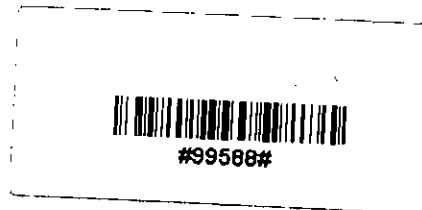
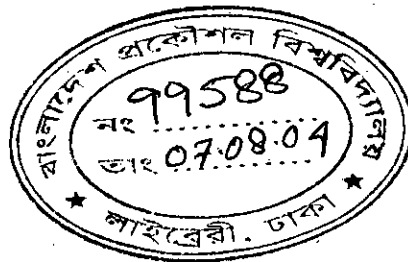


**COMMUNITY PERCEPTION TOWARD WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN
RURAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN BANGLADESH - A CASE STUDY
OF JHENAIDAH SADAR THANA**

BY
URMI RAHMAN

MASTER OF URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING

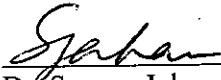


**DEPARTMENT OF URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING
BANGLADESH UNIVERSITY OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY,**

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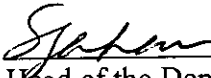
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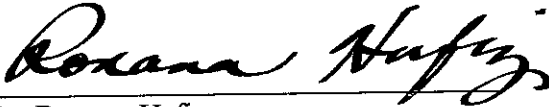
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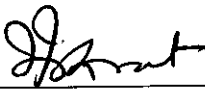
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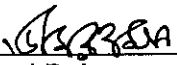
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Signature of the candidate



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ABSTRACT

To bring meaningful social changes and improved quality of life in Bangladesh - both men and women should get equal opportunities and positions complementing each other in every sphere of life. Though the Constitution has guaranteed that there should not be any discrimination between men and women on gender basis and provisions are also included to ensure equal rights, yet, political empowerment remained elusive and representation of women in state legislatures remained very low. In the absence of proportional representation even after three decades of independence, it became imperative that reservations of women seats on proportionate basis should be accepted as a starting point to bring women into the mainstream of political activity. In this circumstances, the recent amendments to the Union Parishad Ordinance (1997) – the provision for direct election of women to one-third reserved seats in the Union Parishad have changed the women representation scenario at the local level. In the 1997 Union Parishad election more than 44,134 female candidates contested in 12,828 seats with 1000 women competing for the general seats in 4,276 unions. Out of that, 26 female candidates were elected chairmen (the number has increased up to 29 through by election). This massive participation of women in elections to a political institution is a landmark in the institutionalization of women in politics.

This study therefore, attempts to highlight and analyze the community's perception towards these women members in local government and how far these women members are fulfilling their expectations. It also analyzes the reason as to why the female members are failing to serve as agents for bringing changes in the life of rural women. The study emphasizes on communities opinion for finding out the means to improve women's social, legal and even economic status in the study area.

During this study, it is observed that maximum women respondents in the study area are having minimum literacy. Now they are more thoughtful about their future and are anxious to get vocational training and different development programs to improve their quality of lives. Though the female members could not satisfy the expectation of the community women, yet most of these women believe that the female members can bring changes in their lives. They strongly believe that the female members can solve their social problems by playing an important role in village *Shalish*. The women in the study area have opined for wider participation of the poor and other women in the decision making level and demanded the female members to ensure corrective effort to make the best use of resources in the interests of the poor especially the women.

On the other hand the female members in the study area are in a disadvantageous position as they have to work against the male dominated traditional system. Male members are not enthusiastic to extend their co-operation to the female members. Some time they create obstruction for female members to utilize their constitutional rights. Moreover, weak educational and lower social status make themselves less confident about their rights. At the same time the male members and the local people neglect their decisions as well. At the end, from the community point of view, we can conclude that to empower the female members in rural local government, it is a must to bring constitutional changes to give these female members equal power in response to male members and there has to be a equal power balance in rural Local Government.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This thesis was prepared under the guidance of Professor Dr. Sarwar Jahan, Head of the department of Urban and Regional Planning. I acknowledge - with utmost respect and gratitude - my indebtedness to him for his constant guidance and advice during the period of the research. The preparation of this thesis would never have been possible without his constructive suggestions, continuous encouragement and assistance.

I express my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Roxana Hafiz, Associate Professor of Urban and Regional Planning Department, who relentlessly pointed out my mistakes and aided me towards precision and ornamentation of the thesis. I am also indebted to Professor Dr. Golam Rahman, my father and former professor of Urban and Regional Planning Department. Without his inspiration and encouragement the work would not be possible.

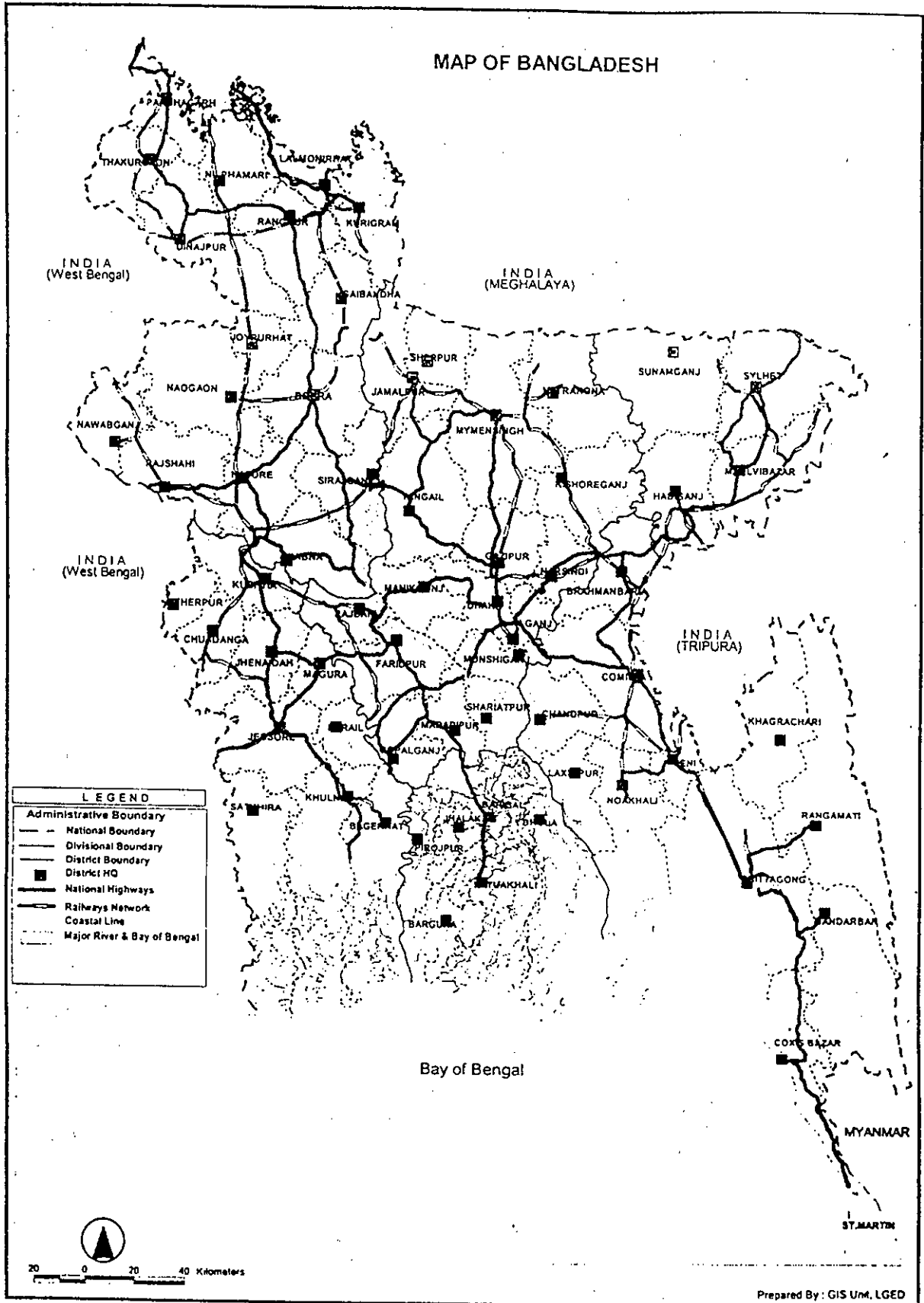
I express my deep gratitude and thanks to Mr. Md. Rafiul Karim, the secretary of Center for Urban and Rural Policy Planning for his valuable advice and the secretaries of the three Union Parishads under study who helped to carry out survey in the remote places of the study area.

I express my profound thanks to my parents, brothers and my husband for their unconditional cooperation and sacrifices during the entire period of study.

I like also to express special thanks to my friends, Shanjida Shamsher Elora and Kamurun Nahar Begum who extended their co operative hands which removed many hurdles on the way to the completion of this work. And finally I recall my loving son, Salman Hassan, who rendered a continuous support in compiling this work into soft copy in the computer.

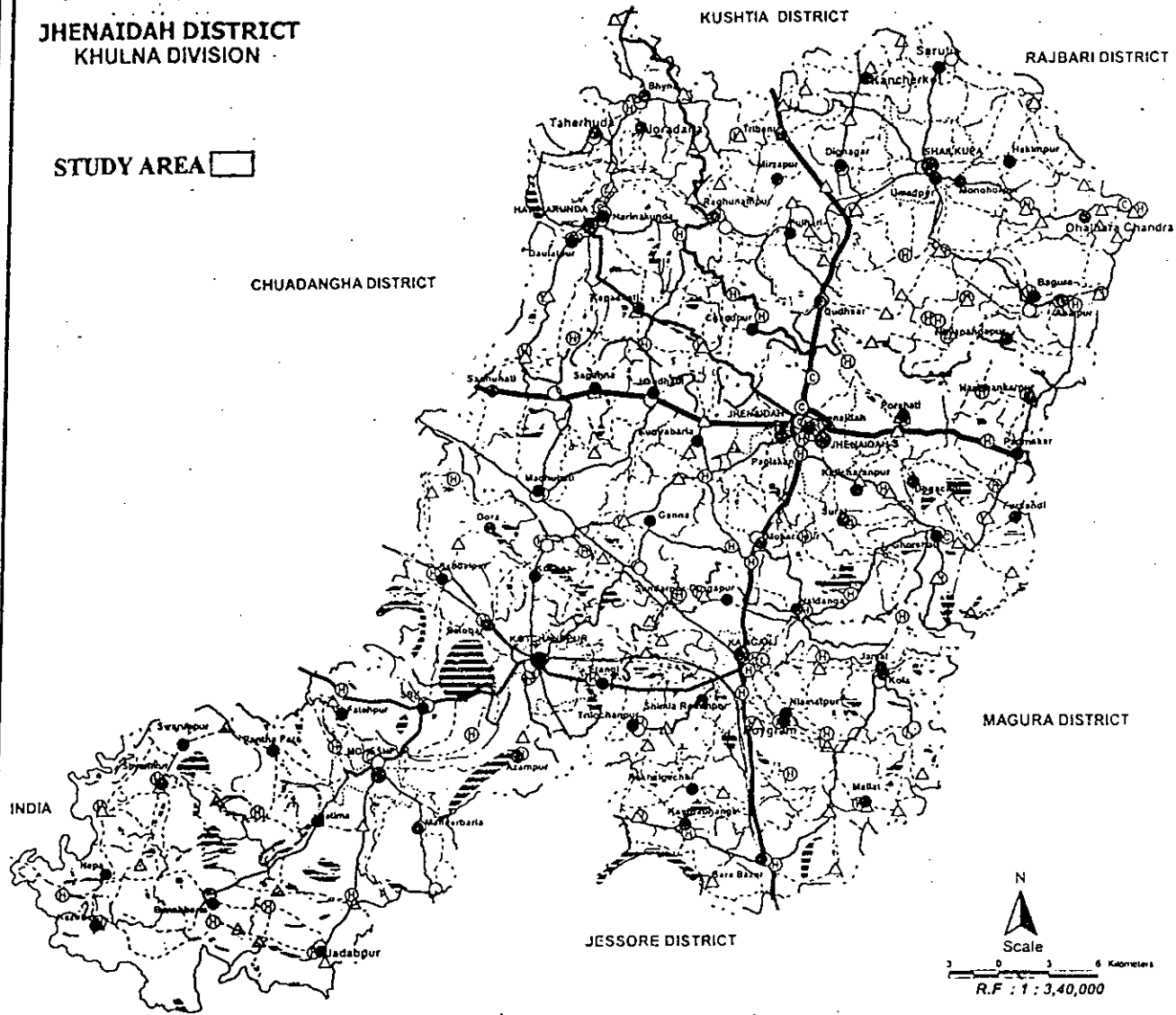
Glossary

<i>Salish</i>	The <i>Salish</i> of village mediation body, in an institution which dates back to the traditional forms of conflict resolution through mediation. It was a forum where disputing parties sought to have their conflict arbitrated. The arbitrators were the local elite, who had gained such status due to their relative wealth or due to the fact that they held respected position in village society- the money lenders, landlords and school teachers fall under this category as do the wise village elders and the imam of the village mosque. Both sides were represented and the decisions given by the body were not binding. A <i>Salish</i> , however, was not allowed to pass judgment on criminal offence
<i>Fatwa</i>	A religious decree.
<i>Purdah</i>	Seclusion. The act of women to not appear before male strangers and had to leave the house either wearing a veil hiding their figure and features or draw the curtains around their vehicle.
<i>Local Government</i>	Local government in Bangladesh is four-tiered. From ascending order, they are the Village Council, Union Council, Sub-District Council and the District Council. These are supposed to be acting as autonomous bodies, with their own budgets and tax collecting power as per Article 9 of the Constitution, which states that local government institutions should be encouraged by the state.
<i>Union Parishad</i>	Union Parishad is the second tier of the local government from ascending order.
<i>Nari shomaj</i>	Women Organization.
<i>Mohila shomity</i>	Women's Co-operation.



