minister's masterminding of massive vote rigging in the ensuing election. No mention was made in his speeches of candidate 'A', as if he was contesting against the minister. Three

days before the election, the sitting chairmen (Candidate 'B') arranged a cavalcade of motorcycles, jeeps, cars, trucks and buses, which circulated throughout the main highways of the upazila. During the procession, many of the roadside offices, posters and banners of the candidate 'A' were destroyed. At one stage, several shots were fired at one of the principal offices of candidate 'A'. In other incidents, two of the supporters of candidate 'A' were also injured seriously. Just after the procession, 'A' issued a statement in the local press accusing the Minister-backed candidate of shooting at his peaceful procession. The next day, when the same type of procession by candidate 'A' was passing through the streets, it came under fire in two places, with five of the supporters of candidate 'A' seriously injured. Vehicles were damaged and some crashed into ditches. The following day, candidate 'B' went to the Chittagong Press Club to accuse his opponents of attacking his campaign supporters.

The candidate 'A' in spite of heavy attacks on his supporters, neither accused his opponents, nor denied the charges frequently made by his opponents, maintaining a dead silence. Candidate 'B' gained wider coverage in the local and the national press by accusing the government party and government backed candidates of all the election violence in the upazila. The Minister himself was in Dhaka during the first incident, and during the second incident, he was abroad on an official visit. The supporters of candidate 'A' became angry at the conspicuous indifference and inactiveness of their candidate. Even the police remained inactive against violence committed by the opposition against the government party. Later, in an interview, one of the closest allies of candidate 'A' revealed that it was the Minister's instructions that no violence or use of arms was to take place, until the day of the election. The same informant also explained that the strategy of not deploying police or issuing counter statements to the press was to avoid giving free publicity to his opponents. The candidate 'A' and his supporters were instructed by the Minister to conserve all their energy for the election day. Assurances were given that if the Election Day violence did not work, the results would be manipulated. So the object was to project a benign image with a view to discredit candidate 'B', remaining patient in the face of all provocations. The ultimate victory was in any case already assumed.

The Election Day and its aftermath

On the election day, squads of armed men were moved to the centres targeted by both the candidates. All the northern centres in unions no. 2 to 8 were captured by candidate 'A' and all votes cast by 10.00 o'clock in the morning. Candidate 'B' could only capture his traditional

stronghold (union No. 12) and was partially successful in Union 10 and 11. Police assisted by a gang of candidate 'A' supporters returning from operations in the north, captured union 14 and 15 while moving south. The gangs supporting candidate 'B' were frightened at the strength of their opponents and fled to safety.

Manipulation during the final count and declaration of result

The Assistant Returning Officer (the Upazila Magistrate who was officially responsible for conducting the election and sending the results to the election commission) voluntarily stood down from his election duties, as he was reluctant to be involved in the manipulation of the election result. He was unofficially replaced by the UNO who was a favoured subordinate of the minister during the reshuffle of the UZP administration. When all the ballot papers were counted, it was found that in many centres, the number of valid votes cast exceeded the number of registered voters.

The results of voting at seven such centres were cancelled. The remaining cast and un-cast voters were redistributed. New ballot papers were stamped in favour of the candidate 'A' behind closed doors. Candidate A's share was kept at 61 per cent and, to make the result credible, candidate B's share was also brought up to 35 per cent. So whatever result came from the centres were totally changed at the UZP headquarter. Candidate 'A' was unofficially declared elected. Union-level results of the election are shown in the table below. These figures have no significance whatsoever as regards voting intentions, since many ballot papers were 'cast' in the office of the Assistant Returning Officer.

After the counting and the declaration of the result, candidate 'A' and most of his supporters showed further commendable restraint. They all went into complete hiding. On the afternoon of the election, candidate 'B' appeared for the third time in the Chittagong Press Club and accused the government supported candidate of massive vote-rigging. He produced as evidence some of the remaining ballot papers collected from the street of a northern union (No -7).

The supporters and an armed gang of candidate 'B' were reported to preparing to attack the upazila headquarters during the count. Heavily armed guards were therefore provided in the upazila headquarters from among the paramilitary troops of the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR). The supporters of candidate 'B' surrounded the UZP headquarter and tried to break the BDR cordon. The BDR fired at the angry mob when it tried to break the cordon, and several protesters

were seriously wounded.[24] Among the seriously wounded, One was the younger brother of an AL leader. The AL indirectly masterminded all the support and protest against the JP through an opportunist candidate who alleged to be a collaborator during the 'war of liberation'. They withdrew from the upazila headquarters but blocked the main highway for 4 days, paralysing transport and communications between Chittagong city and the remaining northern upazilas and districts. The government did not attempt to clear the highway or suppress the excesses of a handful of violent youths. After one week the protesters became exhausted with their action and withdrew.

Table No. 9.4: Union wise shares of UZP election votes of the two principal candidates In 1990

Union		Sharp of votes (A)	Share of voles (B)
Union	1	4226	5448
Union	2	8995	2957
Union	3	6463	45
Union	4	6010	267
Union	5	4417	14
Union	6	4580	19
Union	7	8195	987
Union	8	8895	2910
Union	9	863	2469
Union	10	4472	4165
Union	1 1	2702	5671
Union	12	53	12032
Union	13	4702	2I65
Union	14	1734	50
Union	15	2702	126
Union	16	-	-

The newly elected UZP chairmen himself was not seen for 15 days. A source close to the chairmen disclosed that, he was scared of his safety and specially moved his family and all his belongings to some secret places.

Cose II: The 1990 Upazila election in Comilla Upazila

The incumbont chairman of the UZP was re-elected for second term in 1990. The election was held without any major disturbances. Turnout of voters was almost 50 per cent. The adoption of unfair means

remained limited to the casting of proxy votes. Unlike in Chittagong, the other two unfair methods were not widely adopted.

There are some special reasons behind this peaceful conduct of the election. To understand why, a brief discussion of the political history of the past few election is required. After a brief discussion of this background, the analysis of the 1990 election can be presented in its proper perspective.

Background Context - The Comilla Upazila under study is composed of 8 unions, three of which are semi-urban along two sides of the Dhaka-Chittagong and Comilla-Sylhet highways. The remaining unions are rural and separated by a dividing line drawn by the river *Gomti* between the two. While politics in 5 of these rural unions reflects the interests of the farming community, that of the remaining 3 had all the previous elections been dominated by the interests of the business community.

The upazila was represented in the provincial parliament during the Pakistani period by a member of dominant farming family, who was the current UZP chairmen. In the early seventies, during the AL period it was represented by a teacher of a local college, a typically petty bourgeois professional politician who represented neither the farmers' nor the business class's interests. These two political personalities are still active in local politics: the former is the present UZP chairmen and the latter is the sitting MP. They represent two different constituencies, and enjoy distinct support bases. The UZP chairman originally was a leader of the National Awami Party (NAP) *Bhasani* group, which was popular among the farmers. The MP- a former AL represented the interests of young businessmen, contractors and students, in the late eighties both of them changed then traditional parties and became members of President Ershad's JP.

Though the UZP election of 1990 was held peacefully, the 'normal' political environment and the circumstances in all other local and national elections those had been dominated by violence. The three methods of rigging described in the previous section were systematically deployed. It was only in the UZP election of 1990 that the non-violent method of vote-rigging (the "proxy method") was depended on by candidates in the areas they controlled.

The 1986 Parliamentary election and its aftermath,

After his failure to gain the nomination of his Party AL (1986), the MP revolted against the AL and became an independent candidate. As such

he faced the candidates of the JP, AL, JSD and BNP. The election was dominated by widespread violence and he enjoyed certain dominance over others. Firstly he could split the local AL, winning the support of its influential factions. Secondly the JP candidate and his main patron the UZP chairmen were both in their 60's and as a result, were too old to maintain connections with the youngsters, who dominated the election machinery from the campaign organisation to vote rigging on election day. Indeed, Indepependent Candidate control over local youth convinced government intelligence services of his likely victory. Thirdly, the government backed the independent candidate secretly as a reward for his role in dividing the local AL by not giving adequate support to the JP candidate. As a teacher at a local college and an experienced leader he was able to rally most of the youth behind him and won the election.

Just after the election, his local gangs occupied the UZP complex and the MP himself took over the office of UZP chairmen by force. His armed gangs were so powerful that local police did not dare to evict them from their 15 days illegal occupation of a government office. The UZP chairmen escaped from the upazila and rushed to the Deputy Commissioner and ZMLA's offices in Comilla cantonment seeking their help. The newly elected MP kept the UZP chairman out of office for nearly 15 days.

Within a month of the election the MP formally joined the JP and supported it in the crucial moment of its passing the 7th Amendment Bill indemnifying the government from all previous decisions and acts. As a reward for his invaluable service President Ershad visited his constituency and inaugurated a new college founded by the MP, who was himself to become the principal. The college was named the 'Hossain Muhammad Ershad' college in honour of the President. While addressing a gathering, the President also made some other promises of rewards for the upazila's loyalty such as the construction of roads, bridges and the nationalisation of a high school.

For the time being, the high profile political showmanship of the MP overshadowed the image and activities of the UZP chairmen. But he devised his own method of recovering from the situation. Though the upazila chairmen belonged to the class of rich farmers, by education and political orientation he was inclined to the left ideology. He had been a leader of the East Pakistan Student's Union in the early fifties and embraced *Maulana Bhasani's* politics of peasant mobilisation in the 1960s. During the period of his UZP chairmanship he tried to practice some of the policies and programmes which he had learnt from his past political experiences and associations.

During the first year of his chairmanship he antagonised aspirant young contractors by his strict supervision of tenders. His constant vigilance against corruption also antagonised UP chairmen as well as key upazila officials. Gradually he became isolated in his office and politically ridiculed by the local MP. He devised a method to break this isolation by keeping the general public of the locality informed about the activities of the upazila. The UZP monthly meetings were decentralised and he turned them into public meetings. Instead of arranging meetings in the UZP headquarters, meetings were regularly arranged in rotation in the UP offices where the general public was invited as observers. This method of decentralisation of UZP meetings improved his rapport. But the majority of the UP chairman, some of the officials and local henchmen were getting more and more furious. Though public sympathy were still behind him, local vested interests, especially those of the group of contractors, UP chairmen and political rivals, constantly threatened him with physical assault and replacement from the office. The first local 'coup', in which he was kept out of office for 15 days, took place after MP election and engineered by the local gangs and mafia. A second attempt on his life was made on the 18th of March 1988. A group of local youths under the leadership of the local MP and a UP chairman (who later contested the UZP election, 1990) attacked the UZP chairmen in his official residence in the UZP headquarters. The chairman was mercilessly beaten, dragged out in the street and the house was set on fire. Later police rescued him unconscious and took him to hospital.

On behalf of the government the local police took criminal proceedings under articles No. 147, 307. 325, 326, 427 and 448 of the Bangladesh penal code and a case was prepared for trial at the District Judge's Court at Comilla. The UZP chairmen from his hospital bed named the MP and UP chairmen as the leader of the gang. Lists of 22 other accomplices were also mentioned, among which four were UP chairmen and 10 registered UZP contractors. The UP chairmen was arrested and spent one month in detention. The MP escaped to Dhaka to escape the uncertain situation. This situation caused national embarrassment to the government and it became obvious that a court case would only make for further embarrassment. The Prime Minister (Kazi Jafar, an MP from Comilla) intervened and convinced the UZP chairmen to withdraw the case. The case was withdrawn and the PM mediated between the two feuding leaders for many hours and somehow managed to repair the damages for the time being.

These occurrences created more public sympathy for the UZP chairmen among the common people of the UZF'.When the election of 1990 came after one year, the old rivalry resurfaced. The MP supported his old ally the UP chairmen (who had been jailed for alleged assault

on UZP chairmen) as candidate against the sitting chairmen. By this time the government, recognising the popularity of the sitting chairmen decided to support him against all others. The PM. in a pre-election public meeting in the upazila, endorsed the sitting chairmen as a genuine candidate of the government party. The MP was also present in the meeting. The Prime Minister echoed the general sentiment by expressing his anger publicly against the MP for supporting another candidate against his own party. The MP was also publicly threatened with immediate expulsion from the JP were he to support any candidate other than that of the JP. The PM also privately instructed local gangsters not to go against the sitting chairmen. The administration was instructed to remain vigilant against possible violence against the JP candidate. The sitting chairman's only opponent was the AL candidate, who came second in the poll. The other candidates did not do well outside their own unions. The MP neither supported the JP candidate nor could he work for his personal candidate for fear of expulsion from the party.

Background of the candidates and results of the election

Unlike the Chittagong case, five out of seven (A. B. C. E & F) of the candidates in the Comilla UZP election were to a greater or lesser extent well-known on the political scene in the upazila. They had played different roles in many of the previous elections. Candidate 'A' who was elected in 1990 had been a member of the East Pakistan Provincial Assembly for the same upazlia in the sixties. B,C. E and F had participated in the electoral campaigns of the upazila from time to time. Candidates B and F in particular were widely respected for their political tenacity and firmness.

As for the professional background and main sources of income of the candidates, five out of seven were clearly regarded as businessman of different scales and strength. All five businessmen also owned large tracts of land as well. The principal sources of income of the JP candidate were the cultivation of potatoes as a cash crop; furthermore, his brothers had connections with some urban petty businesses. The family had owned land and house in Comilla city ten years ago, which had since been sold. Among others all have houses or land in areas, either their own or rented (Table 9.5).

The Analysis of election results

The turnout of voters was almost 50 per cent, out of total 115, 429 registered voters, 66,995 votes were validly cast in 38 polling centres.

The results of the two remaining centres were cancelled due to clashes between the supporters of two candidates (B and D). It was found that turnout was higher in the unions in which only one candidate was contesting. The turnout figure rose to 72 per cent in union no. 1 which is the home union of candidate 'A'. Again the turnout was the lowest (29 per cent) in union no. 4 which produced no candidates of its own.

Table 9.5: Background of the candidates of Comilla UZP contested in the election of 1990 along with their voting scores.

Name code of the candidate	Age in years	Education	Occupation	Political party Affiliation	Vote score after count No of votes, % of total cast		Special comments
A	62	B.A	Farming	JP - a former MPA and NAP leader	24748	36..94	Unmarried and does not have family of his own. A member of joint family with two of his younger brothers.
B	45	B.A.	Business/ Farming (Richest of all candidates)	AL	15872	23..69	Owner of cold storages, houses and shops in Comilla city.
C	38	B.A	Business	NAP (111)	0976	14..89	A NAP (M) activist, during election he was supported by youth group of BNP and new generation businessman of local youths.
D	37	I. A.	Business	Independent	8276	12..35	Moderately supported in three Unions, tried to show his Inclination towards BNP.
E	50	Matric	Business [Second richest among the candidates]	Independent (Former Al, supporter)	G858	10..24	Former chairman of UP No6, By profession a contractor, defeated in the last UP election held in 1988.
F	55	M. A.	Teacher	NAP (m)	1150	1.72	Veteran NAP loader. Young NAP workers supported candidate 'C'. financially weak.
G	40	I. A,	Business	Independent	115	0.17	Virtually withdrew his candidate in favour of 'A'.

As a result, the six candidates (except for C) scored a reasonable number of votes in union no. 4. Union No.6 which is the resident union of candidate 'B' and 'E' showed a 37 per cent turnout. Details of the trends of results can be seen from the Table No. 9.6.

The election was comparatively fair in the unions where there were multi-polar contests in the absence of any regional and local consideration (union no-4). To some extent rigging was also prevented

in the areas of bi-polar contests because of the counter balance of the forces of two local candidates. As a result, the turnout figure shown in both the areas falls to 33 per cent (average calculation on the basis of the result of two unions) which would have been the real turnout figure of the whole UZP, if manipulation of localised pockets of votes could have been checked.

The main features of the election campaign and vote collection

From the very beginning, the election campaigns of candidates B, C, D and E were very loud and visible. Early indications were that the election wind was blowing in favour of candidate 'B'. The local conflict between the MP and the UZP chairmen undermined the prospects of the JP. However, after a public meeting at which the Prime Minister spoke, support of candidate 'A' suddenly crystallised. Candidate 'G' withdrew from the contest and supported 'A'. Candidate 'F' also had given up hope because of the rift within his party the NAP (Among the remaining four candidates, three of them (B. D and E) were from the same electoral zone i.e. the semi-urban part of the upazila. The voters of rural UPs favoured candidate 'A' because of his rural affiliation with the remaining five unions. Thus he benefited from more undisputed territory than others, where opponents either withdrew or gave up hope. As a result, he was able to keep absolute control over 5 centres in Union no. 1 (86%) and also in 3 centres in each of the two further unions (Nos. 2 and 5). This control of 11 centres (out of a total of forty) gave him a comfortable majority of 4715 over his nearest rival.

Table No. 9.6: A comparative turn out figure of three unions having single, two and no candidates of its own (figure in parenthesis indicate percentages)

Name/ symbol of candidates	Vote cast in Union No. 1 (Single candidates]	Total no of votor in Union No. 1	Vote cast in Union No. 6 (Two candidates)	Total vote of" Union No. 6	Vote cast in Union No. 4 (No candidates]	Tola! votes in Union No. 4
A (elected)	11235 (87)		133 (2)		1454 (26)	
ii (second)	843 (7)		3(567 (48)		1704 (31)	
C	283 (2)		110 (1)		419 (.8)	
D	291 (2)'		59 (.76)		1394 |25)	
E	140 (11	17 786	3398 (44)	20 70G	367 (7)	19 087
F	90 (.69)		325 (4)		165 (3)	
G	4 (-)		"4 (.05)		9 (.16)	
Total	12 886	_	7 (596 (100)		5 512 (100)	_
Percentage of tun tout	12 886 (72)	17 786 (100)	7 696 (37)	20 706 (100)	5512 (29)	19 087 (100)

The turnout in these three unions was inflated by vote-rigging. The method used was the proxy vote. The turnout of women in unions No. 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8 was hardly 5-10 per cent of the total, whereas in union Nos. 1 and 2 it was claimed to be an unbelievable 80 per cent, all cast in favour of candidate 'A'. The other candidates could not match this scale of rigging and manipulation because of the strong presence of rivals in each of the centres which they hoped to control. The voting situation in 8 unions can be seen from the following Table No. 9.7 and the figure 9.2   :

The Participation of women in elections

Two separate surveys were conducted on the day of the election and the day after, in election centres of both Chittagong and Comilla upazila: in Chittagong union No. 11 was selected and in Comilla union No-4. The aim was to observe the general conduct of the election and especially the participation of women. Just after the election day, 100 women in each area were interviewed by taking the voter list as a guide with a simple question whether they had cast their vote in the previous day i.e. on day of election. The result of which may be seen in the following table.

Table No. 9.8: Women's participation In UZP election 1990 in two centres of Chittagong and ComiIla

UZP	Yes	No	Total
Chittagong Comilla	5 7	95 93	100 100
Total	12 (6)	188 (94)	200 (100)

When the tally of the total votes cast by women in the center before the closing of polls was examined, it appeared that 130 (13%) out of 965 in Chittagong and 51 (17%) out of 296 in Comilla cast their votes respectively. Many of the women who cast their votes never saw, heard or read anything about the candidates. They voted according to the instructions of their husbands, brothers or sons. On the other hand, the threat and incidence of violence at the polls scared women from coming to polling center. During electoral violence, such as communal riots, women are often the worst victim of assault. In the villages, women of 'Sharif (respectable) Muslim families do not consider it proper to vote among a crowd of males. The 'proxy system', whereby women vote via hired women of poor and destitute origin, is considered even more shameful (besara Kam). In particular parents do never allow

their unmarried daughters to travel to polling stations, because of the presence of youngsters and hooligans. Young housewives are also discouraged for the same reasons. As a result many of the women who make up fifty percent of the population are, in reality, excluded from the voting exercise. The situation described above has been seen up to the early 1990s.The post 90 situation gradually improved during non-military and Caretaker governments.

Characteristic of male participants

The characteristic of male participation in the election also gives evidence of the way in which an unemployed group of youths who do not care about any policy programme and ideology typically dominate the proceedings. Among the male voters, 49 per cent in Comilla (No. 4) and 53 percent in Chittagong unions (No. 11) were aged between 18-30 years. Most of them were unemployed youths, students or dropouts from education. The voters of this age group dominated the total election, treating it as an occasion for fun, fighting and the opportunity to earn some pocket money. The professional gangs were able to recruit from local youth thus turning the elections into a breeding ground for local violence.

Instead of propagating party programmes and issues the political parties and candidates mostly depended on these youthful voters and competed with each other by showing the 'youth strength' in their respective camps.

Table No, 9.7: Union wise voting pattern of dominant candidate in Comilla UZP

Name (No.) of unions and candidates house of residence	Winner in union		Second candidate		% of vote shared by other 5 candidates	Tolal number of votes in the union	Total vote cast (% of turnout)
	Name of candidate	% of total vote	Name of candidate	% of cast vote			
Union No. 1 (A)	A	86	B	7	7	17786	13007 (73)
Union No. 2	A	45	D	36	19	168G1	10338 (61)
Union No. 3 (G)	B	27	A	26	47	10994	6001 (55)
Union No. 4	B	30	A	26	44	190S7	5597 (29)
Union No- 5 (F)	A	47	B	22	31	16202	20035 (G2)
Union No, 6 (G)	B	46	E	43	11	20706	7924 (38)
Union No. 7 iB&D)	C	53	B	30	17	18191	772C (42)
Union No. 8 (C)	C	GO	B	33	7	15G02	7677 (49)

Figure No. 9.2 Rigging Operation Implemented by Various Candidates in the UZP Elections 1990 (Comilla Upazila)

Comilla Upazila

The special features of the candidates and an estimate of electoral expenses

In order to gain the party nomination (or the election of MPs and UZP chairmen), the candidate's economic power was given top priority. In the Chittagong UZP, during the parliamentary election of 1979, the AL parliamentary party dropped the candidacy of one veteran former AL MP and replaced him with a young businessmen. The new candidate had become very rich after independence (mostly by smuggling) had never held any important position in the party. The former MP was nothing but a surplus farmer and had been associated with AL for 30 years. It was a popular rumour in the UZP during the election that the new nominee donated substantial funds to the party's election campaign: in short, he purchased the party ticket for the election.

In the last, two UZP elections, the cost incurred by the major candidates was not less than one million Taka. Only a handful of people in the UZP could afford to spend that amount of money to contest the election. The costs per item in the table were estimated by discussing various different sources. For example, the cost of the printing of posters was calculated and verified from two different sources. Data provided by the senior election campaigners about the

number of posters and the printing company provided information concerning the volume and total cost of printing. There are many other costs, on which the collection of data concerning the exact amount was very difficult; for example, payments made to the hired gangs for buying of arms and bribing of officials. There are some items which were estimated by the author by collecting the cost of comparable services and goods at market prices. A moderate estimate of the election cost in the last UZP election in Chittagong is presented in the following table:

Table No. 9, 9: Moderate estimate of election expenses of two main candidates in Chittagong UZP (in Tk)

No.	Description	Tk.
1.	Election deposit	1000.00
2.	Arrangement of 16 public meetings in l6 unions. (6 ×5000)	80.000.00
3.	Maintenance of 60 *offices* for two weeks at per office day expense of Tk 400 (400 × 60 × 14)	3,36.000.00
4.	Priming of posters per center 200 at the rate of Tk 20 per poster (79 × 200 × 20)	3,16,000.00
5.	Transport for candidate's movement for publicity	50.000.00
6.	Transport on Election Day	20.000.00
7.	Payment of dav labourers 2 for each union for 20 days at the rate of 30 (2×20×30)	1,200.00
8.	Payment to arm gang	2,00.000.00
	Total	10.22.200.00

However, the situation in Comilla was somewhat different. In an informal discussion the winning candidate disclosed that he could not afford to spend more than Tk 50,000. A moderate estimate would put his expenses at TK 0.1 million, while three other's expenditure would appear to have varied from Tk 0.4 to Tk 0.8 million.

Conclusion

A general trend emerged from the cases studied,

1. The role of central state was all encompassing in influencing and manipulating the result;

2. The use of violence was one of the main means to guarantee victory in the election;

3. The candidates' economic strength was considered the crucial factors in winning election.

4. Women are almost totally excluded from the election are considered only as captive voters, i.e. a great asset for the stronger candidates for rigging the election.

5. Policy, programme and ideology did not play any significant role in the election held in 1985-1990.

Notes

1. The first UZP election was held on two dates. 16th and 20th of May 1985 and the second election took 12 days from March 14-25, 1990.The third UZP elections held in early 2009 after 18 year's interval.

2. In an opinion survey on the parliamentary election of 1973, Harun (1986) found that 80 % of the respondents heard about false voting and 40 % believed that it was all pervasive. A further investigation also revealed that all contesting parties adopted irregularities in voting practices (pp 286-287).

3. During the parliamentary election of. 1973 many opposition candidates were kidnapped and 11 central AL leaders including Late President Sheikh Mujibur Rahrnan was declared elected unopposed. Violences were also reported in a massive scale in contemporary daily newspaper reports (Harun 1986 : 193-5). For detail discussion, contemporary daily Ganakanta, Daily Ittefaque and Weekly Holiday can be seen. In other subsequent elections the system of rigging under the coverage of state became a normal practice. For instance the high turnout of Referendums could be taken into consideration.

4. Chapter four and five of this book also present the election situation especially under Zia and president Ershad.

5. The term 'coup *culture'* has been (though a pejorative term) taken here from the reading of Bihar situation. A CPI (ML) report while presenting Bihar's situation of violence and counter-violence the term *'Sena Culture'* (culture of private army) was used, in this Indian state, landlords and peasants formed their own private armies to confront each other. The *Bhoomi Sena, Lorik* Sena, Bromarshi Sena represent the landlords and the highest land owning gentry while the Lal Sena (Red army) fights against them. This phenomena has been described in the report as Sena Culture' (CPI-ML-1986:7I). In Bangladesh after liberation a peculiar phenomenon of gang violence started dominating the political and social life of the country. The successful military coups added new impetus to gang zeal. During elections even under political party government it did not improve, occupation of polling booth through violence and intimidation become a common scene which looks like the coups in decentralised and localised form.

6. Two of the members of parliament (MPs) faced criminal charges, one for alleged smuggling and illegal business of foreign currency and the other one for manufacturing illegal arm and selling them to gangs-The criminal charges were drawn against as many as 30 MPs different times for using illegal fire arms which include A.S.M. Rob leader of the opposition group in the fourth parliament (elected in 1988] and Major (Rtd) Bazlul Huda of

Freedom Party (Holiday February 5, 1988). For detail account of violence of political nature see Bichitra July 28. 1989 and Holiday. February 5. 1988.

7. *Mastan* an Urdu and Persi term generally used to identify mad devotees' of peer, fakir and saints who keep long uncombed hair and beard. In the post independent Bangladesh some youths, street Romeos started keeping long hair and beard. The youth who generally tease girls, incite street violence and take drugs were identified the new generation of long haired youths. The word 'mastan' was loosely used to attribute a new name and character to these youths. Soon afterwards, mastans and mastanism transformed itself into an organised force of violence for economic gain. They also become a political force in the cities and villages (Jahangir 1979: 21 1). The new business class and rural propertied class started using them (on contractual basis) for forcefully occupying land, business possessions, killing and threatening political rivals. Many of the candidates in various elections personally or with consent of their respective parties started deploying them in elections to capture polling stations, threatening, kidnapping and even murdering opponents.

8. Weekly Bicliitra July 28, 1989. Mastan: A kind of business (*mastan; oik Daraner Bebsa)* by Asif Nazrul.

9. The total number of the members of Electoral College was 80.000 who used to elect UP chairmen, members of District Council, Provincial Assembly, national Assembly and President of the Republic.

10. For observing political background of the candidates see Ahmed (1986).

ll. The seat of central parliament in 1970 was contested by four candidates. All of whom were very well-known. Similarly among the four candidates contested in 1973 election, three of them were professional lawyer of high reputation and known for their long political party involvement. The fourth one who got elected holds various public offices in local government and national parliament in two previous occasions.

12. This information was given to the author by UNO of the upazila on his request by an official letter No. 667 dated 1.6.85.

13. This minister was acting as the private secretary of Begum Khaleda Zia during the peak period of anti-martial law movement by 15 party alliances and 7 parties combine. Surprising all. The breakfast time radio broadcast his joining in Ershad's cabinet, while the night before he was holding important meeting with Begum Zia in her office regarding the various issues of anti-Ershad movement.

14. The rise and fall of Dr. M.A. Matin, Mahbubur Rahman. Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and Humayun Rashid Chowdhury in Jatiya Praty are few of the many examples.

15. Weekly Holiday April 13. 1990 (Mahmood Hasan).

16. The UZP has 31 high schools, six private college, 30 madrashas and 353 mosques of which all High Schools, colleges and madrashas received grants and donations.

17. Several UP chairmen of a Bhola district were suspended from their offices because of the non-compliance of local minister's private orders.

18. Local MPs were empowered by government to appoint ration dealers in their respective constituencies,

19. A gang was organised under the leadership of a formerly convicted criminal who was jailed several times for various criminal activities. He is a resident of union no. 10 who by 1988 over -powered the AL gangs in the Upazila,

20. It is widely held that the elections are some sorts of arranged game. Sometime opposition and government parties make some deals to fight in the election under compromise formula. For detail see Islam 1988 on parliamentary election of 1986.

21. The author checked the list of donations with the APS of the minister during the meeting on 16th. March 1990.

22. Ministers and MPs in charge of particular UZP constituencies were given special allocation from president's discretionary fund. One hundred bundle of tin was allocated to one minister by memo no. 4001/22/A&L-I (D) 55 dated 26th February 1990 from Supreme Command Headquarters, Joint Administration and Management Directorate, Dhaka cantonment. The order was signed by Principal Staff Officer on behalf of the president.

23. The Speech was reported in local newspapers on March 17, 1990.

24. One of the seriously wounded protesters was happened to be the younger brother of the largest and fiercest AL gang leader. The victim lost one of his legs. In spite of all these atrocities later AL tried to patch with the newly elected UZP chairmen. Because some of them were the enlisted contractors of Upazila Parishad.

25. Computed from the voter list published by election commission in 1988, for these two unions.

Chapter Ten

Decentralisation and Development :
Local Service Delivery and Financing,
Who Benefits?

The term 'development' is frequently used with reference to the reform programme of third world countries, encompassing almost anything and everything in their national life from industrialisation, agricultural modernisation and militarisation to increasing the rate of literacy, decreasing the rate of child mortality, curbing population growth and the eradication of poverty. 'Development' in the context of decentralisation and local government, instead of proliferating its activities in all those areas, mainly concentrates on a limited agenda, in which the delivery of 'public services'[1] has attracted national and international attention (Sills, Marsden and Taylor 1986). The demand for public services in developing countries is growing steadily as population increases and as the expectation of better standards of living is raised by national plans and international assistance programmes (Rondinelli, McCullough and Johnson 1989). These same plans and programmes have brought increasing calls for decentralisation to provide and maintain essential public services. Some of the main elements in the rationale behind adopting decentralisation in developing countries in order to provide for public services to rural people, are outlined below;

1. Decentralisation provides an effective and efficient organisational mechanism to provide public services to a wide range of clients, and to ensure their participation in the process of organising and dispensing these services;

2. Decentralisation minimise the cost of services and also to attain self-reliance by internally mobilising resources for the provision/ maintenance of the services,

3. Decentralisation enhances the capacity of the clients to undertake more responsibility and raise awareness among them to create more demand for services (Gregory and Smith 1986, Sills, Marsden and Taylor 1986 and Conyers and Warren 1988).

The service orientation of decentralisation is also clearly reflected in the policy documents referring to decentralisation and the UZP programme (local government reorganisation) in Bangladesh. These refer to the need for decentralisation of power to local government at the UZP level, in order to make public services available to the rural people (GOB 1985a:1), to ensure increased peoples participation and to mobilise local resources (GOB 1980: 1). Thus the main thrust of the central government in reorganising the activities of local government is to enable the latter to provide all necessary public services to rural areas and gradually to develop dynamic and financially self-sustained institutions to continue the services (Hoque 1989 ; 19).

In spite of the above normative notions and wishful thinking, decentralisation as a package of central state reforms is not 'politically neutral'; thus neither is it beneficial to all members of society. The rhetorical promises of public services are gradually absorbed into and overtaken by the class interest of the state. As a result the developmentalist tenets of decentralisation (such as provision of public services, self-financing and the targeting of potential beneficiaries), the process itself emerged with the images of the class nature of the state it represents. The dominant classes and their local allies appropriated most of the benefits of decentralisation by denying access to the much needed and promised services on the part of the poor and unorganised mass of rural Bangladesh.

This chapter is an attempt to examine the effectiveness of decentralisation in respect of providing public services to rural areas and the rural poor and identification of the principal beneficiaries of such programmes. It is divided into four sections. In section.1, the extent of coverage or impact of public services is explored in the two rural union parishads of Chittagong and Comilla. Section II analyses the general pattern of public expenditure in UZPs and UPs (one in Chittagong and the other in Comilla) by showing the ratio of expenditure between service and bureaucracy. The extent and potential for mobilising local resources and factors influencing the success of this process is dealt with in section III. Lastly, an attempt is made to identify the principal beneficiary groups and the resultant changes in social relations at the upazila level.

1.1. Organisation of the Empirical Data

The data analysed in section I were collected from a survey conducted in two unions in Chittagong and Comilla districts respectively. Instead of sampling the households, a total survey was conducted on a contiguous part of each of the unions covering all the households of several *baris* (homesteads) and *paras* (clusters of homesteads). The

respondents were asked about the services and supplies for which government resources, experts and officials are posted at UZPs. A total of 88 and 59 households from Chittagong and Comilla unions respectively responded to the questions on the use, availability and access to 15 different essential services from key UZP offices.[2] Figure 10.1 gives a detailed account of services organised under the aegis of the UZP by the central government. For the remaining three sections of study, the official records of annual budgets (income and expenditures) and personal observations on the social relations in UZPs were used both in the case of Chittagong and Comilla to understand the process of private appropriation of public resources by surrogate class of central state.

1.2 Characteristics of the respondents in UPs

The landholding pattern and occupational background of the heads of the households interviewed were analysed so as to provide a glimpse of the general characteristics of the unions in general and the respondents in particular. Households were classified into four categories; according to the ownership of land[3] 92 per cent of the households in Chittagong Union belonged to the landless and small farm (68 %+24%) categories.

Figure 10.1: Services organised under the bureaucratic rubric of the UZP by central government.

In Comilla the figure was 91 per cent (landless 19 per cent and small farmers 72 per cent respectively). Medium farmers made up only

8 and 9 per cent of the total households respectively in the Chittagong and Comilla unions. The large farm families, possessing land in excess of 7.50 acres constituted less than 0.5 per cent in both the areas.

Among the total of 147 households, 87 per cent were landless and small farm families, with medium and large farm households constituting 12 and 1 per cent respectively. Table 10.1 gives details of the landholding pattern in two of the unions in general and among the respondents in particular. Table 10.2 reveals that fifty per cent of the respondents are engaged in agriculture as their principal occupation, the rest in small business (17%). jobs outside the union (13%) and self-employment (10%).

1.3 *Availability of public services for production related activities.*

Public services organised under productive sectors can be divided into various categories, such as crop production, extension, supply of inputs, mechanisation, livestock development, fisheries, horticulture, cottage industry and many more.