**JHENAIDAH DISTRICT
KHULNA DIVISION**

STUDY AREA



LEGEND

- Administrative Boundary**
- International Boundary
 - - - District Boundary
 - · - · Upazila Boundary
 - - - - Union Boundary
 - · · · · Municipal Boundary

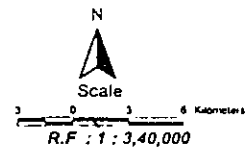
- Administrative HQs**
- District HQ
 - Upazila HQ
 - Union HQ

- Physical Infrastructures**
- ▬ National Highways
 - ▬ Regional Highways
 - ▬ Zila Road
 - ▬ Upazila Road
 - ▬ Union Road
 - ▬ Railway Network

- Natural Features**
- ▬ Wide River
 - ▬ Water Bodies

- Agricultural Infrastructures**
- ▬ Embankment

- Socio-economic Infrastructures**
- Growth Centre
 - △ Small Haat/Bazar
 - ⌈ Police Station
 - ⌈ Upazila Health Complex
 - ⊙ College
 - ⊙ High School



Compiled from: SPOT image 1984-90, Aerial Photograph 1983-84,
Topographic Maps, Thematic Maps, S B S and Field Checkings.
Projection : Lambert's Conformal Conic
Data Source : GPS Field Survey 1999

PREPARED BY : O&E UNIT
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

CHAPTER 1



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem:

Women empowerment is one of the widely discussed issues of the present world community. It is now being considered as the prime step not merely towards the women's freedom or development but also to overcome all the obstacles the world is facing today. The obstructions may be environmental degradation, population explosion, poverty and illiteracy, etc. In the 1990s, in all the internationally organized conferences, women empowerment was given priority. Like most of the developing countries - Bangladesh is also suffering from the same problem of disparity in society with regard to women empowerment (Mohanty, 1999). Though, women empowerment was of prime importance in policymaking or problem solving discussion from the local level to the national level in Bangladesh, women's condition in the whole country is gradually degrading rather than improvement. So, to make 'Women Empowerment' not only as grand topic for discussion in various seminars, it needs to be incorporated in policy planning and execution.

The theme of women empowerment has come to exist as a continuation of 'Women in Development' (WID) in the early 1970s. It was the Society for International Development in Washington DC, a network of female development professionals who were influenced by the work of Esther Boserup and other anthropologists in the field of Third World development. The WID theory believes that the 'backwardness' of developing countries can be attributed to women's limited access to education, technology and other vital resources, and hence their 'negligible contribution to the economic progress of her community'. In a simple way, women's position in society can be improved by facilitating her participation in formal institutions (Kabeer, 1994).

As a counterpart of the International Women's Conferences Bangladesh has various programs to educate women by Government and non-governmental organizations. Legally literacy is taken to grass-root levels, but the women who receive the education find it virtually impossible to exercise what they have learnt about their right. Women's contribution in family, society or institutions is disregarded.

To date Bangladesh has a population of more than 131 million of which 46 percent are female (World Bank Report, 1999). Approximately 76% of the total population lives in rural areas of the country (World Bank Report, 1999). Women could secure only 8% of the 43.9 million economically active populations in Bangladesh and are detached from the leadership in family, society, or national decision making process. Poverty, illiteracy, ignorance of the laws and dependence on men and the surrendering attitude of the women folk to the social and religious restrictions by the elite of the locality are the main reasons for this serious desecration of women especially in these rural areas. Though Bangladesh's constitution has given equal right to men and women but in reality especially in family law, women are being treated in a very inhuman, undemocratic and discriminate way. Marriages, divorce, child custody, heritage of property are the example of the weak laws for women. Women in Bangladesh are directly or indirectly involved in socio-political struggles. They are always trying to bring changes in society and in the formation of women friendly laws by taking part in various movements and forming pressure groups (Khan, 2001).

Women are an integral part of the development process of Bangladesh both in the public and the private sector. The policy makers in government and non-government organizations recognize the need to utilize the population of Bangladesh of its full potential as human resource, regardless of gender. Different donor agencies provide fund for these destitute women to be empowered with a view to changing the level of their awareness. Women's active participation in policy planning will enable the government to identify women's actual needs in society and enable women to gain better access to economic resources in order to alleviate their poverty. At present the

few women who participate in the forefront of women's groups and lead in the policy planning within these groups mostly belong to the elite class of Bangladeshi society. They have little idea of the socio-economic needs of poor women and the participation of women from grass roots level in these policy making positions is decidedly little. Due to this, the needs of the majority female population are not realized or met. Therefore, the actual participation of women in all tiers of state machinery needs to be assured and participation in the grass root levels needs to be included in state policy planning by giving autonomy to the local actively participate, as community representatives, in the decision making processes.

1.2 Justification of the Study

In such circumstances constitutional representation is considered to be one way of ensuring women's political participation leading to empowerment. In Bangladesh constitutional has been provided women's representation in parliament at national level and in the local Government as well. The recent amendments to the Union Parishad Ordinance (1997) provision for direct election of women to one-third reserved seats in the Union Parishad have changed the women representation scenario at the local level. In the 1997 Union Parishad election more than 44134 female candidates contested in 12828 seats with 1000 women competing for the general seats in 4276 unions, 20 female candidates were elected chairmen (the number has increased up to 29 through by election). This massive participation of women in elections to a political institution is a landmark in the institutionalization of women in politics.

Rural local government is the one countrywide, constitutionally mandated governance structure that is closest to the people. The non-involvement of women in local government has created obstruction in terms of the needs and problems of women. In daily life, women also expect accessibility to good health, safety, pollution and crime free environment and social facilities like, education, health,

recreation, etc. Moreover, to eliminate the problems of discrimination and support the destitute part- the rural women of the country, active participation of women in decision-making level is extremely needed. On the other hand, having the interest of the family and the extended community in their heart, women can turn out to be excellent watchdogs of Government programs which is reflected in the chapter six of this paper.

The Government of Bangladesh, different NGOs and other activist group are observing these female members with lots of hopes. Support units like NGOs and local Government institutions have initiated various support programs to strengthen the power of these women members. Different meetings and seminars are organized for the women members to know the problems and prospects from their own point of views. However, it is still unknown that how far their action for the local women has influenced their lives and has accomplished their requirement, what kind of support they expect to get from their local leaders. These aspects of study remain neglected for a pretty long time. Therefore, it deemed as an important area of research for socio-economic and political development of Bangladesh. This thesis looks at the status and potentials women empowerment in rural local Government in Bangladesh focussing on the Union Parishad, from the local people's point of views.

1.3 Objectives

The aim of the study is to establish the importance of rural women in decision making process, and from this point of view "Community Perception towards Women Empowerment in rural local Government in Bangladesh" has been selected as the title of this study. With a view to finding out the dimension of involvement of women in the rural administrative structure in practical field - the following are considered as the main objectives of the study.

- 1) To identify the past and present condition of women empowerment in Local Government and how they influence the Government

- 2) To identify the problems faced by the women as Union Parishad members.
- 3) To analyze the perception of the community toward women empowerment in Local Government.
- 4) To formulate a policy recommendation for enhancing the power of women in Local Government.

1.4. Methodology

The objectives of “Community Perception Toward Women Empowerment in Rural Local Government in Bangladesh” as outlined in section 1.3 were to establish that women as an integral part of the development process of Bangladesh. With this view the following methodology are adopted;

1.4.1 Selection of the Study Area

There was an attempt to select a rural area remote from main cities. In this context, the statistic of violence against women in Jhenaidaha district shows an exhausting picture. In a statistic of 1999, among the total unnatural death in Jhenaidaha Sadar Thana, 60-70% are women (Faruk, 2001). In addition, in this twenty- first century, women voters of Surat village, only could caste their vote for the first time in 2001. They were apart from their right to vote on religious ground. All these facts induced myself to select Jhenaidaha Sadar Thana as the study area.

There are 17 Union Parishads in Jhenaidaha Sadar Thana. It is very difficult to collect data from all the Union Parishads of this Thana within this short period of time and restricted fund. So, to cope with time and fund three Union Parishads of this Thana are selected.

1.4.2 Data Collection

Primary surveys are primarily concerned with the collection of data from the community people of selected Union Parishads in Jhenaidaha Sadar Thana,

about their perception of Union Parishads' female members' activities at the local area.

Secondary surveys are concerned with the collection of data on overall status of women empowerment from top to bottom level in Bangladesh Government mainly from various sources such as review of Books, Journals, Periodicals, Reports, Thesis, Research Project and Newspaper.

a) Data Collection from Secondary Sources:

i. Map Collection

Map for all the three union Parishads have been collected from the Thana office in Jhenaidaha. An NGO named 'Rupantar' have provided modified map of Paglakanai union Parishad that they prepared for their development work.

Some of objects and places in the maps of the study area were previously showed and some of them are made by the information collected from primary survey and secondary information as well.

ii. List Of Unions, Villages with Other Necessary Information

An exclusive literature review on unions, villages and overall condition of the female folk in Bangladesh has been carried out to find out information about condition of women empowerment from top to bottom level in local government. The review has been somewhat helpful to find out the proper guideline to ameliorate the existing problem in the way to women empowerment in the local government. Other information on history of union Parishads and women's involvement in this tire have been carried out to realize the pattern and prospect of women empowerment in the government.

iii. Collection of Records from Unions and Thana Office

Union offices of the study area have provided information about the administrative setup and function of the Union Parishads. The office also provided information on population structure and recorded physical and economical conditions.

b) Data Collection from Primary Sources:

i. Reconnaissance Survey:

Before commencing the questionnaire survey, a reconnaissance survey was conducted in all the three Union Parishads to enrich the questionnaires and to know the physical environment and existing community facilities in the study area.

ii. Physical characteristics and ecological setup of the study area

To understand the physical characteristics and ecological setup of the study area, a detail survey was conducted, because it may necessary to identify and study the overall physical nature of the study area.

iii. Socio- Economic Survey of the Study Area

Socio-economic survey was conducted with help of a questionnaire prepared for this purpose. Questions for survey were set in a manner so as to extract informations about the dwellers of the study area.

1.4.3 Questionnaire Survey:

The study is based on questionnaire survey. A detail questionnaire (Appendix) has been prepared to know the community's feeling about female members' duties as a change agent in local government. For questionnaire surveying a systematic random sampling technique has been adopted. A total of 270 questionnaires have been administered in eighteen villages of three Union Parishads. Thirty community people from two villages (fifteen from each village) within a ward for each female member were interviewed. One of the two villages was the native village of the female member and other is a distant one from it. The questionnaire survey has been done in the household level. Female head of the household has been chosen for questionnaire survey as a respondent. In most cases, the illiterate female heads of households were reluctant to answer whereas literate female members in the family were cooperative. The areas of concern were selected in accordance with the forth-international women conference. The priorities were as follows:

Poverty, economic activities, women's issues in the environment, violation of women's human right, lack of access to health, access to education and literacy, mechanism for promoting the advancement of women.

Another questionnaire was prepared to interview the female members in the three Union Parishads for understanding their own attitude and their feeling regarding communities' attitude towards their duties and performance.

1.4.4 Data processing, Analysis and Representation

After getting the data from all sources, the data have been processed and analyzed in a sequential manner. Both manual and computer techniques have been used in data processing. On the other hand various statistical tools and techniques have been used in data analysis for finding the facts of this research. Such as frequency distribution, satisfaction index, priority ranking, etc. are used in this research to determine the community's perception toward female members' service deliverance as a change agent in rural local Government.

The highest value of satisfaction index is +1, meaning 'high satisfaction' and lowest value of satisfaction index is -1, meaning 'high dissatisfaction' levels. A Priority Ranking Technique has also been adopted to rank the problems existing in the study area regarding their social and economical development. To find out the severity of problems in the 'ranking technique' - the 'mini score' (Miah and Weber, 1990) has been followed: meaning the lower the ranking value the higher is the severity. Various problems related to socio-economic condition of rural women have been set in the questionnaire for ranking by community survey (questionnaire for community people). Respondents were asked to rank each problem according to its severity. The respondents were asked to sort out the highly sever problems to inferior problems serially by ranking them 1, 2, 3 and so on from a pre-coded list of problems. The first rank has been done by summation of total number for each problem. Severity rank-1 means number 1 problem perceived by the community.

1.5 Organization of the Study

The organizational setup of the study is as follows:

Chapter 1 contains a statement of the problem and states aims and objectives of the study. A summary of methodology is given in this chapter, along with a view of the rationality and limitation of the study.

Chapter 2 discusses about the concepts of Local Government in Bangladesh. The historical development of local government and its constitutional and legal basis is recorded in this chapter. This chapter also contains the need for rural local government in Bangladesh and the composition and duties of union Parishad as a tier of local government. Women member's responsibilities have been discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 3 deals on the definition of empowerment and the status of women in Bangladesh. The history and the trend of women's participation in decision – making level are mentioned here briefly. The overall status of the Bangladeshi women in decision making level is also discussed here in this chapter.

Chapter 4 reflects on the general condition of the study area and the socio-economic condition of female population of the study area in particular. The situation of the community's women folk of the study area is recorded and analyzed in this chapter.

Chapter 5 focuses on women's perception toward the female members in their local Union Parishad.

Chapter 6 illustrates the status of women members of the study area and how they function within the existing framework and the problems and constraints female members are facing.

Chapter 7 finalizes the study with Summary Findings and Recommendations on the basis of fact-findings.

CHAPTER-2

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN BANGLADESH

2.1 Introduction

The excessive concentration of decision making and authority within central government is a major obstacle to the effective performance of public bureaucracies in most developing countries. Public sector institutions are commonly perceived to be geographically and socially remote from the people and to take decisions with knowledge of concern about actual problems and preferences. To overcome these problems- decentralization can create an avenue for proximity, relevance, autonomy, participation, accountability and even democracy. In Bangladesh the local government institution is a creation by enacting laws in the Parliament by the legislature through which its jurisdiction, administration, management, power, functions and structural periphery etc. are determined. The local government has identified one of the means of establishing, practicing and enhancing a democratic political system. It is expected from a decentralized local government to emphasize the fiscal, skill, and personnel poverty of localities and their need for central resources to function and the problem of providing effective direction for local administrators. The residents of local governments will be unlikely to participate, invest attention or resources, or learn many of the lessons of governance unless their local governments can make real decisions with effective consequences.

2.2 Definition of Local Government:

Dune Lockard has defined local government as a public organization to decide a limited range of public policies within a relatively small territory. Local government is at the bottom of the pyramid of governmental institution, with the national Government at the top and immediate Governments occupying the middle rung.

Local Government has its jurisdiction and is not confined to one's specific function (Siddique, 1995).

There is another definition of UN that includes the financial and legal states of local Government and its specific representative character.

"The term local self-government refers to a political subdivision of a nation or state, which is constituted by, law and has substantial control of local affairs, including the power to impose taxes. The governing body of such an entity is elected or locally selected".

Generally the institution of locally elected representatives for concluding local programs is the local government. This is not an autonomous institution as the national government. The national government determines the structure of local government, its working frontier, and financial reservation through law and constitution. Apart from this, the national government controls the actions of local government by various circulars and ordinances. Encyclopedia of social science categorized Local Government as:

1. Federal decentralized system
2. Unitary system
3. Neopolionic prefect system
4. Communist system
5. Post colonial system

Four field of administration in local government:

1. Comprehensive local Government system
2. Partnership system
3. Dual system
4. Integrated administrative system

Five attributes of local Government:

1. Its power to raise finance by taxation
2. Its statutory status

3. Participation of local community
4. Freedom to act independently of central control (Siddique, 1995).

2.3 Need for A Local Government:

At the present, almost all the countries have active local government system. Bangladesh is not an exception to them. As it is an important institution, the local government has been provided with legal basis through the constitutional article (59) of People Republic of Bangladesh. Necessity for a local government can be explained as below:

1. It accelerated the task of a modern country at many times. It is not possible for the central government to control the entire task from a distance efficiently. So for solving local problems quickly and efficiently the local government is obligatory.
2. The local government can challenge local problems according to the demand of local people.
3. Local government is established by centering a particular geographical boundary such as; Union Parishad, Zila Parishad, Municipality etc. so it increases civic and political awareness among local people.
4. The local government has a great influence in flourishing democracy. The lesson of democracy is rooted in local government.
5. Local people often do not take part in the national government's programmes but they have a part in the local programs of the local institutions.
6. As a cooperating agent the local government works in approving and implementing of national and local plans.
7. Local government plays an important role in essential data collection and survey for approving plans.
8. Local government implements small-scale projects and development programmes.

shaped the institutional makeup and gradual evolution of the present local Government system in Bangladesh (Saki, 2001).

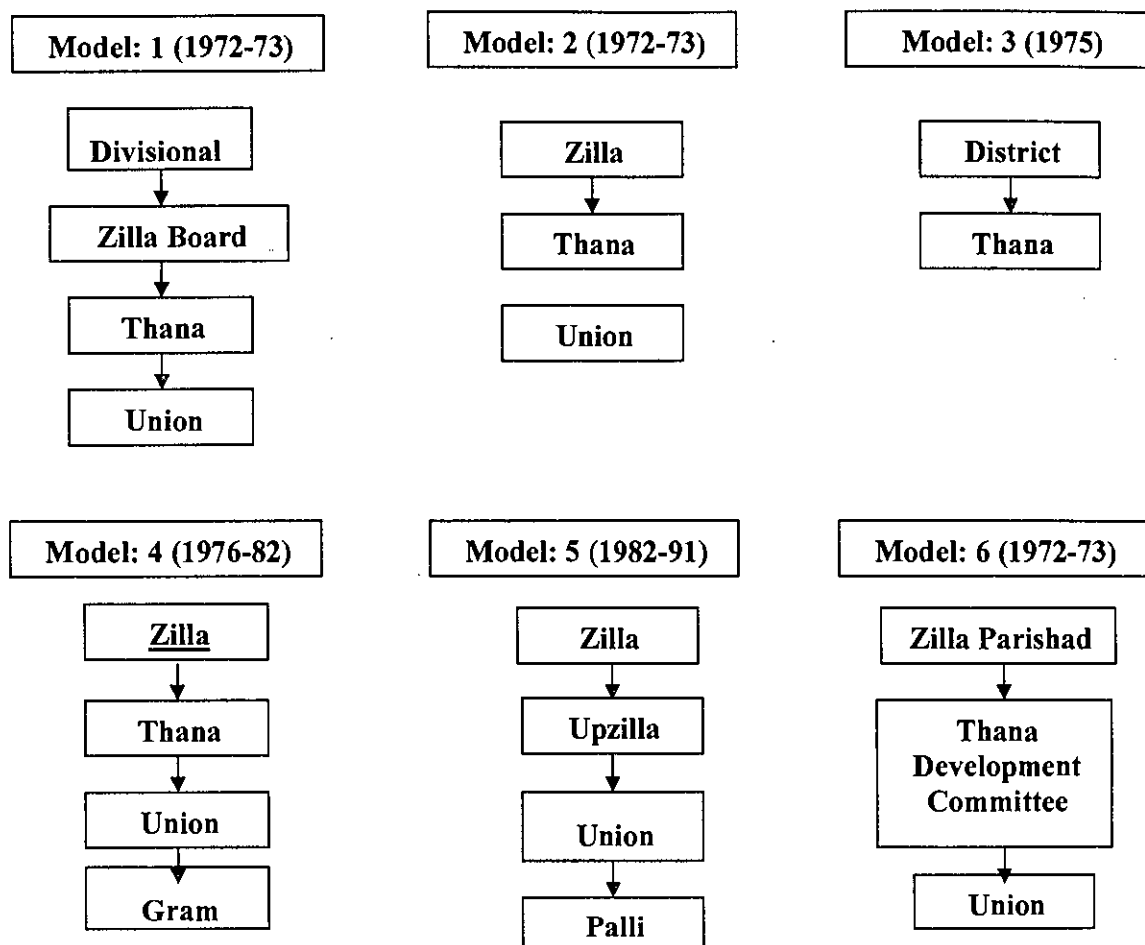


Chart 1: Local Government System in Bangladesh

2.5 Local Government and Constitution

The constitution of Bangladesh that first came into exist in 1972 also emphasized the importance of decentralized and functioning of local Government. According to the objectives set in the state principals (Part II), Article 9 of the constitution which outlined that “The state shall encourage local institutions composed of representatives of concerned and in such institutions special representation shall be

given as far as possible to peasant, worker and women". Accordingly, a separate chapter was devoted to local Government. Article 59(1) of chapter III provide that the local Government in every administrative unit would be entrusted to bodies composed of persons "elected in accordance with law". The law envisaged that each local body would perform within the appropriate administrative unit such Functions as:

- Administration and work of the public officer
- Maintenance of public order and
- Preparation and implementation of plan relating to public services and economic development

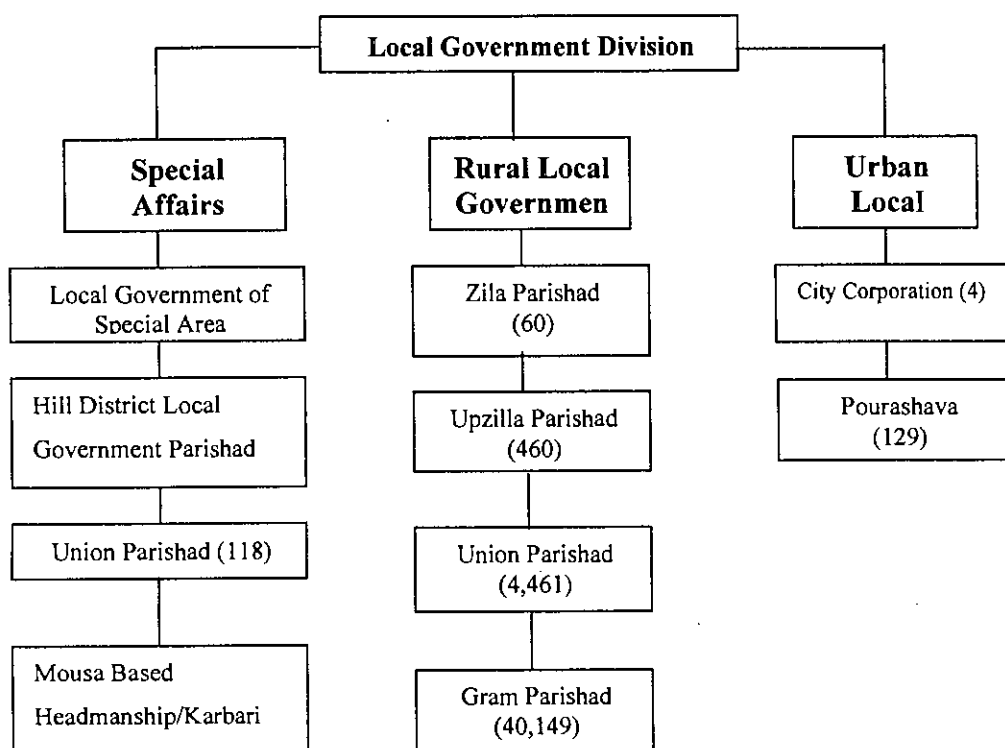


Chart 2: Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives

2.6 Structure of Local Government System in Bangladesh:

Bangladesh is ruled by a parliamentary form of Government. Prime Minister is the head of the parliament who is assisted by Council of Ministers. For the purpose of administration the country is divided into six administrative divisions which is placed under a Divisional Commissioner. Each Division is subdivided into Districts.