For the purposes of analysis, a limited number of variable were tested among which were agricultural mechanisation and irrigation, sources of extension services and lastly the availability of services from the UZP department of livestock, fishery, credit institutions such as cooperatives and banks and promotion of cottage industries.

1.3.1 Mechanisation in agriculture

To promote mechanisation in agriculture (especially in crop production) the UZPs maintain a large staff of agro-bureaucrats and experts in their headquarter offices, as well as field workers at the union level (Sub- Assistant Extension Officers former Union Agricultural Assistants- UAAs and Block Supervisors -BSs). When inquiries were made about the method of ploughing, weeding, threshing of paddy and wheat, and the mode of irrigation, it was found that in Chittagong UZP all the farmers, irrespective of their landholding, use traditional methods of tilling and weeding of their land. Only fifteen per cent of them used paddle threshers and low lift pumps (LLP) for irrigation. In this area of Chittagong there were no deep tube wells (DTW) or shallow tube wells (STWs) installed for irrigation purposes.

Table 10.1: Landholding pattern of all households and respondents in the unions studied (Chittagong and Comilla) (Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages)

Name of unions & Total House hold (H.H.)	Landholding Category of all households				Landholding category of respondents				Total
	Landles s H.H.	Small farm H.H.	Medium farm H.H	Large farm H.H.	Land less	Small farm	Medi um farm	Large farm	
	i	ii	iii	iv	i	ii	iii	iv	
Chittagong union N-3360	2285 (68)	802 (24)	265 (8)	8 (0.24)	42 (48)	39 (44)	7 (8)	--	88 (100)
Comilla union N-4386	822 (19)	3155 (72)	391 (9)	18 (0.41)	13 (22)	33 (56)	17 (11)	2 (3)	59 (100)
Total N+N-7746	3107 (42)	3957 (53)	656 (9)	26 (0.35)	55 (38)	72 (49)	18 (12)	2 (1)	147 (100)

i. 0-0.4 acres of cultivable land
ii. 0.5-2.49 acres of cultivable land
iii. 2.50-7.49 acres of cultivable land
iv. 7.50+

Table 10.2 : Principal * occupations of the respondents

Union	Farming	Small business	Farm labourer	Job outside union	Self employed	Total
Chittagong union	39 (44)	26 (30)	3 (3)	10 (11)	10 (11)	88 (100)
Comilla union	34 (57)	12 (17)	3 (5)	5 (8)	5 (6)	59 (100)
Total	73 (50)	38 (26)	6 (4)	15 (10)	15 (10)	147 (100)

* *Respondents are engaged in more than one occupation. Only option was given to mention the principal occupation.*

    In the Comilla area it was found that, irrespective of their landholding category farmers simultaneously use tractors and traditional methods, simple hand driving weeders and paddle threshers. DTWs, STWs and LLPs are also used by farmers during the dry season, especially for winter crops (table 10.3). Further investigations in Comilla showed that except for irrigation, other services are procured from the private sector, which has no connection whatsoever with the present UZP service delivery system. Tractors are brought from Comilla city on rental arrangements and small agricultural implements like weeders, threshers and spades are purchased from cooperative *Kharkana*. Even the present irrigation coverage at Comilla upazila was achieved before decentralisation. The Comilla UZP under study was one of the 20 thanas in Comilla covered by the Comilla 'two tier cooperative programme'. The present irrigation infrastructure was created in the late sixties under that programme. During interview, people complained about the Power Development Board's delay of 3

years in giving electricity connection to two of their DTWs. It is evident from the situation as reflected in the table that the Chittagong UZP made no attempt in respect of the mechanisation of agriculture or in extending irrigation coverage throughout 7 years (1983-90) of its operation. In Comilla the mechanisation so far achieved is largely the result of the 'Comilla Programme' of rural development in the sixties and seventies, the UZP did not even attain a minimal credible involvement in sustaining these programmes. The UZP chairman in Comilla wanted to start a mechanisation programme in a modest way, but his proposals were shelved due to central government's objection (as discussed in Chapter 8).

1.3.4. Extension Services

UZPs maintain a large staff of administrators and field workers (UAAs and BSs} for the promotion of extension work among farmers. Regular visits to farm plots, meeting and training of farmers are part of their mandatory duties. The World Bank financed Training and Visit' (T & V) system of extension was also officially in use in both the UZPs : thus the UZP agricultural' offices actually received additional resources for carrying out extension activities. The field survey revealed the complete ineffectiveness of extension services in reaching the farmers. Indeed, there was greater demand for those goods and services which the farmers currently buy in from neighbours and private sector manufactures and marketing companies (Table 10.4).

1.3.5. *Services from non-crop sectors*

The use and availability of services by respondents from seven non-crop-related UZP establishments were also examined. These establishments included the livestock and veterinary surgeon's offices; the Department of Fishery; the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) which is responsible for supply of seed, fertilizer and irrigation, equipment; cooperative and Commercial Banks which supply credit; and the office of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation which promotes cottage crafts.

    In Chittagong union, service provision seemed completely moribund. Respondents were not at all aware of all these services and even those who were aware, did not feel the incentive to visit the UZP to procure such services.

    Comilla Union, the farmers were very keen to get services from the UZP offices. The services of the veterinary surgeon, particularly of the

artificial insemination of cows, were in great demand. The upazila livestock office maintains three insemination centres in upazila. Agricultural credit is also in great demand among small and medium farmers. During the period of survey, a group of farmers came to see the UP chairmen about the agricultural loan provided by the banks against a production plan approved by the Union Agriculture Committee.

Table 10.3: Services provided to unions adopting agricultural mechanisation (Chittagong and Comilla)

Name of unions	Method of land tilling		Method of weeding		Method of treshing paddy		Mode of irrigation	
	TM	TT	By hand	By weeder	By thresher	TM	MM	TM
Chittagong union N-34	34 (100)	--	34 (100)	--	5 (15)	29 (85)	5 (15)	29 (85)
Comilla union N-44	24 (55)	20 (20)	15 (34)	29 (66)	15 (34)	29 (66)	35 (80)	9 (20)
Total= 147	54 (37)	24 (16)	49 (33)	29 (20)	20 (14)	54 (39)	40 (27)	38 (26)

TM- Traditional Method; TT- Tractor and Power Tiller; MM- Mechanised Method

Table 10.4: Provision of extension services in availed by crop producers

Name of Unions	Services received by farm households from various sources						Extension services received from other sources		
	Extension expert	Block Supervisor	Model farmer	Contact farmer	Training programmed	Neighbours relative and friends	Radio and TV	News papers	Private company advertisement
Chittagong union N-34	-	15 (15)	--	--	--	34 (100)	5 (15)	2 (6)	15 (44)
Comilla union N-44	-	15 (34)	2 (5)	5 (11)	2 (5)	44 (100)	5 (11)	4 (9)	15 (34)

Note : In both tables the multiple answers were recorded

The UP chairmen reminded them of their still outstanding loans, after repayment of which they would be able to apply for new funds. At that time, the Upazila Central Cooperative Association (UCCA) had set a loan repayment rate for the leading lenders, e.g. for the Sonali Bank of more than 60 per cent. At the same time, the bank's 1989-90 agricultural loan fund had not been fully disbursed. According to bank officials, the main reason for this was the negligence of the UPs and the UAAs, who delayed the processing of loan applications and production plans. The Rural Development Officer (RDO) of the Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) said that 80 per cent of the cooperatives of Comilla UZP did not qualify for any further loans, because of the huge unpaid amount of previous loans. In Chittagong, the cooperatives and agricultural loans seemed unpopular. In the Chittagong Union, no

Agricultural Cooperative Society existed. Five years ago, a former UP chairmen had been able to draw a large agricultural loan from the bank on the basis of a number of fake production plans drawn up against fake names. After remaining unpaid for years, the bank issued notices against those names. It caught everybody by surprise. The new chairmen negotiated the matter with the bank and the former chairmen. The secretary of the UP in a private interview disclosed that as the former chairmen was unable to repay the money due to his current financial straits; the present chairmen paid back 60 per cent of the money by secretly selling a portion of the wheat that had been allocated to the UP under a food for works programme (FFW). This he did out of sympathy for the innocent victims in whose names the misappropriated loans were drawn!

Since then, because of the above fraud, ordinary farmers have not felt any encouragement to apply to the bank for any kind of loan, the other departments, such as livestock, fisheries and the BADC, were also unable to make any of their services available in this part of the upazila where interviews were conducted. For veterinary services people normally go to local 'quacks' while unlike Comilla artificial insemination is an alien idea in the Chittagong UP.

1.3.6. *Provision of physical infrastructure*

With the introduction of the upazlia system, the development schemes for creating small items of rural infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, culverts, markets, small scale irrigation schemes, received a tremendous boost. The infrastructural programmes were thought to have multiple aims. On the one hand, they contribute to achieve overall economic development by giving support to increased agricultural production, e.g. irrigation facilities, drainage systems, rural roads and markets. On the other hand, non-farm economic activities for the rural poor can also be promoted. The resources for such infrastructural programmes mainly come from foreign donors through different projects such as FFW, SFFW and Post Monsoon Rehabilitation Programme (also marginally supported under GOB'S Annual Development Plan). The detailed case studies presented in Blair (1989) of three UZPs i.e. Lakshmipur in Noakhali (Nathen 1989: 48-87), Banga and Nagarkhanda in Faridpur (Lein 1989: 152-186), showed that 94 per cent of the resources of the development budget of the UZPs were absorbed in infrastructural programs (that is exclusive of the revenue expenditure on salaries and administration, Blair 1989 : 236). It has been further observed that in Faridpur, 75 per cent of the expenditure on infrastructure was spent on the construction, repair and

maintenance of rural roads alone. The provision of infrastructure followed the same trend (as regards the volume of work and the corresponding percentage of expenditure) in the case study areas in Chittagong and Comilla.

The development of rural link roads had reached at a saturation point in the Chittagong Union even during the period of the Pakistani rule. Besides, the main highway passing through the union, two other main roads were asphalted and two more were paved with brick during the Pakistan period. After independence in 1971 two more roads were brought under brick carpeting. The major work on the remaining four Union Parishad roads was completed by 1986: these now only require minor repairs and regular maintenance. Except for one, all other major bridges and culverts were also completed by 1987. The UZP records show that the Union Parishad under study received on average half a million Taka per year from 1984-85 to 1987-88 for its infrastructural programmes.' About 80 per cent of the works were completed by the UZP contractors and the remaining by the UPs through their project committees. As far as the labourers are concerned, in both types of work (such as road maintenance and asphaltation), labourers were mostly brought from outside the union by the labour contractors, because local labourers were not readily available for these works.

The Comilla Union is less developed in comparison to Chittagong, especially in terms of the general condition of the rural roads. None of its 10 'link roads are either asphalted or tiled with bricks. All the roads are unpaved. But each and every road had been upgraded and/or repaired under the UZP schemes either form its ADP or through utilising the resources from FFW programmes.

While conducting survey during December 1989, two road reconstruction schemes were in progress in Comilla. Though, on paper, the work was managed by a project committee, in reality two of the UP members were the contractors for those projects. Almost half of the labourers were professional earth work labourers hired from outside. In Chittagong, one UP member was appointed as a contractor for the construction of a culvert and the repair of a road.4

While conducting the questionnaire on the use and availability of public services, questions, regarding infrastructure were not directly asked, as it was obvious that newly constructed roads, bridges, culverts were in use. As a result, the enquiries focused on the participation of local labourers and the role of project committees. Almost no local labourer was employed in the three on-going projects in two of the unions. The Participation of the project committee was nominal: most of the works were commissioned either by the UZP contractor or by the UP members of the respective project area. The assessment of the social and economic impact or these infrastructural projects on the quality of life of the people is a different issue altogether. But if the direct benefit of these programmes are assessed on face value, it is surely the contractors, officials concerned and the representative members of the UZP who benefited directly by earning profits, bribes, commissions and/or salaries either as contractors or as decision makers. The benefits accruing to the labourers and to the general public were marginal in comparison.[5]

1.3.7 *Availability and use of energy*

The supply of energy such as electricity and gas for domestic use (lighting and cooking) and for economic activities such as powering irrigation equipment and small household industries is one of the public services considered essential by rural people. But no initiative so far has been taken by the UZPs to extend the coverage of electricity and gas supply to rural areas. In Chittagong, the coverage exceeded the national coverage, [6] but this had already been achieved prior to the establishment of the UZPs. No special initiative has been taken by any of the UZPs to increase the present coverage. Though natural gas is available in both districts but supply was restricted only within the city areas. Almost all the households of the two UZPs do their cooking by burning fuel wood, thereby massively contributing to deforestation and environmental degradation.

2. *Availability of Health Services*

Health services, preventative and curative, are among the vital public services which the UZPs are supposed to deliver to people living within their boundaries. Three separate government departments viz the Upazila Health Complex (UHC), the Upazila Family Planning (UFP) and the Public Health Engineering (PHE) are engaged in implementing the programmes of their respective departments to promote the health services of the upazila. Six variables such as supply of drinking water, use of toilets and their types, family planning activities, immunization of children and the general situation of curative treatment were tested among the households of the two unions. The findings are as follows;

Table 10.5: Type of energy used by the households of Chittagong and Comilla Unions (Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

Name of Unions	Use of electricity for lighting house	Use of keroshine oil for lighting house	Use of electricity for cooking	Use of gas for cooking	Use of wood for cooking
Chittagong Union N-88	45 (51)	43 (49)	3 (3.40)	1 (1.00)	88
Comilla Union N-59	19 (32)	40 (68)	--	--	59 (100)
Total 88+59=147	64 (44)	83 (56)	3 (.2)	1 (.68)	147 (100)

Table 10.6: Households receiving Preventative Health care services in previous year (1989) In Chittagong and Comllla Unions (Figures In parenthesis Indicate percentages)

Name of Unions	Sources of drinking water		Types of toilet use in home				Delivery ol child IChiltagong 39 and Comilla 303			Visit from family planning workers		Vaccination of children for immunisation	
	Tubewell	pond well	sanitary	kacca	water scaled	open	Trained TBA	untrined	Hospital clinic	Yes	No	Yes	No
Chittagong Union N-88	85 (97)	3 (3)	15 (17)	25 (28)	3 (3)	45 (51)	--	36 (92)	3 (S)	7 (8)	81 (92)	4O (89)	5 (11)
Comilla Union N-59	52 (88)	7 (12)	5 (8)	20 (34)	15 (25)	19 (32)	10 (33)	20 (67)	-	5 (8)	54 (92)	32 (89)	4 (11)
Total=147	137 (93)	10 (7)	20 (14)	45 (31)	18 (12)	64 (43)	10 (7)	56 (38)	3 (2)	12 (8)	135 (92)	72 (49)	9 (6)

Notes: (i) Only 39 family In Chittagong and 30 families In Comilla had baby in last two years

(11) 45 household In Chittagong 36 household In Comilla had children within the age limit of Immunisation

Table 10.7: Households receiving curative medical services and nature of physician consulted within last one year (1989) (Figures in parenthesis Indicate percentages)

Name of Unions	Treatment and medical services from UZP hospital	Treatment by local homeopath doctor	Treatment by quack alopath	Treatment by herbal and traditional medicine practitioner	Treatment by spiritual healer	Treatment by private graduate doctor
Chittagong union N-88	8	38 (43)	70 (79)	10	12 (14)	30 (34)
Comilla union N-59	10 (17)	39 (66)	40 (67)	5 (S)	10 (17)	15 (25)
Total	18 (7)	77 (52)	110 (75)	15 (10)	22 (15)	45 (31)

Note: The responses are multiple as some respondents availed themselves of more than one type of medical services during their Illness situation of curative treatment were tested among the households of the two unions of Chittagong and Comilla districts. The findings are summarised in tables 10.5 and 10.6. '

Except for the supply of drinking water, the impact of other services has been negligible. As many as 97 per cent of the households in Chittagong and 88 per cent in Comilla did report that they drink water from tube-wells installed by the DPHE. Among other services, the immunization programme has already covered 89 per cent of the children of the villages; this has been implemented though the UHC and the UFP field level workers. In addition to the supply of the villages; this has been implemented through the UHC and the UFP field level workers. In addition to the supply of drinking water, the PHE also aims in principle to supply water-sealed latrines at cost price. The UHC and the UFP were jointly assigned the tasks of organising training for traditional birth attendants (TBAs) to facilitate safer child birth, and visiting all eligible couples in the villages to give family planning advice. However these services did not make any noticeable impact in the two unions under study.

There is an 80 bed hospital, with in-patient and out-patient facilities, in each of the two UZPs in Chittagong and Comilla.

However, only 17 per cent of the households in Comilla received treatment during the previous year from the UHC. None of the households interviewed in Chittagong received any treatment from the UHC. People simultaneously visit private homeopaths (52%), Quack *Alopath* (75%), Traditional Healers (15%, Spiritual Healers (15%) and Graduate Practitioners (31%) for treatment at the time of their illness.

The main problem with the upazila health centres as mentioned by the respondents has been the lack of adequate supply of medicines and the availability of physicians for treatment. During the author's visit to the UHCs in January 1990 only two out of ten doctors in Chittagong and four out of ten doctors in Comilla were found present.

3. Availability of Regulatory Services

3.1 The judiciary and the police

The police department at the upazila-level is the oldest of all departments established by the central government to protect people's lives and property from unlawful interference. With the introduction of decentralisation, the judiciary also established its branches at the upazila level to try cases of criminal and civil nature, thereby bringing the administration of justice nearer to the people and making them inexpensive and timely. During the survey on the use and availability of public services, the effectiveness of these departments was found to be at rock bottom level. About 12 per cent of all households in the two

unions surveyed faced occasional disputes or suffered unlawful intrusions on their life and/or property in the preceding year. None, however, have had recourse to the police or courts but preferred to solve them mostly through local 'informal' arbitration (Salish - 76%) was the most frequently used method followed by the Village Court (UP Reconciliation) (18%).

There was a general feeling in two the upazilas and the unions that the law and order situation had deteriorated rapidly and crimes such as robbery, intimidation, blackmail and trespass on a neighbour's property were reported to have reached alarming proportions. In the Comilla Union, the rustling of bullocks and cows had become so commonplace that poor peasants were compelled to sleep in their cowsheds to guard their animals. Nevertheless people neither got nor sought police protection. When people were asked about police protection they mentioned the 'invisible expenses' they would be expected to pay for asking police protection and which they could not afford. Similar feelings were also expressed about the courts, generally regarded as expensive and delivery of a final judgments take a long time, in some case more than 3 years. These delays increase the complainant's expenses to levels unbearable for the rural poor. Because of this situation, people are reluctant to seek protection either form the courts or from the police.

Three separate case studies are presented below to give an idea of the situation prevailing with regard to the UZP police services and the courts. Case-1 reveals an example of police response to a call for assistance during a robbery at night. Cases II and III illustrate the various stages of a court case, and show how expensive, time-consuming and biased in favour of the powerful and rich they tend to be.

Case *I: Chittagong Union: Police* response to a *robbery*

During field work in Chittagong in February 1990, a robbery was committed in the house of Sunil, a Hindu resident of the Chittagong union. Sunil and his 21 year-old son had both worked in a Persian Gulf country for four years and had recently returned home. Sunil was arranging the marriage of one of his daughters and his wage earner son. Only 3 weeks after their arrival home, their house was raided by a gang of armed dacoits. The police were contacted by telephone from the neighbouring Muslim 'para', but only appeared two hours after the call. By this time the gang of robbers had fled with all the valuables (gold, cash money, fabrics, electronic gadgets etc.) they could carry. Without

making any attempt to follow the fleeing gang, the police merely entered the house to inspect the broken suitcases and wardrobes. After this inspection, they called Sunil quietly to one side and asked him to pay two hundred taka towards the cost of fuel for their vehicle. Sunil begged for mercy and expressed his inability to pay the money: the dacoits had left no cash for him even to do a little shopping. Then the police insisted that Sunil borrow the money from his neighbours'. It was about 4 O'clock in the morning. Nervously, Sunil said nobody was -going to give him a loan at that hour of the night. At last the police left Sunil's premises after receiving an assurance that he would send the money to the police station the next morning.

The UP chairmen visited Sunil the following morning. Without making any complaint about robbery itself, Sunil complained about the police's behaviour. The UP chairmen left the premises consoling Sunil that he would handle the police. When the chairmen had left, some of the young people present commented that the chairman was himself a smuggler and a police agent. The crowd outside also reported that Sunil was the fourth victim of robbery within two months in the union. None of the previous victims had received any help from the police.

Sunil was interviewed twice after the incident, and reported that he had neither sent the money to the police nor made any formal complaint regarding the missing goods for fear of further harassment.

Case II: A Court case

Security officer vs. jeep driver Kamal Uddin

Case No- CR 9486 dated 15-8-86

Statement of the case

A jeep driven by Mr. Kamal Uddin collided with one of the micro buses belonging to a government organisation on 15-9-86. The bus was damaged on one side and two passengers were injured. Just after the accident, the jeep driver disappeared, abandoning his vehicle so as to escape arrest/police action. The injured passengers were hospitalised and the police seized the jeep as *alama*t (sign and evidence) of the accident. A case was instituted in the court of the Upazila Magistrate by the security officer of the organisation, with the following persons as witnesses;

1. The driver of the bus which was hit by the jeep.

2. The transport supervisor of the organisation.

3. Three employees of the organisation who saw the incident.

4. One physician from Chittagong Medical College Hospital who treated the injured and

5. one police officer of the local police station who attended the incident.

The Stages of the trial

1. The proceedings were instituted on 15-9-86;

2. The police submitted their charge sheet on 21-12-86;

3. A warrant for Kamaluddin's arrest was issued from the court on the same day;

4. The police report confirming the serving of the warrant was submitted to court as late as 9-8-88. Then *a* report was forwarded to the court saying that the accused had absconded.

5. The court ordered the seizure and confiscation of the movable property of the accused on 9-8-1988;

6. The confiscation order came back to the court on 24-5-89 with a note that no house and property was to be found in the address that had been given to the court,.

7. The case was gazetted for trial on 17-9-89;

8. The case was brought to trial on 8-1-90;

9. None of the witnesses appeared and as a result, the case was dismissed.

Observations

1. According to the magistrate, the unsatisfactory' result came about as a result of the non-cooperation, biased action and/or inaction of the police. Firstly, the seized jeep was returned to its owner through the intervention of a local notable, who had been one of the candidates (candidate D') for the UZP election held in 1985. Since the jeep had been returned to the owner, the accused did not feel any compulsion to appear before the court. The jeep was returned to the owner by the police without any order from the court. Secondly, the police were bribed by the owner of the jeep at each stage of the proceedings i.e. during the preparation of the charge sheet, and in delaying the serving of the warrant and confiscation order.

These motivated action and inaction on the one hand delayed the process for more than 3 years as a result of which the complainant and witness both lost interest in the outcome of the judgment.

Case III: Upazila Education Officer Vs. Shamsul Huda and accomplice

CR case No. 6425 dated 2-4-1985

Statement of the case

During the examinations held by the Madrasha Education Board, the Upazila Education Officer, acting on secret information, challenged one of the candidates of being a 'proxy candidate'. One Shamsul Huda confessed his guilt, and was arrested. Subsequently, a case was lodged by the Education Officer against both the intended candidate and his proxy in the court of upazila magistrate.

Later, Shamsul Huda the fraudulent candidate was released on bail.

The Stages of trial

1. The case was lodged on 2.4. 1985

2. The police charge sheet was submitted on 13-5-1985

3. The second accused absconded and could not be arrested until 19-1-89.

4. The case was brought for trial on 21-1-89

5. The witnesses did not turn up during the first session of the court and the hearing was suspended.

6. Warrants were issued to the witnesses on 24-12-89

7. The police failed to execute the warrant, as a result of which the case was dismissed in the absence of both witnesses and evidence on 13-1-1990 after 5 year's delay.

Observations

1. One of the accused, Shamsul Huda, spent 15 days in custody and appeared 5 times before the court. He had to pay his lawyer each time he appeared. Moreover, his relatives also made some illegal payments to the police during the preparation of the charge sheet and during his being granted bail by the court.

2. All 5 of the witnesses in this case were government employees; three of them were police personnel who were deputed to maintain law and order during the examination; the two others were the *madrasha* teachers, who were conducting the examination as invigilators. Their refusal to comply with court orders and subpoenas is in itself a criminal offence, which the court failed to pursue any further.

Conclusions

While observing the total impact of services in two of the rural UPs under two UZPs, neither the productive nor the social and regulatory services were found to be effective in having any significant impact on the intended beneficiaries. In Comilla union, the demand for services was greater than in Chittagong. In Chittagong, people appeared generally unaware of the services that could, in principle, be demanded from the UZP.

Among the services examined in this section both the supply of drinking water and the immunization programme achieved considerable success. The reasons for success may be due to their close supervision and adequate and timely supply of inputs.

Infrastructural programmes such as the construction, repair and maintenance of rural roads, bridges and culverts also achieved their physical targets. But these programmes in absolute terms benefited mostly the UP and the UZP leaders, officials and contractors rather than general people (the distribution of benefits is discussed in section four of this chapter). In other areas of services, such as police protection and the provision of a fair and cost effective judiciary, were also in reality dominated by the particular interests of corrupt officials and professionals in and around the said institutions. The relationship between the sub-standard delivery of the public services to the poor and the overall control on the delivery system by the dominant classes will be further explored in the subsequent three sections of this chapter.) In other areas of services, such as police protection and the provision of a fair and cost effective judiciary, were also in reality dominated by the particular interests of corrupt officials and professionals in and around the said institutions. The relationship between the sub-standard delivery of the public services to the poor and the overall control on the delivery system by the dominant classes will be further explored in the subsequent three sections of this chapter. As essential components of this exploration, the structure of public expenditure and the processes of appropriation of that expenditure will also be analysed.

Trends in UZP expenditure : a comparative study of public services *and* bureaucracy

UZPs' income and expenditure budgets are divided into two separate components - the Revenue Budget and the Development Budget. The expenditure in the revenue budget normally consist of the salaries, allowances and contingency expenses of the UZP administration.[7] The

resources in the development budget are mainly channelled into infrastructural projects, such as construction, repair and maintenance of rural roads, bridges, culverts, drainage, irrigation channels, various social services programme, the organisation of petty productive activities as well as contingency relief programmes. In this section, an attempt is made to present a comparative analysis of the budget in order to show that a rising proportion of the budget is getting spent in the maintenance of the bureaucracy rather than on the provision of services.

The actual expenditure of the two UZPs as well as two of the UPs of Chittagong and Comilla were selected. The total expenditure of the two components of the budget for five years were lumped together by dividing them into two broad categories- expenditure on public services and expenditure on administration and bureaucracy.[8]

The trend of expenditure for the five financial years from 1985-86 to 1989-90 showed that the ratio of the administrative expenditures in the total budget expenditure has been consistently and rapidly rising. In the year 1985-86 the ratio of public service expenditure to administration costs was 1:1.35. The trend showed a sharp rise in favour of administrative costs, such that the ratio had reached as much as 1:23 in the terminal year (1989-90) of analysis.

On the other hand, the trend also showed that the volume of expenditure on services had declined eight fold in absolute terms (much more at constant prices). In Comilla UZP, the total expenditure on services fell to TK 514,000 in 1990 from 4, 193.000 in 1985-86 and in the case of Chittagong UZP, it fell to Tk 700,000 from Tk 4,816,500 during the same period, the details of which may be seen in table 10.8.

Table 10.8: Ratio of Development Assistance Grant from GOB. (Excluding food assistance) and expenditure incurred in salary, wages, allowance and contingency (amount in Tk) in Upazila Parishad

Name of UZP	N o	Years / Sector	1985-86	1986-87	1987-83	1988-89	1989-90
Comilla Upazila	1.	Annual Development plam (ADP)	4193000	5549000	3130000	981000	514000
	2.	Expenses on satary and administrtion	6235635	9833572	8830141	8626523	12298428
		Ratio between 1&2	1:1	1:2	1:3	1:9	1:21
Chittagong UZP	3.	ADP	4816500	3608759	4897000	1719400	700000
	4.	Salarg & Admn	7753326	9000372	10366500	12056100	14711300
		Ratio between 3&4	1:2	1:3	1:3	1:7	1:21

Source: (i) Proceedings of UZP meetings in Comilla 25th June 1989 and November 1989 and chairman's memo No. 213/2 (3) dated 10.7.1989

(ii) Proceedings of UZP meetings 25th June 1987, 28th June 1988 and 9th September 1989

(iii) UZP Chittagong memo No. upa/Hat/Budget-Kha 10/89/160 (50) dated 28.6.1989

Note: (i) Government grant and assistance in Revenue Budget includes all the govt. allocations to UZP to meet the expenses of salary, allowances and general administration

(ii) Government Grant & Assistance in development Budget mainly includes Development Assistance, under Annual Development Plan (ADP) of central govt. supply of wheat and rice from World Food Programme, CARE and Govt. of Bangladesh (GOB)

Table 10:8 A comparative statement of expenditure on Administration and Services in two UPs of Chittagong and Comilla for six years (1983-84 to 1988-89)

Name of Upazilla	Year Sector	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89
Chittagong UP	1. Service expenses	17550	99425	20573	31090	20852	6240
	2. ADP expenses	41532	47681	66808	80451	46001	73312
	Ratio between 1&2	1:2	2:1	1:3	1:2	1:2	1:11
Comilla UP	3. Service expenses	875	124466	3789	30276	1000	17105
	4. ADP expenses	20398	30400	33509	42045	32250	37372
	Ratio between 3&4	1:23	4:1	1:9	1:1	1:32	1:2

A similar trend was also found in two of the UPs under review. The expenditure on services had registered a constant decline, while at the same time expenditure on administration was on the rise. Further to this, the rise and fall brought uncertainty and instability, which threw local institutions into disarray. In the Chittagong UP the amount suddenly rose to TK 99,425 in 1984-85 which was only Tk. 20,573 in the previous year and which is almost 500 per cent increase within a year. Again in 1988-89 it came down to TK -6240, a cut of 300 and 1,600 per cent in comparison to the years 1983-84 and 1984-85 respectively. In Comilla UP the situation was worse than that of Chittagong UP where the amount was raised from TK 875 (1983-84) to TK 124,466 (almost 142 hundred per cent) in 1984-85 and then gradually left the total UP budget into deficit. In 1987-88 the UP could not afford to pay staff salaries. The deficit was covered by a

government grant in the following year, details of which may be seen from table 10.9.

The top heavy UZP bureaucracy- a conglomerate of different productive and reproductive service departments can only justify its existence if it can provide the services it was created to provide. That it seems increasingly unable to do properly. As revealed in section 1 and in section II, the service provision in the UZP was in a complete shambles, while the growth and expansion of UZP bureaucracy continued. Every central government ministry and department wanted to extend its own empire in each upazila and, as a result, the size and expenditure of UZP bureaucracy raised constantly. The rise in the number of administrative staff over a five year period can be seen from table 10.9, the information for which come form the Chittagong UZP. The staff strength of 22 upazila departments has been shown in the table. Data on some other essential departments such as the police, - Ansar (para-military organisation) and Chairman's office could not be shown because of the absence of dependable information. Chittagong UZP began functioning during financial year 1983-84. The total staff position of the upazila administration was 320 and expenditure in salary, wages and administration was TK 3,444, 723. In spite of cuts in services, the staff increased to 463 (a rise of almost 50 percent), and the expenditure on administration increased by almost 400 per cent by the year 1988-89.

The situation observed in Chittagong is typical of all other 460 UZPs in Bangladesh. No UZP autonomously directs its activities. All UZPs function according to a comprehensive blue print of central government. Financial allocation, the creation/abolition or increasing/decreasing the strength of a particular department is within the jurisdiction of the central government.

As far as the financing the of the UZP services and bureaucratic empire is concerned, the facts presented; in table 10.7, 10.8 and 10.9 should be considered in order to gain a proper understanding of the situation. The priority given by the central government had become the sole determinant in shaping and reshaping the policy of financing local government services.

In the pre-civilianisation period (see detailed analysis in chapter 7), i.e. from 1982 to 1986, the services of local government proved very important for the regime, particularly in its strategy of legitimising its military rule via civilianisation. As a result, unprecedented funds were provided to buy the support of those influential in the rural areas, thereby incorporating them within the 'allied' and 'supporting classes' of the central 'power bloc'. During the post-civiiianisation era (1986

onward) the locus of power was shifted back to its original place. The military, as a dominant partner of the petty bourgeois Bangladeshi regime, expanded its class support base by forming an alliance with other factions of the greater petty bourgeoisie in society. The civil bureaucracy in Bangladesh is one of the dominant partners in this coalition. The Upazila was one of the traditional preserves of civil bureaucratic power, which was effectively used 'or their self-reproduction as well as maintaining the dominance over greater civil society.

Table 10.10: A comparative picture of the size of UZP bureaucracy and administrative expenditure over five years (from 1983-84 to 1988-89) in Chittagong UZP (actual)

| No. | Name of the offices & no of staff | 1983-84 | | 1988-89 | |
		Total amount of expenditure (salary and contingency)	Total No. of staff	Total amount of expenditure (salary and (contingency)	
1	Agriculture 45	558100	49	1375166	
2	Cooperative 5	76111	5	179601	
3	BRDB 16	149448	12	179342	
4	Social service 10	100498	10	255825	
5	Engineering 10	234303	20	694202	
6	Fishery 2	41240	6	98810	
7	Livestock 8	83546	11	355000	
8	Health complex 143	1074746	150	3392017	
9	Education 9	77631	10	313227	
10	Project implementation 1	22320	2	48480	
11	Family planning (NA) available	N/A	60	2600000	
12	Finance 3	74058	5	141658	
13	Statistics 4	32991	4	107929	
14	Public health engineering 6	12002	8	127507	
15	Accounts 4	75035	4	152845	
16	BADC (seed) 3	39500	2	64200	
17	BADC (ittigation) 26	552323	17	710828	
18	Food -NA	-	14	381308	
19	Land revenue -NA	-	45	1162943	
20	UNO 17	115586	17	341535	
21	Magistrate (court) 6	59773	6	247840	
22	Judge court 6	65512	6	168924	
	320	34,44,723	463	130,97,470	

Source: UZP Accounts office - Chittagong

As a result, in spite of the government rhetoric of extending services and development programmes for rural people, ultimately the whole initiative has concentrated on strengthening the position of the bureaucracy as one of the dominant partners in the emerging coalition of petty bourgeoisie in which factions are forever competing against each other.

Section III

Local government finance : the myth of self-reliance

One of the explicit objectives of decentralisation as envisaged by the GOB is to reduce the financial dependence of local government on national government and also to foster local self-sufficiency in every respect. The three objectives of self-reliance in the decentralisation programme have been expressed by the GOB as follows;

> "Implications of this process of devolution are: (a). reduction of dependence of rural people on national government for meeting the needs which can be met locally and development of self-reliance in this process; (b) mobilization of resources which have hitherto remained untapped; and (c) reducing direct involvement of national government in planning and implementation of projects which are purely local in nature. All those are expected to lay the foundation of a solid local government which could be ushering a better life for rural people in the near future." (GOB, 1983a: 1)

The establishment of any kind or degree of local autonomy requires local government to have a solid financial base of its own, because outside financing often comes with conditions which limit the autonomy (Nathan 1989: 5).

In Bangladesh, right from the inception of the upazila administration, neither the central nor the local government officials could make any effective progress in achieving self-reliance through mobilising local resources. Before discussing the reason for this, a comparative picture of locally mobilised financial resources on the one hand and centrally provided resources on the other need to be studied (see table 10.11). Our task involves a comparative analysis of local and central resources in two UZPs and UPs, along with the identification of the loopholes through which drain out much of the locally procurable resources for the benefit of a few, most of whom are 'notables' at the UZP and the UP levels.

3.1 *Local Resource* mobilisation in *UZPs*

In the initial five years (1982-87) during the pre-civilianisation phase, UZPs all over the country received resources almost proportionate to

their size and population; the average varied within a range of TK 15 to 20 million per year. The revenue budget, intended to meet salary and administrative costs, was entirely financed by the government (amounting to between TK 8 and 10 million). The development budget was also entirely financed by cash grants and resources in kind (i.e. wheat and rice). It was expected by the government that the UZPs would quickly take over their own development and services and manage them by increasing their own share of self-resourcing. The flow of resources from within and without the UZPs from the fourth year (post civilianisation era) of the establishment of UZP can be seen in table no-10.11.

In Chittagong, local resources contributed to only 6 per cent of the revenue budget and 2 to 4 per cent to the development budget. In Comilla, the situation is slightly better than Chittagong, while the rate of local resource mobilisation Chittagong was in decline, in Comilla it was on the increase. The reasons were many. One of the reasons for the dissimilarity was the difference in the leadership backgrounds of the two UZP chairmen in two of the UZPs (discussed in some length in chapters 8 and 9). The chairman of the Comilla UZP was active in mobilising local resources. Moreover the potential for mobilising local resources is far greater in Chittagong than in the Comilla UZP.

Table 10.11: A comparative statement of government grants and local resources of Comilla and Chittagong as observed in the revenue and development budgets of the-last two years (amount in Taka)

Upazilla	Years	Govt. grant/ assistance	Local resources	Total
REVENUE BUDGET				
Comilla UZP	1987-88	8 682 749	1 695 644	10 378 393 (100)
	1988-89	(83.66)	(16.33)	10 216 958
		8 184 055	2 032 903	(100)
		(80.10)	(19.89)	
Chittagong UZP	1987-88	10 212 700	714 500	10 927200
	1988-89	(93.46)	(6.54)	(100)
		12 473 700	835 400	13 309100
DEVELOPMENT BUDGET				
Comilla UZP	1987-88	13 391136	. 491 842	13 882 978
	1988-89	(96.45)	(3.54)	(100)
		3 482 525	3 218 500	6 701025
		(51.97)	(48.02)	(100)
Chittagong UZP	1987-88	12 439700	561700	13 001400
	1988-89	(95.49)	(4.32)	(100)
		8919 000	214000	9133000
		(97.66)	(2.34)	(100)

Note: *(i) Figure in parenthesis indicate percentage, (11) Sources:*
a) Proceedings of UZP meeting June 25, 1989: Comilla UZP
b) Budget statement 1987-88, 1988-89: Upazila Finance Office, Chittagong UZP

Instead of harnessing local resources, the leadership of the dominant coalition in the UZP power structure in Chittagong appropriated those resources for their personal gain.

3.2 Potential sources of local resources and their appropriation process

UZPs as empowered by the ordinances could mobilise local resources from the following activities (GOB 1983 : 9-10).

a. the proceeds of all taxes, rates, tolls, fees and other charges levied by the UZP under ordinance;

b. All rents and profits payable or accruing to the UZP from property vested in or managed by it;

c. All the sums contributed by individual or institutions or by any local authority;

d. All receipts accruing from the trusts placed under the management of the UZP;

e. All profits accruing from investments;

As far as the taxes, rates, tolls and fees were concerned, a special section of the ordinance contains the following list;

1. Lease money on *jalmahals* (water body) situated entirely within the UZP boundaries;

2. Taxes on professions, trades and callings;

3. Taxes on dramatic and theatrical show and other entertainment and amusements;

4. Street lighting tax;

5. Fees for fairs, agricultural shows, exhibitions and tournaments;

6. Fees for licenses and permits granted by the UZP;

7. Tolls on services and facilities maintained by the UZP; and

8. Lease money from specific hats (village markets), *bazaars and ferries.*

The types of local resources mobilisable in principle can be reviewed elsewhere (see e.g. Blair 1989), only the following items were found to be popular in most UZPs:

1. Leasing of *hat, bazaar, jabnahaL ferry ghat;*

2 Licenses and fees from UZP contractors, traders and sale of tender forms;

3 Rent from UZP-owned houses;

4. Other income such as bank interest; sale of crops from agriculture nurseries, livestock and agricultural farms; and income from services;

From most of the studies of UZPs local resource mobilisation process it seems that the leasing of hats, *bazaar and jalmahal* contribute the largest monetary share of local resources. Natan (1989:76) found that in two UZPs of Noakhali, over sixty per cent of UZP local resources came from hats, bazaars, ferries and *jalmahals*. The second largest amount came from the house rents of UZP officials (17% in 1987-88)'and another 10 per cent from sale of tender forms and contractors fees; the rest could be attributed to various other sources depending on the activities of the UZP.

In the study area of Chittagong UZP, in 1987-88, 92 % and in 1988-89, 80 % of the local resources were generated from hats and *bazaars* alone. The corresponding figures were 72 and 57 per cent in the two years respectively in Comilla.[9] In absolute terms, the amount collected in Chittagong is just half of that in Comilla, though the number of hats and bazaars in Chittagong was double that in Comilla (35 and 18 respectively). The biggest Bazaar in Chittagong (SL No 28 in table NO. 10.12) is about one square kilometre in its area with 800 permanent shops, 20 small manufacturing units, banks, five large educational institutions with a total of around 8,000 students. On the other hand, the three biggest *hats* and *bazaars* of the Comilla UZP (SL No 1, 3 and 6) taken together cover less than half the surface area and generate around half the volume of transactions normally done in one single bazaar of Chittagong. Comilla UZP mobilised TK 866,000 in 1987-88 and TK 1,002,600 in 1988-89 by leasing these three bazaars, whereas Chittagong UZP earned TK 275,000 leasing their largest bazaar during two of the financial years each. The total income form hat and leasing in the two UZPs can be seen in the table : 10.12.

3.3 The causes *of low returns from leasing of space at bazaars*

As mentioned earlier, leases from hats and bazaars does the single largest source of UZP revenue comprise two thirds of its own internal sources of income. Public auctions are held each year with the highest bidder gaining overall control of a given market. The government land

used for these purposes is leased to private individuals, who then occupy themselves with the collection of tolls, cleaning etc. Each auction is conducted by a committee, headed by the UNO and consisting of three members. The revenues collected from the successful bidders are distributed by the UZP in the following manner;

i) By transfers to concerned UPs for the future development of the market-place 25%

ii) By transfers to central government exchequer 5%

iii) By transfers to the UZP Revenue Fund 70%

In most cases the auctions are not held in a free and fair atmosphere. Very often prices are held down by prior collusion among bidders, or by buying-off key bidders. Others are eliminated by force or scared away by threats. Even the auction officials are bought or threatened by political bosses (Hoque 1989: 60 and Alam 1989: 131).

In the study area, three *bazaars* from each UZP were selected for detailed observation. Each was of a different size: large, medium and small. Observations included a comparison between actual lease amount paid to the UZP and estimated net income of the lessees. Indicators such as area of land, number of permanent shops and number of days in the week worked, heads of cattle brought during *Eid-ul-Azha,* estimated average number of people gathered per hat day were considered as key variables on which to collect data summarised in table 10.12.

It is revealed that in Chittagong, only 8 to 11 percent of the actual income from hats and bazaars was realised by the UZP. The rest of the money was appropriated by the lessees. In Comilla, the situation was better than Chittagong; nevertheless the UZP lost 60 per cent of the expected revenue, the busiest bazaar in Chittagong is five time larger than the biggest one in Comilla; it also attracts a larger number of people in every hat day, yet the revenues collected were still far below those from Comilla.

Table 10.12: Income from the lease of hats and bazars of two UZPs of Chittagong and Comilla for two years

Comilla UZP (in TK)			Chittagong UZP (in TK)		
No	Amount of lease money of hats and bazars		No	Amount of lease money of hats and bazars	
	1987-88	1988-89		1987-88	1988-89
1	250000	351000	1	3100	3400
2	7 000	5250	2	600	1100

Comilla UZP (in TK)		Chittagong UZP (in TK)	
No	Amount of lease money of hats and bazars	No	Amount of lease money of hats and bazars
3	246000	270000	3	270	550

Comilla UZP (in TK)			Chittagong UZP (in TK)		
No	Amount of lease money of hats and bazars		No	Amount of lease money of hats and bazars	
3	246000	270000	3	270	550
4	11000	11000	4	-	-
5	14 000	14 100	5	400	500
6	370000	381600	6	710	720
7	55100	55000	7	1322	800
8	39000	145000	8	3300	2000
9	3000	3000	9	200	-
10	3500	4 800	10	570	-
11	21000	21200	11	1300	400
12	14000	14500	12	2500	1000
13	8500	8700	13	6100	6300
14	70700	70000	14	3550	3700
15	14150	13000	15	1840	1945
16	2350	13500	16	4800	5100
17	2100	2400	17	4550	2000
18	75000	75500	18	4100	4200
			19	1700	3000
			20	5500	5300
			21	1300	1400
			22	-	-
			23	7300	7350
			24	100000	70000
			25	17000	4500
			26	8000	11000
			27	16500	24000
			28	275000	275000
			29	24000	24000
			30	9 000	4000
			31	30200	33000
			32	5800	7300
			33	36000	37600
			34	72000	75000
			35	88000	49000
Total	123900	1177250	Total	657812	666665

The reason for this low revenue yield was investigated by interviewing the officials, lessees and informed people of the respective hats of the Chittagong UZP. The result is similar to the situation revealed in' chapter 9, where the low turn out of voters is caused by poll violence. Here also gang violence plays a dominant' role in

deciding the lease value of *hats*. In most of the big and medium markets free bidding and competition could not be held.

In Chittagong UZP there are some families whose' main business traditionally has been the leasing and running of hats. They have been involved in this business for generations. Most of the large and medium hats and bazaars remained under their control until the late seventies. After the formation of the UZPs, they still continued to collect toll from stall-holders, but control over operation and the revenue from such markets is now shared (albeit unequally) by the local *'mastans'*. Indeed those families are now relegated to the position of sub-lessees to local gang leaders and mastans who virtually control them.

On the day of open auction of markets no. 16, 28 & 31 gangs occupied the premises and did not allow the traditeonal bidders to compete fairly in the bid. This happened in both the years covered in Tables 10.13 and 10.12.

The thugs kept genuine bidders out of the premises by using threats. They also kept the auction prices artificially low. After the end of the official bid they sublet those hats and bazaars to the raditional leasees. By doing this, the gangs earned in one operation almost as much as the traditional *hatua* (the local market leasees) would earn after one years of activities, the two medium and small hats of Chittagong (No-31 and 16) were sublet to the original *hatua* at a price three times higher than the original sum paid to the UZP by the gangster and the profit earned thereby was distributed among the 50 persons who took part in the occupation of the premises on the auction day. In the same way, one traditional *'hatua'* was allowed to get the official lease of market No 28 after vigorous negotiations between two rival gangs of youths. The members of these two gangs are patronised respectively by the local branches of two national political parties, the AL and JP.

Table 10.13: Bid money earned by the UZPs Leases and actual income earned by leases in selected markets of Chittagong and Comilla

Name of UZP	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l
Chittagong UZP	28	Big	5.00	10.00	90.00	20.00	115.00	3000	500	275000	2500000	11
	31	Medium	1.00	3.00	2.00	1.00	9.00	2000	150	33000	416000	7
	16	Small	1.00	3.00	6.00	1.50	11.50	2000	5	5100	5900	8
Comilla UZP	6	Big	3.00	2.00	15.00	2.00	22.00	10000	200	381000	1239000	30
	-	Medium	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-
	12	Small	2.00	1.00	5.00	--	8.00	3000	--	14500	59000	24

Notes :

a. No. of market from Table No. 10.11
b. Size of market
c. Khash land used on hat day (in acres)
d. Other land used on Eid-ul-Ajha for cattle market
e. Land occupted by permanent shop/business/other business
f. Other land used for open market
g. Total land used for market
h. Average number of people gathered on hat day (estimated)
i. Average estimated number of cattle heads brought on each hat day
j. Lease money paid in Tk (1988-1989) to the UZPs
k. Yearly estimated lease money collected by the leases
l. Lease money paid as percentage of actual collection.

In April 1990 it was not possible to conduct the auctions associated with these three markets on the due date. The rival gangs of two chairmen candidates (candidate 'A' and 'B' in table NO-9.3) indiscriminately used fire arms in eliminating each other from the competition. The date was postponed twice. The two gangs were affiliated to two major political parties and the same gang mentioned in chapter 9 as being prominent in local electoral violence. Later it was confirmed that the gang attached to the JP won the major share while some of the gang members belonging to AL also enjoyed some marginal benefits. The official lease value limited to the previous year's figure (TK 275 000).

In an informal discussion, one of the sub-leasees and traditional *hatua* said in addition to the money he paid to the gangs to .acquire his sub-lease, he had to pay off many other local groups in order to keep the collection process unhindered. They included local officials, the market committee members as well as some other local mastans active in the hat business'.

3.4 *Land Development Tax*

The Land Development Tax (LDT) is one of the vital components through which central government generates its revenue from local sources. LDT is collected under the auspices of the Assistant Commissioner for lands and sent to central government via the Additional Deputy Commissioner in charge of revenue at the district level. LDT is formally based on the size of a person's land holding and is payable annually by the owner. The evasion of LDT entails a risk of government seizing the land. LDT is paid for two types of land:

cultivatable and non-cultivatable (residential and commercial), there being different rates of taxes for each. Liability is calculated on the basis of progressive rates applied to various landholding 'bands', as shown in table 10.14.

Table 10.14: Land Development Tax Rate for rural non business land.

Band	Size of holding	Tax rate /acre
1	Below 2 acres	3 taka
2	2 - 5 acres	30 taka
3	5-10 acres	50 taka
4	more than 10 acres	200 taka

Calculated per decimal or hundredth of an acre. Source: LDT ordinance 1987

An assessment has been made of the collection of LDT in Comilla UZP which represents 278 (which comprises 71 per cent of the total number of upazilas) underdeveloped upazilas of Bangladesh. Chittagong Upazila was excluded purposely because it represents the developed upazilas (totalling only 34 i.e. 9 per cent) which are more urban relative to other upazilas.[10] The findings of the LDT collection and its contribution to the national exchequer in comparison to administrative expense is presented in table 10.15.

Fable No. 10. 15 income and Expenditure of LDT in one upazila of Comilla in 1988-89 (Amount in Taka)

Total cost of LDT collection	Total tax liability	Total tax collected	collection cost as % of tax collected
817, 293 (66)	1,241, 211 (100)	613, 770 (49)	113

Source; Office of the Assistance Commissioner Land , Comilla Upazila.

The LDT collected in Comilla is even not enough to support the local land revenue department. Even if taxes were to be collected in full 66 per cent is to be spent for its collection. The major part of LDT is spent just to maintain large bureaucracy and their departmental empire that are responsible for collecting those taxes.

3.5 *Local Resource* mobilisation in UPs

UPs are empowered to generate their own resources by collecting various taxes as well as earning their won incomes from property and services. In two of the unions of Chittagong and Comilla, a large gap was found between locally generated resources and government grants in each of the last six years' budget (table 10.15). Though the UPs showed two different trends in figures, while observed the process of mobilisation it was all the same.

None of the parishads made any initiative to collect taxes from the inhabitants of the unions. No assessment of taxes has been carried out for the last 10 years in either of the unions. Comilla UP derives its meagre local income collecting fees from the rickshaw pullers, local shopkeepers, merchants and leasees of markets. They have taken no steps to collect even the *chowkidari tax* (rate for policing the village). The Chittagong UP is a resource rich area: it derives a large portion of its local income by taxing some of the public sector organisations hosted within its jurisdiction. One government institution and three commercial banks pay more than half of the total amount of local revenues of UP budget. The rest is generated from UP court fees, collection from the leases of markets, trade licenses and rickshaw pullers. The Chittagong UP did not show any interest in increasing revenues by taxing from hearth, land, buildings and *chowkidari taxes.* There are businesses and industrial concerns such as modern shopping centres, brick yards, saw mills, cold storages warehouses, cinemas etc which are normally excluded from the tax net though UPs are legally authorised to levy taxes on them. Some of them pay nominal face saving taxes which are grossly inadequate. For example, according to a government gazette notification dated April 6, 1981 cinema halls and any other theatrical shows should pay 10 per cent of their admission fees to the UPs concerned as amusement taxes. There is a cinema hall under the jurisdiction of Chittagong UP with a capacity of 500 spectator in each show and it runs average 3 shows a day. If, on the average, one third of the seats are filled up, the total amount payable to the UP may stand at Taka 100 per day (166 X 3 X Tk. 0.20 per ticket). As the cinema hall remains closed only 5 days a year, the UP may earn (100 X 360) TK 36000 every year. Though estimate above is a modest one, the cinema hall owner has only paid a total of TK 15 thousand throughout its 10 years of business to UP.

The reason is obvious. The owner of the cinema hall was one of the powerful persons of the upazila power structure. He was also the chairman of the adjacent UP (UP No. 9 see in table 9.1) as well as the chairman of the Upazila Central Cooperative Association for last 7 years. He was also one of the contestants in the UZP election of 1985 (candidate 'E' in table 9.1). The chairman of the UP under review and the cinema hall owner are business partners. They have helped each other on many occasions by providing gang support in time of need. These two chairmen also run a ring of food grain hoarders and timber smugglers in the area, whose activities were noted during the survey.

The above case is typical and can be found replicated throughout the UP's power structure and related institutions (formal or otherwise). The existence of such officially condoned tax evasion is one of the main reasons why the UP has shown little interest in collecting taxes from eligible tax payers.

Conclusion

The system of local government finance reflects the very nature of capital accumulation in a social formation where the political superstructure plays a dominant role over production activities. The power structure of local bodies is composed of different strata of the rural petty bourgeoisie such as regular salary earners, professionals and the intermediary business community. On the one hand, these strata appropriate a part of whatever resources are made available to them from the state. On the other hand, they create barriers to the local mobilisation of resources, by virtue of their formal influence over the conduct of local tax collection. The method adopted for accumulation is essentially primitive' in nature. The use of force and gang violence the most obvious manifestations of this) primitiveness, However the process itself has been instrumental in rapidly changing the class map and power structure of Bangladeshi rural society.

Table 10.16: A comparative statement of local resources and government grants in the Annual Budget of the two UPs of Chittagong and Comilla for six years (1983-84 to 1988-89) in Taka (Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages

Name of UPS	Years Sources of resources	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	Average annual amount
Chittagong Union	Total	59002 (100)	147109 (100)	87376 (100)	114541 (100)	66853 (100)	79552 (100)	92418 (100)
	Local Resounces	30224 (51)	35564 (24)	33335 (38)	44459 (39)	27246 (41)	47519 (60)	36441 (40)
	Govt grant	28758 (49)	111245 (76)	54041 (62)	70082 (61)	39607 (59)	31933 (40)	55944 (60)
Comilla Union	Total	21273 (100)	154866 (100)	37299 (100)	81421 (100)	13629 (100)	54477 (100)	60494 (100)
	Local Resources	4182 (20)	11576 (7)	2309 (6)	8064 (10)	1821 (13)	2933 (5)	5147 (8)
	Govt grant	17091 (80)	143290 (93)	34989 (94)	73356 (90)	11808 (87)	51538 (95)	55345 (92)

The traditional power structure, dominated by rich and middle farmer, is losing its ground. A new group, which has diversified its income sources into business, contracts and dealing in licenses and many other activities in the sphere of circulation, has further strengthened their position by creating political linkages. The new group is emerging into an important factor and as dominant classes. A detailed class analysis will be provided in the next chapter. The next section of this chapter will attempt to identify the major beneficiary groups who in reality

control the goods and services and also appropriate a major portion of the resources of the upazila for their private accumulation.

Section II

Benefit relations in the UZP structure

The ostensible rationale for decentralisation and the creation of UZPs as mechanism of people's participation and as a provider of essential services by now has been largely discredited. The welfarist and developementalist rhetoric of the ostensibly 'neutral' Bangladeshi state belies the reality of a highly inequitable distribution of state resources and the systematic use of violence and intimidation as a means of denying rather than promoting popular participation. The state itself is a set of relationships which is not neutral and benign, but rather, is partisan and exploitative. As a result, the supply of services and the flow of benefits at the local level of the state (UZP) inevitably favoured a few whose network of relations and actions supported the continuance of the central state. These relations and practices form part of a clienteles' network of vertical class relations. The system itself was a network of discriminatory distributions of benefits, with a view to erecting a coalition of power brokers and 'vote banks' which would remain subordinate to central authority and superordinate over the rural masses, exercising over the latter an appropriate political control.

To explore the nature of the local state by identifying the dominant groups and classes which hold power and office at that level of the state, it was decided to locate them within the benefit system of the UZPs and assess the benefits received. The identification of beneficiaries at the UZP level constitutes neither an attempt to precisely quantify the benefit accruing to a particular group in statistical terms nor to merely make an exhaustive catalogue of benefits. Rather, it is designed to explore the emerging benefit relationships established and consolidated within and beyond the UZP by means of the appropriation of public resources for private accumulation, a process which in turn tightens the grip of the dominant class on the state at central and local levels through mutual support. This support system, however, is mutual but the terms applied to different components and levels are unequal. It is essentially the relationship of superior and subordinate, patron and client and dependence and underdevelopment. The national government and state is the satellite of core metropolitan capitalist countries in the same way the UZPs are themselves at the satellites within the national boundary. As our present study particularly addresses the class relationship at the

UZP level, no further elaboration will be provided here of the structure above and beyond this level. Within a decade of the evolution of the UZP system, a new type of dominant classes had emerged at the UZP level, absolutely, dependent on the local state for their progress in economic and class terms and flexing their political muscles by riding the horses of the local state. To observe the process of class formation and the accumulation of resources, the benefit system of the UZP were found helpful.

Resources on a massive scale had started to flow to the UZPs from the central government after the new decentralised system was put in place. It is very difficult to isolate different benefits and beneficiaries, put them into categories and determine the quantitative share of benefit flowing to these predetermined categories. However, one of the methods adopted here was to identify them according to their relative stake in the flow of fund and resources, on the reasonable assumption that behind a flow of resources, automatically comes a flow of benefits.

There are two major sources from which resources and benefits flow downwards. One was the UZP budgetary allocation to various sectorial UZP development initiatives; the other is the internal mobilisation of resources and services. An examination of the pattern of this flow of resources and benefits, will help in understanding the roles of four groups who are directly and indirectly involved in the process. These groups are:

1. the decision makers- UZP representative members, including the UZP chairmen and the key government officials posted at the upazila;

2. the people involved with the UZP as intermediaries in the process of implementation of various UZP projects as contractors, suppliers, license holders, leasees of UZP property etc;

3. the workers and labourers employed in UZP projects, peasants and unemployed *lumpens* associated with the Vulnerable Group Feeding Programme, disaster relief, famine relief and political patronage system of the UZP and the UP leadership and

4. the general population who use public utilities and services such as rural roads, culverts, bridges etc, developed by the UZP.

For the convenient of the discussion the first two groups are labeled as primary beneficiaries as most of the benefits of the UZP resources are appropriated by them and the remaining two groups are labeled-as secondary beneficiaries, as they are merely the passive recipients of benefits arbitrarily decided by the primary group controlling the UZP.

Estimate of the share of benefit received by different groups is presented below on the basis of empirical observation in the two upazilas.

4.1 Process of appropriation from audgetary sources

In the Financial year of 1988-89 Chittagong and Comilla UZPs received government subventions of TK. 22, 442, 100 and TK 16, 917, 983 respectively for their annual budget, of which more than Fifty per cent was immediately earmarked by the 13 government departments active at upazila level for salaries and administrative expenses. Over 17 per cent of the sanctioned resources were further absorbed by the minimal level of corruption expected by central government from UZP the officials and public leaders. This is formally referred to in project accounts as a 'loss'.

Then comes the contractors, suppliers and other agents and intermediaries who lay claim to nearly 7 per cent of the resources as their legal earnings for providing various services in the implementation of various UZP projects. After all these legal, extra-legal and illegal appropriations, only 25 per cent of the budgetary resources are left for projects and programmes. (Table, 10.16).

Sarker's study (1990} shows that only 10 per cent of the total project money is spent in the form of wages for labourers; the under-payment of prescribed wages to such labourers is also a normal practice, in FFW projects, underpayment is calculated to be around 40 per cent (Sobhan and Hashemi 1989 : 158). The savings arising from wage-underpayment are appropriated mostly by members of project committees and labour *sardars.*

4.2 Appropriation from internal mobilisation of resources and services

Internal mobilisation includes the invisible cost people pay when they claim certain services (such as electricity connection, supply of irrigation equipment etc), under rating of leases of UZP property and-non-payment of taxes, rates and tolls by powerful people.

By one single process, the underpayment of lease money of the UZP markets, the lessees and gangs around the market, officials and other local *mastans* privately appropriate huge sums of money. This was estimated to be 89 per cent in Chittagong and 70 per cent in Comilla. Table 10.17 presented the estimated private appropriation from five markets of Chittagong and Comilla in the financial year 1988-89.

Table 10.17: Estimates of Resources Appropriated in the process of the implementation of development projects by officials, public leaders and contractors as observed from the Budget of 1988-89 (in Tk)

Name of UZPs	Total amount of Budget	Expenditure on salary and Administration	Development Expenditures	Misappropriation by officials and public Representatives (35% of column 4)	Contractors commission (15% of the amount in column 4)	Actual amount spernt in project area (4-5+6)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Comilla UZP	16917 983 (1∅∅)	8626523 (51)	829146∅ (49)	29∅2∅11 (17)	1243719 (7)	414573∅ (25)
Chittagong UZP	22442 1∅∅ (1∅∅)	12∅95 1∅∅ (54)∅	1∅347∅∅∅ (46)	362145∅	1243719 (7)	51735∅∅ (23)

Notes:

1. The amount in column 2 includes Revenue and Development grant from GOB as well as the amount received from various donors as cash and kind.
2. All expenditure excluding column 3 is considered as development expenditure.
3. The figures of the misappropriation were calculated by World Food Programme on the basis of a country wide survey as well as by CARE on their experience of FFW for seven seasons. For detail see Blair (1987:8-9) and Sobhan and Hashami (1989:158).
4. The commission of contractors is an average figure calculated by interviewing several UZP contractors in two of the UZPS.

Table 10.18: Estimated private appropriation of public revenue from five markets of Chittagong and Comilla (in Tk.] in one year (1988-89)

Name of UZPs	Name code of markets (Table 10.12)	Revenue paid to UZPs	Actual Revenue collected by leasees	Revenue privately appropriate
Chittagong UZP	28	275 000 (11)	2 500000 (100)	2 225 000 (89)
	31	33 000 (8)	416 000 (100)	38 3000 (92)
	16	5100 (9)	59 000 (100)	54 900 (91)
Total amount & percentage in Chittagong		313 100 (9)	2 975 000 (100)	2 662 900 (89)
Comilla UZP	6	381 000 (31)	1 239 000 (100)	858 000 (49)
	12	14 000 (24)	59 000 (100)	45 000 (76)
Total amount and percentage in Comilla		395 000 (30)	1 298 000 (100)	903 000 (70)

According to table 10.18, the revenue loss form the markets alone in Chittagong and Comilla, at a gross rate of 89 and 70 per cent of the

total revenue collected from the markets respectively, can be estimated to have deprived both UZPs of 50 per cent of their total development expenditure. In table 10.19, a further estimate is made of the total losses in lease revenues, amounting to TK 5 million in Chittagong and 3 million in Comilla.

Table 10.19: Estimated total private appropriation of market revenue in 1988-89

Name of UZPs	Total No. markets	Revenue received by UZPs	Revenue privately appropriated	Estimated total revenue collected
1	2	3	4	5
Chittagong	35	666 665 (11)	5 393 925 (89)	5 460 590 (100)
Comilla	18	1 177 250 (30)	2 746 9 IB (70)	3 924 166 (100)

Note: Amount of column 4 and 5 were calculated on the basis of the percentage drawn from Table 10.17 (survey results obtained from 5 markets).

Those who insert themselves between leasers and final leasees of markets, other intermediaries associated with various types of services and development projects appropriate huge sums of money. Contractors and suppliers, dealers in rationed food grains, lawyers and touts associated with the courts and police, *local mastans* and political gangs and large property holders in various parts of the UZP virtually monopolise the appropriation of the major portion of UZP resources by forming an alliance with the officials and the political leadership of UZPs. A tentative estimate has also been made by studying the office records of two UZPs and calculating the approximate number of those primary beneficiaries in each UZP, and how much they are able to expropriate. It should be noted that, in addition to these economic appropriations, the same beneficiaries exercise considerable influence over the administrative and political structures at upazila level (see table 10.19 for detailed information). It appears that 364 (0.12 per cent) persons out of 290 044 of total population of UZP in Chittagong[12] and 281 (0.14 per cent) out of 192 087 in Comilla constitute the maximum numbered primary beneficiaries able to expropriate a total of 80 per cent of the resources of UZP. When further observation was made, it was confirmed almost 80 per cent local political party leadership of all parties, even the trade union leadership is also confined within those groups of people.

Table 10.20: Primary Beneficiaries and their approximate numbers in the two UZPs of Chittagong and Comilla (1989)

Name of UZPs	Government officials	UZP chairman and UP chairman	Contractors and suppliers	Food grain dealers GRC	OMS		Lawyers and touts UZP courts	Property holders at UZP centre	Leasees and mastans	Total
Chittagong UZP	3∅	18	9∅	16	3∅	2∅	1∅	3∅	12∅	364
Comilla UZP	28*	1∅	12∅	13	2∅	23	7	1∅	5∅	281
Total	58	28	21∅	29	5∅	43	17	4∅	17∅	645

In Comilla the position of two officials were vacant

The number of key actors and beneficiaries is limited further when their roles are closely observed. Among the 30 upazila officials only eight play crucial roles in the entire affairs of the upazila. Among these eight, four belong to the central government's elite civil service: the UNO, AC (Assistant Commissioner in charge of Planning and Finance), AC (Land) and the upazila magistrate (Civil service – Administration). The other single most influential and powerful official in the upazila is the officer in charge of the upazila police. His command over the public representatives is enormous. In respect of development programmes, especially in the implementation of physical infrastructure projects (which make up 75 per cent of UZP development activities) and general food grain supplies, three officials play the key role: they are the Upazila Engineer, the Project Implementation Officer and the Upazila Food Officer. The contractors, food grain dealers, lawyers at the upazila court, property holders in UZP headquarters, leasees and *mastans* all maintain close relationships with these eight officials. For example, contractors, food grain dealers and lessors are closely related to the UNO, the Engineer, the PIO and the Food Officer. The lawyers , lessors and property holders maintain close link with the UNO, AC (Lands), Upazila Magistrate and the senior officers of police.

In all the activities of the above officials and intermediaries, the role of the UZP chairmen and UP chairmen of respective upazila remains crucial and determinant.

4.3 *The secondary group of beneficiaries*

A secondary group, comprising of labourers on various construction projects, ration card holders, families receiving food grains under Vulnerable group' feeding programmes, families receiving post-disaster relief materials and, more generally, the users of various UZP services such as rural roads, bridges culverts as well as the specific sectoral

services relating to agriculture, health, family planning, livestock and fisheries. The size of the 'secondary' group of beneficiaries in theory embraces the entire population of the upazila. But the share of total budgetary resources accruing to them is as low as 20-25 percent. These beneficiaries mostly consist of passive receivers of patronage. No organisation exists to articulate their interests. The political party organisation, at upazila and union level are totally controlled by the activists who belong to the group of primary beneficiaries of the UZP : contractors, leasees, dealers, mastans and lawyers at upazita level.

4.4 Conclusion

The concept used in this section of the study 'benefit relations' is theoretically a problematic term. In real theoretical discourse, it is the social relations which culminate into concrete class relations in a particular social conjuncture. In the UZPs the massive flow of resources and their appropriation by political power, has promoted a new class configuration which has permitted the petty bourgeoisie to establish their hegemony. Of the 645 UZP stake holders identified with service delivery system, the majority did not come from traditionally rich rural families. Among the 210 registered UZP contractors, 85 per cent are the first of their generation in this profession, and more than fifty per cent had never performed any formal contractual work. They only compete in the tendering process in order to 'earn a part of the contract's value. Similarly, among the leasees of markets almost 90 per cent in Chittagong and 70 per cent in Comilla are local youths and lumpens who do not have much propertied social base, except their recently acquired coercive power (by virtue of being member of a gang or political party). The food grain dealers, especially those dealing with rural rationing and the OMS (Open Market Sale) are appointed as political clients by the ruling regimes from amongst the members of their local party units. Local MPs were authorised by the government to appoint them.

Before decentralisation, there was little evidence of such a large intermediary class at the upazila level to exercise political power. UPs and the traditional village institutions of *samaj* and *salish* were the focus of this elite concentration, whose members were mostly rich farmers with strong kinship inter-connection (Jahangir 1986). The UZP has changed this traditional configuration. The relatively autonomous rural institutions of UPs were submerged under the more sophisticated institutions of the UZP. In India, in the *Kosi* Region of Bihar, Wood (1977) found that the emergence of parliament and political parties had gradually undermined the autonomy of the bureaucracy, and

transformed the state more into an instrument of the dominant classes. In the case of the Bangladeshi local state, the opposite took place. Decentralisation brought about the sudden upsurge of an intermediary class under massive state patronage, which undermined the traditional dominance of the rich farmers, replacing them with a new business and bureaucratic petty bourgeoisie, serviced and supported by a large *lumpen* element. Because of its instability and fragility, the new power structure formed a miniature authoritarian state at the local level. UZPs have been made powerful by resting in them many of these forces which were earlier with the UPs. As a result the UZPs enjoyed greater power to articulate the interests of all dominant forces under a new patronage network. Gradually UZPs were becoming more instrumental in exercising the power of the rising petty bourgeoisie to whom the central state provided both a niche to thrive and resources to appropriate. Their accumulation of capital was not at all dependent on production: they mostly depended on the process of circulation and the plunder of state resources. As a result of this, this new class deployed violence and ruthless authoritarianism to acquire and retain its power. The central state itself also needed a structure at the local level to ensure state control extended to the local level. Through decentralisation, the central state had moved its gun from army headquarters at the forts to the outposts in the periphery (Slater 1989: 514) in order to establish that control.

Notes:

1. Rondhnlelli et al (1989) categorised *the* local goods and public services into four different types such as public goods, open excess goods, joint use or toll goods and private goods. Our use of public services covers those four categories in one package comensurating with the public services delivery system of UZP.

2. As per the revised organogram of the upazila administration except judiciary there are 20 other developmental service and regulatory departments. Each of this department is responsible for more than one service. Here only 15 of those services were chosen to test among the households interviewed. Services are also reorganised and classified in the figure 10.1 for the convenience of understanding.