The administrative structure of Bangladesh consists of four tiers. In descending order right below the capital, there are six divisions; sixty-four District and 460 Upzilas. Each of these tier is headed by a central government official known as *Divisional Commissioner* and *Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO)* respectively. In the rural areas the Upzilas are sub-divided by 4,461 unions which and the 40,149 Gram Parishads.

The local government system in Bangladesh is also based on four-tier structure i.e. the Zila Parishad, Thana Parishad And Union Parishad at the District Thana and Union level respectively. In addition for urban areas there are four urban Metropolitan Municipal Corporations, 108 Pouravas (Municipalities), which are mostly based at the division and District levels. All local government bodies in Bangladesh are controlled and coordinated at the national level by the Local Government Division of Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives. In addition to the City Corporation there are some special development bodies that are working in the four Metropolitan cities. These are Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakha (RAJUK) the capital development authority, Chittagong Development Authority (CDA), Khulna Development Authority (KDA) and Rajshai Town Development Authority (RTDA). These bodies have been established by the government ordinance to design and implement the master plan for the respective cities. With the central government grants these bodies under takes development projects like road building, housing, development of commercial and industrial zones park, play grounds and many other similar functions normally undertaken by typical municipal bodies. Administratively, these urban bodies are controlled by the Ministry of Public Works, run by a board of governors composed of government officials, and nominated public representatives.

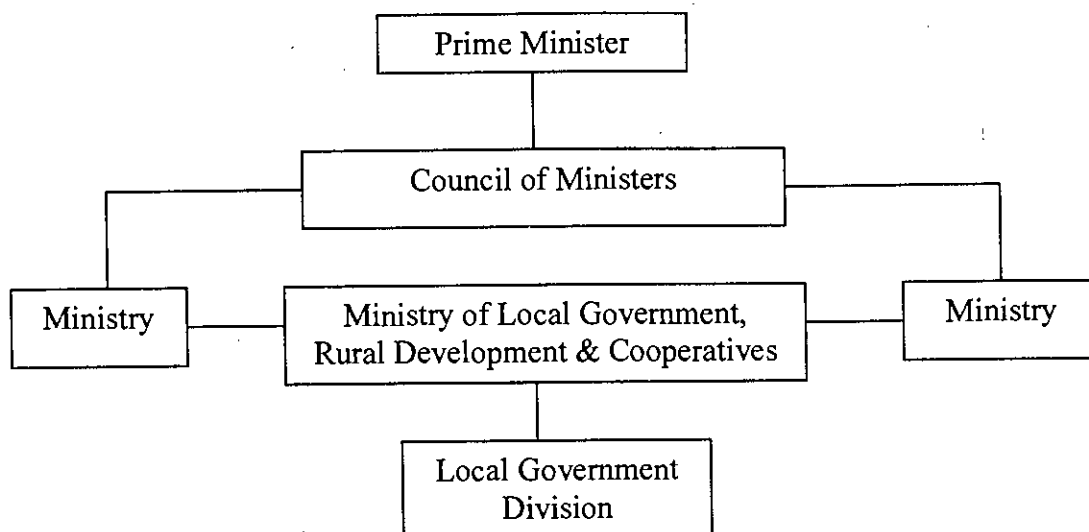


Chart 3: Structure of Local Government in Bangladesh

2.7 Composition of Union Parishad and Electoral Process:

Union Parishad is the lowest elected body in the local Government structure in Bangladesh. Its management is performed as per the Local Government (Union Parishad) Ordinances of the country. According to the ordinances, a Union Parishad consists of an elected council and a Government employee (secretary). The responsibility of the elected body is to perform the functions of the Union Parishad mentioned in the ordinance. Under the Local Government Amendments 1997 a Union Parishad is divided into nine wards. It consists of an elected chairman, nine members, and three women members. The voters of the entire Union directly elect the chairman. The voters in their respective wards elect the nine members, while women members are directly elected by the voters from respective three wards.

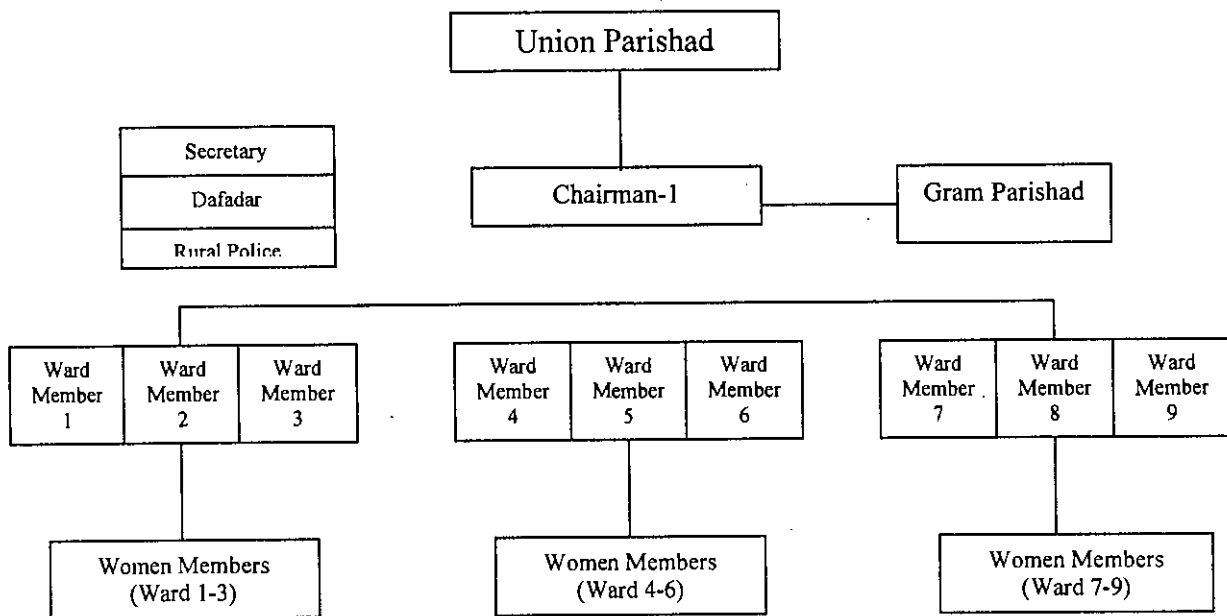


Chart 4: Structure of Union Parishad in Bangladesh

2.8 Function of Union Parishad:

Functional responsibility of Local Government in Bangladesh at the union level has undergone changes six times, as the government was changed, namely in 1885, 1919, 1959, 1976, 1983 and 1993. The difference was substantial between 1885 and 1919 and between 1919 and 1959. From 1959 onward, there were no drastic changes rather only regrouping functions and shifting and emphasis among the function.

In the company of the introduction of the Upzila Parishad in 1982, the Local Government Ordinance, 1983 was promulgated. This ordinance had divided the function of Union Parishad in five categories:

- a) Civic functions
- b) Police and defense functions
- c) Revenue and general administrative functions
- d) Development functions
- e) Transferred functions

Among these categories large number of functions is prescribed in the Local Government laws. At first the ordinance included the development function clearly. This development functions includes:

- ◇ Construction and maintenance of public property such as roads, bridges, culverts, etc.
- ◇ Assessment and collection of taxes.
- ◇ Construction and maintenance of ponds.
- ◇ Maintenance of harts and bazaars.
- ◇ Excavation and re-excavation of derelict ponds for pisciculture.
- ◇ Provision of road lighting.
- ◇ Plantation of trees.
- ◇ Settlement of local petty disputes.
- ◇ Promotion of cottage industries.
- ◇ Maintenance of Union Parishad information and records.
- ◇ Issue of various kinds of certificates and licenses.

- ◇ Maintenance of birth and death registers.
- ◇ Motivation of people to adopt family planning methods.
- ◇ Celebration of national days (Siddique, 1995).

Apart from these formal functions the Union Parishad performs some additional functions to meet the specific needs of the people, and under the instructions received from different Ministries and Agencies from time to time. These are:

- ◇ Issuance of certificates;
- ◇ Relief work;
- ◇ Clearance for loan;
- ◇ Referral work on connection with treatment at the Thana Health Complex; and
- ◇ Settlement of petty disputes without referring to the conciliation court.

2.9 Duties and Responsibilities of Union Parishad Members:

There are no specific duties and responsibilities proscribed in the Local Government (Union Parishad) Ordinance, 1983 and other laws. But as representatives of Union Parishad the members performs some responsibilities as follows:

- (a) To prepare list of victims and distribute relief products in the emergency of Union area such as, flood, cyclone or any other disaster.
- (b) To support village police for controlling laws and order situation in local domain.
- (c) To be present in monthly meeting of Union Parishad and deliver their ideas.
- (d) To prepare lists of local development projects for incorporating into government's development projects.
- (e) To take active part in budget preparation.
- (f) To take care of implementing process of development projects in own ward/wards.
- (g) To response as an organizer/member of standing committee.
- (h) To support the village court in trial as a member.

2.10 History of Women in Local Government:

In Bangladesh, women constitute almost half of the total population. But the involvement of women is mainly confined to the household works and they are excluded from the mainstream of socio-economic development and political decision making process at the local and national levels. Even they were not able to exercise their rights of equality to cast vote in the election of local bodies before 1956. In the recent time, women are encouraged to be involved in the socio-political decision process at the local and national levels. But in reality, the number of women decision-makers in the National Assembly and in the local government bodies is negligible. After the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971, five elections were held to the local bodies where only a few women candidates could win the election as chairmen or members through universal adult franchise. In this context the local government ordinances of 1976 and 1983 are of some relevance, which made provision for nomination of women members to local bodies, besides the elected ones.

The Union Parishad is the first step on the pyramidal hierarchy of the local bodies in Bangladesh. As per the previous local government ordinance, the Union Parishad would consist of a chairman and nine members elected through universal adult franchise, and three nominated female members. The Zila Parishad stands at the Apex of the local government system where three women members were nominated by the government from among the residents of the respective district. In place of Upazila Parishad, the Thana Development and Co-ordination Committee was introduced in 1991 through an amendment. This committee also had the provision for nomination of three women members from the residents of the Thana. The Pourashava (municipality) as an urban local government system also had a similar provision. For the purpose of ensuring active participation, nomination of women members were introduced through ordinance. However, it was found that the nomination of female members in the local government bodies were not done in time and the procedures followed for nomination were not uniform in the different tiers of

local bodies. Through the Local Government (Union Parishad) Amendment act 1993, the government body was changed to indirect election. At this time chairman and members of the respected Union Parishad elected them by voting. The women representatives in the local government bodies, either directly or indirectly elected, are expected to deal with the gender issues and solve the problems of women. Moreover, they have the right to enjoy the same right and privileges as the male elected members of local bodies.

2.11 Role of Female Members:

Female members are incorporated in the Local Government for the first time in Bangladesh in 1997 through direct election. At the initial stage these female members faced discrimination in performing their duties. There was no particular duty written in the Ordinance for these female members. For enhancing favorable condition, to exercise their power and play their role, the Local Government of Bangladesh suggested the chairman of Union Parishad, originating five more standing committees along with previous seven through the Local Government Ordinance (Union Parishad) 1983, Act 38(1). Each of the female members will perform as a chairperson of these standing committees, which will ensure their equal right with men.

It is in the ordinance that each Union Parishad will have eight projects worth Taka 25,000 each and there will be committee to implement these projects. Duties of Union Parishad's chairman and all other members are made particular in the circulation as follows:

- Each Union Parishad or member will chair in only one project
- Female members must chair one third of the total projects
- The female member will be member of project committees if they fail to be chairperson of project committees (due to fix one-third quota).

- Female member will be member of the location of tube well selection committee of their respective wards.
- The female members are included in the committee for selection of destitute women in VGD Program for allowance.
- Female members will be responsible for granting old allowance among real needy people as chairperson of one third of the committee.
- Department of primary and adult education has offered female members position of chairperson of one third of compulsory primary education committee.

2.12 Duties and Responsibilities of Female Members in Union Parishad:

The election to the country's 4400 Union Parishads were held in December, 1997 in which 14000 women were for the first time in the history of the country directly elected as members in the Parishads – mostly from reserved seats and a handful as members and chairmen from general seats. This entry of rural women into the formal structure of the Union Parishad is a landmark in the history of political participation of Bengali women. However, the post election experience of elected women members in the Union Parishads has not been encouraging. Reports indicate that they are being systematically discriminated and abused, denied power to take decisions, implement schemes and deliver services to people, are intimidated and even raped by male councilors of the same Parishad, faced gender discrimination and sexual harassment from the Union Parishad office (The Daily Prothom Alo, p.16 , 8th March, 2000).