3. All the rural households' |HH| are broadly classified in four categories:
   i. Landless having a farm area of less than o.O4 acres of land.
   II. Small farm HH having farm land of O.O5-2.49 acres.
   iii. Medium farm HH having farm land of 2.5O-7. 49 acres.

iv. Large farm HH having farm land of 7.50 acres and above. This classification is followed as standard classification in government documents [GOB. 1988)

4. UP Business Rule clearly prevents UP members to become contractors in any of the UZP and the UP projects.

5. Abu Elias Sarkar (1990) also showed a much skewed pattern of the UZP benefit system in his study of two UZPs.

6. BBS (1988) estimates that around 20 per cent of rural households are covered by the supply of electricity.

7. A further detailed break-clown of the UZP budget will be analysed in section III In which the gap between local resources and government resources will be discussed.

8. Here the UZP administration and bureaucracy covers only 13 departments whose services have been transferred to the UZP, But total upazila administration Include 24 departments and offices, the salary of which comes from the government treasury (see table 10.12).

9. In Chittagong, out of a total local resource of TK 714,500 market revenue alone contributed TK 657.,812 (92%) In 1987-88 and TK 666,665 (80 %) In the following year, out of total TK 835,400 in Comilla it was TK 1,223,900 (60 %) out of TK 2,032,903 in 1987-88 and TK 1,177,250 in the following year.

10. This classification of the UZPs is indicated in the Industrial policy note of the Government of Bangladesh, published in 1988.

11. For a list of taxable items see the gazette notification from the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong dated April 6. 1981.

12. GOB, 1985.

Chapter Eleven

Class Relations in the Central and Local State

In the previous chapters of the study (especially in chapters 7-10) we have tried to present a concrete account of the contradictions between the ostentatious rhetoric and real post implementation outcome of decentralisation programmes in Bangladesh. In the present chapter, it is being emphasised that the outcome of decentralisation in Bangladeshi situation is neither accidental nor surprisingly an isolated phenomenon, rather it is logical and consistent with the nature of the state which prevails in contemporary Bangladeshi society.

The discussion of the nature of the state remains unsatisfactory as long as no discussion of the class nature of the state is included. This aspect largely depends on the processes of class formation and their struggles for power and to establish alliances. The present chapter is devoted to an exploration of the class configuration of the local state and its relationship with the central 'power bloc'.

The class problematic of the state can be addressed at various levels and using different parts of the Marxists' theoretical discourse, i.e. the Mode of Production (MOP, the Social Formation (SF) and conjunctural analysis (Wright 1985). The classical Marxist school has typically opted for the MOP as the appropriate method for exploring the class structure as well as the class nature of state. From this perspective, the particular form taken by the state (as manifested in its political actions) merely reflects the corresponding stage of social development being experienced by the MOP. Of course, there is no disagreement about the historical reality of the MOP and the stages of social development. But this can only be abstracted in most general terms without undermining the historical and conjunctural specificities. In the peripheral underdeveloped capitalist societies where more than one MOP exists the processes of capital accumulation and socio-political domination do not depend on production alone, but equally

depend on exchange, circulation, speculation, manipulation (political and ideological) and the use of private and public violence; and in organising all of these activities the state plays the key role. As a result, any narrow theoretical abstraction of peripheral society based on the MOP (i.e. concentrating on land and agriculture) tends to be inconclusive,[1] especially when attempting to analyse the concrete class relations so as to determine the nature of the state. Therefore, side by side with production, other aspects of accumulation (circulation) and domination (violence) should also be given due weight when investigating the class nature of the state.

Given the peripheral nature of such societies and the corresponding state structures, discussion of the MOP within a purely national-spatial context also makes little sense, because the circuit of production in such peripheral areas is only completed outside the periphery itself. The production (as well as exchange) circuit of the periphery is embedded in a dependency relationship of the metropolis-satellite type. The peripheral state plays a key role within this dependency relationship, as a result of which peripheral capitalism leans more on the state to ensure its survival and growth and through the crutch of the state on metropolis rather than on the internal production structure exist in the civil society. Because of the complexity of these relationships, class struggles manifest themselves simultaneously in the sphere of production, circulation and in the state (This issue has already been discussed at considerable length in chapter three especially in the sections I, II and V).

Classes in peripheral societies are embedded in the historical development of the peripheral states themselves and dominant classes express their dominance through the state. Thus the state is also used as a means to form new classes and their wider reproduction.

In the absence of a classical bipolar class system of bourgeoisie and proletariat, the state in peripheral societies is dominated by the 'intermediate classes' because they occupy a strategic position in the economy and in the politics of the country. What particular role these particular, classes play in a given conjuncture, and whether they would align themselves with a class or classes 'above' or 'below' is influenced by the nature and dynamics of the conjuncture itself. In peripheral societies, since the balance of forces is usually in favour of the bourgeoisie and landed elite, and since the metropolitan power insert themselves into the structure of the periphery, the intermediate classes are normally pre-disposed to work within that broad alignment (Ahmad 1985). In the concrete conjunctural context of contemporary Bangladesh, the intermediate classes are broadly constituted as petty

bourgeoisie to differing degrees and on different scales. Such differences may exist in 'ownership' and 'position' between different segments of this petty bourgeoisie do not make for differences in the overall class position and class aspirations of its relatively heterogeneous membership.

The petty bourgeoisie alone cannot pursue class hegemony because it is not a fully formed class in the sense that it has no firm economic base. As a result it aligns itself with other classes depending on the prevailing configuration of power. Such alignments can be formed with the bourgeoisie (indigenous and metropolitan) or with urban workers, with landowners or with the peasantry, or indeed with a mélange of class fractions including lumpen elements.

In most of the previous contributions to the analysis of the class nature of the state in Bangladesh, the emergence and dominance of the petty bourgeoisie has not been addressed from a particularly coherent perspective. The studies using micro level case studies successively moved from one part of the country to another focusing the peasantry (Bertocci, 1972; Wood 1976; Aurns and Burden 1977; Westergaard 1978; Howe 1979 and Chowdhury 1978), while macro level approaches on the other hand confined themselves to the study of the bureaucracy (Islam 1988). The basic notion of class was forgotten in both categories of study. The peasantry and the bureaucracy (both civil and military) are not classes respectively by virtue of their ownership or non-ownership of land and by their position within or outside the state apparatuses. Rather, their class nature is revealed by their role in the on going class struggle.

The present chapter brings together a wider range of factors and materials to analyse the class character of the central state and, in the light of this, to look at the class nature of the local state. The empirical information concentrates on the following salient features of the relationship between the central and local state (with regard to the class alliance between the two, characterised by the dependency of the latter on the former).

1. At the micro level, the location of dominant classes in contemporary Bangladeshi society is not identical only with the ownership of land; rather, education, profession as background/activities and politics too play a prominent role. The dominance of traditional land based classes is in decline and the dominance of merchant and state capital is on the rise.

2. The intermediate classes of various strata (e.g. civil-military bureaucracy, traders, professionals and cash crop farmers) who together constitute much of the petty bourgeoisie are constantly struggling to establish/protect/enhance their own hegemony. This compels them to

constantly broaden their support base by incorporating classes below and above them.

3. As the petty bourgeoisie itself is not a fully formed class, hence unable to impose class hegemony by its own might, it forms 'upward' alliances with sections of the metropolitan and indigenous bourgeoisie and 'downward' alliance with sections of the pauperised masses. This latter process of alliance-making in turn promotes the process of the 'lumpenisation of polities'.

4. The central government concretely serves the interests of the bourgeoisie while pretending to champion the cause of peasants and workers; this ultimately ends in an authoritarian 'Bonapartist state'.

5. Spaces are created for the middle and lower level petty bourgeoisie[2] by erecting local state structures which play a vital role in providing the Bonapartist regime with the required base of support at the lower social levels and throughout the national territory.

The central state, supported by the lowest sections of the masses and of the petty bourgeoisie (i.e lumpens and political gangsters) places some of its surrogates in positions of influence in the local state to exercise control over the mass of peasant and workers, and to provide a basis of support for the central state in time of crisis.

The chapter is divided into three separate sections. In the first section a review of the literature on the MOP debate in Bangladesh is presented to show the major weakness of the method followed in those studies which has ultimately deflected and restricted the analysis of the dominant classes and nature of the state in Bangladesh, especially at the level of the local state. The second section is devoted mainly to macro economic indicators and the class nature of the central state. The last section is devoted to an analysis of the nature of the classes that occupy the local state and their relationship with the dominant classes at the center.

Section I

The *Mop debate and the* class nature of *the state*

A total of eight studies were selected for review in order to give attention to the appropriate temporal and spatial dimensions of the country under scrutiny. The temporal dimension covers nearly one decade from 1970 to 1980, and the spatial dimension covers the major regions of the country (north, south-west and middle regions of the country). Each study differs from the other in the approaches adopted and objectives set. Again, all of the studies followed the conventional

method of adopting land ownership as a common denominator to analyse the accumulation of capital, exploitation of surplus labour, formation of classes and the domination of other social institutions and state apparatuses. As a corollary to the focus on land and the peasantry, villages have been chosen as the spatial unit of study, in a manner redolent of early anthropological studies in which constitute a hermetically sealed world of production and reproduction, with virtually no relations with the rest of the society.

A 'class map'[1] of the villages can be drawn up on the basis of land ownership. Residents are divided into owners and non-owners; furthermore owners are themselves divided into various categories (Table 11.1). On this basis, different authors have produced different sets of generalisations. In some of the studies, the growing landlessness of the peasantry is equated with proletarianisation (Rahman 1986), while in other studies the same phenomenon is equated with pauperisation (Westergaard 1978 and 1985). Share cropping is equally confused as a semi-feudal relation by Bhaduri (1973) in Indian context which is followed by some authors in Bangladesh well. Furthermore, other analysis discovered the presence of bonded labour within the share cropping system, and therefore labeled the system as feudal. To add more to the confusion, the studies scrutinised in this chapter produced six different categories of peasantry: here, the basic notion of class gets lost in the statistical modeling of landownership stratification. The table below illustrates the confusion generated by the conventional method adopted in the MOP debate to analyse the rural class structure in Bangladesh.

While studying the MOP and the class structure of Bangladeshi villages, the authors were profoundly influenced by the contemporary debate of the MOP in the Indian agriculture, the debate which was started in 1969 and ended inconclusively in the late seventies.[3] Throughout the debate; different authors emphasised separate aspects of feudalism and capitalism on which to ultimately base their generalised view.[4] As far as the class relations and nature of the state are concerned, the debate added more confusion instead of resolving the issue. The debate produced a five tier model of the peasantry namely are agricultural labourers, poor peasants, middle peasants, rich peasants and landlords (summarised in Rudra 1978). Rudra opened the debate in the early

Table'11.1: Land based class configuration as reflected in six villages studies in Bangladesh.

Authors, and villages in their temporal and spatial location	Class categories	No. of H.H. & percentages
1. Bertocci (1970) Comilla POOR = 44%	Landless Land poor Detlor middle Non debtor middle Creditor middle Non creditor middle Creditor Rich	10 (9.8) 35 (34.3) 6 (5.9) 30 (29.4) 12 (11.8) 5 (4.9) 5 (4.9)
Total		102 (100)
2. Wood (197(5) Comilla (Bandakgram POOR = 42%	0.00-0.009 acres 0.01-0.99 aerrs 1.00-2.49 acres 2.5 + acres	14 (18.4) 18 (23.7) 25 (32.8) 19 (25.0)
Total		7G (100)
3. Aurns and Buren (1977] Kustia (Jagarapur) POOR = 54%	Poor Middle Rich Landlord	94 (54.5) 41 (24.0) 37 (21.0) 1 (0.5)
Total		173 (100)
4. Wcstcraard (1978) Bogra (Baringram) POOR = 65%	Landless marginal Peasant (0.1-2.9) Small peasant (3.0-6.9) Medium peasant (7.0-10.9} Surplus peasant (15+1)	3G (30) *42* (35) 24 (20) 15 (12) 5 (4)
Total		122 (100)
5. Howcs (1979) Jamalpur POOR = 62-82%	poor peasant (landless) Poor peasant (small) Poor peasant (danger) Middle peasant (sage) Rich peasant	143 (37) 95 (24.8) 77 (20.1) 33 (8.6) 35 (9.1)
Total		383 (100)
6. Chowdhury (1978) Dhaka (Islampur) POOR = 52 %	Landowners Rentier Owner cultivator Share cropper Landless	84 (47) 40 (22) 44 (25) 48 (27) 45 (25)
Total		177 (100)

seventies (1969, 1979 *&* 1971) and again attempted to conclude it (Rudra 1978) by adopting a new method in which more emphasis was placed on 'class relations' as to free the debate from its agriculture confines and place it in the context of the total production and reproduction process of society. Rudra (1978) raised several questions

regarding the scope and method of the MOP debate, among which the following two are crucial: firstly, whether the agreed 'domain' of MOP analysis should be literally global (as Frank 1968 argues), or restricted to national political boundaries, specific regions or even a particular locality (which Bangladeshi authors understood to refer to the village). Secondly Rudra objected to conceptually dividing agriculture from other areas of production, such as industry. He argued that agriculture constituted only one part of the Indian economy, stating that "those who argue for pre-capitalist mode in agriculture do not necessarily extend the same' characterisation to Indian industry." As a result, the characterisation of state in the MOP debate in agriculture is misleading. For a similar reason, and to some extent as a result of being the Bangladeshi studies too become vulnerable to becoming an appendage to the Indian debate drawing misleading conclusions regarding the class character of the state, especially at the local level. For example, Westergaard (1985), Chowdhury (1978), Rahman (1981 and 1986), Khuda et al (1981) and many others following the same line of thought, drew the conclusion that rich peasants and landlords are the dominant classes in rural Bangladesh; local state institutions such as UPs and UZPs constituted nothing more than *Kulak Clubs* (Rahman 1981 and 1984).

Among others Wood (1976 and 1981), Jahangir (1979 and 1986) and Adnan (1977) pursued a different line in analysing Bangladeshi rural society and drew different conclusions. Wood found that capital accumulation in rural areas is supplemented significantly by some other sources from outside agriculture, such as usury, trade etc. Jahangir emphasises that surplus farmers no more retain their dominant position only by keeping hold of land, but also by diversifying their economic activities into trade, and by establishing political connections with the state and the ruling regimes. He presented a detailed biographical case study of a rural *noubeau riche* called Tobarak who rose from a lumpen background to become a petty bourgeois and who undermined the authority of the traditional village leader *(Boro Dewan).* Though he acquired a large quantity of land by using violence, Tobarak did not derive his main income from agriculture, but from different businesses. Adnan(1977), in his more comprehensive study, also clearly demonstrated that land alone is not a sufficient criterion by which to determine class position in contemporary Bangaldeshi society, even in the remotest and the most peripheral areas such as the *char somaj* (communities living on land reclaimed from the river) in Barisal. Income from sources other than agriculture such as trade, professions and control over the state apparatus and means of violence provide a large contribution to the formation of both upper and lower classes.

Adnan finds that cultivation accout for less than 50 per cent of total incomes in the *Char Somaj*. Out of total income of Tk 917, 981, agriculture accounts for TK 434, 599. All these studies indicate a major shift of class dominance: from that of the relatively older generation of traditional land owners, sentimentally attached to the village and taking pride in being identified as a village 'nobleman, to that of the young rural upstart, confident and ruthless, having little sentimental attachment to the village, identifying themselves much more/multiple, notably with urban interests. Political connections and control of violence are considered the main means of personal enrichment and achieving local social dominance (Jahangir 1979).

These are the new generation of petty bourgeoisie elements quickly aligning themselves with the central state and establishing control over the local state (in the form of UPs, UZPs,Pourashavas and ZPs) and other related political institutions.

Changing Macro Economic Structure: Classes and the State

It is difficult to deny the fact that nature of the state can best be understood by relating it to the total production and reproduction process of a particular society, consisting of agriculture, industry, trade and services on the one hand and the interaction of dominant classes (international, national and local) who own and control the corresponding means of production, on the other, in the developed capitalist societies production functions are autonomously run by the owners of the means of production; the state is subjugated and used by them to facilitate their capitalist reproduction. While in the peripheral capitalist societies, state is placed at the center of the processes of both production and reproduction. In chapters 3 and 4 of this study, the role of the state in peripheral capitalist societies has been dealt with both from a general theoretical as well as from the concrete historical perspective of Bangladesh, in this section of chapter 1 1 those views of state which are substantial in the subsequent chapters will be reinforced by bringing in additional concrete empirical evidence regarding the class nature of the state.

Before addressing the prime questions of who dominates the Bangladeshi state and who constitutes the ruling class (es) in Bangladeshi society, some of key macro-economic and social indicators are reviewed in order to put the enquiry into its proper perspective. These indicators may assist understanding of the present production structure, the process of capital accumulation and the emerging class structure within and around the state as a logical

consequence of the long-term process of class formation and class domination in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is a society in which agriculture predominates: the vast majority of its labour force (about 85% in 1961) is employed directly or indirectly in agriculture, and the share of agriculture in Gross Domestic product (GDP) was also estimated to be about 70 percent during the same period. The share of agriculture in total employment and GDP has declined tremendously over the years, falling to 58 and 38 percent respectively by the late eighties.[5] 40 and 25 % by 2010.Though agriculture still maintains its overall significance as the largest single sector, the generation of reinvestable surplus from agriculture is negligible because of its predominantly subsistence nature.

As a result of this, the relative strength of Bangladesh's agrarian classes is also declining within the overall power structure of the society. Among the many different reasons for this, three of the more noteworthy are discussed below. Firstly, there have been four major tenancy and land reform programmes implemented in Bangladesh from 1950 to 1984, which resulted in a decline in farm size. The latest land reform measures (Land Reform Ordinance 1984) prohibited the acquisition of new agriculture land in excess of 20 acres by a family (GOB/MOL 1989: 26), The Agricultural Land Occupancy survey also shows that the percentage of farms with above 12 acres of land has declined from 3.5 percent of the total in 1960 to 1.2 percent in 1977 (Wood 1981). Secondly, for the last two decades, the terms of trade have grossly disfavoured agriculture relative to commerce and industry, which has made it cost-ineffective, inefficient and stagnant (Umar 1986: 14).[6]

Secondly, the rapid growth of population (at the annual rate of 3% in the1980s) has contributed to the fragmentation and proliferation of holdings. Though the total quantity of cultivable land (8.7 million hectares) has barely altered since the 1960s, the population between 1960/61 and 1986/87 has increased from 55 to 104 million[7] and now in 2010 rose to 140 millon.Thirdly, the decline of agriculture did not necessarily contribute to the growth of the industrial sector. Industry's share of current market price of GDP is only 8.5 per cent.[8] Neither the industry nor the manufacturing sector achieved 50 percent of their growth targets for the third five year plan period (which ended in July 1990).[9] Moreover the industrial sector has become one in which the systematic plunder of state resources by trading and bureaucratic communities is the most prominent characteristic.

Within 100 days of independence in 1971, Mujib's government nationalised by an ordinance 639 large, medium and small industrial

units, which accounted for almost 85 percent of the total industrial assets of the country.[10] In almost all the nationalised units, the ruling party (AL) put in their party stalwarts as managers and administrators and especially in the case of the appointment of chairmen for the 44 public corporations under whose control virtually all nationalised industries, banks, insurance companies and services were placed. Eighty percent (35) of them were appointed from among party cadres (Islam 1988: 63). With the change of government in 1975, the new industrial policy partially reversed the nationalisation process, keeping only 78 industrial units in the public sector; the rest of the industries were either sold or returned to their former owners.[11] A survey[12] on 462 new industrialists reveals that the majority of them is of basically trader-origin, with a minority of civil servants and army bureaucrats. Rahman (1986:200) described the process of accumulation through new industrial ventures as two sides of the same coin with regard to the commercial bourgeoisie. The survey '2 identified the following groups among the new industrialists who bought denationalised industries or established new industries in the 1980s.

1. Industrialists -cum-traders
2. Traders (mainly Import business)
3. Traders (foreign and domestic trade)
4. Traders (domestic trade only)
5. Retired army and civil bureaucrats
6. Contractors
7. Professionals (engineers, physicians and bank executives) and
8. Others

There has been little inclination on the part of the new industrialists to risk their own capital. The state virtually sponsored them through loan and equity finance. A total of TK 8,877 million had been sanctioned up to 1981, of which 12 percent has come as equity support and 88 percent as loan finance. A total of 82 per cent of private investment has been funded by the state since liberation (Sobhan 1982: pp. 48-49). A bank report further shows that at the end of 1987, the amount of overdue industrial loans stood at TK 8500 million[13] Another survey conducted by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) shows that up to 1986[14] only 4 per cent of borrowers had fully honoured their loan agreements by paying their regular installments. A cover story on the industrial development of the country, published in a weekly magazine, revealed that a large portion of industrial loans has been diverted to the commercial sector, and in many cases to *smuggling*. Many of the borrowers transferred a large portion of their

capital to foreign banks.[15] The studies by Umar (1986). Sobhan (1983). Sobhan (ed) (1990) and the various interim reports by industrial financing agencies such as the *Shilpa Rin Sangsta* (or Bangladesh Shilpa Bank) and other commercial banks all point to the same major conclusion, namely that both agriculture and industry in Bangladesh have been taken over by more organised commercial capital. However, commercial capital has not operated independently; the bureaucracy is the main force able to manipulate state policies in favour of commercial capital. A strong alliance between the bureaucracy and commercial capital has extensively subordinated agricultural as well as industrial capital, and paved the way for the dominance of the bureaucracy and commercial bourgeoisie.

The phenomenon can more clearly be illustrated by observing the growing size of state, which has undermined the private sectors of production. The national accounts figures show that the state as corporate sector (together with services, public administration and defense) contributes 52 percent of GDP.[16] This enormous growth in state and state-sponsored activities has been instrumental in the formation of intermediate classes embracing traders, indentors contractors, consultants, professionals, all subject to the pivotal control of the bureaucracy.

The new industrialists are also more or less absorbed into this intermediate group, commercial activities still predominated in their total volume of business and appropriated surplus.[17] Most of the members of these' groups have strong mutual social ties whether through intermarriage or by being part of a shared social milieu (Sobhan and Hashemi 1990:167).

The huge plunder of surplus by the intermediate classes is rooted mainly in three different spheres of state activity. Firstly, there is direct public expenditure which accounts for about 16 percent of the GDP; secondly, there is the import and export policy of the government, the total volume of which is not less than 21 per cent of GDP; finally, there is the flow of foreign aid which so far accounted for 50 percent of GDP in 1987 ($ 9506 million).[18] Though these three spheres of appropriation have been identified separately for the sake of convenience, in actual operation they are controlled from one center and benefits are also shared by the same social group.

The size of the state apparatus at present is much greater than that of its immediate post colonial predecessor. In every successive year, the state has increased its size. Even in spite of massive denationalisations and privatisations of the last 10 years, the growth of the state has remained unhindered. This is the only sector in which the growing

number of petty bourgeoise has been significantly and successfully absorbed. Besides the defense establishment and other parastatal agencies, the total number *of* staff and officials of the Central Secretariat and the associated departments of central government more than doubled, rising to 12,25, 784 in "l987 from 5,99, 278 in 1980.[20] Total public expenditure accounts for 12.2 percent of GNP ($ 18112) of which about 70 per cent is spent on 1.2 million state salariates who compose only one percent of the population.[21] Half of total public expenditure between 1975 and 1985 was absorbed by the civil and defense establishment.[22]

The total volume of foreign trade accounted for 21% of GDP. Foreign trade is handled by a partnership of the bureaucracy and the commercial bourgeoisie. Only a few hundred commercial firms in collaboration with the higher echelons of the bureaucracy reap the benefits of foreign trade. The state itself is also directly involved in some vital trade activities, such as the trade in foodstuffs and other essential commodities. Every year, through its import and export policy, commodity prices are manipulated by the state, often to the detriment of domestic agriculture and in many cases to that of industry as well.[23]

Besides the two factors discussed above, foreign aid plays the most crucial role in promoting the interests of the ruling Bangladeshi petty bourgeoisie (or 'lumpen bourgeoisie' as Frank. (1972) would term it). The accumulated volume of external debt in 1987 came to $9506 million, or just half (50.6%) of the GNP of the same year.[24] Foreign aid financed 90% of the 1989 development budget, 20% of the revenue budget and 48% of the import programme.[25] Sobhan and Hashemi (1990) have analysed the international and domestic beneficiaries of foreign aid in their in-depth study of the Bagladeshi aid programme of three major donors (namely the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the United States Agency for International Development (USA1D) and the World Bank.

Form December 1971 to June 1985, foreign aid commitments to Bangladesh amounted to US $18, 151 million of which 71% (US $12,872 million) had been disbursed.[26] A large portion of these aid funds is spent abroad on purchasing foreign materials, paying shipping charges, providing fees for foreign consultants and contractors, and payment for training Bangladeshi personnel abroad. The analysis of programme and project budgets indicates that roughly 90% of the ADB funds, over 70% of the USA1D funds and 60% of the World Banks funds to Bangladesh are spent abroad.[27] Though the list of the domestic beneficiaries is likely to be extensive, the principal beneficiaries are a

small group who appropriate almost 50% of the aid that is spent in the domestic sphere. Sobhan and Hashemi (1990) identified them as indenters for aid-financed commodity and equipment purchases; consultants to aid agencies or to United Nation agencies in aid-financed projects; construction contractors in aid-financed projects; and finally the bureaucrats who preside over the aid programmes. The other direct beneficiaries also include lawyers, bankers, insurance companies, travel agents and direct employees of donor agencies or persons employed in aided project or counterparts to foreign consultants. Instead of further extending the list, the authors attempted to focus on the principal beneficiaries such as indentures, construction contractors, consultants and bureaucrats to demonstrate how a tiny minority appropriate huge resources by employing the machinery of the state.

1. Indenteres

The indenting business flourished in Bangladesh after liberation, when the large Bangladeshi petty bourgeoisie gained access to state power. The rationale of the indenting business lies in its role in providing information to buyers and sellers to facilitate market transactions, for which the indenting firms generally earn a commission ranging from 1% to 10%, depending on the nature of the commodity. For example a 5% indenting commission on the US $ 100 million worth of imports amounts to US $ 5million. The rates of return on and the scale of, the indenting business are probably the highest of all business activities in Bangladesh, since the main investment in this trade is the access to the state and influence in the decision making process. In fact, most of the big business houses have contacts in the various echelons of power. The indenters claim that 50% of their commissions are paid back as unofficial 'compensation' to decision makers.[28] The authors also commented that the huge commissions provide the indenters with a degree of liquidity which is never possible in industry and, as a result, indenting has remained a primary occupation even for many industrialists. The study further disclosed that given the high premium on access to state power, the 'untargeted' beneficiaries of aid funds (i.e. those who earn commissions through indenting business) are a rather select group. With reference to the tenders put out by the Rural Electrification Board, out of total of 240 contracts, 5 firms received 50% of the contracts; with regard to the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB), out of a smaller sample of 33 tenders, five firms received 18 tenders. With reference to the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation, 6 firms received a little over one third of the total of 79 contracts and in the case of the Power Development Board ,7

companies received contracts worth over TK 2 million each.[29] The indenting and commission business prospered very rapidly with the escalation of foreign aid funded projects. These commission businesses have become instrumental in the process of 'primitive accumulation' that has been taking place in the aid-dominated climate of the last two decades, in this process, indenting has contributed to fostering a wealthy and powerful group able to exert influence over demands for more aid and has thereby contributed to sustaining the 'lumpen development' of the country.

2. Consultants

Consultants are required by aid donors to design, supervise and make evaluations of their projects. In the case of construction projects, consultants often evaluate the tender documents submitted by the construction firms. In foreign aided projects consultants in most cases are foreign, in the post-1972 period, a handful of Bangladeshi consulting firms have developed, about 20 of which take care of the bulk of the work available.

While both consultants and construction contractors are dependent on the bureaucracy, in many cases consultants receive pay-offs from contractors in addition to their service fees, 'earned' by providing them with inside information, or by favouring one particular firm in the bid.[30]

In the last few years, there has been a mushrooming of local socio-economic consultancy firms. Professional social scientists (economists, sociologists, statisticians, etc.), mostly from universities and research institutes, along with retired members of the higher echelons of the civil service, entered this profession. The lucrative nature of this profession created a group with vested interests which was gradually being integrated into (the system of state patronage which had itself originated in an economy dominated by foreign aided projects.[31]

3. Construction contractors

The Bangladeshi-owned sector of the construction business in Bangladesh is a post-liberation phenomenon. By 1975, major foreign aided construction work was being undertaken by Bangladeshi construction firms. About 10 major construction firms are now responsible for the majority of the major construction works. There are, in addition, several hundred medium and small firms. With the initiation of the upazila programme, small construction firms have mushroomed in their thousands.

During our survey in two upazilas of Comilla and Chiltagong, we found that about 100 individual contractors were registered in each upazila. Among the hundred, major UZP construction work was allocated to about 20 contractors, politically aligned with the power structure of the respective UZP. Contractor's profits normally do not exceed 15% of the total cost of the construction, but can range from 20% to 30% depending on the case. Access to higher levels of profit depends on the scale of payoff to the consultants and personnel of the implementing agency.[32] In government departments, irrespective of whether they are civil or military establishments, payoffs to engineers and executives have been institutionalised, by way of earmarking 3% of total costs as a 'fee'.[33]

Construction contracts of the greatest scale/prestige are examined by experts and consultants, though scope for manipulation still remains. But at UZP level, muscle power and political connections are regarded as a major factor in influencing the outcome of tendering. The construction business at upazila level is devoid of any investment costs for details, see chapter 10) and regarded as leverage for political support.

The new classes that have emerged out of these various non-productive activities were behind a boom in conspicuous and luxury consumption, which further boosted the import trade. For example, the increase in the ownership of private cars and motorcycles in comparison to tractors, bus and trucks is an example.[34]

All the above instances amply demonstrate that in a society like Bangladesh, the state itself generates much economic activity which helps in the formation of classes, whose surplus appropriation is closely tied up with the further development of state itself. Because of the underdevelopment of productive sectors like agriculture and industry, the productive forces also remain in a suppressed condition. The state is instrumental in perpetuating the class hegemony of non-productive classes which are rooted in the super structure of the state. Throughout the last two decades in the history of Bangladesh, the intermediate classes of traders, middlemen, bureaucrats and professionals can be identified as the ruling elite, because of their strategic position in society and their close ties with the state. While the regime has changed thrice, the class nature of the state has followed a logical continuity.

The socio-economic and occupational background of the state elites under the three different regimes (Mujib 1971-75. Zia 1976-80 and Ershad 1981-90) demonstrates the dominance of the intermediate classes. The changes in regime only marks the culmination of the crisis created by each regime in its attempt to implement its 'class project'.[35]

From the late forties to the late sixties, during the whole of the Pakistani period, the bureaucratic fraction of the petty bourgeoisie (civil and military) was in the dominant position, and the growing fractions of traders and professionals were largely subordinate to them. During the early seventies, due to the nationalist movement and war of liberation, the non-bureaucratic petty bourgeoisie became dominant; the bureaucracy for the time took the back seat. These non-bureaucratic fractions fully utilised their chance to plunder state resources, especially by using the instrument of trade licensing, nationalisation of industries and through access to lucrative state employment.

The process of 'primitive accumulation' developed by the 'intermediate regime'[36] alienated it from the masses of peasants and workers, through whose support they had acquired the state power. The left political parties and the youth who had learnt from the liberation war that 'power comes out of the barrel of gun', and that 'legitimate violence' could bring about socio-economic change in Bangladesh. Revolutionary challenges began to be mounted against the regime. The more the challenges sharpened towards the end of 1974, the more the regime swung towards a reactionary position and ruthless authoritarianism. The uprising threw the regime and the class It represented into deep crisis, and in turn interrupted its process of accumulation. To rescue the regime and re-launch the interests of the hegemonic fraction-Sheik Mujib rearranged his role, image and stature.

The result was that Sheik Mujib was transformed into a *Bonaparte of Bangladesh,* sloughing off the skin of *'republican'* prime minister, to reveal that of an all-powerful president, when he abolished parliament, banning all political parties and newspapers. By May 31, 1974: 7, 674 arms and 371, 036 rounds of ammunition had been recovered and. in the process, a total of 60000 persons were killed and 86,000 arrested (Islam 1988: 73). But its ruthlessness failed to save the regime and its leaders. The ruling class sacrificed Sheik Mujib in order to safeguard its class interests. Ultimately, the military was brought in to restore 'order'[37], rescue the old state and suppress the popular uprising.

Many of the MPs and cabinet members who had backed Mujib took seats and posts in the new government.[38] virtually no significant opposition was offered the new regime (at least not by AL) until the beginning of 1980. The new regime began to privatise industries, banks, insurance companies and other businesses; these were acquired in many cases by the beneficiaries of two preceding regimes (those of Ayub and Mujib) in partnership with the state elites (bureaucracy) of the new regime.[39] When the ceiling on private investment was lifted, they also took advantage of those policies. The path of Bonapartism

which was paved by Mujib was successfully utilised by Zia. He was crowned as a *new Bonaparte* who would rescue the crisis ridden petty bourgeoisie on whose behalf Mujib has given his life. Zia gave *carte blanche* to the petty bourgeoisie to 'plunder' the 'black money' of pro-Awami League elements when he offered generous investment opportunities in disinvested state enterprises and also when rehabilitating the former Muslim League bourgeoisie by returning to them many of their nationalised assets.[40] Similarly, after five years, when the same crisis resurfaced, Zia himself was found unfit to manage the crisis. He was also sacrificed by his own classes as had happened in cases of Mujib. General Ershad emerged as the third *Bonaparte* in succession. He did not diverge from his predecessors' approach. As the economic policy of Ershad was merely the continuation of Zia's, all fractions of the petty bourgeoisie (traditional and new), members of which had been elevated in the past to their present positions in the new bourgeoisie through state patronage again united to safeguard their interest under the Ershad regime.[41]

The capital accumulation of the petty bourgeoisie largely depends on the existence of a strong and extended state (irrespective of left whether this is manifested in or right version); the management of such a strong state fundamentally depend on an able *Bonapartist leadership* (which may be provided by a civilian political figure or military leader) depending on the specific political conjuncture. In Bangladesh during the early seventies leadership was provided by a civilian political leader and in the subsequent periods up to 1990. It was the generals who officiated. As Marx wrote, *Bonapartism is the religion of bourgeoisie:* and in case of the underdeveloped peripheral societies where chronic political and economic crisis haunts the nascent bourgeoisie like a shadow, it is more than mere ritualistic religion. Bonapartism is considered as the mission of the ruling class and the various, successive Bonapartes are seen as saviors of that mission. When the crises become acute and unresolvable the saviors themselves are sacrificed to save the mission. Bonapartes as individuals have to be 'disposable' if Bonapartism is to persist. The killing of Sheik Mujib, General Zia and overthrow of General Ershad (December 1990) bears strong testimony to this fact. In each case, the deposed Bonapartes took on themselves all the sins of the crisis on behalf of their own classes and accepted political crucification, thereby providing some breathing space in which to seek new ways and means to ease the immediate tension of the crisis.[42]

As far as the specific socio-economic background of the dominant state elites is concerned, most of them are former petty bourgeois, now on the verge of vigorous transformation or reincarnation into a nascent

bourgeoisie. The only means of transformation is essentially the state. The process changes its course of transformation, however, over time: during the first half of the 1970s, the traditional petty bourgeoisie, because of its leading role in the triumph of the nationalist movement, established its supremacy over the nationalist movement, established its supremacy over the civil-military bureaucracy, which hitherto had enjoyed substantial political power. The military coups in 1975 abruptly ended the political supremacy of the traditional petty bourgeoisie in the 'power bloc' replacing it with that of the new petty bourgeoisie. The new regime, instead of denouncing the traditional petty bourgeoisie, provided it with a more secure ground for a broader alliance. From the second half of the 1970s, the commercial bourgeoisie, professionals, and commercial farmers accepted that the bureaucracy should take the lead in crisis management and accepted for itself the role of an 'allied class' in the 'power bloc' of *a* Bonapartist state. The occupational background of cabinet members, top political party executives and members of parliament under the three subsequent regimes provide ample empirical evidence of this fact. The occupational background of cabinet members, party executives and parliament members of the Awami League shows a clear dominance of traditional petty bourgeoisie of professionals, traders and medium farmers, while in two other subsequent regimes (i.e. of Zia and Ershad) cabinet members and top party executives came from the bureaucracy and technocracy, with a parliament filled with the various social strata of the traditional petty bourgeoisie.[43] Because politicians to them are the third component of the broad alliance (Alavi 1972).