In the light of these developments, the government took a strong policy decision to provide them with specific status and empowerment. An official order of the government in 1998 of the Government notified and instructed in the Union Parishad chairmen (of which copies were sent to Divisional Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners and Thana Nirbahi Officer or TNOs) to take a number of steps to

empower elected women members. These instructions include duties and responsibilities of female members in Union Parishads. They are as follows:

- (a) Any Union Parishad chairman/members will not be the chairman for more than one project in a fiscal year.
- (b) Elected female members will be the chairmen of at least one third of Project Implement Committees
- (c) The female members, who will not be able to be chairman of a project committee (due to the fixed one-third quota), have to be made members of project committee.
- (d) Female members would be the chairmen of site selection committee for ward-based Hand Tube-well in their respective wards.
- (e) The female members are included into the committee for selection of destitute women under the VGD program.
- (f) The Social Welfare Ministry has convent a committee for disbursement of elderly stipend, chaired by the members of Union council. The female members are working as co-chairmen in this committee.
- (g) Under the primary and mass education department, the female members are made chairmen of one third of the existing compulsory primary education ward committee.
- (h) The women members are included in the selection committee for women workers for the rural rehabilitation programs under LGED. They are also included as one of the three monitor in the existing monitoring system of rural rehabilitation programs.
- (i) Women members are made chairman of the Union Parishad's reserved seat for the one forth project undertaken by the Relief and Disaster Management Ministry.

- (i) The law, justice and parliament ministry has formed a village social development committee by including the three wards from which the female members are elected. This committee takes part in collection of statistics on birth and death register, promotion of women education, increase awareness for family planning and health care, poultry development, promotion of cottage industries, prevention of women and child oppression and violence.

CHAPTER-3

EMPOWERMENT AND WOMEN: THE RECENT SCENARIO

3.1 Introduction

Women empowerment is a widely used term for more than a decade. The term women empowerment is being used much more often than terms like 'women's welfare', women's uplifting, women's development or awareness increasing. However, in spite of the growing popularity and widespread usage of the term, the conceptual investigation of what exactly empowerment means, and even more, what the empowerment of women implies in social, economic and political terms is going on.

In many cases, the word 'empowerment' has simply been substituted to describe the same strategies and activities, which were earlier, termed 'women's development', community or 'women's participation' and so on. Some identified empowerment as a 'great deal, for large-scale programs has been launched with the explicit objective of empowering women and several older programs have adopted this goal in recent years (Batliwala, 2000).

It is a fact that, the societies, which have given equal access to women and men in economic and political opportunities, have progressed much faster than those, which have denied such access. Gender equality is necessary condition for sound human development (Haq, 2000). The women's' status in a developing society depends on her position in the family, in the various social and administrative institutions and at the political decision making level. In the case of Bangladeshi women, all these have acted as contributory factors to deprive her from the mainstream of political and administrative hierarchy. Women's participation in the political and national movement has been very negligible in Bangladesh. Although in the recent year two women (both the former Prime Ministers in the Parliament) have emerged as important political leaders in the country through their personal connections with former male political leaders of their respective parties. So, recent policies adopted for women's development and equality of gender is more concerned about the empowerment of women as an important

ingredient of economic development as well as a direct outcome of socio-political movement. For this reason, the main effort came from the government to provide supportive measures to enable women to participate in the mainstream of national activities. Recently, some NGOs are working for the emancipation of women and trying to create pressure on the government and society to formulate appropriate national policies for empowering women in economic activities as well as in legal aspect.

3.2 What is Empowerment?

To define empowerment in an exact way is difficult. There are many different definitions of empowerment in use that show it to be an elusive concept. The most conspicuous feature of the term empowerment is that it contains within it the word power. So obviously, empowerment is about power and about changing the balance of power. Power is exercised in development theory or gender analysis and social, economic and political relations between individuals and groups. So, for better understanding the empowerment, there is a need to look at actual meaning of power its root-concept, and how this root concept, power is being used in different theories or gender analysis.

'Empowerment' is used in many ways and in a wide range of contexts. The notion of the empowerment of women has increasingly become a part of the gender and development debate over the past decade. Empowerment focuses on women's practical and strategic gender interests in compliance with analysis and planning. Women's practical needs result from their position in society. Here position means that women also have strategic needs, which challenge the gender hierarchies and other mechanisms of servility.

3.3 Different Forms of Power

Power itself can be simply defined as control over resources and control of ideology. The resources, over which control can be exercised, fall into five broad categories;

- Physical resources like: land, water, and forests;

- Human resources like: people, their bodies, their labour and skills;
- Intellectual resources like: knowledge, information, and ideas;
- Financial resources like: money access to money;
- The self: that unique combination of intelligence, creativity, self-esteem and confidence.

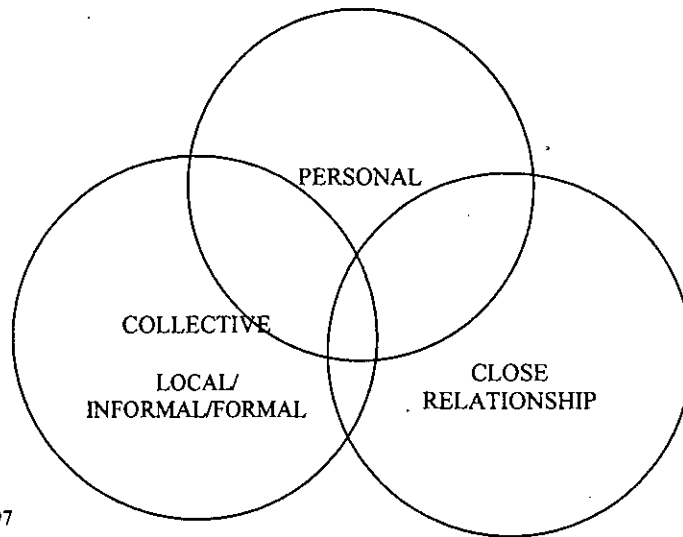
Controlling power, which may be responded to with compliance, resistance (which weakens processes of victimization)" or manipulation, is the base of empowerment in the development theory. Thus empowerment is including people in the decision-making process who are outside of it. This puts a strong emphasis on participation in political structures and formal decision-making. In the economic sphere, it emphasizes on the ability to obtain an income that enables participation in economic decision-making (Rowlands, 1997).

Many development planners/researchers have shown empowerment to be operating within three dimensions:

Personal: developing a sense of self and individual confidence and capacity, and undoing the effects of internalized oppression.

Relational: developing the ability- to negotiate and influence the nature of a relationship and decisions made within it

Collective: where individual work together to achieve a more intensive impact than each could have had alone. This includes involvement in political structures, but might also cover collective action based (in co-operation rather than competition. Collective action may be locally focused for example, groups acting: at village or neighbourhood level or be more institutionalized, such as the activities of national networks or the formal procedures of the' United Nations (Rowlands, 1997).



Source: Rowlands, 1997

Figure 1: The Three Dimensions of Empowerment

Empowerment is characterized by awareness, critical knowledge, and social, economic, political and psychological upliftment. Obviously it cannot be achieved by a one-shot intervention; it needs to be viewed as a process of building self-esteem and leadership. There is also a limit to what can be achieved through external interventions; empowerment is basically a process of learning and accommodation through education and conscience building and, most importantly, through understanding the interaction of interests between the powerful and the powerless. In other words, it requires a minimum level of achievement in terms of human capital on the part of the poor at the individual level (RD Report, 1999).

In the chapter 5 and chapter 6 of this thesis paper, an elaborated analysis was made to understand the condition of the women empowerment in our rural areas in response to the above mentioned definition of empowerment.

3.4 Woman Empowerment in Bangladesh: The Rural Scenario.

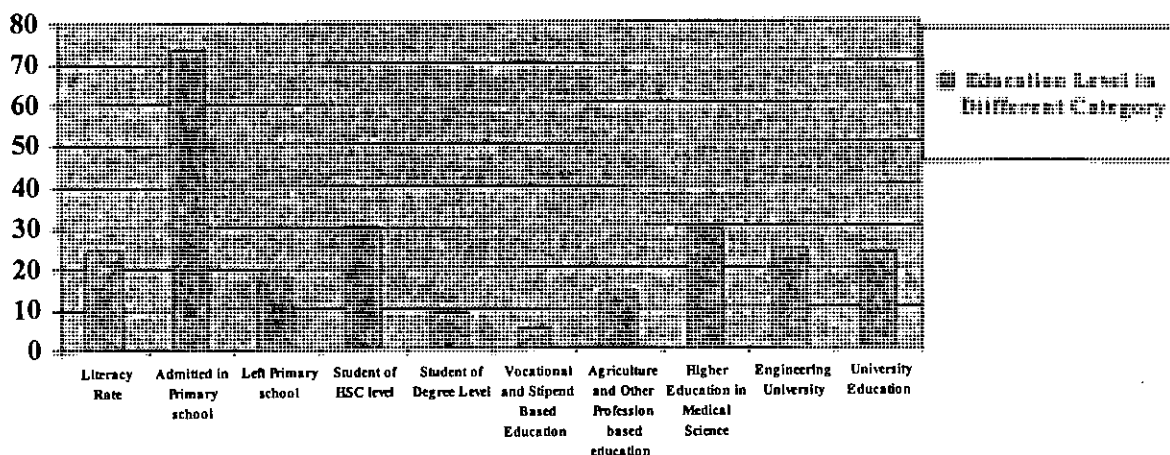
The daily life of poor rural women revolves around home, family and animal husbandry. From childhood, she is taught to be a good and obedient homemaker and wife. Being such involves submission to husband's will, bearing sons, being demure, observing *Purdah*, working hard, eating after everyone else and generally keeping her family's (her fathers) face (khan, 2000).

Rural women are often seen to share the work burden associated with household income generating activities through direct participation in income earning and /or expenditure saving activities. With largely unchanged societal and familial roles and obligations, such income generating activities of women, however remain peripheral to their lives. The dominant rural development efforts in the country have largely ignored the ways in which rural women's lives. Rural women's roles could be improved by changing technologies and providing livelihood options in areas, which are considered as women's domain. The perception bias against and the existence of physical and social 'empowerment' of rural women thus constitute one of the most significant disparities that persists, both at micro and macro levels, in the rural society in the country.

3.4.1 Women in Education:

Education is the backbone of a nation, which is really very weak for our country. The education is not accessible for woman which results low literacy rate in Bangladesh which is 44% for men and only 26% for women (The daily Janakantha, 12 June, 1998). Out of this 26% few have graduated from colleges or universities while the majority have passed primary school or spent three or four years in primary level education. A woman's or girl's right to education depends on the attitude of the society that she is belonging. Recently the government has grant free education for women up to higher secondary school certification level and due to the social condition or self-motivation women are lacking educational qualification. Although, the constitution of Bangladesh has laid down that no citizen can be subject to any disability, liability restriction or condition which regard to admission to any educational institution on the ground of sex. The constitution further empowers the state to make special provision to favor of women. Still the total drop out of girl student remains high in comparison with boys.

Graph 1: Women's Literacy Rate in Bangladesh



Source: BBS 1996

3.4.2 Women's Mortality and Health:

After 1970 Bangladesh went through three severe crisis periods i.e. War in 1971, famine of 1974/75, cyclone and flood 1988. Death rates were higher during these periods, particularly among poorer groups (D'Souza, 1982) and obviously, the women were the worst victims of all these disasters. Usually female experiences lower mortality levels than males because biologically females are considered the stronger sex. From south Asian countries, however comes evidence that female mortality is higher than male mortality and that the sex ratio is biased towards males (Goswami, 1998). This feature is also perceived from the following table.

Table 3.1: Disparities among Female and Male in Health Sector.

Issues	Female	Male
Average life expectancy	57.6 years	58.1 years
Mean age at marriage by sex	17.9	24.9
Malnutrition of child	13.3	11.9

Source: Kabeer, Rokeya, 1998.

It is seen from another statistic that the expenditure for treatment of male members in family is 24TK./head and only 18TK. for a female member in the same (Kabeer, 1998).

3.4.3 Women and Law:

Constitution of Bangladesh had been approved in 1972 where the equal right of men and women is reserved. But in reality the existing amendments could not support women's right in some of the following issues like: family law, especially the successors law, divorce, the guardianship law of child etc.. Moreover, keeping the option of taking permission from father or husband for applying any loan to bank, this naturally undermines the women's equal right. The women are the victims of judgement proceedings while conducting cases like women abuse, rape etc. even by the judge and lawyer for the patriarchal mentality, which is widely observed in the village area. There is no cell in many villages under the child and women ministry to protect those inhuman activities against women. Thereby the abused women of the village are being deprived from minimum legal support from the government. So far the women protection cell has been established only in 136 Thana out of 496 which is not working as per expectation. Though, there is no safe custody in law but the thousand of women are being detained for the crime done by others. Moreover, the provision section 54 of CPC usually being misused by the police. Thereby, women especially the floating or homeless are being abused and detained by them.