The occupational composition of the 37 member central executive committee of Awami League in 1972 was 57% lawyers. 14% businessmen and business executives, 11% teachers, 3% trade union leaders, 3% religious leaders and 1% landlords (Islam 1988 : 61). The same occupational background was also largely reflected in the 23 member first cabinet of the party in government, of which 13 were lawyers. 4 businessmen and business executives and one each from teachers, trade unions and landlords, plus one retired army official (Isiam,1988:61).

The cabinets of subsequent regimes (each of which was the result of a *coup d'état)* illustrate a major swing towards the creation of an army-civilian bureaucracy and professionals previously held positions in government. In the first cabinet formed under General Zia, all 24 members were selected from the former civil and military officials including two chiefs of the air force and the navy and also in the two subsequent reshuffles in 1979 and 1981, 60% of the cabinet position were retained by bureaucrats and technocrats.[44] The same trend was

continued throughout the nine years rule of General Ershad. In the first cabinet formed after the coup in 1982, of its 16 cabinet posts only four were offered to politicians selected by the bureaucracy. Outside the cabinet, in all the important government bodies such as the National Economic Council, the Planning Commission and Public Corporations, civilian and military bureaucrats were appointed on a massive scale.[45] Representation of the armed forced in the diplomatic service, administration and police, and in other government and semi government services, has progressively increased. Out of 64 districts, 53 had military officers as superintendent of police and out of 36 corporations (as of April 1985), 17 had military personnel as chairmen and 12 as Director General or Director (Rahman 1985). Besides these appointments, the zonal, sub-zonal and district martial law administrators up to 1986 were not only the chairmen of various development and planning bodies, but also *de facto* heads of the civil administrations in their respective areas. The above evidence the extent to which the military in alliance with the civil bureaucracy occupied the whole of state machinery.

Parliament was a creation of the coup regimes, designed to provide some sort of the mantle of' legitimisation' to the regime. Members of parliament were a selected group of protégés who accepted the regime's main political agenda of strengthening the state by promoting the growth of an allied class to provide a wider power base to the state. As a result the composition of three successive parliaments in terms of occupational background of the members did not experience a very big shift. Two significant trends emerged from a study of the occupational background study of the members of three parliaments elected respectively in 1970, 1973 and 1979. Firstly, in all the three parliaments, the representation of farmers or the agricultural community remains negligible (8 to 19%). Secondly, businessmen and lawyers constantly maintained a stable share of parliamentary seats. In 1979 lawyers, businessmen, teachers, bureaucrats and technocrats became the single largest group in parliament, a fact which further supports the argument that the petty bourgeoisie dominance is gradually strengthening over the entire formal political structure. Those from civil and army jobs also increased their presence from 2.6% in 1970 to 13.33% in 1979 (Table 11.2).

As a social group, the bureaucracy has been the dominant position of the power bloc of the state. But for our purpose of the study, the bureaucracy cannot be taken as a class by itself, but as a category of classes in the totality of the social class structure. For the purpose of delineating the social class origin and class affiliation of the

bureaucracy, the occupational background of their fathers and father-in-laws were examined.

Table 11:2: Occupational background of the members of three subsequent parliaments after independence

Occupation	Parliament elected In 1970		Parliament elected In 19 73		Parliament elected In 1979	
	Nos.	Percentage	Nos.	Percentage	Nos.	Percentage
Lawyers	79	29.47	75	25.50	78	26.0
Businessmen	72	26.86	67	23.67	84	28.0
Teachers	25	9.32	42	14.84	20	6.6
Doctors	20	7.46	28	9.89		
Farmers medium & large	46	17.16	23	8.12	58	19.3
Bureaucrats technocrats	7	2.60	2	0.72	40	13.33
Others trade union leader professional politicians etc.)	19	7.07	46	16.24	20	6.66
Total	268	99.94	283	98.96	300	99.89

Source: Computed from Jahan. R (1976I and Islam. 5 S (1988) p. 130

Table 11.3 shows that of the 187 members of the erstwhile members of civil service of Pakistan (CSP), 53% came from the highest income and status group, comprising less than one per cent of the population. On the other hand, 64 % of them were the sons and daughters of the members of top (31.80%). medium (8.4%) and lower level (25.20%) civil servants. In another study Gustav Papanek (1967) concluded that Pakistan's civil service drew heavily from the family tradition of government services (64%). Agricultural background composes only 13% out of the total jobs.

When the occupation of fathers-in-laws is analysed, almost 70% of the officials (top 63% and middle level 6.8%) married spouses also from civil service families. In cumulative terms, 90% of the marriages of CSP members were arranged in the top most deciles of the income group of Pakistan. These marriage relations show the upward mobility trend of the petty bourgeoisie in general and also closer integration with the upper echelon of the power structure. Similarly, the military bureaucrats also came from the families which had the tradition of government service. The situation did not change after Bangladesh's independence so far as the general trend is concerned, but a substantial number of civil and military officers have been recruited from the middle and lower strata of petty bourgeoisie which together made up 48% even in Pakistan period.

Recruitment from the lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie did not bring about any qualitative change in the general class aspirations of the bureaucratic fraction of the petty bourgeoisie. Moreover, it helped the higher echelon to broaden its power base, enabling it to reach out to the remotest peripheries of territory and society. The training of civil servants and their own vested interests helped to develop a "corporate group spirit" on the part of the ruling class, irrespective of their origins.

Table 1.3: Occupational Background of fathers and lathers-In-laws of the Bengali members of the erstwhile civil service of Pakistan

Category of Occupation	% of father's occupation	% fathers- in-laws occupation
Landlord	16.75	10.9
Top government job/top professional	31.80	63.1
Top Business	4.20	16.5
Sub-Total	52.75	90.5
Medium farmer	5.25	6.8
Mid-level government job /mid-level professional	8.40	
Mid -level business	1.05	2.7 9.5
Sub-Total	14.70	
Small farmer	7.35	-
Petty government, or non-government job and profession	25.20	
Sub-Total	32.75	-
Grand -Total	100.00	100.00S

Source: Siddiquee, K.U (1980)

The local state structures in Pakistan and Bangladesh were mainly the creation of various administrative reforms aimed at easing 'bureaucratic constipation'. As a result, the local state (in case of rural Bangladesh, the Union Parishad (UP), Upazila Parishad (UZP) and Zila Parishad (ZP) and, in the case of urban areas, the municipalities and municipal corporations) did not attain any autonomous character of their own. The continuous manipulation of the regime prevented the local state from developing along conventional class lines. In particular, the military and 'self-civilianising' regimes lumpensied the class configuration of the local state by using the various manipulative means such as money, power and the legal apparatus. As a result, the local state only carries the images of the central state. The lower and middle strata of the petty bourgeoisie held power at the local state. The

central state fostered by all means their growth and in return expected their support.

Section I11

Class *Nature of Local State*

The nature and role of the local state can best be understood from three important and interrelated factors regarding the central and local socio-political structure: firstly, the role of the local state in the process of capitalist accumulation and its continued reproduction, and, secondly as an arena in which the dominant classes are constituted locally so as to provide a basis of support for the central 'power bloc' and lastly the potential of local state in generating class struggle against the dominant classes from different spatial locations.

In Bangladesh, the local state largely followed the first two discourses supporting the central hegemonic class in its extended reproduction as well as in the management of the crisis which from time to time affected the accumulation process of the dominant - classes. In return, the locally dominant classes enjoyed some of the spoils of patronage from the central state. The local state structure was also used by the central state to suppress the potential class struggle, as a result of which a class was deliberately fostered by the central state in the outlying areas of the country, which could share their class aspiration and socio-political values. In this section of the study, the socio-economic background as well as the political process contributing to the emergence of a new class occupying leadership positions in the local state institution, will be discussed. The central state by its deliberate policies of patronage distribution has promoted new local stratum of 'political entrepreneurs' and has gradually restructured the dominant power relationship in rural society so as to create a permanent 'supporting class' to provide base-line support to the central state.

While analysing the UP leaders elected in 1977 and 1984, Rahman (1986:209) observed the emergence of a new group of young, 'upstart' educated local leader which broke away from the old tradition of the UP leaders, who in the past had been the relatively aged and influential villagers with their roots in the landed gentry. The UP election was held in 1988 and two UZP elections were also held in 1985 and 1990 respectively. The detailed characterisation of the leaders who emerged out of these elections may provide us with the sort of information that would indicate whether the trend that emerged in the late 1970s and the

early 1980s so far has crystallized into something different from the past.

In this section of the study, the socio-economic background of the leaders of two basic local state institutions i.e., the UP s and UZPs from Chittagong and Comilla districts have been examined so as to elucidate the class characteristics of the newly elected leaders and their overall role in and relationship to the central 'power bloc'.

Before entering into the detailed analysis of the survey results of the formal state institutions of rural Bangladesh, the power relationship and the class structure of the informal rural institution need some discussion. The most traditional of the informal rural institution in Bangladesh is known as the *'Gram'* (village) and *'Somaj'* (rural community) in which changes in the wider society are reflected. In other words, the *'Somaj'* can be regarded as the microcosm of the whole society.

The 'Somaj' institutions are currently experiencing a vigorous process of transformation: traditional *'Somaj'* leaders are gradually losing their grip on power. A new generation of young "upstarts" are emerging; they are rich, educated and more well-connected politically and socially with the institutions outside the village and also with the apparatus of the state (Rahman 1986 : 208 and Westergaard 1985 : 146). Changes in the socio-economic and political structure at the macro level {already discussed in the previous section) are contributing greatly to the changing class configuration at the local level. In the following pages the leadership characteristics of the UPs and UZPs also support the trend.

The Class characteristics of the UP leaders

Rahman's Study (1986) based on sample of 132 leaders in 1977 and 12 leaders in 1984, points to a major shift from traditionally less educated and conservative elements towards educated, young and outward looking persons. But Rahman's findings still indicate the dominance of rich peasantry in the UPs.[46] According to the survey 60% of the UP leaders in 1977 and 63% of those in 1984 came from family background characterised by large land-ownership (in the Bangladesh context this means in excess of 7.5 acres). The principal occupation of the UP leaders was dominated by agriculture (51% and 60% respectively in 1977 and 1984). The survey in the present study, based on a sample size of 18 UP members and 20 UP chairmen, points to a further shift from a peasant character to a new generation of political

entrepreneurs. Large farm households or rich peasants as such rarely take an interest in the UPs. Out of 18 UP members 15 (83%) belong to small farm families (having on average a maximum of 2.49 acres of land) and only 3 (17%) to medium farm households (having maximum of 7.49 acres of land). None of the UP members elected were from large farm households, though there lived 26 large farm families in two of the Unions (Table 11.4) under study.

Among the 20 UP chairmen of the two UZPs of Comilla and Chittagong, 15 (75%) came from medium farm families. Among the remaining 5, 3 (15%) came from small farm and 2 (10%) from large farm households. There are 352 large farm families in two of the UZPs where the survey was conducted (Table 1:5). The vast majority of landless households which comprise about 37% of the total households had no direct representation in the UPs either as chairman or as members.

Though as compared to Rahman's survey, the proportion of rich farmers seems to have declined (as measured by the criterion of land ownership) but the level of income is much higher than their counterparts elected in 1977 and 1983/84. About 70% of the UP chairmen had annual incomes between Tk 100,000 and 300,000. In Rahman's survey TK 100,000 was the maximum income recorded for chairmen (Rahman 1986: 210) in both the 1977 and 1984 surveys.

The UP leaders elected in 1988 are not dependent on agriculture alone for their total family income. They derive most of their cash income from sources other than agriculture. As far as the occupational background of the UP members is concerned, all of them derive their income from various non-agricultural activities side by side with farming. Almost all of them employ hired labour for cultivation and devote most of their time to other activities or trades. They include rice mill (3), contractor (4), rickshaw business (3), land broker (2), shop-keepers (4) and jobs in private business firms (2).

Among the 20 UP chairmen, the principal occupation of only 5 (25%) is farming, with the remaining 75% engaged in more than one trades or businesses. As compared to the businessmen, the former chairmen are less well off. Among all the trades and professions, construction and supply contractor (50%) and wholesale and retail business (45%) dominate all others listed in table 11.6.

As a general rule of bourgeois society, property ownership economic/ political power goes hand in hand and the state tends to protect the interests and privileges of the propertied classes. Bangladesh, as a part of the global capitalist system is no exception to this rule. In the past, rich peasants and farmers able to produce a marketable surplus used to control the local state institutions such as UPs and cooperatives making up as they did the richest class in rural society. However, land ownership pattern and occupational background of the latest incumbents of local institutions suggest a major departure from this trend. The shift in dominance appears to have been from the peasantry to the business community, from the aged to the young[47] and from large farm households to medium and small ones.

The above change cannot definitely be attributed to an advance in the political awareness of the relatively poor majority and retreat on the part of the riches in regard to local institutions. The total exclusion of the 37% of the landless households from any share in the UP leadership is sufficient evidence that the poorest are on the offensive (Table 11.4). On the other hand, the Income data show that the level of income is not at all affected by the smallness of the farm sizes because of their diversification of profession and investment elsewhere including political connections. The most staggering trend which demands explanation is that 60% of the UP chairmen and 40% of the UP members have been elected from the *nouveau riche,* a group that has drastically changed its previous economic condition over the last decade[48], and which has few if any links to the traditional rich families of the village. Even the rich were not as rich as the *nouveau riche* is now.

The nature of the central state and the dominant process of accumulation have contributed centrally to this transformation in the socio-economic background of local leaders (i.e. from the dominant landed gentry to landed-cum-business and/or the landed gentry who diversified their income from business). The findings on the one hand show the shift of the focus the rural power structure from feudal landed classes to capitalist farmers-cum-merchants, and on the other hand it suggests the dominance of a new conjoint mode of production with a blend of merchant and state capital rooted in the sphere of 'circulation' rather than in the process of production. The control of state apparatuses is very important in keeping control of this particular type of accumulation process.

Table 11.4: Landholding pattern of all households in the two UPs surveyed as compared to that of the UP members elected in 1988 (Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages)

Unions	Total number of households (H. H.) in the unions				UP members' size of land-holding				Total
	Land less (0-0.04 acres)	Small farm (0.052.49 acres)	Medium farm (2.50-7.49 acres)	1arge farm (7.50+ acres)	Land less (0.000.04 acres)	Small farm (0.05-2.49 acres)	Medium farm (2.50-7.49 acres)	large farm (7.50+ acres)	
Chittagong N-3360 n=9	2285 (68.00)	802 (23.07)	265 (7.89)	8 (0.24)	-	8 (88.89)	1 (11.11)	-	9 (100)
Comilla N=4386 n=9	822 (18.74)	3155 (71.93)	391 (8.92)	18 (0.41)	-	7 (77.78)	2 (22.22)	-	9 (100)
Total N+N=7746 n+n=18	3107 (40.19)	3957 (51.06)	656 (18.46)	26 (0.33)	-	15 (83)	3 (17)	-	18 (100)

N= Total Households n= Total UP members
Source: BBS (1988) upazila statistics and author's own survey

Table 11.5: Landholding pattern of all households in two upazilas (UZP) surveyed as compared to that of the UP chairmen elected in 1988 (Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentages)

Name of UZPs	Landholding of all H. Hs of upazilas				Landholding of UP chairman				Total
	Land less (0-B.04 acres)	Small farm (0.05 2.49 acres)	Medium farm (2.50-7.49 acres)	Large farm [7.50+ acres)	Land less H. Hs	Small farm H, Hs	Medium farm H. H	Large farm H. H	
Chittagong UZP N=406S5 n=9	2 1 053 (51.74)	16321 (40.12)	3112 (7.65)	199 (049)	--	2 (18.18]	9 (81.82]		11 (100)
Comilla UZP N=30769 n=9	5212 (16.94)	22270 (72.38)	3134 (10.18)	153 (0.50)	--	1 (11.11)	6 (66.67)	2 (22.22)	9
Total N+N=71454 n+n=18	26265 (36.76)	38591 (54.01)	6246 (8.74)	352 (0.49)	--	3 (15.00)	15 (75.00)	2 (1 0. 00)	20 (100)

N = Total Households n. = Total No. of UP chairmen

Table 11.6 : Occupational background of the UP chairmen of two UZPs of Chittagong and Comilla (Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage)

Name of UZPs	Primary Occupation			Secondary Occupation			Types of Business						Total No. of Respondent in Business
Occupations	Farming	Biusiness	Job	Farming	Biusiness	Job	Wholesaler /Retailer	Transport business	Contractor	Import export & Commission agent	Renting of Houses	Others	
Chittagong UPZ n=11	2 (18)	8 (73)	1 (9)	7 (64)	3 (27)	1 (9)	3 (63)	3 (27)	7 (63)	7 (63)	2 (18)	3 (27)	10 (91)
Comilla UZP n=9	3 (33)	5 (56)	1 (11)	6 (67)	3 (33)	--	6 (67)	--	1 (11)	--	--	3 (33)	8 (89)
Total n=20	5 (25)	13 (65)	2 (10)	13 (65)	6 (30)	1 (5)	9 (45)	3 (15)	8 (40)	2 (10)	2 (10)	6 (30)	18 (90)

'others' category include Rice mills, flour mills, Saw mills and cinema hall owners.

As a result, from the 1970s onwards, with the triumph of petty bourgeois access to state power, the state has become instrumental in the process of accumulation. The ruthless competition for state power also begun at the same time, the political manifestations of which can be seen in the frequent coups and coup-attempts at the centre of political power and the increasing trend of political *gangsterism* at the local level. The two phenomena of coups and *gangsterism* have contributed to a *'lumpenisatio*n' of politics and the rise of a new class of political entrepreneurs who are drawn from relatively young and fairly well-educated sons of the rural rich who nevertheless have strong urban connections. These latter have played a vital role in eliciting favours from the state and have been most successful in being recruited as clients of the state. The connections are mainly established through non land-based profession, education and membership of political parties.

In order to supplement the information provided in the above tables and to provide a better understanding of the politics and the accumulation process based on the local state, a detailed profile of four typical actors of the contemporary local state is presented in four separate case studies below. Cases I and II refer to a UP member and a UP chairman from Chittagong; cases III and IV deal with two of their counterparts from Comilla.

Case I- Rajib Ali (UP member from Chittagong): an ardent Lobbyist

Rajib Ali (40) passed his terminal secondary school exams and attended college for one year in the late sixties. He served for a few years in a private business firm in Karachi, and then came to Bangladesh just before independence in 1971. He lost his parents early and was brought up in the house of his maternal uncle who was a rich and influential man within the area of Chittagong UP.

Rajib's uncle had three wives and about a dozen children, none of whom ever completed school. Later, Rajib married one of his cousins and continued to live with the family of his uncle as a *Gharjamai* or resident husband i.e. without his own house.

During the early seventies, Rajib was an ardent supporter of the AL but held no formal position in any of its branches, when the BNP was founded during General Zia's rule he was the first person from the UP to join the party. His main occupation during the BNP period was to

perform *tadbir* (Lobbying) for others, with a view to securing them jobs, business licenses, construction and supply contracts, etc., thereby earning a commission on a share of the corresponding bribes.

When the government changed in 1982, Rajib too changed political parties. The sitting BNP MP of the local upazila joined General Ershad's JP, and was offered a cabinet post; Rajib become the local client of the minister.

Rajib Ali never had any permanent occupation from the early seventies since he left Karachi. Though he was a father of three sons by the end of 1986, he did not have a house of his own and used to live in his father-in-Law's house as a *Gharjamai.*

In the late eighties, just before the UP elections, he built a house and established his own family in a separate house. During the author's field work in 1989-90, Rajib was seen supervising the construction of a (food for work) culvert and road project. His other less visible sources of income still come from commissions or bribes received for various *tadbir* services rendered to different clients. Rajib Ali is one of the few political entrepreneurs who started as a virtually homeless and poverty-stricken individual who now lives an affluent life using his skills of political entrepreneurship and institutional lobbying.

Case 11- K. Ali: UP chairman of Chittagong: a despised opportunist

K. Ali comes from a rich, family. His father was a UP chairman during President Ayub's Basic Democracy period and a contractor by profession. He also owned a large quantity of agricultural land. K. Ali is the first of his father's two sons. After his father's death, he took up the family business as well as the political entrepreneurship of his father. He contested twice (in 1973 and 1978) the UP chairmanship but was not successful, because the other candidate who won in both these elections was regarded locally as a very dignified person; moreover the latter enjoyed the support of the ruling AL in 1973. In contrast, K. Ali was less educated and regarded in the locality as the spoiled child of a rich man. During President Zia's time, when the BNP was formed, K. Ai joined the BNP breaking his family's political tradition as Muslim League loyalists. He stood in the UP election for the third time in 1984 and was elected. The election cost him a substantial amount of money, and was financed by the sale of two acres of land (in 1978). But by 1985 he had regained those lands, acquired three new businesses and houses in the city. So the investment in politics paid him handsome dividends within a very short period of time. During the BNP period, he

established a cinema hall near the present UZP centre, become the chairman of Thana Central Co-operative Association (TCCA) and also stood in the UZP election of 1985 in which he performed miserably (candidate 'E' in Table 9.1). When the *Jatiya Party* (JP) was formed, during General Ershad's Presidency, he deserted the BNP and joined the JP. He stood in the UP election for the fourth time in 1988 and won. In his fourth election his contestant was a youth who could almost equal All's ability to organise political terror and violence. As a result, the casualties on both sides were very heavy. On Election Day, one of the members of his opponent's gang was shot dead and many more injured, forcing Ali to go into hiding for few months and to pay bribes to the police. At last, the JP Minister was able to influence the police not to pursue him or prosecute him.

K. Ali originally came from a rich family and later, through political connections and entrepreneurship, enhanced his property and wealth many fold. He is involved in some illegal businesses which need protection on the part of top political offices. He is one of the largest debtors of all the three local banks and TCCA. He maintains a smuggling ring which regularly cuts and transports timber illegally from the Chittagong Hills. He is also a member of another ring of flour mill owners and food grain merchants, who purchase all the wheat misappropriated from FFW schemes in the three neighbouring upazilas. He patronises one illegal brewery, one ruthless terror gang and acts as an intermediary or broker deals between the local police and criminals.

His father made money as a client of one of the locally connected members of Ayub's government who later became Speaker of Pakistan National Assembly. K.Ali took the same enterprise of money making as his father by becoming a client of the BNP and JP, working especially for the local MP and minister later.

Case III: Abdul Alim (UP member, Comilla: the archetypical rustic

Abdul Alim (38) is a member of an extended family of 20, in which he lives along with his five other brothers and their children. The family owns 5 acres of land and also cultivates 2 more acres of land which he is purchasing on mortgage. He himself is illiterate, but two of his younger brothers attended school. One of them serves in the Bangladesh Rifles as an ordinary soldier and another one serves in one of the Gulf States. The cash flow from the Gulf gave the family an opportunity to take more land into their possession both through direct purchase' and mortgage. The family has also opened a grocery shop in the nearby village market.

Abdul Alim is the eldest of all his brothers. It is his first time as a member of the UP. When asked about his future ambitions regarding the UP chairmanship, he replied that membership was enough for him, as he is illiterate. To take on the chairmanship needs education and good connections with the administration. He is not a member of any political party, No political party even made any request to him to join. However in the last two elections he voted for the candidates of the government party, because the UP chairman and the upazila level officials advised him to do so. He also helped the UP chairman when the JP leaders and ministers visited the union, by bringing people from the villages to demonstrate their support for the government.

He thinks that supporting and obeying government policy will help the UP to get more government resources. Two of his younger brothers live in the village with him. One of them admires the late President Zia and the other one admires the late President Sheik Mujib. He holds both these politicians in high esteem but even so he never became a member of either of their parties, in his view, all presidents are good: it is the officials who are not honest, and it is the shortcomings of their subordinates Presidents who very often are blamed by people for.

Abdul Alim admires President Ershad more than all other past Presidents, because, according to him, his government has provided villages with more resources than ever before. He pointed the newly constructed and repaired culverts and roads in his union.

Abdul Alim is a prime example of peasant opinion in the village society, untroubled by national politics. His two younger brothers were instrumental in his becoming a UP member. One of these brothers maintain close links with a local gang of political gangster and he ensured the candidature of his elder brother by using his influence in the gang which played a crucial role in electing Abdus Sobhan as chairman (case iv).

Case 1V: Abdus Sobhan (UP chairman of Comilla): Young, rich & 'lumpen'.

Abdus Sobhan is the eldest of four brothers. He was 36 in 1990. The family jointly own 15 acres of land, out of which they cultivate 6 acres by employing hired labour with the remaining 9 acres rented out to others. The fourth and youngest brother is a student at the local college. He helps the second brother to run a chemist's shop. The third brother runs a rice mill and a grocery shop in the local market in partnership with the second brother.

Abdus Sobhan is a first class contractor registered at the Public Works, Public Health Engineering, and Roads and Highways departments as well as the *Zila Parishad* of Comilla. He also holds two dealership licenses as a distributor of edible oil and sugar. The sugar license was obtained through the influence of a cabinet minister from Comilla. The family purchased a housing plot in Comilla city, financed by the sale of half of an acre of agricultural land.

None of his family members ever became members (left alone chairman) of the UP. He is the first of his village in his generation to hold such an office. Before Abdus Sobhan, Ameer Ali was the chairman of the same UP. Ameer Ali was 55 when he was defeated by Abdus Sobhan in 1988. Ameer Ali had held the UP chairmanship for two consecutive terms from 1977 to 1988 and was defeated in his attempt to hold office for a Third term. He is a large-scale farmer and fairly popular among the peasant community but fell victim to the effects of the generation gap. The growing number of youths and petty traders and students' en mass voted against him. This aversion was suddenly sparked over a dispute over the annual auction for a rural market. Instead of giving to a prominent young bidder, what might have been more self-interested backing, he too backed a traditional bidder when the youths forced him to comply with their decision. Mr. Ali called police. After a few days he was physically assaulted in broad daylight and threatened with death by the local youths.

The general public sentiment and sympathy was always with him, but because of the terror and threats of terror employed by the *'mastans'* the public could do nothing for him. The UZP chairmen tired to persuade Mr. Ali to bring police proceeding against the gang. But for fear of further humiliations, he did not follow this advice. Because the UZP chairman himself was beaten twice by another *mastan* gang which went unpunished.

During the UP elections of 1988, Ameer Ali had initially decided to step down but some of his traditional supporters, specially the UZP chairman, assured him of their support. On the other hand, Abdus Sobhan emerged as a candidate to whom most of the local youths (including the youth gang that had humiliated Ameer Ali) were prepared to give their support. Ameer Ali depended on his traditional supporters to vote for him, and on the UZP chairman to provide him with adequate police support to protect the polling centres from violent attacks by Vote pirates'. However, all his plans were foiled by Mr. Sobhan and his armed gangs on the Election Day.

Sobhan himself was not a member of any gangs but he skilfully manipulated the situation in his own favour. He emerged as a strong

patron of the local youths and sympathised to them during their conflict with Ameer Ali, but never came to the surface. During the election time he reaped benefit by securing their service. Obviously he paid them well and promised all other future help. Especially for the electoral confrontation, Sobhan organised and equipped youth groups with weapons of different types as well as hired professional terrorists from the city. They occupied one centre and stole almost 90% of the ballot papers. During their attack on another voting centre, one of his hired terrorists died when the bomb he was carrying exploded prematurely. There were five occurrences of such bomb explosions around the UP during the night before the election. These events terrorised many members of the general public not to go to polling centres which created favourable atmosphere for Sobhan to rig the election. Abdus Sobhan was finally elected, but in so doing he had spent a huge amount of money. He had paid TK 100.000 to the police to protect him from accusations of patronising an armed gang. He also paid TK l00.000 to the family members of the person killed in such outrages. On the top of those two big expenditures spent a further TK 250,000 on other election expenses.

Abdus Sobhan does not have any special inclination for any particular party. While he was at college, he used to support the student wing of the Awami League. He now supports the policies of General Ershads government, but has not become a member of his Jatiya Party. During the above-mentioned, UP election he drew support from the youths groups of Awami League as well as BNP, partially by virtue of the cash payments he made and partially due to his attractiveness as a youth candidate.

The general trend in the social background of the 18 UP members of the two unions studied of and the 20 UP chairmen of the two, UZPs, is that the second generation of rich peasants who managed to transform themselves into traders and political entrepreneurs now occupy the leadership positions in the UPs. Violence and state patronages are two of the vital means which have facilitated this process.

Characteristic *of UZP* chairman

The detailed backgrounds and the electoral style' of the UZP chairman of Chittagong and Comilla UZP were discussed in chapter 9 of the present study. Here, however, only the background of the 183 UZP chairmen elected in 1985 are (re) presented to underscore the trend of increasing political dominance in local institutions exercised by people

with non-agricultural occupations. Among the 183 chairmen of Dhaka and Chittagong Divisions, agriculture is the principal occupation of only 38%. The remaining 62% have business and/or the professions as their main source of income (see Table 11.7 for details). It should not be forgotten, however, that secondary occupation with almost 50% of the others derives a substantial portion of their income from renting out their land, but as such they do not regard themselves as farmers.

As far as the land holding pattern is concerned, 62% of UZP chairman own agricultural land in excess of 10 acres and 71 (39%) out of 183 own 20 acres or more land and 101 (55%) of them, in addition to agricultural land, also owned land, house or other assets in various nearby towns and cities (Ahmed 1986 : 16-17). With regard to income and education, the UZP chairmen's achievements exceed those of the UP chairmen. 58% of them are graduates, and almost half of them admit to having incomes between TK 300,000-500,000 annually. Among the 20 UP chairmen, only 2 (10%) were graduates.

The highest range of income of the UP members and, UP chairmen remained limited respectively within the threshold of TK 15 to 30,000 and TK 100-300.000. The age structure of the local state leaders at three levels (UP member, UP chairmen and UZP chairmen) is rather similar: almost 61% are drawn from 25 to 45 years age; group.

Table 11.7: Occupational background UZP chairman elected in 1985 from Dhaka and Chittagong Divisions.

Occupation	Principal Occupation		Secondary Occupation	
	Numbers	percentage	Numbers	percentage
Agriculture	69	37.70	90	49.18
Business	72	49.34	60	32.78
Industry	5	2.73	-	-
Teacher	25	13.66	-	-
Lawyer	10	5.46	-	-
Doctor	2	1.00	-	14.75
Landlord (Housing)	-	-	27	14.20
Others (a)	-	-	26	14.20
Total	183	100	203 (b)	-

Note:

a. 'Other occupations include consultancy, income from pension, dependence on the income of the family members etc.

b. As some of the respondents had more than one secondary sources of income, the total number of secondary occupations exceeded the total number of respondents.

The study of these leaders' socio-economic background indicates that people with relatively higher incomes and education occupy the leadership of the highest levels of the local state. However, this can be partly explained by the fact that most of the leaders at these 3 levels come from the same generation of people who benefited from the new Bangladesh state after 1971.

As far as the political affiliation of the UZP chairman is concerned, a survey conducted in 1985 revealed that many of UZP chairman elected that year had been very reluctant to clearly express their political affiliation or preference, despite the fact that the majority of them were supporting the ruling party and its government. To investigate the political significance of this aversion which seems to be a classic case of petty bourgeois opportunism, the survey attempted to identify the political allegiance and class alliance of the UZP chairmen over preceding 15 years (i.e. from 1970-1985).

This 15-year period covered four different ruling regimes. The four regimes were those of Mujib and the AL from 1970-75, General Zia and his BNP from 1976-81, Satter and BNP from 1981-82, General Ershad and his JP from 1983-85- In table 11.8, the vertical axis, indicated the names of the political parties and groups concerned and, on the horizontal axis, the political allegiance of the UZP chairmen over the four different regimes is indicated. Out of a total of 183, only 38 decided not to disclose (their political affiliations at all). The majority of the 145 who responded to the question revealed that they had changed their political allegiance at the time of the change in regimes. Out of the total 145 across the spectrum almost 50% had changed their political affiliation in each time (as indicated in table 11.8) instantly with the change of regimes. 20 to 48 percent (the so called 'camouflaged' group) maintaened a non-partisan position but in fact supported the regimes which had taken state power in each time.

During the period of Mujib's rule, 64 (48%) of the UZP chairmen supported the AL; by 1982, more than half of them had left the AL and joined General Zia's BNP. Again, in 1985 when General Ershad offered a more lucrative distribution of patronage, only 9 out of 64 stayed in AL. The same trend can be seen in the BNP as well. Out of 135 UZP chairman, 40 supported president Zia and his BNP until 1980, at which point after the assassination of Zia, Ershad provided the new leadership. 31 of 40 UZP chairmen joined President Ershad's new party. It seems that in choosing their political affiliation, ideological commitment and party loyalty matter very little as compared to the prospect of personal gain. This may reflect the petty bourgeois opportunism which would be expected to characterize the majority of

UZP leaders given their socio-economic position. Irrespective of the parties and regimes, the petty bourgeois elements in great majority in every crisis situation side with the state. They cannot afford to lose the connection with the state. As a result they always support a strong state which can contain the rising of lower classes under control because it is the state which guarantees the continuation of their accumulation process.

During this 15 years period of Bangladesh's political history there were six major coups and many small attempted coups from 1974 'to 1989.[50] The regime changed three times as a result of major coups and assassinations of presidents. Two of the governments, in particular the governments of Zia and Ershad used the local state institutions massively to carry out their political strategies. The UZP level leaders were the main contact persons used to set in motion in the process of the legitimisation of military governments and process of restructuring rural class relations through 'lumpenisation' and the suppression of pro-democracy movements. The UZP chairmen, UP chairmen and the UP members, together with the active support from the central state mercenary constituted a local enclave of the central state both in terms of its administrative role and its 'legitimate' use of violence by holding a dominant position within the locality and constantly using the services of a new emerging lumpen proletarian group as foot-soldiers at the grass roots level, to carry out the political programmes of the Bonapartist regime.

Lumpenisation and restructuring of class relations

In order to better understand the landscape of the lumpenisation of politics, the major restructuring of social relationships that this accompanied and supported, Table 11.9 has been constructed, indicating demographic as well as labour participation trends in the two UZPs under study. Of the total population of 10 years of age or more totalling 334240 only 21% (16% in agriculture and 4.69% in manufacturing} are directly involved in the major activities of production. The remaining 79% of the population of active age is not directly involved in production activities. This alienation from the means of production and subsistence makes people's political behaviour inherently unpredictable and unstable unless they are organised on the basis of ideology. Frequently, the result is that so-called 'false consciousness[1] regarding their own class position (as well as that of others) tends to develop.

Table 11.8: Changing Political affiliations Over a Decade (1971-1985) corresponding to changes in the Ruling Regimes by the Upazila chairmen, elected in 1985. (Figure in Parenthesis indicate percentages of the respective column)

Name of Political Parties/Groups	Mujib Period 1971-75	Zia Period 1976-81	Sattar Period 1981-82	Ershad Period 1982-85
Camouflaged Groups (GGI)	33 (25)	35 (26)	78 (48)	40 (28)
Traditional *Parties* [TP]2	37 (28)	34 (25)	19 (13)	11 (8)
Breakaway Parties (BP)3		4 (33)	3 (2)	1 (0.68)
Awami League(AL)	64 (48)	23 (17)	23 (I6)	9 (6)
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	--	40 (29)	30 (21)	9 (6)
Jatiya Party (JP)	--		--	75 (52)
Total	134 (100)	136* (100)	14* (100)	145 (100)

Notes:

1. GGs are those who contested in election as independent candidates and choose not to disclose their political identities during the interview.

2. TPs are those existed before the political parties (prohibition) act' of 1975. Some of those parties are, JSD, NAP (M). NAP (B| and Saymmabadi Dal (Toha) and also include some of the defunct parities at time such as the Muslim League and Jamat-e-lslami.

3. BPs are those breakaway functions of AL and NAP (B) which include AL (Mizan), the Democratic League, the Janata Party (Osmany) and the United People's Party (UPP) respectively.

•The increase in the number of respondents from Zia's period onwards was due to people subsequently entering into politics for the first time.

For example, 37% of the labour force engaged in household work are basically of unwaged women who live a life secluded from all socio-political activities. Similarly the unemployed (13.12%) and underemployed (14.3%) (most of whom are technically shown in government statistics as self-employed) despite the miserable life they endure cannot spontaneously be organised to reduce their own sufferings. As Cohen and Michael (1973:38) remark "the next bowl of food, the stealing or begging of a few pence, the fighting over a

cigarette, a joint or a piece of territory on the pavement may assume a much more immediate and practical reality than a subjective class consciousness". In Bangladesh, historically the student community (constituting 12% of potentially active population of the two UZPs of Chittagong and Comilla) has played the role of providing a great reservoir of political activists in a sense of substituting for the various poor and young in the political campaigns and projects. While the poor, unemployed and underemployed, struggle for their next bowl of food, the students generally do not suffer from that type of misery, as the majority of Bangladeshi students come from a lower middle class and middle class background. The students as a heterogeneous group contain within it the anger and frustration of various social milieus sometimes also demonstrating opportunist petty bourgeois aspiration towards the establishment. In all the major political activities either the movements against oppressive regimes or in the campaigns in favour of the same, students were seen in the forefront of both, hundreds of students were killed in those encounters from time to time. Student activism often turned into destructive violence. In the process of the lumpenisation of politics by destructive violence, students are used as tools by all the regimes.

As seen in the analysis of macro and micro level socio political and economic indicators, merchant capital and state capital (as a conjoint mode) dominate overall other mode (s) of production visa-a-visa accumulation. Our study of the two UZPs supported by the background study of UZP chairman from all over the country, show the overriding dominance of trading and professional groups. As trade is vital to the accumulation process in Bangladesh, commercial capital together with state capital is permanently in contradiction with the productive capital of agriculture and industry. The data from various sources confirm that the present ruling coalition in the Bangladesh state is predominantly constituted by commercial and state bourgeoisie of non-productive classes who constantly work in contradiction to the productive classes. As for political activities concerning the central or local state, they do not try to form alliances with the productive forces, because such an alliance may shift the balance of power towards the main producing classes as the new commercial petty bourgeoisie are in a tiny minority (only 3%). Through the help and patronage of the central state, this new class is able to form self-protective and self-advancing alliances, they form political *gangs* and economic *mafias* thereby forging sinks between themselves (i.e. *nouveau riche* mainly the landed gentry-cum-businessmen) and the lumpen proletariat in rural Bangladesh. The rural lumpen proletariat are mainly drawn from the unemployed youths, other elements of the poor, outlaws and various anti-social elements,

students and sometimes even the sons of the rural rich, thirsting adventure and (as an apprenticeship) for a future career in local political leadership. Outlaws and criminals get protection and immunity from prosecution as well as a handsome income. Of course, (the membership is selective and dependent ultimately on loyalty of such gangs and mafias (Jahangir 1979: 261) to the individual politician or political aspirant.

The gangs were indiscriminately used by the aspirant local leaders for their personal gain as well as to strengthen the complementary forces of state violence in suppressing genuine popular interests and movements. Gang violence has gradually become a vital means of gaining public office, which has dominated local and national elections for the last one and a half decades. An analysis by Rahman (1990) shows that compared to the 1970's, 1980s witnessed a major expansion of violence in local elections.

Table 11.9: Population over 10 years of age, by main activities and degree of labour participation (Figure in parenthesis indicates percentages)

Upazilla	Total populati on	Not in work (Total)		Househol d work (Women)	Cultivati on (crop)	Agricultu re (non-crop)	Busin ess	Manuf acturi ng	Self-employ ed
		Unemployed	Student						
Chittag ong Upazila	207179 (100)	27445 (13.25)	25545 (12.33)	75397 (36.65)	17488 (8.44)	1453 (0.70)	9.002 (4.35)	10651 (5.14)	39660 (19.14)
Comilla Upazila	127061 (100)	16416 (12.92)	14138 (11.13)	47675 (37.52)	34427 (27.09)	233 (0.18)	924 (0.73)	5035 (3.96)	8213 (6.46)
Total	334240 (100)	43861 (13.12)	39638 (11.87)	123612 (36.98)	51913 (15.53)	1686 (0.50)	9926 (2.97)	15686 (4.69)	47873 (14.32)

Source : Bureau of Statistics (1988)

The UP elections of 1973 appear to have experienced violence at 138 polling centres; in 1977 its incidence was reduced to only 38. The trend moved markedly upward in the 1983-84 election, with violence reported in 204 centres throughout the country. This trend not only continued but engulfed the entire country in 1988 effecting over 3000 polling centers. The violence not only affected the results of the election, but also brought much greater uncertainty into the political life of the country. Furthermore, during the UZP election of 1990, 40 deaths, 2000 injuries, 160 uses of fire arms, 500 arrests, 26 cases of arson and 16 vehicle damages were recorded.[51] Rahman suggested that violence has become an integral part of Bangladesh's 'political culture' and has become institutionalised to such an extent that no election can be thought of without violence.

In order to maintain socio-political order in favour of the general interests of bourgeois accumulation, the petty-bourgeois Bonapartist regimes of Bangladesh have promoted different class projects at different socio-economic and institutional levels which have subsequently led to the restructuring of class relations, class alliances and class practices. As discussed earlier, while the highest echelon of the new and traditional petty bourgeoisie constitutes the central 'power bloc' of the state, the middle and lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie operate as a supporting class visa-a-visa the power bloc' and which is enabled utilise the full potential of local state institutions for its own personal accumulation. Furthermore it also helps the central state by organising the services of the disposable masses of lumens as foot soldiers and mercenaries. The local state minimises the use of state violence as by organising lumpens at much lower social and economic cost to the state.

The central and local state together represent and uphold the interests of the same class, which broadly speaking is the petty bourgeoisie associated with different social and economic strata. Fear of a revolutionary upsurge and the overthrow of the central state do not permit the local state to adopt even a minimally democratic structure. The development of the productive forces have become blocked and their organisation has been suppressed, to which end the local state has been retained as localised oppressive apparatus able to contribute significantly to the suppression of the rising class struggle. On the other hand, it has become the centre for the dispensation of patronage to those classes supporting successive regimes.

Notes:

1. The MOP debate in agriculture in India which continued for one decade (1969-1980) ended without any consensus or conclusion. The debate was unconcerned about the class structure of the society which encompass industry, trade and all other means of accumulation outside agriculture. For detailed analysis see Rudra (1978).

2. For derailed stratification of petty bourgeoisie in a peripheral society see the diagram 5 in chapter 3.

3. The list of the studies on the MOP debate in Indian agriculture is very exhaustive; Ashok Rudra and his associates (Rudra, Mojib and Talib 197i) initiated the debate which was sharply criticised by Patnaik (1971a) and later through 5 more elaborate articles in between 1970-1980 Alavi (1975), Banaji (1972 and 1973), Bhaduri (1973), Chattopadyaya (1972). Finally

Rudra [1978] and many others contributed to the debate. For extensive summary of the whole debate Harriss (1979) may be seen.

4. For example Alavi and Banaji emphasised on the impact of colonial production system on the MOP, where Patnaik and Rudra while agree to draw a conclusion nearer to distorted capitalism still differ in the nature of capita] and labour process.

5. Employment in agriculture declined from 84.6 per cent in 1961 to 58.8 per cent in 1983 (BBS 1986:188). The share of GDP also declined to a substantial proportion which was almost 70 per cent in 1961 it has come down to 38.7 per cent in 1987 (BBS 1989: 195).

6. Rise of agricultural factor price and decline of agricultural commodity price made agriculture less competitive.

7. Khan and Hossain (1990) for population growth see table 2.3 pp 20-21 and for the figure of land equilibrium p-32.

8. BBS (1989) p-195; the large and medium industries share only 5.2% of the GDP and employees 1.36% of labour force (Khan and Hossain 1990 : 68).

9. The Government adopted three major industrial policies by 1986 to encourage the private investors from home and abroad by disinvesting nationalised industries, through liberal credit policy as well as tax rebate and state protection. But in spite of ail those efforts the plan hardly achieved half the rate of its targeted growth which was fixed at 10 per cent (Bichitra 28th July, 1989).

10. The ordinance was promulgated on 26th March. 1972; under the ordinance 111 large industrial units of former Pakistanis, 75 of Bengali owners, 53 of East Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation and 400 more small units owned by Pakistan were nationalised. Only industrial units whose asset value fall below TK 1.5 million were allowed to retain in private sector. For detail see Akash (1987: 47-48).

11. The figure was published in a Bengali Weekly *The Purnima* in September 1990.

12. Weekly Bichitra October 7, 1988 p.7

13. Ibid p.27.

14. Ibid p.27.

15. Ibid p. 27.

16. BBS (1989) P. 195. The gross figure 52 has been derived by adding the subsectors of construction, power, gas, water, sanitary services, transport & communication, trade services, public administration and defence, Housing Services, Banking and Insurances and professional and miscellaneous services. 90% of the activities of these sectors are controlled by state and the state agencies.

17. Zahirul Islam-the number one rich man of Bangladesh is basically an indenter and contractor. From the severities he started purchasing denationalised Industries. Still major portion of his earnings come from construction and supply contracts. The financial institution and banks owe

to Zahirul Islam about TK 126 million as overdue loan in 1983 (Weekly Akata. April 6, issues from 13th April to 24th August. 19S4).

18. World Development Report 1989.

19. 'Over development' of the state is not a colonial legacy as proposed in Alavi (1972). It is the logical consequence of the class nature of the state.

20. BBS (1984) p.180 and BBS (1989) p. 94 for the comparative growth of public sector employment. For comparison of GNP and public expenditure. See World Development Report 1989.

21. World Development Report 1989.

22. Khan and Hossain (1990) p. 114.

23. Umar (1986) presented detailed accounts of case history how commercial bourgeoisie manipulated the price of jute, chilly, pulse, sugar against the interest of home growers. On the other hand, the import policy in many cases safeguarded the interest of commercial bourgeoisie against domestic industry. The case of steel factory. Diesel engine and power pump had also been elaborated, (see pp. 7-33)

24. World Development Report 1989.

25. For budget analysis see the budget speech of Finance Minister as published in the Weekly Bichitra. July, 1989 and for the share of foreign aid in revenue budget and total import programme. See Sobhan 1990 p.7 and p.43,

26. Sobhan and Hashemi (1990) p. 149.

27. ibid p. 149.

28. Ibid (1990) p. 151.

29. Ibid p. 152.

30. Ibid p. 153.

31. Ibid p.153.

32. Ibid p.154,

33. Ibid p. 154.

34. Table on comparative figure on cars & tractors (see BBS 1989).

35. The class objective of the petty bourgeoisie in general lies in the attainment of personal enrichment by using the various instruments of the state. In Sheik Mujib' s period the class project of the ruling fraction of *petty* bourgeoisie was to promote a commercial bourgeoisie from among the ruling fraction though the direct state patronage. During the post Mujib period class project has not been changed but only strengthened the bureaucratic fraction of petty bourgeoisie over other fractions as they were presiding on the decision making processes. They themselves like the traditional petty bourgeoisie of the previous regime pursued the same goal. This time the two Tractions instead of contradicting each other formed alliance to share the fruits of the stale. While the bureaucracy was presiding over the privatisation of industries, sanctioning of credit, issuance of trade licenses, the new riches [the non-bureaucratic fractions) 'reacquired' those advantages either through large pay offs or in partnership. Many Al. leaders

are now found among the new industrialists and bank directors who never enjoyed such position during Mujlb period. In many instances top civil and army bureaucrats also established themselves as industrialists and businessman.

36. Awami League regime from 1971 to 75 was characterised by some of its own think tanks (such as Nurul Islam, 1977. Muzaffar Ahmed and Rehman Sobhan. 1980) as 'intermediate regime'. Here intermediate regime only referred to mean the regime who is dominated by 'intermediate classes'. 37. Lenin stressed (The state and the revolution, progress publishers. Moscow, 1977, p.7) that order involves oppression of one class by another and systematic denial of means of struggle to the oppressed class. And state plays pivotal role in this process.

Engles (1984 pp. 326-327) observed that the state and its order maintaining function is very vital to dissolve the irreconcilable antagonism which arise out of class divided society and the alienated state.

38. A study on the socio-political background of the members of Ihe BNP parliamentary party (as in April 1979) shows that out of 127, 27 came from AL, 36 from Muslim league and the rest from NAP [Bhasani], united people's party and other small parties. The same trends also seen in the student front of BNP i.e. *Jatiatabadi Chattra Dal* (Nationalist Student Party], For detailed facts and figures see Rahman (1985) Socio Economic Development under military regime; Recent Experiences in Bangladesh. The journal of political science, vol-II no. 1, Dhaka University, Dhaka.

39. The former Muslim Leaguers were politically suppressed during the Awami League rule, because of their 'collaboration' with the anti- liberation forces. With the change of government in 1975 they re-emerged in the political and economic arena of the country. In the parliamentary party of BNP, former Muslim Leaguers composed the largest single group. See Rahman (1985).

40. An AL (MP) who was expelled from the party in 1973 for his alleged corruption, by the end of Zia's term he diversified his businesses into various branches and became one of the new industrialists. By this time he re-established his dominant position in Awami League and elected MP for the second time. During the Er-shad's time he became the chairman of the Federation of Chamber of commerce and industries and regarded as a leading industrialist of the country. He was included as member of many of the official delegations abroad by Ershad government; still he remained an influential member of Awami League.

Similarly. Muslim League leader Kazi Kader who was put into jail during Mujib's rule for his collaboration with Pakistan army was paid compensation for his property nationalised by AL government. Maulana Ahdul Mannan a ML leader was made minister. There are few of the many examples of alliance between the former political opponents who joined to a common platform during Zia and Ershad's period for pursuing common economic interest.

41. Like the previous case of BNP of Zia, General Ershad also created a new parry which was again joined by former BNP, AL and other party leaders.

Out of 33 ministers in Ershad's cabinet in 1984, 13 were politician who came from BNP, Awami League and other small political' parties. For detail see Rahman (I985).

42. General Ershad resigned from the presidency of the country on the brink of prolonged mass protest in December 1990, later arrested for his alleged corruption and misuse of power. The army, civil bureaucracy and the commercial class who prospered during his nine year rule did not make any attempt to rescue him from crucification. Two reasons are very basic to the phenomenon. (1) To resolve the immediate tension mounted around the regime one scape goat was badly needed and Ershad has been found the natural sacrificing goat whose demise can ease the tension (2) Because of the massive unpopularity and fierce oppositions, the international bourgeoisie also found General Ershad as disposable and looked for a new face. For hastening the process of change they threatened to stop or reduce their aid to the unpopular government by considering the future of their long-term interest. As any reduction in the flow of aid is harmful for the interest of aid regime of the petty bourgeoisie and the Bangladeshi state they had no other option but to sacrifice him for the interest of stability, order and aid.

43. Parliament's power was also curtailed substantially by three amendments to the constitution which ultimately turned parliament into a show piece without any effective role. For detail see Abdul Fazal Hoq (1980).

44. Among 29 members of cabinet (full minister) in 1979, only 13 and again 1981 among 24 members only 7 were selected from outside the bureaucracy. For detailed see Hoq A.F. (19803 and Islam S.S. (1984),

45. The Committee for Administration R*eform*/ Reorganisation (CARR) on whose recommendation the decentralisation of local government was initiated was headed by the chief of Naval Staff Rear Admiral M.A. Khan and another member from land forces was the member.

46. Rahman's sample composed of 132 UP chairmen and members from 10 different districts and 12 chairmen from Mirzapur UZP of Tangail elected in 1977 and 1984 respectively (Rahman 1986 : 248).

47. Among the UP leaders of 1977; 20% were more than 60 years of age which had been reduced to 10% in 1984 [Rahman 1986], In the present survey among the 38 UP leaders (18 UP members and 20 UP chairmen) only 2 (5%) have been found above 60 years of age. Almost 61% of the UP leaders of 1988 were between 25 to 40 years of age.

48. As compared to their fathers economic condition only 20% said that their condition had deteriorated. Among the rest 25% said their condition remained unchanged and 55% have become better off. 49. Generally UP members are not very keen to national politics and their connections with outside world are also not very wide as compared to the UP chairmen. All of the UP members (18 out of 18) live in their village home but 70% of the UP chairmen have their second home outside their own union and 10 out of 20 live in the city. As a result of which they are more exposed to political connection..

50. The following table (11.10) will provide an account of coups from 1974-1990. The transformation of Bangladesh into one party authoritarian state by Late Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by an amendment of the constitution was regarded as a 'constitutional coup'. The other coups were bloody where army played a dominant role with an exception of the 'coup' instituted on November 7, 1975 where some armed cadres of a left political group also participated with army, for detailed see Lifsultz (1979).

Table 11.10: An Account of coups in Bangladesh from 1974 to 1990

No. of crops	Date/Month of the crops	Leaders of the coups	Victim of the coups	who formed govt. after the coups	States of the coup
1	March. 1974	Sheik Mujib	All opposition political parties and the constitution	Sheik Mujib	Succeeded (constitutional coup)
2	August, 15 1975	A small group of Army	Sheik Mujlb.Family and trusted friends	Khundhkar Mustaque Ahmed	Successful
3	November 3, 1975	Brig,Khaled Mossaraf	General Zia	*Brig. Khalid Mossarf*	Failed
4	November 7 1975	CoL AbuThaher	Brig Khaled	Justicc Sayem	Successful
5	1981	Major General Manjur	General Zia	Justice Satter	Small group of Army
6	March 1982	General Ershad	Justice Satter/BNP	General Ershad	Successful [Army)

51. The Weekly Holiday. March 30. 1990.

Chapter Twelve

Summary and Conclusion: Policy Perspective for the Future

The principal objective and theme of this study has been to explore the causes of the recurrent weakness and arrested development of the Bangladeshi local government system in spite of its centuries-long institutional presence and functioning, and to suggest measures to overcome this weakness. Such an exploration required the study to address itself to a wide range of theoretical issues both on a global scale and with regard to the concrete historical situation of Bangladesh. Because of this wide coverage of issues, there is the danger that the conclusions may tend to be too wide and generalised. For convenience's sake, a systematised version of conclusion can now be presented from the following perspectives. Firstly, a brief recapitulation of the previous theoretical discussion will be presented to provide a general perspective on the specific nature of local state in peripheral societies and secondly, an attempt will be made to explore viable future direction for Bangladeshi local government institutions by reviewing the concrete historical context of the country as well as examining other experiences from elsewhere.

In outlining the theoretical perspectives and debates on decentralisation and local government and their policy implications, it has become clear that decentralisation was ostensibly designed to foster democracy and development but often it hinders both. This study was therefore designed to look beyond the narrow institutional framework, rather widening issues of decentralisation to the larger societal sphere with particular reference to the concrete capitalist as well as class imperatives of peripheral societies and their respective state apparatuses. In so doing, institutional aspects were not totally excluded from the investigation but discussed in considerable detail in order to demonstrate the redundancy of the existing institutions and the pressing need for different ones to be established.

As far as the new options and directions are concerned, the experience of relatively successful implementation of decentralisation programme in the neighboring Indian state of West Bengal (Blair 1983, Westergaard 1986, Ghose 1988a and 1988b and Lieten 1988)in particular and India in general was considered to be a case worth reviewing, though a detailed case study is not possible within this short space. Bangladesh is a nation state and West Bengal on the other hand is one of the 27 constituent regional states within the all-Indian federation. Nevertheless, the two parts of Bengal still share many commonalities. The initiatives taken in West Bengal may provide Bangladesh with some positive lessons, in particular with regard to the need to raise the political[8] consciousness of the mass of peasants and workers, in this way, it may be possible to forge a new alliance between the lower classes and the progressive section of the petty bourgeoisie which in West Bengal has contributed to challenge the dominant coalition of the big bourgeoisie and the class of large land owners.

Before exploring this policy option, the general theoretical issues of the specificity and autonomy of the local state in Bangaldesh within the peripheral capitalist system is discussed in order to review the main highlights of the theoretical and empirical discussion.

The specificity and autonomy of the local state in peripheral capitalist societies

Throughout the discussion of decentralisation in this work, the state has obviously occupied a central position, because decentralisation as a policy initiative emanates from the state, with a view to fulfilling certain implicit and explicit items on the class agenda and certain implicit and explicit objectives of the state. As the state is not a neutral institution, it ultimately serves the interests of the dominant classes i.e. supports the process of their private accumulation. The ways and means involved in the state's primary role will differ from society to society, according to the particular historical circumstances and the nature of the dominant class or classes holding power in the state in developed capitalist societies the local state (often referred to as local government) is conceived of as an agent of the central state, providing a basis upon which the general process of private accumulation can continually be reproduced (Cockburn, 1977). In the process, the local state shares the cost of social reproduction (of labour power) and acts as the vehicle of a policy of regionalisation and localisation of the crisis-management, legitimation and rationality functions of the central state (Cooke 1983: 181). However, within the parameters of its instrumental role, the local

state in the developed capitalist system still enjoys a certain specificity and autonomy of its own (Cawson and Saunders 1983: Duncan and Goodwin 1980). The specificity it attains by performing some vital functions in the service sector such as providing housing, planning land use and allocating certain personal welfare entitlements. Similarly, autonomy is derived through pluralistic interest group politics and the process of democratic representation. Cawson and Saunders (1981) in their 'dual state' thesis argued that, while the central state is preoccupied with production-related issues, the local state increases the 'net' space available to the lower classes while performing its reproductive functions connect with the consumption issues.

In the peripheral capitalist societies, the social and economic context of private accumulation is different from that of the developed capitalist countries. Private accumulation in the former group of societies does not entirely depend upon the system of production: rather its different means of circulation under the permanent control of the central state (facilitated by the metropolitan bourgeoisie) that plays the more prominent role. As a result, the reproduction of labour power is not an imperative of peripheral capitalism (indeed, many citizens retain at least some of the means of their own reproduction in the form of land); rather, control of the means of circulation ensures the continuity of private accumulation. Because the existence of a relatively 'surplus population' guarantees the uninterrupted supply of labour without incurring much in the way of 'social investment and 'social expenses' unlike in the developed capitalist societies. The specificity of the local state in peripheral society comes from the above imperatives in conjunction with the specific nature of the peripheral state and the (primitive) peripheral nature of its accumulation process. Thus the specificity of the local state in peripheral societies depends on the role it plays as a support base for the centrally dominant classes in the management of recurrent crisis, Many such countries' chronic political instability stems from the fragile class base of those associated with the state. The dominant classes use the local state apparatus and institutions to recruit subordinate allies and to foster their interests. The exploited classes, from whom state benefits are thereby diverted, continually pose threats to order and the stability of the dominant accumulation process and to the very existence of the state itself. A vertical class alliance constituted out of patron-client networks through the local state provides the means of cementing relations between both centrally and locally dominant classes. Through this arrangement, the central state establishes enclaves by which it can extend its authority; in the turn, the locally dominant classes are provided with a niche under central protection to pursue their social, economic and political goals so long

as these do not conflict with those of the central state. Thus centre-local relations mutually reinforce the position of both parties.

The above specificity does not entail any separate autonomy for the local state in the peripheral societies. Indeed, the enclaves allow the central state to be more authoritarian as the penetration into the interior becomes easier and more inexpensive. The central state embarks upon a series of self-interested and self-strengthening development initiatives, upon the basis of which the state ultimately legitimises its own expansion. Decentralisation is one of the such steps. For comparative purposes, see the case of Tanzania's 'villagization programme' in the 1970s (Samoff 1979). Bangladesh's decentralisation measures brought about through local government reform in the1960s and 1980s were designed to achieve a similar purpose. Both of those initiatives permitted the massive extension of central bureaucratic control to the rural areas, while presenting the process to the citizenry as an extension of developmental coverage. In doing so, the state machinery absorbed a great number of lower ranking and enthusiastic petty bourgeoisie within its fold by creating jobs for them.

In principle, decentralisation, as an institutional approach, has been seen as a means of achieving debureaucratisation, deregulation and destatisation (Brett 1986 & 1987), and also greater participation, enfranchisement and empowerment. Empirical evidence from rural Bangladesh indicates that such optimistic hopes for dcentralisation are little more than pious dreams. The reality is that rebureaucratisation, reregulation, restatisation, disenfranchisement and debilitation, of the masses take place on a massive scale (see Chapter 8,9 and 10), all in the name of decentralisation. This paradoxical outcome is neither an accident nor a crude conspiracy by powerful interests, but rather a logical consequence of the nature of state, its narrow class base with limited productive economic resources of it's own, the resultant mode of accumulation and attendant crisis management techniques and political practices has been discussed in previous chapters. The crisis ridden petty bourgeoisie in a peripheral state can afford to risk its developmental and democratic credibility, but it cannot afford to lose the control of the state as its vital means of accumulation. In this connection, reference can be made to how the benefits of developmental activities were accruing to the key members of local elites and their role in subverting local elections either by vote rigging or through political violence.

As the private accumulation of the dominant classes in peripheral capitalist state is closely tied up with the expansion and strengthening of the state and tightening the regulatory control, real measures of

decentralisation to achieve democracy, participation and empowerment never constitute their real agenda. Because it would doubtlessly endanger the existing fragile coalition and be inimical to the long term interest of its constituent class faction instead rhetoric is employed to mask the hidden agenda of consolidating the class coalition, successful management of crises and continuation of the legitimisation of authoritarian rule.

The potential for decentralisation: Can Bangladesh learn from West Bengal?

For activists seeking social change, local politics have always been a practical issue. Activists have developed their own organisations : within local political party wings, labour unions, cooperatives, social action groups, neighborhood organisations and ultimately such activists have been able to lead as well as at least challenge the state at the local level. Examples may be cited from the US cities of Hartford, Cleveland and Berkeley in the 1970s and Santa Monica, California, Burlington and Vermont in the 1980s (Clavel 1985). In the United Kingdom, Liverpool, Sheffield, Hackney, Walshall and many other local councils experimented with the idea of 'municipal socialism' throughout the 1970s and 1980s (Stocker 1988). They were basically seeking an alternative means of representing the interests and promoting the cause of the working class on the basis of the hypothesis that "the state is to some extent autonomous from the ruling class, so that any share in control of it may be a means to gradual or even faster accretion of working class mobilisation" (Clavel 1983).

The local state in a society like that of Bangladesh did not emerge in the way in which western urban sociologists (Saunders 1979, Castells 1977 ana O'Connor 1973) might have predicted, namely as an autonomous socio-political structure. In Bangladesh, the local state fulfils a role in which its characteristics have no specificity of its own; the local state does not function in its own autonomous interests. In many respects, the local state develops as a caricature of the central state.

Nevertheless, the potential for social and political change is still there if progressive measures are initiated by progressive socio-political forces to address the main contradiction of the society between the exploited masses of peasants and workers and the dominant classes. The experience of relatively successful reactivation of progressive goals in the neighboring Indian state of West Bengal and Kerala (albeit keeping in mind certain reservations about the extent of success as well

as differences in the situation compared to Bangladesh) may act as a stimulus in this direction.

Differences and Similarities: issues of mutual learnings

The main difference separating the two Bengals (East and West) with regard to their objective social conditions regarding the formation of classes and the difference in trends which have characterised their respective policies of decentralisation and local government, is the subjective reality of successful class action in West Bengal and its failure in Bangladesh (formerly East Bengal).

Objectively both parts of Bengal are predominantly agrarian societies characterised by low land-man ratio, unequal distribution of land and income, abundance of labour (relatively surplus population) and predominance of the petty bourgeoisie as the politically most dynamic group. For a comparative picture with corresponding Bangladeshi situation of the rural class presented in the following table based on a survey conducted in West Bengal villages can be compared with table No. 11.4 and 11.5 of this book.

Table No. 12.1: Percentage Distribution of Households and farm size in 60 Bengal villages, 1981-82

Farm Size (in acres)	% of Household	% of Area
Landless	35.5	0.0
0.01-2.5	45.0	30.0
2.51-5.0	13.0	31.5
5.01-10.0	5.0	24.0
Above 10	1.5	14.5

Source : Westergaard (1986) P. 12

To focus on the factor of subjective class action a brief review of historical development is necessary. Before 1947 both parts of Bengal has been polarised between the British colonial state and their local agents, the feudal landowning and comprador trading classes at one end of the spectrum, with the petty bourgeoisie (often referred to as the middle class), the exploited and dispossessed peasantry and other sections of the lower classes at the other end.

After 1947 East and West Bengal gradually diverged from their previous unity of social and class contradictions, as the two regions became part of different states namely Pakistan and India. The two states were not only different in their name and boundary but because of substantial difference in the composition of ruling class which

changed the nature of state, in India gradually national bourgeoisie developed and started controlling the states, in Pakistan it was basically the comprador class which was in control of the state. Both Bengals waged a relentless struggle against their respective hegemonic central states and dominant classes. West Bengal achieved a successful milestone in its struggle by defeating congress party in the state level election in 1967 and formation of a left front government. In East Bengal (then East Pakistan) the success was even more triumphant which completely ended the Pakistani domination through independence in 1971. Apart from these apparent similarities of the movements and struggles, there were underlying qualitative difference within the class configuration of the movements which needs further elaboration and from which Bangladesh can learn from West Bengal.

Though the leadership of the movements in both the Bengals were provided by the urban petty bourgeoisie (Jahangir 1986 : 10 and Mitter 1986 : 595), in West Bengal it was the radicalised petty bourgeoisie organised under various left political parties (CPI, Forward Block and later CPI-M-L) which addressed more strongly the inner contradictions within the local social structure side by side with the national question. For example, land as a vital means of production in the rural areas, has been placed at the top of the agenda in attempts to radicalise the peasantry. Most sections of the petty bourgeoisie and working class were also simultaneously radicalised against the background of general industrial and commercial decline as a result of the discriminatory spatial industrial policy of the central government (Saha 1987: 20-25). These radicalised groups composed of CPI, CPI (M) and Later CPI (M-L), Forward Block and RSP together could bring a greater section of the petty bourgeoisie, working class and poor (landless and small holders) and the middle peasants into a broad alliance against the classes which dominate the state, namely the industrial bourgeoisie and landed classes.

In Bangladesh the national movement was led by a petty bourgeoisie of an ambiguous ideological orientation and, while the support of the lower classes (peasants and workers) was drawn on, it was not organised on class lines. As a result, at the end, the benefits were enjoyed by the aspirant petty bourgeoisie by rapidly incarnating themselves into a nascent bourgeoisie. This incarnation subsequently alienated them from mass support and threw the state into endemic crisis and instability. To solve those crises (rather than addressing basic contradiction of the society), the alienated petty bourgeoisie always opted for a 'Bonapartist Solution' (see Chapter 11 section 2). In West Bengal, because of the relative strength of the national bourgeoisie and the vastness of the central state, the prospects for West Bengal petty

bourgeoisie remained limited and Bonapartism in any form was an unthinkable proposition. Moreover, they concentrated more vigorously on the politicisation and radicalisation of the petty bourgeoisie and the lower classes, especially the peasantry. But the task was daunting. It took a further 10 years from 1967 to stabilse the situation by defeating the anti-alliance forces. From 1971 to 1977, West Bengal suffered 7 different governments, including three terms of presidential rule (Dasgupta 1990 : 84), violence from both left, and right (GOI 1986) and process of 'lumpenisation of polities'. As in Bangladesh's current situation, in West Bengal the youth wing of the ruling party (the Youth Congress of the Congress Party) was deployed in the rural areas as *vigilantes,* to counter the threats to law & order from the *naxalites* (CPI-ML) and the Communists (CPI-M) (Mitter 1986: 604). The Left Front, through their persistent struggle, staged a come-back in 1977 with a more consolidated rural power base: since then it has further consolidated its initial gains by introducing many progressive social and economic reforms and emphasising political mobilisation.

In an underdeveloped capitalist society and   its corresponding state structure at the national (Federa/Union) level, West Bengal proceeded towards building as 'Welfare State' within its regional territory which was not sprung from the capitalist imperatives of the reproduction of labour power but from the compulsion of the consolidation of power base among the lower strata of petty bourgeoisie and the poor as well as organised pressure of the politicised poor masses from the below.

As a first step, the Front Government politicised local government and initiated the implementation of a land reform programme along with other redistributive and employment generation programmes. The land reform programmes together with decentralisation initiated a process of empowerment to the assetless masses and overcoming the oppressive social economic and political atmosphere and also curb the political power of the dominant landed classes. One million acres of ceiling-surplus vested land has been distributed to 1.4 million landless labourers with an average of 0.7 acres per beneficiary (Ghose 1988a). The land reform programme added new momentum to the welfare demands of the poor and also increased the trust of the poor in the commitment of government. But the radical left critics of the front government specially CP1 (M-L) expressed a more skeptical view of the long term strategy. They portrayed it as shrewd tactics of the front government to arrest the revolutionary potential of dispossessed peasants, by embroiling them in a muddle of economistic policies. For the CPI (M), it was argued by the CPI (M-L), the distribution of land was merely a tactic, and not a long term strategy with a long term goal

which would bring land-hungry peasants into the party (Mitter 1986:598). An anonymous critic even went as far as to say that it was an effort to repeasantise the already depeasantised rural population so as to prolong the effects and stability of the CPI [M] 's *reformist coup detat,* which in turn would retain their own petty bourgeois property owning interests safeguarded. However, in spite of some of these criticisms being valid, the new land reform programme has been able to crush the rural power structure based on feudalistic landed class and replace it by a politicised coalition of the lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie along with poor, small farmer and other low caste people. As a result of this, local Panchayet institutions in West Bengal in contrast to those in Bangladesh registered increased numbers of agricultural laborers, share croppers, small farmers, industrial workers and artisans in their leadership. A case study of Muhammadpur block of Birbum district, an administrative unit corresponding to the Bangaldesh Upazila showed that only 25 percent of the 390 seats had been taken by middle and large scale farmers, businessmen and professionals in the local election held in 1988 (Lieten 1988:2070. table 3). If the same election result is assessed along caste and community lines (given that caste divisions closely mirror the Indian class configuration), it can be seen that in 1967, while 80 percent of the seats of local Panchayets were occupied by the various higher caste Hindus, the Muslims, Schedule Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) had virtually no direct representation despite their relatively large presence in the population. With the ascent to power to the Left Front in 1977, the trend had been gradually reversed. By 1988 the hitherto politically marginalised SCs and STs along with the minority Muslims have built up an almost equal share of Panchayet seats.