3.4.4 Legal Rights and Women:

There are some laws and provisions to lessen and remove social, economical and political injustice against the women are mentioned as follows:

- The Muslim family law Act, 1961 wherein the minimum marriageable age for women and men fixed at 18 and 21 respectively.
- Muslim Marriage and Divorce registration Act, 1974, has been passed thereof.
- Anti Dowry Law passed in 1980, which has been later amended in 1986, wherein receiving of dowry has been declared as punishable act.
- The provision of establishing the Family Court in every Thana and District headquarters has been made according to the Family Court Act 1985.
- Violence Against Women And Child Amendment Act 1995(special provision), has been passed to protect the women and child when they are under safe custody.

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3.4.5 Women in Economy:

When Bangladesh emerged in 1971, there was no foreign exchange reserve, no central policy planning agency for foreign relations, defense and economic planning. One of the first step took by the government was preparation of a First Five Year Plan for 1973-1978. In this Five Year Plan, issues like women development and gender disparities seemed to be absent. Only women rehabilitation program got priority in this plan.

The Two Year Plan spanning 1978-80 was characterized by a move from welfare to development oriented efforts. Women's development was centrally focused on.

The Second Five Year Plan (1980-1985) emphasized undertaking more diversified programs. The major objective here was to create an atmosphere for increasing women's development skills and activities. This was aided by expanding opportunity for specialized training, skill development, credit programs, etc. In this regard, 900 million TK. was granted which was only 0.56 percentage of the total grant for the plan year. At the same time section for women affairs was established in the secretariat and 10% quota was reserved for women to serve in the lower posts of public service commission.

Third Five Year Plan (1985-90) was built up on the second five year plan's activities. To achieve over all integration of women in the development process, the plan has specific objectives to reduce imbalances between the development of men and women.

The forth five year plan (1990-95) had, as its objectives, the acceleration of economic growth poverty alleviation and increasing self reliance of on its agenda. Development policies with regard to women were placed within the context of a macro –economic framework for a multi-sectorial thrust. Special attention was given to increased opportunities for income generation, access to institutional credit and organizational building for participation in bottom-up planning. The plan has pledges to improve the lot of women, especially their economic condition, by initiating certain steps. These steps are as follows:

1. Skill development and training programs for women
2. Credit schemes
3. Job opportunities and housing for working women

4. Child care facilities and legal aid for battered women (Ahmed, 2000).

A draft Participation Perspective Plan for 1995-2010, formulated by the government in 1995, sets the goal of eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. Its targets include:

1. Increasing the female literacy from 24% to 50% by year 2000;
2. Raising the adult literacy rate to 62%;
3. Increasing the enrolment of girls on primary schools by 94%;
4. Ensuring health for women by the year 2000;
5. Ensuring adequate nutrition for women and girls;
6. Increasing the share of women's employment from 8% to 30% by the year 2000.

In March 1997, the Cabinet approved a National Policy for women's Advancement. The vision of the policy is to guarantee women's equal access to opportunities for the realization of the goals of equality and peoples participation. It also aims to provide a comprehensive framework for women's development. It strengthened the following institutional mechanisms:

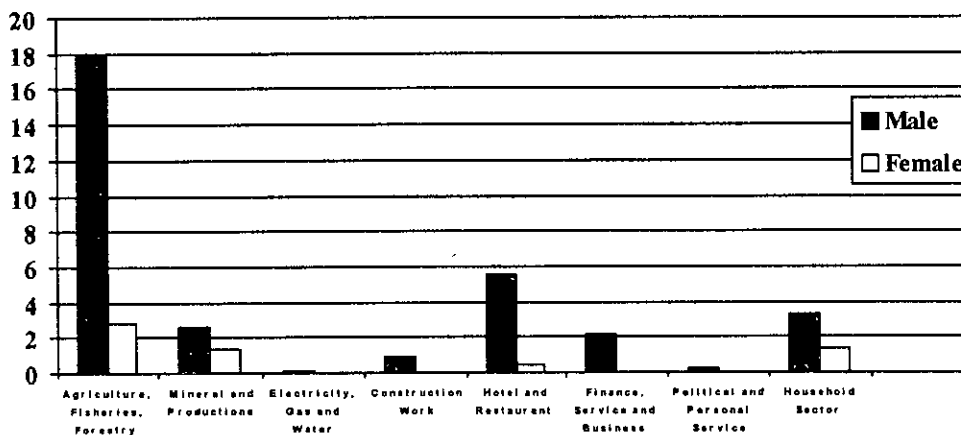
1. A 44 members National Women's Council headed by the Prime minister and comprised of ministers, members of parliament and eminent persons, as a policy directing body;
2. The Jatiyo Mohila Shongstha, a women's organization set up by the government which tends to be monopolized by women from the ruling political party, as a statutory body to link grassroots women's organization;
3. The ministry of Women's And Children's Affairs as the leading agency with 32 focal points in different ministries to mainstream women's concerns (Draft of the Participatory Perspective Plan 1995-2010. Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh).

The Fifth Five Year Plan of 1997-2002, articulates of the goals of the National Policy for Women's Advancement but does not include all the recommendations of the Sectoral Needs Assessment reports of different ministries which had been carried out by the government in 1996. The plan highlights the need to eliminate all discriminatory

laws, rules, regulations and practices governing the family, social cultural economic and political aspects of life (The Dainik Ittefaq, 9 March, 1997).

Moreover, budgetary allocations for women's development remain low. Women's condition is harder for the village women. They are neglected, as they are not economically independent. Creation of job opportunity for women will help women to realize their power. In all, given continued rise in violence against women, the serious lack of implementation of laws enacted to protect them. The issues of women development are remained for only discussion during election campaigns and are second matter for policy planning and the table in the next page is an affirmation to it.

Graph 2: Women's Position in Country's Economy



Source: Commercial activity and women and ecology, 1994.

3.4.6 Women in Politics

Nineties are the era for women's political participation and involvement in decision making process in the community. Bangladesh has made numbers of formal commitments to women's political participation in several important international strategy documents starting with the Plan of Action (Mexico, 1975), the Forward Looking Strategies (Nairobi 1985), and the Beijing Plan of Action (1995). By following the recommendation of Beijing, constitutional changes have been made to change women's mode of participation in electoral politics. Along with the Government

organizations NGOs supplemented the efforts of the government for women's development and campaigned for women's political rights (Ahmed, 2000).

In Bangladesh, women have remained outside of the power structure. They participate in campaigning and in community work, they fought for democracy but nothing was enough for their approach in public domain. A very small share could be able to enter positions of public decision making. Notwithstanding, there are a few signs of change as women press for recognition of their rights as an essential condition for democratization. There is a need to look at the situation if recent changes have increased this access and also to observe whether indeed women are able to function effectively in the given environment, in a highly controlled male domain (21st century).

3.4.7 Women in Local Government Institutions:

Constitutionally women have right to join the Local Government institutions. Article (59) of the Constitution of Bangladesh specifies that, "Local Government in every administrative unit of the Republic shall be entrusted to bodies, composed of persons elected in accordance with law". Union Parishad is the lowest tier in Local Government, which is spread over villages. Historically Union Parishad was dominated by male politicians. In 1996, women entered in this tier through direct election. They occupied three reserved seats out of twelve, whereas they have right to contest in other seats. Election under the new system was held in 1997. Great enthusiasm was witnessed among the rural women as voters, candidates and campaigners. Total 44134 women contested for 12828 female seats. Over 75% of the women voters cast their vote.

Though the conservative forces have strong influence against women's movement in countryside, their active and aggressive participation in the election is considered as a landmark in the struggle for empowerment of women. Women's entry into a highly controlled and hierarchical institution is set against difficult odds of family pressure, social inhibitions, financial constraints and even physical threats. This is why their decisions have to be reinforced with support from activist women's groups. Women's and civic organization, such as Bangladesh Mohila Parishad, Bangladesh Nari Progoti Sangha, Nagorik Uddyog have tried to promote women's political participation through

voter education and direct support for their candidacy. Most of their initiatives have been directed to creating a contributory political condition for women's participation and increasing their initiatives and active participation.

It is now necessary to create conditions congenial for the women members to act. Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperative has initiated a number of step to ensure participation of women members of union Parishad in all committees at union level including Project implementation Committee, WATSAN Committee for selection of tube well site, Committee of VGD, Committee for disbursement of Old age pension, Primary School Ward Committee, Rural Social Development Committee and the Standing Committees of Union Parishad. The Ministry has also formulated the duties and responsibilities of the elected women members. Women's organizations should act as a watchdog for enabling women members to discharge their role effectively.

Table 3.3: Women Chairperson in Union Parishad

Year	Position	Total no. of competed for seats	Elected Women in positions
1992	chairperson	116	19
	members	883	241
1997	chairperson	276	20
	members	44134	12828
2003	chairperson	396	56
	members	39419	13139

Source: Islam, Farzana, 2000.

In the recent time there are some evidences of violence against these women members or chairpersons in different part of the country. The victim of one such incidence is elected female member of Charbhadrashan upzila of Faridpur district (Daily Janakantha, 1st December, 03). She was physically abused by the union Parishad chairman's supported terrorist. Women leader and female member of Modhukhali union Parishad, Mrs. Hawa Begum was terribly abused along with her son and another female member in her union Parishad (Daily Sambad, 15th October, 03). Luckily Begum of Shonaimudi

Thana of Noakhali (Daily Dinkal, 18th February, 04) was also physically abused. There previous political or social confliction with others played the vital role for such incidences. Different protest groups took this issue very seriously and asked the government to take proper legal action against the criminals related to such incidences.

3.5 Hurdles in the Way to Women Empowerment:

Women-'s political empowerment is now a universally recognized phenomenon. But the reality is something different. The following sub sections will depict the hurdles in the way to women's empowerment in Bangladesh with an emphasis on political field.

3.5.1 Patriarchy

The traditional 'Patriarchy' - the domination of the male in the house and at the work place - is the first and fore most constraint in the process of women's empowerment.

3.5.2 Education

The centuries' old traditional belief - the women are to maintain the household only - coupled with the fear of security prevent the parents to send their girl children to schools/colleges for education. The lack of education on the part of the girl children ultimately proves to be the single strongest obstruction to women's empowerment.

3.5.3 Tradition

It is widely believed accepted by the people of the country that the empowerment in the state policy making process is the prerogative of the male folk only. The female section of the society is believed to have accepted this reality. This fake belief greatly negates the idea of women's participation in the male dominated society.

3.5.4 Religious Factor

Due to religious reasons women in Muslim states are strictly excluded from politics so as in Bangladesh. The doctrines often stress the importance of women's role as wife and mother.

3.5.5 Economic Factor

Economic factor poses a great barrier to women's empowerment in social and political arena. We can discuss the economic status of women in our country under few heads.

- **Dependency on Men:** Women are dependent on men due to their non-wage economic activities. Though women in the rural as well as in urban areas (specially the urban poor and middle class) are engaged in essential house hold works that are never assessed through economic yardstick. Women's earnings are thus lower than that of men's.
- **Land Ownership:** Men mostly own the lands owned by the households and women are deprived of this right. Land provides social status and political power as well as economic security. Women's landlessness reduces women's power in the household, even for wealthy women.
- **Less Scope for Employment:** Marital status restricts women's scope to go out of home for employment, as they are responsible for child bearing and rearing. Service holder women have to complete their household duties before they start for their job places. Therefore, economic segregation due to non-accessibility to resource base keeps them away from income earning opportunities and outside power structure (Goswami, 1998).

3.5.6 Legal Factor

Women constitute 48% of the total population, yet they have a negligible participation in different tiers of power structure of the state -machinery- i.e., till to date there are only 30 women reserved seats in the parliament where as proportionately this figure should have been 144.

3.5.7 Political Factors

Running in any type of elections in Bangladesh involves quite a handsome amount of money. It's not as easy for a female contender to meet such huge expenses as the males. On the other hand the political party authorities even do not rely on the females' ability

to earn or 'manage' such a huge affair in terms of profits for the party. All these result in poor participation of women in elections.

3.5.8 Organizational Factors

In the male dominated traditional society like ours, when a competent female contender intends to come forward in the political arena - she faces difficulties in organizing her forces and assets. This originates mainly from her lack of knowledge and shyness and partially from her physiological factors. A separate women political front from the grass root level can help eradicate this organizational drawback of the women.