The decentralised institutions in West Bengal have strengthened and become more effective as a result of the participation of the greater number of people from the lower strata of the society. As a result of which the state government had to commit the largest amount of resources i.e.40- 50 percent of the total state budget to the Panchayets. The per-capita allocation of resources had risen from Paisa 8.5 (less than one tenth of a rupee) in the 1970s to RS. 150 in the 1980s (Chowdhury 1978 and Lieten 1988). In Bangladesh it did not rise above TK 3 (which is equivalent to one Indian rupee), despite all the populist rhetoric (Asaduzzaman 1986). The differences in resource allocation also manifest the resultant effect of different nature of class alliances. In West Bengal, the Left Front government had to satisfy the wider sections of their constituency, which include the rural petty bourgeoisie and the poor alike. In contrast, Bangladeshi ruling elite could afford to protect its power by supporting only a tiny minority of

the local petty bourgeoisie and lumpen elements (see table 10.19), ignoring the vast majority which was not organised physically or politically to put effective demands on the government.

The local state in Bangladesh remained ever feeble, distorted and underdeveloped both with regard to its upstream and downstream linkages. The central state on account of its own class interest did not allow local states to transform themselves into a countervailing force, able to resist and subvert authoritarian central directives. The relationship between the centrally dominant classes and their local counterparts has remained characterised by mutual reinforcement which nevertheless induces weakness because of the latter's lack of a solid economic base and due to the contending class interest of central and local elites. As a result, the class coalition forged between them has never been able to escape or overcome its inherent fragility, haunted by endemic suspicion and distrust. The cumulative impact of this relationship has been that the central state never showed any interest in developing autonomous local state institutions in Bangladesh, consciously keeping them weak, dependent, underdeveloped and constantly placed under the tutelage of the central bureaucracy and central political classes.

On the other hand, the local state also failed to earn the trust and confidence of the ordinary citizen because of the results of their disenf- ranchisement, non-involvement in decision making and structural exclusion from receiving the minimum social services they require. The widespread use of violence and the lumpenisation of politics have further alienated the productive classes in turn confirming the status of the Bangladeshi local state as a puppet extension of the central state without any firm base in the grassroots. The central state only stimulates action at the local level when there is a need to fulfill its own narrow self-interest. The major efforts to dynamise local governments (albeit under close control) came from the successive military regimes of General Ayub (1958-69), General Zia (1975-80), General Ershad (1982-90) and lastly by Caretaker Government (2006-2008). The civilian-political regimes did not show as much enthusiasm for decentralisation as their military counterparts. Though the real democratisation of local government and the decentralisation of power appeared on the surface to be a suicidal and contradictory step for an authoritarian regime (civilian or military), successive military regimes in Bangladesh saw local reform as one of their priority projects. Such reform enabled them to create a democratic facade behind which the civilianisation and legitimation of military bureaucratic rule was gradually pursued (see chapters. 4 and 7). After the completion of the civilianisation process and the

consolidation of class power in all the three cases cited (Ayub, Zia and Ershad) the activation of the local state was invariably suspended. General Ayub and General Zia's indifference to the UPs after the presidential and parliamentary elections (see chapter 4) and similarly the way in which General Ershad gradually distanced himself from 'upazila euphoria' in his post-civilianisation era (1986-1990) are eloquent examples of the way in which the central state opportunistically ran hot and then cold with respect to formal decentralisation. By 1990 the upazila had lost all political importance and their financial allocation was cut to 10 per cent of its level in the pre-civilianisation period of 1982 to 1986 (for details see chapter 10).

The reason here for identifying the key role of the military is not to reify a particular apparatus of the state. In a particular historical conjuncture, the military had been best placed to act as successful protector of the dominant bourgeois interest in Bangladesh. The military bureaucratic power axis provided a Bonapartist solution to the continual crisis of accumulation of the central power coalition of the nascent indigenous bourgeoisie and the aspirant petty bourgeoisie. The local state in all its forms and contents was designed to support the Bonapartist central state in order to overcome those crises. As a result, the local state lost its legitimate autonomy at the cost of the greater 'relative autonomy' of the central state, and exhausted its potential to either act as a real grassroot organisation, or to dominate the local masses in its own autonomous interests.

In view of the above circumstances, the current policy option for Bangladesh seems to exclude further institutional reform under the present class alliance of the state; institutional reforms could be only effective if a new class alliance dominated by the peasants and workers can change the nature of the state. To a pragmatist with all revolutionary optimism, a total class war along Leninist or Maoist lines is not a possibility in Bangladesh. What is within the sphere of possibility is a strong anti-imperialist anti-bourgeois alliance of the peasantry, wage-workers, salaried-employees and various section of the radicalised petty bourgeoisie to change the balance of power in favour of the hitherto exploited classes.

With the fall of the eight years old military government of General Ershad, a democratic environment for free and fair election has been created. The Parliamentary elections held on February 27, 1991 were peaceful, free of rigging and impartial. Since then three successive civilian governments led the country up to 2006. No substantial development in broader areas of local government and local state during one and a half decades of civilian rule is visible. The simple

conclusion we can draw from this phenomenon is that change of regimes (from military to civil) did not bring substantial and qualitative change in the   class configuration and class nature of the state. The nature of conflict and crisis has been changed dimensions and that resulted in the reformulation of 'power block' only. The classes are more consolidated at the central levels as compared to the 1980s and the nascent bourgeoisie of the 80s play more firm role in the management of state affairs during the first decade of Twenty first century. The ruling 'Power Block' anchored in the major political parties still do not behave like proper bourgeoisie but maintain their past lumpen legacy in shaping and reshaping power alliances that kept local masses in a vulnerable position. As a result, even at the beginning of 2011, decentralisation and local government have not found a clear direction either through mass movement or through committed state intervention. Stalemate and uncertainty are dominant features that characterise the general scenario of local government in Bangladesh for last forty years since independence in 1971.

Post Script

Chapter Thirteen

Challenges in Local Governance : Outlines for Building New Agenda

"Governance" has been one of the prime agenda on which many of the national and international actors concentrated their activities in Bangladesh for last one and a half decades. Governance improvement as a blanket term appeases and amuses all but it does not communicate the same message to everybody. The *Human Development Report*, for instance describes governance as "the exercise of power or authority-political, economic, administrative or otherwise to manage country's resources and affairs. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences" (UNDP, 1997). The dominant discourse of good governance propagated by globalisation proponents of neo-liberal economic school primarily think it as a way of effectively managing economic resources in the context of macro-economic management with peripheral focus on decentralisation, accountability and transparency (World Bank, 1994). The Rights-based School emphasises on power relationships within and beyond the state and non-state institutions precisely focusing on accountability, right to information and right to claim services.[1] The Bangladeshi context of "Good Governance" movement took a slightly different path, though the ingredients of all the different schools were enmeshed in the general package. The governance movement in Bangladesh took a clear uni-dimensional turn at the end of 2006 that single mindedly aimed at achieving political democracy of a particular brand and it concentrated heavily at the central level of the state apparatuses that ultimately

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[1]   John   Samuel   (2009)   Towards   Democratic   Governance   in www.infochange.org/ India.

boiled down towards having a 'free and fair' parliamentary election.[2] It appears, the whole reform movement towards good governance for the time being ended amidst the grand fun-fare of parliament election. The Ninth Parliament election in Bangladesh held in the last month of 2008 was relatively free and transparent and that has been claimed very loudly as a grand success.[3] The electoral success is not an end in itself, whether 'free election' guarantees it to be 'fair' still seems doubtful.[4] It is to a large extent contingent upon what the parliament delivers at the end. On the other hand, it is also not unfair to ask, how the election under the influence of unfair money, with candidates of questionable integrity and criminal records can create an environment of fair election![5] The election is a process through which certain political leadership manages to acquire the mantle of legitimacy to govern, but delivery of real 'good governance' still has to be evaluated separately. Looking at democracy from narrow political perspectives and limiting its application only from electioneering process led us to blind, sterile and strife-ridden alley-ways in which broader governance agenda lost its relevance at least for the time being.[6]

Political democracy propagated (not practiced in real sense) through some implanted institutional devises without having deep-rooted socio-cultural ground, remain ever fragile and very often tend to be counterproductive. The parliament and parliamentary practices may be taken as an appropriate example, a top-heavy stature without meaningful content. Democracy is a value system, a cultural process and a way of life; without inculcating the core values in individual and social life, political democracy cannot be flourished on a firm foundation. There is no short cut to reach nearer to the dream society with democratic values together with good governance which government can constantly pursue. It is indeed a hard job but not impossible to achieve democracy and good governance in Bangladesh too. What is needed is well thought out politically intelligent, socially realistic, culturally adoptable and technically sound agenda to pursue with great care and commitment.

While venturing towards that direction, the current paper is aimed at focusing precisely on local governance of the country in the post-election (Ninth Parliament, 2008) period and also tries to explore some of the doable agenda for furthering the causes of good governance at the local levels. The whole write-up is divided into two major sections. The first section deals with situation analysis in general as well as in three different tiers of rural local government and growing urban concerns (for proper understanding of the local government system of Bangladesh an organisational matrix is attached in the next page). The tier-wise analysis is also followed by few recommendations to address some of the immediate problems in the respective tiers. While doing that, separate discussion are furnished on Upazila Parishad (UZP) and Union Parishads (UP) with some reasonable lengths as these two are active LGIs at the moment. Among these two, UZP is relatively new and having enormous amount of problems. As a result discussions on UZP presented first and discussion on UP brought later as it is reasonably stable and discussions are aimed at how to make it more efficient in future. In the same section very cursory reflections are made on Zila Parishad (ZP), Municipality and City Corporations as the broad issues brought in section 2 will take care of the governance issues currently faced at those levels. The second section brings some of the issues being perused and advocated by local government activists for nearly two decades which may be reviewed afresh for adopting as future local governance agenda.

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[2] The wider reform agenda pursued by different actors suddenly reduced to one point political movement for free and fair election since the first half of the year 2006. It seemed logical that after a free and fair election all other reform agenda could be implemented as election pledge.

[3] The Election Commission and election observers from home and abroad provided evidence for a free and fair election. Under the banner of election Working Group 17800 local and 500 foreign observers observed the election including wider investigative report from the press; the cumulative assessment went in favour of fair election.

[4] The inconsistencies in many of the candidates' credentials started publishing in the newspapers and after election TIB published a report on the electoral process of the candidates' of ninth parliament. It is revealed that 54.5% of the candidates have criminal cases against them,9.9% are loan defaulters and 87% lied about their election expenses(Akram and Das, 2009)
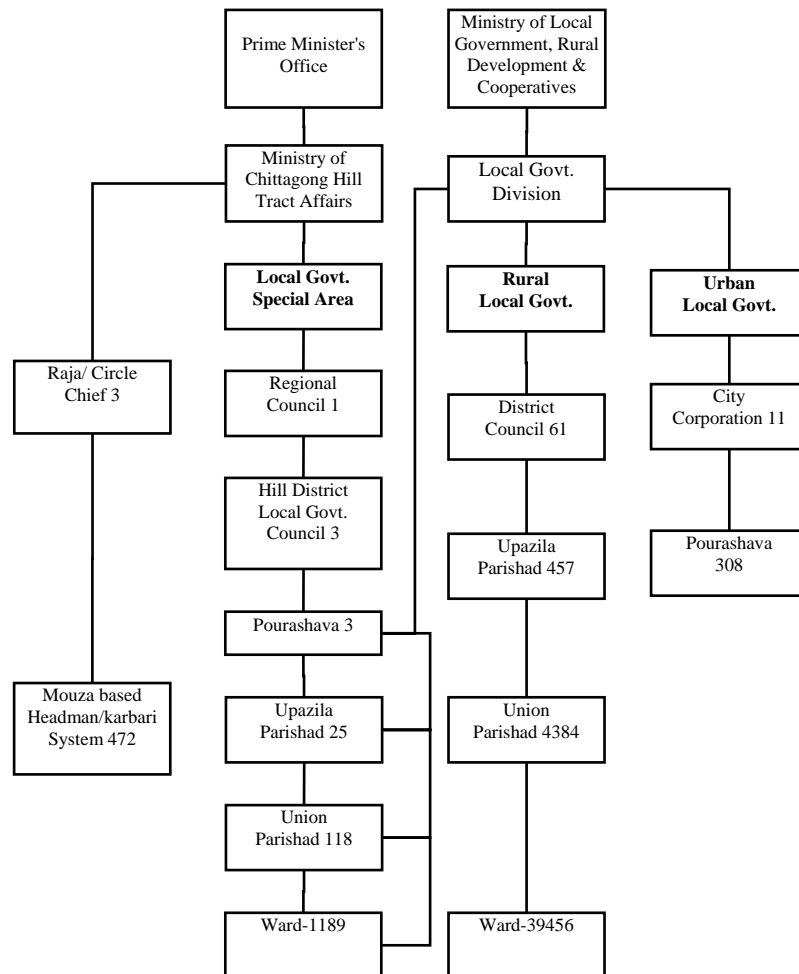
[5] Mukul Sharma (2009) Unfair Wealth and Fair Election in www.infochange.org

[6] After the election in 2008 the reform agenda so far dominated in political program before election were forgotten for the time being and' reforms' and 'reformists' were branded as collaborators of the army and conspirators against main stream politicians.

Matrix-1: Structure of Local Government in Bangladesh

Prime Minister's Office

Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives

Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tract Affairs

Local Govt. Division

Local Govt. Special Area

Rural Local Govt.

Urban Local Govt.

Raja/ Circle Chief 3

Regional Council 1

District Council 61

City Corporation 11

Hill District Local Govt. Council 3

Upazila Parishad 457

Pourashava 308

Pourashava 3

Mouza based Headman/karbari System 472

Upazila Parishad 25

Union Parishad 4384

Union Parishad 118

Ward-1189

Ward-39456

Source: Ahmed (1998) and Quddus, Ahmed & Ali (1995).

PART-1

Situation Analysis

The most notable government document in Bangladesh in recent times the PRSP, *Unlocking the Potentials: National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction* aptly observed in the year 2000 that 'governance as the most critical of issues at the interface of democracy and development' (GoB, 2004). While prescribing remedies the document clearly advocated for greater decentralisation and local democracy for accelerated poverty reduction efforts to succeed. By the turn of the first decade of the new century (2009-2011), still governance is the main and critical concern but dimension though not changed substantially; the stated policy of the government is clearly seen twisted. Decentralisation specially devolution seems no more a sincere political agenda of regimes in power rather recentralisation is gradually taking over, local government institutions (LGIs) already exist are greatly by-passed and ignored, field offices of central government bureaucracy and service providers are confused, demoralised and left to inaction. The elected LGI representatives are made subservient to the Members of parliament (MP) in their respective areas as the MPs were given executive authorities over the offices of field level operations as well as the UZP.[7]

The governance situation in general and local governance in particular may be outlined from two different premises for objective analysis:

1. The stated policy agenda of ruling coalition and real policy delivery so far in respect of new legislations and institutional reform within the period 2010, and

2. Meso and micro level impact of the policies and programs so far implemented.

Local Governance agenda on the table

There are many local governance issues on which a greater consensus has been built if not more at least for last one decade. In one blanket term all of these may be encapsulated as 'local government strengthening agenda'. The other single but cross-cutting issue feature dominantly is 'poverty alleviation' proliferated in the areas like

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[7] Different central government departments and directorates such as relief and Disaster Management, Social Welfare, Women Affairs, Home Affairs Education issued a host of circulars in which Local MPs are given very specific roles in the process of selection of beneficiaries or forming local committees overriding the role and function of local government bodies.

enhancing allocation and efficiency for safety net, education, health and eradication of inequalities and discrimination on gender considerations (GoB, 2004). As far as local government is concerned the following issues dominated the whole decade on which people wanted clear direction from a democratically elected government after lot of promises in the election manifestos:

- Formulation of a decentralisation policy for bringing greater efficiency, economy and accountability including fiscal decentralisation towards the LGIs,

- Legal and institutional reform for strong, accountable and efficient LGIs, The precise agenda pursued around these two issues on decentralisation and LGIs are:

  -Reintroduction of *Upazila and Zila Parishads* with adequate power and authority,

  -Changes in the existing legislation on *Union Parishad, Upazila parishads, Zila Parishad, Pourashava* and City Corporations for making those more, strong, efficient and transparent,

- Addressing the issues of providing adequate manpower to the LGIs and having clear personnel policy for the LGIs,

- Addressing the issues of fiscal and administrative decentralisation in line with devolution,

- Addressing 'rural –urban divide' while addressing all future legal, administrative and functional issues of LGIs in view of rapid urban growth,

- Streamlining local government finance with a clear formula instead of present system of contingency allocation and transfer through multiple sources (ministries and departments),

- Introduction of local level planning system at all the levels of LGIs in line with PRS and Five year plans,

- Decentralisation of judicial services at Upazila and Union levels for creating easy 'access to justice' for the poor and also to contribute towards checks and balances at the local levels between political and bureaucratic administration,

- Establishment of an independent, neutral and professional body to be known as 'Local Government Commission'(LGC) to assist, guide and regulate LGIs and also as safeguards against bureaucratic and political excesses. The LGC may also act as LG Finance Commission.

- Completion of all long pending Rules and Regulations under the existing laws to make the legal framework of LGIs understandable and workable,

- Coordination of donor assistance in the areas of governance improvement and local development for efficient use of resources towards strengthening LGIs and effective poverty alleviation impact.

During the two-year term of the Caretaker Government (2007-2008), there were few attempts to address some of the above issues and numbers of legislations in the form of ordinances were also promulgated. Those include the (1) single and uniform law for all City Corporations, (2) New law for *pourashavas,* (3) New law for *Union Parishad* (UP) in line with new electoral law and Right to Information law, (4) *Upazila Parishad* (UZP) Ordinance was passed and election schedule for UZP election was declared, (5) Local Government Commission (LGC) Ordinance 2008 was passed, a three member LGC was formed and operationalised. As far as the fiscal decentralisation is concerned under Local Government Support Project (LGSP-LIC) UNDP, UNCDF, EEC, SDC and World Bank already committed resources jointly with government and directly transferring resources to the UPs since 2006.[8]

The new government elected in December 2008 assumes power in January 2009, did not ratify any of the five laws (previously promulgated as Ordinances, required ratification by elected parliament within 30 days of its first session) and created a legal vacuum for first few months of their rule. They gradually embarked on making new laws by incorporating some controversial provisions against which local government activists were fighting for one and a half decades. For example, insertion of a section in the UZP Act 1998 as amended in 2009 making the Members of Parliament 'Advisers' to the UZP, Other provisions include, scope for MP's intervention in upazila development activities, no outside communication by UZPs without MPs clearance and UZP *Nirbahi* Officer's role and position in Parishad created huge protest from all quarters.[9] In the meantime, there were some executive orders from the ministries of Home, Disaster, Relief and Health those empower MPs to exercise discretion in beneficiary selection and other

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[8] The LGSP is a program design to transfer direct resources to UPs as block grant.

[9] UZP Chairs and Vice-chairs lunched .mass movements including mass-hunger on these issues. They also formulated a 10 point Charter of Demand highlighting the issues and problems of UZP.

decision making which were so far the domain of local government officials. All these legal and executive orders created a chaotic situation at UZP and UP levels virtually left those institutions inactive since last February (2009). The UZP virtually remain non-existent since its election in January (2009). The UPs, pourashavas and City Corporations were passing through a legal Vacuum since January 2009. Attempts have been made only in October (2009) by having some legislations. The three year overdue elections in the UPs and Pourashavas were completed by July 2011 and Dhaka City Corporations election is still overdue for four years (2011). In the meantime, the Ninth Parliament passed specific acts on UP, UZP, Pourashava and City Corporations in 2009.

Impact at micro-level

The legal vacuum, policy confusion, absence of clear role demarcation, conflicts among different stakeholders created a chaotic situation at the local levels. Absence of governance is not enough to explain the situation; it is a total state of mis-governance. The MPs are working in absentia through their political party agents in making local development decisions at unions, upazilas and districts. The selection of small schemes at UP level under Test Relief (TR) of general and special nature and the selection of beneficiaries of VGD and VGF are taken over by surrogate local power holders of local MPs. An apprehended political rivalry and tension between the MP and UZP made the local functionaries of government confused.[11] The local officials of central government at upazila receive orders from multiple authorities such as MP, UZP chair and Vice-chairs and also from higher officials of their respective departments. The Upazila Parishad Act is not made fully effective after almost three years of its enactment (December, 2011). The stalemate regarding the role, function and position of UNO a key official from central bureaucracy is not resolved. Moreover, 17 other government offices placed under UZP are still working independently as before. Four of the central government directorates /departments issued contradictory orders by giving upper hand role to local MPs undermining the existing role of elected LGI officials specially in respect of discharging the functions of TR, FFW, law and order, education, infrastructure development and local hospital management.

The overdue elections of *Union Parishads (UP) and Pourashavas* are held in 2011 but inaction and stalemate are making the whole system of LGIs ineffective. The increased intrusion of MPs and frequent intervention of local party activists are making the situation

worse. The local government institutions in the Chittagong Hill Tracts especially the Hill District Councils (HDCs) are also left dysfunctional for many years. No firm commitment so far showed either from the ministry of Hill Tract Affairs or from any other quarter of the government to end the stalemate.

The civil society activism around the LGI issues so far seen for last few years are also seemed suffering a syndrome of suspended animation. It is only the press that still keeps the LGI and decentralisation issues alive. The 'Development Partners' of multi-lateral and bi-lateral nature are still financing many of the projects in and around the rural and urban LGIs both with government and NGOs. It is doubtful that how the isolated projects can achieve expected outputs within such a chaotic local governance situation. Even many of the projects are already facing problems due to the changes in the general governance mode of the country.

Glimpses from Upazila, the vital local governance point

The *Upazila* (former *Thana*) is the oldest of all the field level administrative units in the sub-continent. The *Thana* first created by the British as police outpost in 1793 and gradually other elements of administration were added. The police was followed immediately by revenue, thus maintenance of law and order and collection of revenue remained the main function of *Thana* for long as usual for fulfilling the objectives of colonial masters. Later, some other services and development functionaries such as agriculture, education, sanitation, infrastructure, etc. were incorporated. By the turn of late 19th century, *Thana* has been made as fully functional and vibrant governmental unit. The *Thana* did not have corresponding tier or level of Local Government Institutions (LGIs) with the involvement of people's representatives till 1960.During the period 1960-2008, the LGI system were introduced at *Upazila/Thana* level twice and subsequently abandoned. First time during the 1960-1970 under General Ayub's Basic Democracy system and second time during General Ershad's rule from 1981-1991. Finally LGI at *Upazila* level has been reintroduced in 2009 after 18 long years with the enactment of *Upazila Parishad* Ordinance 2008 by Caretaker Government and later re-enactment of *Upazila Parishad* Act 2009 by AL government which is virtually the revival of *Upazila Parishad* Act 1998.

The *Upazila* a vital administrative unit of government has been functioning with a huge number of functionaries and substantially big/large amount of fund from national government. The functionaries

include 40 officers from 23 departments with approximate total staff strength of 400. The *Upazila Parishad* Act 2009 created the opportunity to re-establish a people's body as the highest policy making and executing agency at *Upazila* level. This body will be an LGI known as *Upazila Parishd (UZP)* and truly run the *upazila* level administration (matrix-2 Organisation of UZP).

The UZP- the second tier of Local Government System in Bangladesh caught the imagination of the policy makers, development partners, media and mass people in recent times as the nation held its third UZP Election in January 2009 after 18 years. The *Upazila* as an administrative unit and geographic and spatial location occupy a very strategic position. While considering the sub-national political contour, upazila features there very prominently as political and administrative unit. It is equally important from service delivery perspectives too. Almost all the service providers from government side are present at Upazila and virtually they stop there in terms of paraphernalia. The only missing link hither to exit at *Upazila* was the representative structure and character to integrate all the disjointed socio-political and administrative elements into a single whole. The formation of the UZP fulfilled this long existing gap in the realm of sub-national level governance. The formidable challenge that has to be faced now by all who really believe in good governance through decentralisation is to make and keep upazila functional by considering its complex chemistry, multi-dimensional role and national level political confusion.

The Challenges ahead with upazila

The main challenges the newly initiated UZP may face is to generate confidence and skill among the Upazila leadership in managing the multi-dimensional affairs of the Parishad, creation of new and acceptable norms and rules for its operation, accommodation with competing self-interests, creation of a congenial work culture among different stakeholders, reorientation of local bureaucracy and emerging social forces on their respective roles and functions. Central support in appreciating the initial local problems of the newly functional *Upazila* is also very crucial for its healthy growth. The confusions and clouts prevail at the level of national political elite need to be removed. The MP and UZP-UP level leadership need to learn the art of mutual accommodation, adjustment and also how to appreciate the role differentiation of elected leader of a formal statutory body and party

wing. The norms and rules of use and abuse of public money and resources also need to be taught to the political activists at all levels.

The new public leadership in *Upazila* lacks in most cases experience and exposure in managing such an unique organisation that combine civil bureaucracy, development professionals and public leaders within one institutional framework and management of services on the one hand, and political and social pressure from wide range of social fabric on the other. There is a big risk element from within the upazila system too, though the system itself is a creation of decentralisation effort, it can be turned into a very centralised and autocratic organisation from within depending on the personality of the leadership. On the contrary, there is also a risk that it may become a hotbed of constant in fighting among different feuding political fractions, bureaucratic inaction and tension that may ultimately lead towards governance failures. The challenges outlined above may not be applicable universally and uniformly everywhere but adequate preparations for positive engagement may minimise the risk.
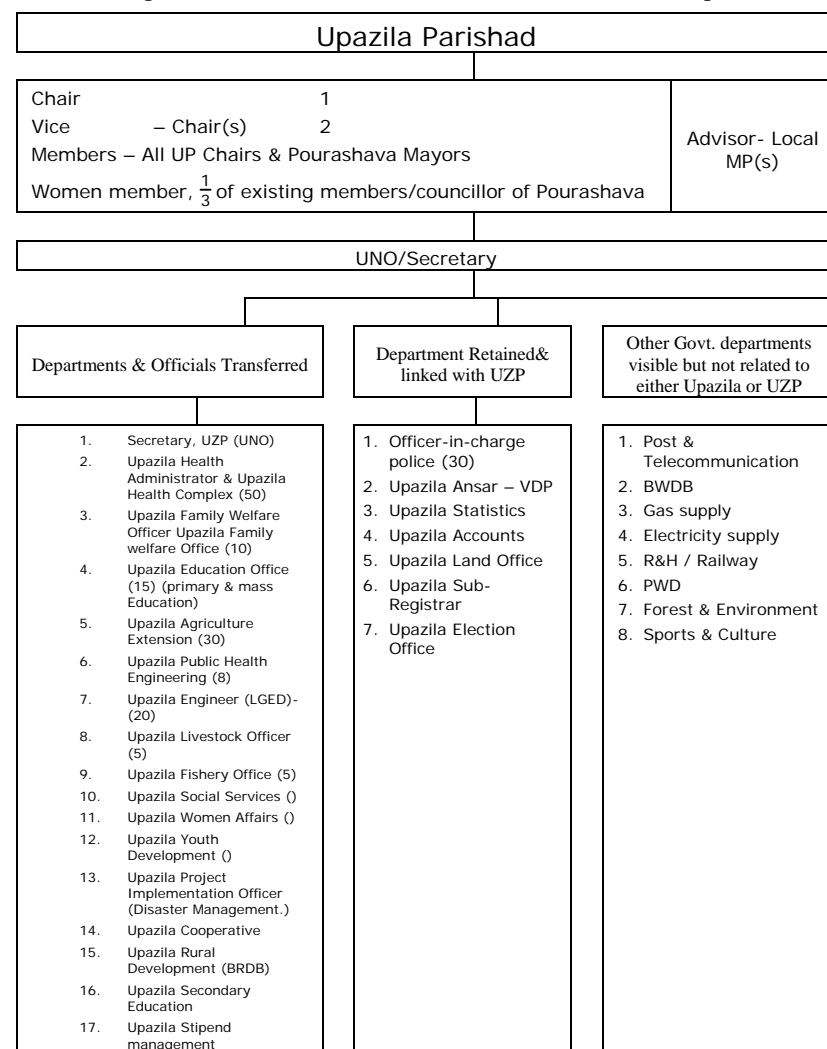
A strong local government is indispensable for ensuring sustainable development, achieving the targets of poverty alleviation, attaining the targets of millennium development goals by 2015, and developing democratic institutions in the country. Inadequate resource allocation to local government, lack of capacity of concerned local government representatives in planning and resource mobilisation, and poor mechanism for citizen engagement lead to ineffective local government systems in most of the developing countries.

Major political forces including ruling party in general seem to agree to strengthen local government to meet the development needs of the people of Bangladesh. All the successive governments in the past in Bangladesh felt the need to have viable local government for ensuring effective governance. As a result, we have seen decentralisation is recognised publicly as an important policy agenda by the present government as well as by other parties within and outside the government. It is evident that the legal basis of the local government that is clearly spelt out in the Constitution through articles 9, 11, 59, 60 and 152 ensured the devolution of power to local government bodies.

The UZP is viewed a viable administrative and service unit with significant constitutional mandate to run local administration and implement plans for socio-economic development. Many academicians and policy makers ponder that UZPs can play a significant role in planning and implementing need-based development projects for poverty alleviation and reduction of socio-economic inequality.

The legal framework for UZP is the *Upazila Parishad* Act 1998(as amended in 2009 and 2011) and the act provides its structure, functions, role and jurisdictions. An UZP consists of a chairperson, two-vice-chairpersons (one of them is a woman), chairmen of all *Union Parishads* (UP) and mayors of all municipalities under the UZP concerned will be ex-officio members. In addition, one third membership positions will be occupied by women elected by the women members and councillors of *Union Parishads* and *Pourashavas*. As far as the functions of UZP, the law provides a separate schedule with a list of 18 very clearly defined functions that include dealing with administrative and establishment issues, ensuring law and order and services related to peoples' welfare, and formulation and implementation of local economic and social development planning. Preparing development plans for five-year terms; constructing, repairing and maintaining link roads under the UZP; initiating and implementing small irrigation projects; creating jobs and initiating programmes to reduce poverty are among the major duties of the parishad. Besides, the parishad will regularly report on the UZP's law and order situation to the district committees on law and order and to other higher-level authorities. The UZP will also publish 'citizens' charter' including the description, conditions and duration of the service it would render to the people. The services of 17 officials from 11 different Ministries along with all their staff have been transferred to the Parishad.All of them will be working in the upazilla under the supervision of the *Parishad*. The Chairman UZP will act as the chief executive of the Parishad.The organization of *Upazila Parishd* may be seen below.

Matrix-2: Upazila Parishad (UZP) and Government Offices at Upazila

Upazila Parishad	
Chair 1 Vice – Chair(s) 2 Members – All UP Chairs & Pourashava Mayors Women member, $\frac{1}{3}$ of existing members/councillor of Pourashava	Advisor- Local MP(s)

UNO/Secretary

Departments & Officials Transferred	Department Retained& linked with UZP	Other Govt. departments visible but not related to either Upazila or UZP
1. Secretary, UZP (UNO) 2. Upazila Health Administrator & Upazila Health Complex (50) 3. Upazila Family Welfare Officer Upazila Family welfare Office (10) 4. Upazila Education Office (15) (primary & mass Education) 5. Upazila Agriculture Extension (30) 6. Upazila Public Health Engineering (8) 7. Upazila Engineer (LGED)-(20) 8. Upazila Livestock Officer (5) 9. Upazila Fishery Office (5) 10. Upazila Social Services () 11. Upazila Women Affairs () 12. Upazila Youth Development () 13. Upazila Project Implementation Officer (Disaster Management.) 14. Upazila Cooperative 15. Upazila Rural Development (BRDB) 16. Upazila Secondary Education 17. Upazila Stipend management	1. Officer-in-charge police (30) 2. Upazila Ansar – VDP 3. Upazila Statistics 4. Upazila Accounts 5. Upazila Land Office 6. Upazila Sub-Registrar 7. Upazila Election Office	1. Post & Telecommunication 2. BWDB 3. Gas supply 4. Electricity supply 5. R&H / Railway 6. PWD 7. Forest & Environment 8. Sports & Culture

The issues further clarified

As stated earlier, the UZP as a body corporate and a mid-tier LGI still (December, 2011)could not start its function. The departments (17+8) are virtually functioning as they were functioning before the formation of UZP.The UNO(desiganation has been changed to Upazila Mukkha Norbahi Karmakarta- upazila Chief Executive Officer by an amendment since December 1, 2011)) still participates or remains the Chairman, Secretary and Member of as many as 50-62[10] different committees at UZP level but the hard reality is, very few committees at all meet and function. The TR, FFW, CFW and many other allocations are coming to Upazila through Deputy Commissioners (DCs) and the UNOs receive orders from DCs as usual. Under the current situation that is also not working. The UNOs in the upazila has to take instructions from the local MPs in certain matters compulsorily such as in approving any TR, FFW, CFW, etc. and also in all other matters as courtesy. Even the upazila police also take instruction from MP while taking action on major law and order related situation. The UPs are receiving all allocations and instructions from UNO and the decisions regarding VGD, VGF, and TR are shared with the local MP. In absence of a five-year or annual development plan in the UP and UZP level, the resources are grossly misused and avenues for further misuse in future kept open at all levels. The recently allocated TR and VGD – VGF cards were put into rampant partisan abuses (2009-2011). The entire tender and contracts in the upazila are politically controlled. No one can expect any quality work from those contracts. The whole safety net programme has become the first casualty of the partisan abuses. This may disrupt the achievement of MDG by 2015. The increased allocation in the second and third national budgets of the AL led Grand Alliance government needs to be utilized judiciously if real poverty reduction target had to hit.

Issues need immediate attention on UZP

- The organization shown above (Matrix-1) is tentative one, drawn by reviewing the *Upazila Parishad Act 1998* and real field situation. The UZP election held in January 2009 has been *post- facto* legalised by the UZP Act (1998) and one circular (May 4, 2009) has also been issued by delineating power and functions of UZP Chairman but another order from Cabinet Division of the government is needed communicating the deputation/placement /transfer (whatever it is) to those 17 officials including their mode of operation under the UZP.

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[10].

- The other 8 offices and officials in the middle row cannot be left without clear direction too. Out of those 8, at least 4 more offices should also be transferred in the same manner as it has been done in case of 13+4. Only 4 offices such as police, land, sub-registrar and election may remain outside the UZP but with clear functional relations.

- According to the UZP law, election of women members has to be held immediately. The UZP remained incomplete without legitimate participation of women.The issue has been neglected during last three years of the formation of UZPs

- The newly elected Chair, Vice –Chairs, members as well as deputed officials need proper training and orientations on the UZP.Many of the problems are generated out of mere misconception and indifference of the higher level offices of the government.

- Relevant Rules have to be prepared and approved to enable UZP to become functional without any delay. Rules should not be prepared only by the ministry concerned in a secretive bureaucratic manner; those have to be widely shared with the stakeholders before finalisation.