3.5.9 Fatwa

In recent years due to *Fatwas*, the incidents of the oppression on women are being perpetuated at a large scale. The cases of *Fatwas* are related to oppressing women especially when the question of illegal sexual connection is raised. The attack on the NGOs and their female members in rural areas is the economic and political aspects of oppression by the *Fatwa* givers. Women are being subjected to oppression through the use of *Fatwas* even when the women are engaged in economic activities. The political aspect of *Fatwas* constitutes violating human rights and the right to freedom of speech. In this case also, women face it more than men.

CHAPTER 4

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY AREA

4.1 Introduction

The prime question of our concern for this study is 'Women empowerment in rural local government'. The study area includes three Union Parishads of Jhenaidaha Sadar Thana, named, Paglakanai Union Parishad, Harishankarpur Union Parishad and Porahati Union Parishad for this purpose. These three Union Parishads represents the rural areas in Bangladesh. On the other hand as these three Union Parishads are within proximity to the Jhenaidaha Municipality, they have also some influence of urbanization. A descriptive feature of these three Union Parishads is presented in this following section.

4.2 Physical Background

Jhenaidaha was a former sub-division of Jessore district. Kushtia and Rajbari Zilas bound the Zila on the north, on the east it is bounded by Magura Zila, on the south by Jessore Zila and on the east by Chuadanga and India. The total area of the Zila is 1949.62sq.km. (752.75sq.miles) of which 33.80sq.km (13.05sq.miles) is river line. The Zila lies between 23^o13' and 23^o46' North latitudes and between 88^o42' and 89^o23' East longitudes. Jhenaidaha Zila has eleven Thanas within its physical boundary. Among these eleven Thanas Jhenaidaha Sadar Thana is one, which includes to the Jhenaidaha Pourashava. A combined atmosphere of rural and partly urban life prevails in this area, which is needed to be integrated for the community's welfare.

Jhenaidaha Sadar Thana is divided in 17 union Parishads of geographic units, the largest Thana of Jhenaidaha Zila occupies an area of 467.75sq.km. including 2.25sq.km. of river area. It is located between 23^o26' and 23^o36' north latitudes and 88^o57' and 89^o20' east longitudes.

The total population of Jhenaidaha Sadar Thana is 333,192 which is highest within Jhenaidaha Zila. Of the total population, 171,483 are male and 131,046 are female

and total literacy rate is 27.5% where male constitutes 34.8% and female constitutes 19.8% of the total.

4.3 Climate

Agro-economic condition of the study area is based on agro-economic condition of the Union Parishad (UP). Tropic of Cancer passes through the middle of Jhenaidaha Zila. Due to the presence of the Bay of Bangal the area has a climate, which is neither too hot nor too cold. The annual temperature in the area is 22⁰C to 24⁰C and the annual average rainfall remains 150cm-190cm.

The concerned three Union Parishads of this study area are Harishankarpur, Paglakanai and Porahati union parishad. Physical, socio-economic and cultural environment of these three Union Parishads have been depicted in the following sections.

4.4 Physical Features of the Study Area

The physical condition of the study area is of great significance as it influences the settlement pattern and agro-economic settings of the area. The land is 8 meter above sea level of Bay of Bangal on the southern part of the country. This land area slopes from west to east and at the end it joins with the low land of Magura Upzila. The whole Jhenaidaha Upzila is a flood plain of river Padma along the bank of river Noboganga. The river Noboganga passes through the northern part of Jhenaidaha Sadar Thana. This river divides both the Paglakanai and Harishankarpur unions of the study area into two parts. Soil of this area is a mixture of Silt and *Bele- doansh*. The higher alluvium occurs along the riverbanks and *Pali* (silt) is concentrated in this flood plains.

4.5 Population

For overall development of the area, the size of the population, its density and structure are essentially required. All future development plans are formulated mainly based on these features. Table 4.1 shows population of the study area.

Table 4.1: Population Structure of Jhenaidaha Sadar Thana

Union	Male	Female	Total
Pagla Kanai	6972	6982	13954
Porahati	12276	10360	21636
Harishankarpur	8809	8608	17417

Source: TNO office of Jhenaidaha Thana, 2003

4.6 Literacy Rate

The literacy rate of Union Parishads under the study is shown in Table 4.2:

Table 4.2: Literacy Rate of the Study Area

Union	Male(%)	Female(%)	Total(%)
Paglakanai	27.4	16.9	22.3
Porahati	31.3	16.5	24.3
Harishankarpur	33.3	19.6	26.6

Source: BBS, 1991.

4.7 Employment Structure

The employment structure as depicted in Table 4.3 reveals the predominance of agriculture as the source livelihood for the majority people of Jhenaidaha Sadar Thana and the under study Union Parishad as well.

From the table it appears that the employment pattern corresponds more or less to the national characteristics. Agriculture is by far the most dominating occupation and when the landless laborers working in this sector are taken into account, it reaches almost a point of quasi-total, leaving only about 40.7% for services and other sectors. The employment pattern of the area is shown in Table 4.3:

Table 4.3: Employment Structure of Jhenaidaha Sadar Thana

Union Parishad	Total Household		Cultivator		Agriculture Labor		Business		Employee		Livestock and Others	
PaglaKanai	1460	100.0	516	35.3	290	19.9	210	14.4	30	2.1	414	28.4
Porahati	1920	100.0	749	39.0	420	21.9	102	5.3	90	4.7	559	29.1
Harishankarpur	2622	100.0	1208	46.1	348	13.3	130	5.0	60	2.3	876	33.4

Source: TNO office of Jhenaidaha Thana, 2003

4.8 General Profile of Study Area**Table 4.4: General profile of the study area**

General Profile		PaglaKanai	Harishankarpur	Porahati	
District		Jhenaidaha	Jhenaidaha	Jhenaidaha	
Name of Union Parishad		PaglaKanai	Harishankarpur	Porahati	
Came into exist as Union Parishad on		4 th May, 1974	4 th April, 1960	4 th April, 1960	
Area (Sq KM)	Total	12.02	26.84	33.01	
	Core	9.02	19.50	24.01	
	Fringe	3.00	7.34	9.00	
Ward (in Number)		9	9	9	
Mouza (in Number)		8	21	19	
Villages (in Number)		12	22	20	
Population		13954	17417	22636	
	Male	6972	8809	12276	
	Female	6982	8608	10360	
Household (in Number)		3053	3669	4616	
Educational Institutions (in Number)					
	Primary School	5	9	11	
	Government	1	6	8	
		Private	4	3	3
		NGO	0	0	4
	High School	1	2	3	
	College	0	1	0	
	Government	0	0	0	
		Private	0	0	0
	Madrasa	2	4	2	
	Orphanage	0	0	1	
Pond/Dighee	356	446	593		
River	1	1	1		

Source: TNO office of Jhenaidaha Thana, 2003

4.9 Logistic Profile

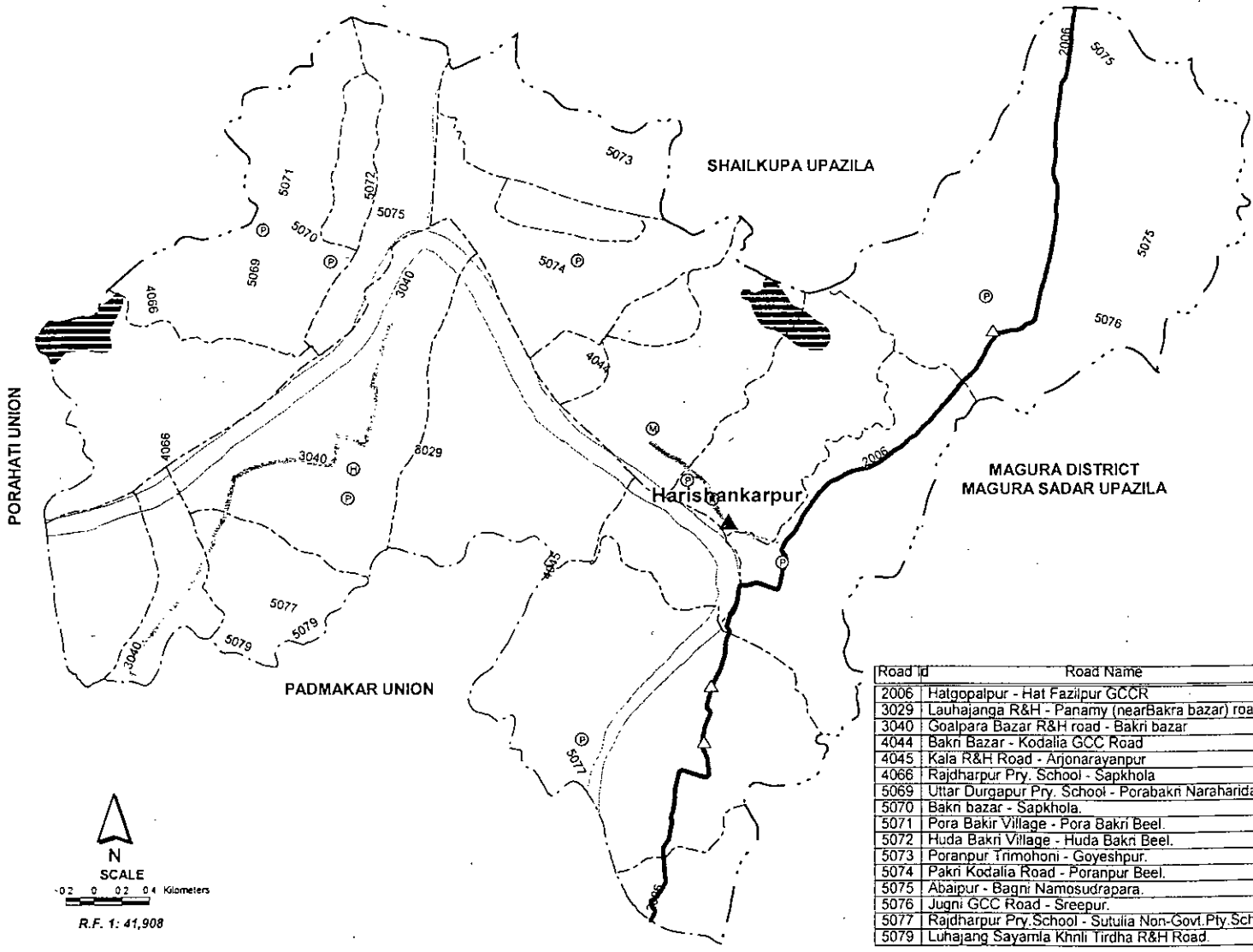
Table 4.5: Logistic profile of the study area

Logistic Profile		Paglakanai	Harishankarpur	Porahati
Health Care Centre				
	Hospital		1	0
	Child Hospital		0	0
	Clinic		1	0
	Family Planning Clinic	02	2	1
	Animal Hospital		0	0
Police Camp		1	1	0
Post Office		1	2	1
NGO		4	4	4
Sub-registry Office				
Infrastructure				
	Haat/ Bazar	2	4	4
	Culvert	16		78
	Overbridge	0	0	108
	Road (in KM)			
	Kutchra	16	22	06
	Pucca	10	8	04
	H.B.B and soling	5	7	4
	Religious Institutions			
	Mosque	18	0	28
	Eidgah	12	0	27
	Temple	1	0	0
	Church	0	0	0
	Cemetery	1	1	1
	Market	0	0	0
	Industry	0	0	0
	Cinema Hall	0	0	0
	Bank	0	0	0
	Public Library	0	0	0
	Public Auditorium	0	0	0
Park		0	0	0

Source: TNO office of Jhenaidaha Thana, 2003

These selected three unions, under the study area are not similar in terms of physical feature, socio-economic conditions and style of living of the dwellers as well. But apart from this it has found some common characteristics on the basis of which it will be possible to make common recommendations.