- A comprehensive planning and budgeting system at UZP and UP level need to be introduced with professional assistance and under strict rules. This may reduce the contingent and political abuse of scarce resources given for poor and poverty reduction.

- One full-time secretary and another official with accounts, finance and planning responsibility need to be posted for the UZP , UNO's position either to be integrated with the *parishad* or need complete separation.

- Upazila Accounts office needs strengthening and regular financial and performance audit mechanism have to be established.

- The Vehicle for UZP should not be procured centrally. The UZP should be given the authority to purchase their own transport according to their own need within government procurement rules.

- The circular so far issued on various matters which adversely affect or contradictory to UZP Act 1998 (from Food and Disaster, Home, Health,Agriculture and other ministries) need to be reviewed in view of the Upazila Parishad and Union Parishad Acts (2009) and also looking at the practices in Upazila during the period (1982-1991).

- The NICAR or any other powerful committee (the provision already created within the UZP Act , article 24(3)) should review the pros and cons of upazila and unions bi-monthly and take corrective measures. If such a regular monitoring is done seriously, upazila, pourashava and union level LGIs as well as general field administration will get to their own feet and gear to deliver required services within a year. It will also help to establish 'rule of law' and promote discipline in local governance.

- The changes brought in the number and modality of standing committees through the amendment in December, 2011 may create more problems than it can solve. It needs further reconsideration. The number of standing committees (17) is disproportionate and it is also not fair to make two Vice-Chairs of UZP the Chair of 17 committees. The matter of appointing Chair

should be left to the UZP. The Vice-Chairs can led three/four committees each.

Issues from Union Level Governance

Union Parishad (UP) the lowest tier of rural LGI system survived all the socio-political upheavals for centuries. There were changes of regimes, rules and even the statehoods (from British to Pakistan in 1947 and Pakistan to Bangladesh in 1971) but the UPs retained their formidable institutional role intact amidst all the changes. All the years from its beginning since 1870, there were many twists and turns, there were crisis, good time and bad time but the UPs in different names and nomenclatures continued its existence. During the first decade of the twenty first century, the traditional UP institution and UP leadership witnessed many positive and negative changes. The core constituency of the UP proliferated into different dimensions over the years. The NGOs, civil society organizations, media, development partners and academics started taking genuine interests in the empowering of UPs.The representative structure of women in the UPs has been changed and fiscal decentralisation initiated through Development Partners(DPs) brought efficiency and skill in the general and financial management. The anti-poverty cash transfer and skill development also helping UPs to reduce extreme poverty situation in a meaningful way. The LGSP-LIC of World Bank and UNDP and also REOPA of UNDP-EC-Danida, Sharique of SDC and PRDP of JICA played very important role in this regard. The water, Sanitation and Hygiene project financed by World Bank and Unicef helped to improve the situation in that particular sector. The financial and performances audit under the projects is helping in building capacity of the UPs to keep proper records and also holding of regular meetings. The practices of participatory scheme selection process brought greater awareness among the common citizens. In spite of many of the improvements, some of the areas still need careful review for further improvements, as full potentials are not harnessed yet. Some of those areas are listed below.

Issue-1: Comprehensive plan Vs. fragmented Schemes

Name any union out of 4502, you will encounter with the same fact and phenomenon particularly in the utilisation of development allocations, hundreds of schemes of petty nature either under implementation or already implemented, are all basically earth works for repair and

construction of roads. The economic as well as physical sizes of the schemes are very small and duration of completion also shorter with almost no technical supervision. This has been a very popular practice in rural infrastructure sector for long. Very few persons care for quality and durability (question of sustainability even is very remote) of work itself, only reports are collected on how many labourers engaged and how much is paid to them. In some cases earth works are done on the same roads for utilisation of resources from multiple sources. There are reasons and genuine reasons for adoption of these types of schemes. Some of the reasons are analysed underneath:

1. The money or resources the UP getting from different sources are not projected to them in advance and the sources also in most cases remain undisclosed. They do not know in the beginning of the year how much resource they are going to get and from which sources with an exception of few DP supported projects like LGSP-LIC, ROPA, Sharique, PRDP etc.

2. All the source managers (TR, FFW, DP supported Project, ADP of GoB,etc.) have got their own individual guidelines which the UPs have to comply in utilising the resources.

3. The money or resources from the central sources deliver late and a strict time limit is prescribed for execution and adjustment of bills and vouchers which they (UPs) en-mass fail to comply. The compliance failures are mostly manipulated and leniently dealt with by the concerned departments. In most of the cases, the delaying departments never take the blames and they also tolerate the delay of the concern UPs.

4. In case of infrastructure projects/schemes as UPs do not have their own technical staff; LGED is supposed to provide the technical supports. It is difficult, time consuming and at the end turned into mere a formality without any technical scrutiny or assistance. The schemes suffer from lack of appropriate design, accurate cost estimate and quality of work largely compromised in almost all the cases.

5. Whatever the amount is utilised, almost 90% of the allocation goes to physical infrastructure in the form of earth work, a very small amount goes to social development or direct to support to poor or poverty alleviation.

6. Local contribution is not getting any substantial consideration while designing the UP level schemes. In cases of roads, the relatively riches and in some other cases community can also contribute and that in turn may create a sense of ownership among the users of services. Even the private roads connecting some influential homesteads are also maintained from project (public) money without any contributions from the users.

7. Consecutive three years of fiscal decentralisation in the form of block grant in most of the unions (under LGSP-LIC 2007-2009) could not improve proportionate local tax collection and local resource mobilisation.

8. Because of the smallness of the schemes infrastructural improvement is also not clearly visible and cumulative contribution of the programmes in

the development of the general 'quality of life' of the people is also very hard to fathom.

For a concrete micro view, we can observe the following two tables (Table-1a and Table-1b), the first table shows the flow of resources and their expenditure pattern as well as allocation norms at union level. While analysing the annual scheme based expenditure of just one year, it may seem very interesting to note that the particular UP received an amount of TK. 2.6 million from nine different sources, in nine different times of the year and has to follow perhaps eight different operational guidelines .The UP concerned formulated 71 schemes with average financial outlay of Tk.36991by satisfying the requirement of each of the contributing source/authority. While satisfying all the different authorities and their guidelines, at the end the UP has to compromise with comprehensive and durable development plan of the Union. These types of scheme preparation and execution have been continuing for last 5 years in the union under review with even LGSP-LIC claimed to be an emerging model of 'fiscal decentralisation'. Why the requirement of petty earthwork for road repair and maintenance is still very high in the development agenda? It seems operational costs of the small schemes are relatively high and scope for misuse of fund is also higher there. On the other hand, the UP, if willing can use the money more meaningfully with technically sound, socially feasible and economically beneficial schemes other than petty road repair and maintenance for which fund from other sources are avilable.

Table-1a: Traditional Allocation and Block Grants used/utilised in physical infrastructure during the year 2008-2009 in Bausha UP under Nobigonj of Hobigonj.

No	Sources of Resource	Quantity of Resources/Amount of money	No. of Schemes Implemented	Average scheme size in terms of money spent
1.	LGSP (1st Instalment)	409818	12	34151
2.	LGSP (2nd Instalment)	409818	05	81963
3.	LIC	580932	10	58093
4.	Supplementary Block Grants	156069	07	22295
5.	REOPA Block Grant	148980	03	49660
6.	Annual Development Plan	207983	09	23109
7.	Food for Works	260000 (Rice 20 MTx1300 per MT)	03	86666
8.	Cash for Works	209000	12	17416
9.	REOPA Basic Services	48800	02	24400
10.	TR	195000 (Rice 15 MTx1300 per MT)	08	24375
	Total & average money spent in each scheme	26,26,400	71	36991

Table-1b: Non-Traditional Pro-poor Direct Transfer and Safety Net Allocation in Bausha UP , Nobigonj, Hobigonj, during 2008-2009.

No	Sources of Resources Transferred to the Union	Quantity/Amount in Tk.	No of Beneficiary Covered
1.	REOPA (salary and wages for 33 No. Women x Tk. 100 a day per person for a year)	11,80,000	33
2.	Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) (30kg rice per HH per month for 12 month, price-per kg Tk. 13)	5,00,760	107
3.	Vulnerable Group Feeding (15 kg per HH thrice a year and 1250 HH in a year)	7,31,250	1250
4.	Pension for Aged (over 65 years) (Tk. 250x353 for 12 months)	10,59,000	353
5.	Allowances for Insolvent Freedom Fighters (Tk. 900x11x12)	1,18,800	11
6.	Allowances for Physically Handicaps (Tk. 250x33 for 12 months)	99,000	33
7.	Allowances for Poor Widows (250x157 for 12 months)	4,71,000	157
8.	Stipends for girls students in primary 12 schools	3,37,000	854
9.	Stipends and Tuition Fee Support for girl students at Secondary, Higher Secondary and Higher Education (Tuition + Stipend + Books)	15,32,010	354
Total		6028820	3152

The table- 1b reveals something more surprising and shocking. The total amount of money spent in the union under various safety net programs are more than double the amount UP spent in infrastructures. Except REOPA and VGD-VGF, no other safety net program spent their resources through the UP. Even UP was not aware of the amount and did not try to know who the beneficiaries were. The amounts spent (including REOPA and VGD-VGF) are not reflected in the UP budget either. During beneficiary selection the department concern discusses the UP and prepares a list of beneficiaries, and then on they distribute the cash or kind whatever is applicable by following project/ department's own method. The DSS, Women Affairs, and Education (Primary and Secondary) follow their own procedures and only in cases of VGD-VGF, UPs are given the responsibility to deliver food staffs to the listed beneficiaries. The list of beneficiaries are even not entirely but partly prepared by the UP. Even in those cases transportation cost of carrying the materials are normally subsidised from the UP. In this case, REOPA may be taken as an exception as they share management costs by providing additional staff support for carrying out all REOPA related activities.

The point, which the study wants to make, is that government, donors and others associated with the process should rethink their delivery mechanism and scopes have to be found for working within a more realistic and comprehensive local level planning framework. This may help to establish discipline, transparency and durability in local

development and also enhance technical capacity of the UP.The current practices neither promote durable development of infrastructure nor creating a sound governance structure at the local levels rather creating a culture of misappropriation.

Issue-2: Enhancing technical as well as management capacity of UP

The UP grossly lack technical capacity to formulate, execute, monitor and evaluate physical infrastructure schemes as they lack technical manpower in the UP. It was expected that the LGED (an engineering set-up) created by the government to provide technical support to the LGIs will do so as and when required. Instead of a support organisation for LGIs , LGED itself has become the largest spending organisation at the *upazila* and unions. The LGED alone spend more than two-third of the whole of upazila budget. LGED seldom spares their technical staff for the help and support of UPs. Another Set-up in upazila is the PIO of Disaster Management Directorate; they are also supposed to provide some technical supervision to the UPs in implementing food assisted development projects. One union alone is generating 100 micro schemes on an average which is humanly impossible to supervise properly by a lone official of another department. A mechanism has to be found out to strengthen UP and the local government system to provide adequate technical staff support with enhancement of resources and responsibilities.

Issue-3: Development Coordination at the Union Level.

There are field staffs from various departments at the union levels. Union Parishads in almost 3000 places have got adequate office accommodations for all the field level extension officials posted in the union. The field level government functionaries those do not have their own offices at unions are invited to have an office space in newly constructed UP buildings. They are invited in the regular UP meetings but many of the grassroot level field staff do not attend meetings called by UPs in spite of repeated reminders. The NGOs working within Union should also attend the coordination meetings of the UPs.The projects from various government departments under implementation at Union or *Pourashava* levels should also establish a linkage with the host *parishads and pourashavas* for mutual benefit. Gradually all projects and programmes implemented at union level as far as possible may integrate their activities with the mainstream UP activities for the ultimate sustainability of those project activities. Under the current UP

(Local Government (UP) Act 2009) Act, officials of 9 departments under 7 Ministries are transferred to the UPs, if the law is sincerely implemented union level service delivery expect to improve substantially and coordination of development will become easier.

The three issues brought for the attention of all concerned can be synthesised under one concerted intervention at this moment which is also strongly supported by the current law. The single intervention which can ultimately pull all the strings of discomfort and discord towards a process of harmonisation is the initiative of establishing a comprehensive planning system at the UP level. The UP level planning should not follow a blueprint approach rather scope should be created to get it developed through a participatory process. A broad framework or guidelines from the highest level of government such as Planning Commission in line with the Sixth Five Year Plan may be a welcome step. These guidelines will be both legitimising and recognising the grassroot planning on the one hand and also be regarded as encouragement to the LGIs to utilise resources under a long-term vision and plan. Later, the *Upazila Parishads, Zila parishads, Pourashavas and City Corporations* will also follow the framework or guidelines with appropriate adjustments and modifications in due courses. A very tentative framework for organizing planning activities at the Unions has been provided in draft Guidelines Prepared for UNDP and UNCDF (Ahmed, 2011)

Zila Parishad (District Council)

The *Zila Parishad* (ZP) though regarded as the highest tier within the structure of three-tier rural local government system, never got a fair treatment in post independent Bangladesh. Zila Parishad as LGI has long history since the British rule in the sub-continent and it continued to enjoy its glory during the latter part of Pakistan times as well (Siddiqui,2004).The ZP with buildings along with officials, staff and budget very much exist in all the 64 districts of Bangladesh and only missing link is its representative character and elected officials. Since 1972 in Bangladesh, revival of ZP had never got serious attention. General Ershad revived it in a distorted way with appointed Chairs and nominated members in 1988.This were obviously abolished after the fall of his regime. The *Awami League* government (1996-2001) promulgated a Zila Parishad Act in 2000 by following the recommendations of a high powered 'Local Government Commission' headed by a Member of Parliament Advocate Rahmat Ali. The law was not activated for last 10 years. In the light of the constitutional obligation for establishing democratically elected local government at

all administrative units, districts need serious consideration for having a full-fledged elected LGI.Three high-powered 'Local Government Commissions' formed under three successive governments led by Begum Khaleda Zia (1991-1996), Sheik Hasina (1996-2001) and Caretaker Government under Fakruddin Ahmed (2007-2009) came up with detail recommendations for establishing strong ZP.The recommendations need serious considerations under the current context and revival of elected ZP may be a milestone in fulfilling the constitutional obligation for establishing democratic governance at the vital administrative unit of districts.

There are functional District Councils in three of the districts (*Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban*) under Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). There is also one Regional Council to function in that distinct region in line with regional autonomy. The Hill District Councils (HDCs) in the CHT did not have any election for last 20 years and Regional Council also exist only in name. In the context of local governance and regional autonomy at CHT, the issue need separate treatment along with other ethnic and regional issues.

The Zila Parishad system urgently needs revival with new roles and functions. While considering reorganisation of ZPs we may look at the ZP system of India which may shed some new light in our effort. The existing public administration system may also need reform or reorganisation with the introduction of three-tier LGI system for creating a harmonious working and accountability framework.

Urban Local Government Institutions

Urban LGIs trace its formal statutory entity in this part of the world since mid18[th] century with the introduction of 'Justice of Peace' in three port cities of the sub-continent- Madras (Chennai), Bombay (Mumbai) and Calcutta (Kolkata). Still the urban civilization and distinct urban settlement in the sub-continent had a very rich historical legacy. The ruins of *Harraffa* and *Mohenjodaro* during Indus Civilisation and seat of kings, queens, emperors and administrators from ancient, mediaeval and modern times created cities as old as thousands of years back in the sub-continent. In the modern sense of 'Municipal Administration' in line with western tradition is certainly the creation of colonial rulers. However, towns and cities are growing aggressively since last fifty years with the growth of population and economy. The growth of cities during last 40 years has taken a dramatic proportion and it is going to upset down the demographic and settlement pattern during next one/two decades. During the time of independence in 1971 less than

8% of the population was urban dwellers. In 2010, it rose to 30% and it is estimated that under the present rate of urban growth by 2030 almost fifty per cent of the population of the country will become urban dwellers (Mannan, 2010).

The changes already visible and changes in the vision compel us to revisit present rural-urban divide, in shaping and reshaping future local governance in respect of its legal, institutional and programmatic scenarios. Instead of divide, an interface may be thought of through a process of integration package for next one decade as "rural urban continuum interim". Ultimately the whole of the country has to be brought under the same social and economic service network which currently regarded as urban or municipal services. The services package on health, education, sanitation, housing, communication will not differ in urban and rural areas due to spatial variations. Uniform health, education, housing, electricity, gas, telecommunication, road network, amusement, etc. have to be provided to all citizens- urban, semi-urban or rural; only the economic density may differ between and amongst the different spatial locations not the basic services structure. This is one way of addressing rural-urban divide in reorganising local government in general and LGIs of distinct rural and urban variety may also be transformed gradually by bringing them all under single legal and institutional mechanism. The current trend of social transformation is rapidly progressing towards urbanisation. To give special thrust to growing urbanisation, converting UPs into pourashavas as being done by administrative order is not the ultimate solution rather gradual municipalisation of unions will the future of LGIs. We may not need separate LGIs for rural and urban areas in future, all LGIs may be known as municipalities like many other developed and developing countries. Those may be categorised as rural, semi-urban and fully urban municipalities depending on the scale and degree of urbanisation but urbanisation is the ultimate goal and reality. All LGIs in the next one or two decades could be governed under a single legal instrument and rural-urban divide will also be eliminated in rational way.

In the meantime, though very nominal, a welcome step has been taken by bringing all City Corporations under a single legislation. Previously six city corporations used to function under six different laws. Similarly new *pourashava* law has been promulgated with provisions of town planning. There are some overlaps among the UZPs and the rural *pourashavas* created within upazila townships and partly dividing existing UPs for creating *pourashavas*. An interface is needed between Upazila Parishads and the *pourashavas* within the Upazila Township to prevent unhealthy competition and wastage of state

resources and also for establishing an efficient local governance system.

Part -2

Some Future Agenda on Local Governance

The Concept and practice of state, government and governance have constantly been changing phase and face both with the change of time. The changes from monarchy to republic, authoritarian and autocratic to participatory and democratic, totalitarian to pluralist and all-encompassing centralised to decentralised, welfarist and responsive to citizen- changed the nature, dimension, forms and functions of modern states to a revolutionary proportion. All these changes brought enormous transformation among the organs and organisations within the state and a prominent and distinct space for Local Government Institutions (LGIs) leading to a new concept ''local state'' has emerged. In the recent decades the phenomenon of globalisation, marketisation and liberalisation created a new impetus and imperative for strong and effective local democracy and local governance as opposed to private corporatism and corporate nature of state. The modern states are divesting and 'hiving off' power, authority and responsibility at the local levels for efficient management of services. Local government institutions are being regarded as necessary stage between the common citizen and the central state and also be treated as 'load management' mechanism for accelerating development efforts at all the receiving points. People at the grassroots also feel good by having opportunities for closer interaction with the 'government at their door steps' (local state) compared to remote central state.

Bangladesh is an old nation with relatively a new statehood. The nation building efforts with a stable state still face formidable challenges. Establishing democratic polity and responsible, responsive and efficient governance is considered to be at the top of the challenge list, the nation has been encountered with. In achieving the twin objectives of institutionalisation of democracy and good governance, the role and function of LGIs need be emphasised and placed in proper perspective. Though LGIs in this part of the world have a tradition and practice of hundreds of years, still it is not regarded and respected fully as effective, functional and credible service delivery mechanism. Mere existence and stereotype continuity does not ensure its rationale and relevance. The nation is faced with the challenge of transforming nearly 6000 weak, emaciated and feeble LGI units into effective, functional and accountable democratic institutions.

The LGIs in this country have been the victim of endless experiments and benign neglect. The state, state institutions and society in general are going through tremendous changes .The intuitional and legal environment in the LGIs remain very stiff and static. For example, the rural –urban divide in institutional design of various LGI tiers hierarchically as well as horizontally in functional term seems irrelevant with the rapidly growing urbanisation occurring for last two decades. A new institutional mechanism with the support of appropriate legal framework has to be devised to address the rapidly waning rural-urban divide and also build bridges for an inclusive rural-urban interface. At some stage we have to arrive at one and a single LGI system with less hierarchical tiers.

A new dawn has been ushered with the resurgence of civil society activism after a free, fair and credible national election in 2008. A few future agendas are listed below with an objective to facilitate some fresh thinking on the basis of new ground realities for consideration of all concerned for realising the promised dreams of democracy and good governance at all levels specially for the institutionalisation of local democracy local services and local economic development.

1.   Providing constitutional guarantee to the LGIs

The constitution of the republic is the main source and provides legal bindings to all legislations, acts, rules and regulations of the country. The present constitutional provisions as embodied in articles 9, 11, 59 and 60 on LGIs are very conductive to promoting the sprit, but ambiguities still remain in its operational directions. As a result the issues like the hierarchical nature of tiers of LGIs corresponding to administrative units, central-local relationship, functions, functionaries, financing and freedom of LGIs in general hang on the balance and entirely depend on the direction given by the incumbent governments. While the Indian constitution provides guaranties for LGIs, we do not see such guarantee clauses for LGIs in our constitution. For example, the 73rd and 74th amendments of the Indian constitution provides a direction with a guarantee clause regarding the number of tiers, allocation of functions amongst central, regional and local levels , clear financing arrangement with the formation of Finance Commissions (SFCs) and framework for planning with mandatory District Planning Council (DPC). In Bangladesh the LGIs predate the constitution itself (Jain, 2005). There are inconsistencies between constitutional provisions and ground realities within which LGIs exist and function. Those need to be reviewed and removed for providing a sound base and

basis for strong, effective and stable local government system in the country.

2. Uniform Legal System and Decentralisation Policy

Local Government Institutions in this country is organised from three different streams. These are the rural, urban and local government for the special areas, such as, Chittagong Hill Tracts. There are more than two hundred active laws to govern these three types and streams of LGI system. The elected LGI representatives and officials temporarily deputed from central government hardly know the law and rules. Many of the laws are not even publicly available. Many of the laws lost enforceability as relevant rules as suggested in the law itself is never completed. For example, seven Rules as suggested in the Pourashava Ordinance 1977 have not been completed after 30 years of enforcement of the law (2008).

LGIs should follow standard and uniform finance, accounts, audit and procurement rules. Similarly, uniform service and discipline regarding the handling of employees should also be followed. As each individual unit of LGI (such as UP, UZP, ZP, Pourashava, City Corporation) is govern by a separate set of legislation, it is very difficult to keep consistency between and amongst them. The capacity building efforts are also wasted as legal requirements differ from one LGI to another.

In order to bring harmony, discipline, consistency and efficiency, the LGI system could be brought under uniform legal coverage. A uniform and single "Mother Law" may shape the structure, function and other basic requirements such as election, tenures, discipline, staffing etc. under common principle for all the LGI units currently exist in three different streams. The City Corporations, *Pourashavas, Zila Parishads, Upazila Parishads and Union Parishads* of hills and plains can be brought under a single 'Mother Law'.

The changed constitutional provisions and a well thought out 'National Decentralization Policy' may guide the formulation of such laws. The law itself will create adequate autonomy and 'room for manoeuvre' for each unit within its own jurisdiction. The individual units will prepare their own rules and bye-laws to administer their individual services. The issue of decentralisation is one of the much talked about subject but there is no clear policy on the basis of which government departments can coordinate their services and supplies with the LGIs at their corresponding administrative levels. Most of the time they exist parallel and foster a competitive mood instead of forging cooperation. The interfacing of rural-urban divide also need to

be addressed in the context of uniformity in institutional , legal and services perspectives.

3. Adequate attention on 'Four Fs'-- Function, Functionaries, Finance and Freedom

Bangladesh is legally having a system of three tiers rural and single tier urban LGI system. These are *Union, Upazila* and *Zila Parishads* as rural and *Pourshava*/City Corporation as urban LGIs.While *Zila Parishad* still awaits formation, election for the *Upazila Parishads* have been completed. The basic question arises, what functions these bodies are assigned to perform? Do they have appropriate functionaries at their command to carry out the functions assigned? Do they have adequate fund to carry forward the functions already assigned? How much freedom the LGIs enjoy at their respective levels? A long list of function can be seen in all the LGI legislations so far enacted. The *Union Parishads* (UP) have been assigned function in 4 broader areas of compulsory nature and 39 specified (with a separate schedule) functions with 54 more judicial and 21 village police functions. Though a long list of function is provided to the UPs, the functionaries and funds are laying with the respective line agencies of the central government at all the corresponding levels, i.e. *union, upazila* and districts. For example, the responsibilities of health, family planning, education, agriculture, fisheries, livestock, physical infrastructure- all equally appeared in the list of functions of LGIs. But the functionaries and finances are absolutely controlled by the line departments. The challenging questions need to be answered in future are (1) whether functionaries and funds will also flow towards the LGIs with the list of functions? (2) How we are going to deal with numerous line agencies at all administrative units together with LGIs at the same levels? The presence of two parallel organisations with the same or overlapping assignments create more problems than solving them. This also curtails the freedom and autonomy of elected LGIs. As a result two separate agencies at one particular unit are neither desirable nor practicable. A bold and courageous step of public administration reform is an immediate necessity to solve these age-old problems. Otherwise LGIs will never be established with clear mandate as an effective organisation at the levels of *Union, Upazila and Districts*. The line agencies will also fail to discharge their assigned functions under the changed circumstances due to legitimacy crisis and contlict weth representateve organesations.

4. Local Government Finance

There exists no clear budgetary formula for allocation of resources for LGIs. The LGIs receive development and revenue grants from central exchequer, which is nominal, compared to the public expenditure incurred at the same level through separate government agencies. For example, one UP receives direct government grant to the tune of taka less than three million on an average for a year. During the same year government expenditure in the same union area normally reach up to taka 50 million with which the UPs have very ambivalent relations. The public expenditure and grant vary from year to year at each level and it is mostly an uncertain terrain for LGIs to fathom. It has been stated that sometimes lobbying, personal connection and a network of irregular means play vital role in getting enhanced amount of grant and different project support. In the cases of many of the 'Social Safety Net' programmes and projects, the conditions set by the executing agencies such as Disaster Management, Social services and Women Affairs are neither found respectful nor even consistent with the constitutional provision on LGIs. It manifests general mistrust and disrespect to the autonomy of the LGIs as enunciated in the constitution. On the other hand, LGIs themselves in general also lack adequate staff, financial discipline and management transparency. The experiences of Indian State Finance Commissions, South African Local Government Commission and many other mechanisms (Ombudsman in *Maharastra* in India) followed in some other developed and developing countries need to be examined for adoption and to create clear financing line and method for LGIs and also to bring financial discipline within the LGIs.

5. Procedural innovation in planning, budgeting and monitoring system

All the LGIs in addition to the central government's budgetary allocation mobilise their own resources too. They are also legally bound to prepare and pass their own annual budgets. According to the new LGI laws passed in 2009, all UZPs are required to formulate a five-year plan and then need to divide the five-year plan into Annual Development Plans. The same provision is applicable to all the other LGIs including *Union Parishads, Pourashava* and City Corporations too. The LGI plans and budgets are needed to be integrated with the national budget and national plan. Over a decade, we are not having five-year national plans and long-term perspective plans. Whatever plans we were having nationally in the name of rolling plan or PRS and Annual Development Plans (ADP) are merely the collection of projects

prepared by different ministries. There are scopes for innovative planning and budgeting system in the country. Firstly government may initiate a five-year indicative plan under a 10/15-year perspective plan by incorporating vision 2021 keeping in mind the Golden Jubilee of our liberation. The present government (AL led alliance) already formulated or revived the five-year plan system. If it goes to implementation , this will provide a clear vision and broad guidelines for 'local level planning' to all the LGIs. The LGI plans will then be aimed at achieving the goals of national plan along with their specific local objectives. In this way allocated resources can be utilised under standard planning system and general financial discipline.

Regarding the innovation in budgeting, serious consideration may be given whether a separate national budget for LGIs can be prepared and placed in the parliament. The national budget for LG may incorporate all the planning and budgetary performances of all the LGIs of the country in a cumulative and aggregated way. The Local Government Division of the government can collect and consolidate the actual income and expenditures of all the LGIs of the previous year and also reflect their next year's projections. The Minister for Local Government can place the National Budget for LGIs in the Parliament few weeks before the Finance Minister place National Budget. Later the LGI budget placed by the LG Minister may be incorporated in the national budget after final adoption in the *Jatiya Sanghad* or it may also be kept separate. This national level exercise is not baring individual LGI units in making their own budgets and plans, rather national plan and budget will basically consolidate the local plans and budgets. In India, the Railway Minister places a separate railway budget in the parliament. We can create a new tradition of separate local government budget in future, which may make the local government's development plans and finances more transparent and accountable.

6. Freedom and autonomy of Local Government.

Local governments should really be regarded as 'governments' of small areas and not merely an agent or client of central government. It should be allowed required freedom and autonomy within its own domain, otherwise its full capacity will not be harnessed and dedicated leadership will not emerge and develop from the soil. Instead of day to day administrative control from bureaucratic and political hierarchy, participatory planning system and strict and standard financial discipline and social audit can ensure real autonomy on the one hand and accountability on the other. In South Africa under the post-

apartheid constitution, governments are created in three spheres - national, regional and local. None is under any one sphere. Each sphere of government works with its own mandate independently. Same experience may also be shared from the Swiss federalism, where three different governments at three different levels function in a harmonious way with virtually no control from above. Control and accountability are ensured through a common system.

7. Uniform Local Government Service Structure.

It is an accepted reality that the LGIs from City Corporations to UP suffer from lack of adequate and efficient staff support for carrying out their technical, financial, service management and administrative responsibilities. To address the issue with renewed commitment, a long pending proposal to create a 'Local Government Service structure' may be reviewed afresh with a long-term vision of sustained professionalism among the LGIs. The members of this service wherever feasible, may start their career from the UPs and end at the City Corporation and *Zila Parishad* levels. This service may consist of few sub-groups or sub-cadres, such as professionals with Engineering, Health, Accounts and Administration backgrounds. The service may provide continuity and professionalism within the LG system. It is high time now to seriously take up this issue for detailed examination and for taking decision for a pragmatic and sustainable staffing for LGIs.

8. Reintroduction of Judiciary at Upazila and reorganization of Union Courts

There is tradition in this country of having criminal and civil courts at Thana/Upazila levels and also of arbitration/reconciliation through informal *Salish / Darbar*. During the period from 1981-1991 infrastructures including court room, *ajlash,* sub-jails, etc. were created at the *upazila* to administer judicial functions. It was found that during the initial years (1981-1983) number of cases and litigations increased in *upazila* courts as people found courts at their close vicinity but by 1985-86, the trend gradually decreased as large number of cases were settled. The court system at *upazila* has been stabilised by 1986. The rural people especially poor and women were tremendously benefited from formal courts near to their door steps. The system was less expensive, easily reachable and there were less scope for false cases as well.

A moderate estimate shows that there are about 2 million court cases remain under trial in different courts of the country. Out of 2 million, about 1.7 million are lying with the entire District and session Judge's Courts, various Tribunals and Magistrate's courts (CMM/CGM). Only about 300,000 cases are pending and remain under trial at the higher courts (Daily *Ittefaq*, 17/10/09).

During 1981-1986, all cases from sub-divisional courts and some of the selected cases from District and Session Judges courts were transferred to the newly formed Upazila Courts. Each and every upazila court handled about two thousand cases within three years' time. Gradually the number reduced to an epic proportion. Initially there were problems of experienced judges and Magistrates and also other logistics including proper court building and solicitors. The initial problems mostly overcome within the third year of the system. Upazila based legal practitioner community started to grow and court system started functioning with new physical facilities. Currently many people are thinking of establishing Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and strong Village Court to redress the problem. The Village Court under the existing law will never be an effective court and ADR can also contribute very marginally compare to the magnitude of the problem. Still ADR is worth trying. But ultimately there is no substitute to the reestablishment of proper courts at upazila like all other services and organ of government. The court at upazila will also bring a check and balance in the function of upazila police and executive branch at that level. The Union level court system may also demand strengthening in line with a separate formal court system free from elected and politically motivated UP. A proposal has been mooted in this regard in the report submitted by First Local Government Commission in 2009 which can be deliberated extensively at all levels

9. Permanent Local Government Commission.

Formation of an independent and permanent Local Government Commission has been recommended by all the committees / commissions formed since the 1990s. The *Nazmul Huda Commission* during BNP government (1991-1996), *Rahmat Ali Commission* during AL government (1996-2001) and lastly *Dr. Shawkat Ali Commission* in 2007 under Caretaker Government may be taken as examples. The first permanent LG Commission has at least been formed and started work from November 2008 under an ordinance promulgated by the Caretaker Government. The elected government assumed power in 2009 did not ratify the Local Government Commission Ordinance 2008.As a result,

four month old First LG Commission of the country had its unnatural death after 30 days of the first session of the Ninth Parliament on February 24, 2009.It is expected that government will revive the issue of LG Commission in line with the recommendations of all three Committees and commissions. The permanent LG Commission if revived can play a very important supportive role for strengthening LGI system by providing expert help and assistance to both government and the LGIs. A specialised agency with positive outlook towards constantly building agenda for the LGIs and assisting all concerned to carry the mission forward is needed. The Commission can also build a bridge among the higher-level policy makers, policy implementing bureaucracy, LGIs, civil society and all others intimately concerned with local development. It is expected that government, LGI and civil society organizations will use and utilise the services of the Commission in realising the objectives of developing a credible, efficient and accountable LGIs system. The LG Commission tend to work closely with the ministries of Finance and Planning for providing assistance during the preparation of national budget and plan like the State Finance Commissions in India. Similarly it may also work very closely with the ministry of Hill Tracts Affairs on the local government Institution of *special and Adivashi areas* and also with other line ministries such as women, youth, health, education, social welfare, land, disaster mitigation for policy advice. In this connection we can review the working traditions and procedures of British and South African LG Commissions as well as LGI Ombudsman in some other part of the world.

10. Donor Coordination Cell and Multi Donor Trust Fund for Supporting Local Governance

Many development partners are contributing resources in the broader areas of governance in general and local government in particular. An initiative would be welcome in every quarter that can bring better coordination of efforts, judicious utilisation of resources and strengthen better exchange and understanding. A huge amount of donor resources are contributed to scattered projects implemented either through various bureaucratic process or through fund hungry NGOs. Very few of the projects come up with sustainable outcomes. Each and every LGI unit is legally empowered to sign contact with outside agencies to implement projects. The experiment should also be carried out whether direct funding of LGIs on competition basis can be initiated. The Experience of Municipal Development Fund and PKSP from different angle can be studied. An idea of Multi Donor Trust Fund (in form of

challenge fund)is often discussed now-a-days, which is a very innovative idea need detail discussion. A Multi Donor Trust Fund (MTDF) under an independent management team may be tried to bring harmony in local governance sector as a whole.

Helping the growth of LGIs and strengthening those institutionally is very much in national interest. Because by doing this, we can assist the LGIs in future to become an engine for growth and change for better Bangladesh for establishing good governance and institutionalisation of democracy and development. The smooth transition to democratic government at national level and the Third *Upazila Parishad* election held in 2009 under the *Awami League* led alliance government is expected to usher in a new era in the history of local governance in this country. Similarly, elections in other three LGIs such as City Corporations, *Pourashavas* and UPs are also held though after an undue delay. An enabling environment for supporting the growth of LGIs and strengthening them appear to have emerged. All the persons and agencies involved in supporting LGI must grab this opportunity. In this light it can also be regarded as an acid test for the new government, newly elected leadership and the Ninth Parliament, so as to see how further development takes place in the realm of local governance in future.

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