HARISHANKARPUR UNION MAP
JHENAIDAHA SADAR UPAZILA
JHENAIDAHA DISTRICT



LEGEND

Administrative Boundary

- International Boundary
- District Boundary
- Upazila Boundary
- Union Boundary
- Mouza Boundary
- Municipal Boundary

Administrative HQs

- District HQ
- Upazila HQ
- Union HQ

Physical Infrastructures

- National Highways
- Regional Highways
- Feeder Road Type A
- Feeder Road Type B (Pucca)
- Feeder Road Type B (Katcha)
- Rural Road (Pucca)
- Rural Road (Katcha)
- Railway Network
- Telecommunication line
- Power Transmission Line

Agricultural Infrastructures

- Road Cum Embankment
- Embankment

Natural Features

- Wide River with Sandy Area
- Water Bodies
- Khal
- Sandy Area
- Forest Area


Socio-Economic Infrastructures

- Growth Centre
- Small HA/Bazar
- Police Station
- Upazila Health Complex
- Family Welfare Centre
- Community Clinic
- Post Office
- College
- High School
- Primary School
- Madrassa
- Mosque
- Ashrafyan/Alpasha
- Church/Temple

Bettement

Digitized from 1:50,000 Vector Data Sheet (VDS) of 1988. GPS Survey 1998 and Data Checking in May 2001. Prepared by: Local Government Engineering Dept.

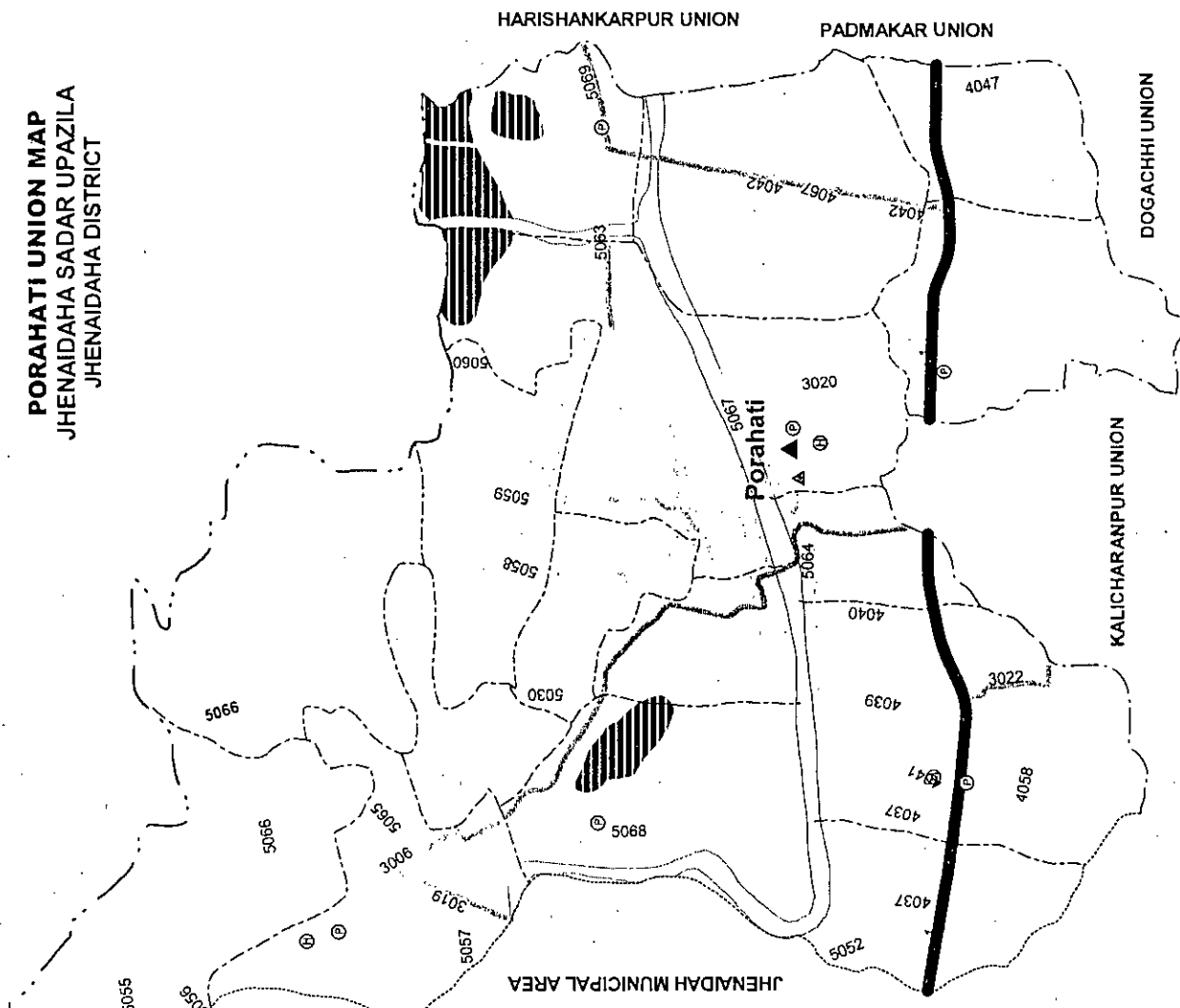
Road Id	Road Name
2006	Hatgopalpur - Hat Fazilpur GCCR
3029	Lauhajang R&H - Panamy (nearBakra bazar) road.
3040	Goalpara Bazar R&H road - Bakri bazar
4044	Bakri Bazar - Kodalia GCC Road
4045	Kalia R&H Road - Arjonarayanpur
4066	Rajdharpur Pry. School - Sapkhola
5069	Uttar Durgapur Pry. School - Porabakri Naraharidah.
5070	Bakri bazar - Sapkhola.
5071	Pora Bakri Village - Pora Bakri Beel.
5072	Huda Bakri Village - Huda Bakri Beel.
5073	Poranpur Trimohoni - Goyeshpur.
5074	Pakri Kodalia Road - Poranpur Beel.
5075	Abaipur - Baqri Namosudrapara.
5076	Jugni GCC Road - Sreepur.
5077	Rajdharpur Pry.School - Sutulia Non-Govt.Ply.School.
5079	Luhajang Sayamia Khnili Tirdha R&H Road.


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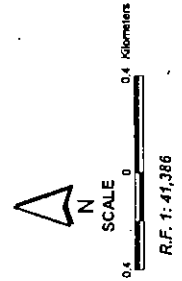
PORAHATI UNION MAP
JHENAIDAHA SADAR UPAZILA
JHENAIDAHA DISTRICT

LEGEND

- Administrative Boundary
- District Boundary
- Union Boundary
- Union Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- Administrative HQs
- District HQ
- Union HQ
- Union HQ
- Physical Infrastructures
- National Highway
- Regional Highway
- Feeder Road Type A
- Feeder Road Type B (Pucca)
- Feeder Road Type B (Kutcha)
- Road Road (Pucca)
- Road Road (Kutcha)
- Railway Network
- Telecommunication Line
- Power Transmission Line
- Agricultural Infrastructures
- Road Cum Embankment
- Embankment
- Natural Features
- Water River with Sandy Area
- Water Bodies
- Khal
- Sandy Area
- Forest Area
- Socio-Economic Infrastructures
- Growth Centre
- Small Market
- Police Station
- Upazila Health Complex
- Family Welfare Centre
- Community Clinic
- Post Office
- College
- High School
- Primary School
- Madrasah
- Mosque
- Assembly Hall
- Church/Temple
- Settlement

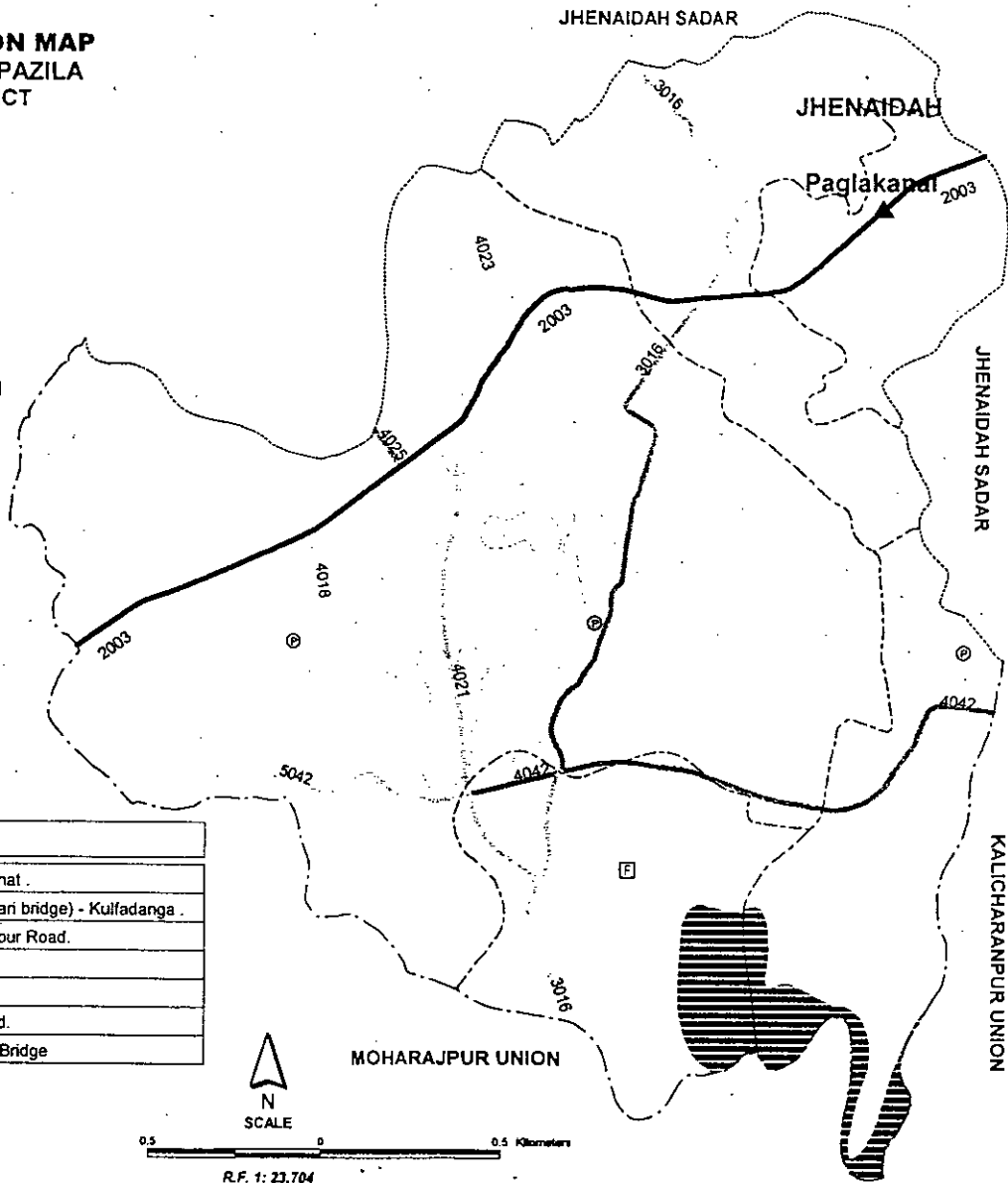
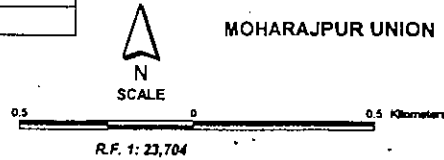


Road Id	Road Name
3006	Mochpur Elm street - Bhuoi bazar via Hershinga Road
3019	Komalpani Road - Bahadurpur bazar road
3020	Komalpani Egha Road - Mochpur bazar road
3022	Dighon BC road - Porahati Road
4037	Porahati Road - Bahadurpur River
4039	Porahati Road - Kaldia
4040	Porahati Road - Kaldia
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4097	Porahati Road - Kaldia
4098	Porahati Road - Kaldia
4099	Porahati Road - Kaldia
4100	Porahati Road - Kaldia



PAGLAKANAI UNION MAP
JHENAI DAHA SADAR UPAZILA
JHENAI DAHA DISTRICT

Road Id	Road Name
2003	Jhenaidah - Kotchandpur ghaga ghat .
3016	Gopinathpur R & H (near Dingamari bridge) - Kulfadanga .
4018	Baribathan Jamtala bazar Krishnapur Road.
4021	Bablatala - Paglanai Major.
4023	Baribathan HBB Road.
4025	Bablatala - Horinakundu HBB Road.
4042	Ghoramara R&H Road - Bejoypur Bridge



LEGEND

Administrative Boundary

- International Boundary
- District Boundary
- Upazila Boundary
- Union Boundary
- Mosjid Boundary
- Municipal Boundary

Administrative HQs

- District HQ
- Upazila HQ
- Union HQ

Physical Infrastructures

- National Highways
- Regional Highways
- Federal Road Type A
- Federal Road Type B (Paved)
- Federal Road Type B (Unpaved)
- Rural Road (Paved)
- Rural Road (Unpaved)
- Railway Network
- Telecommunication Line
- Power Transmission Line

Agricultural Infrastructures

- Road Cum Embankment
- Embankment

Natural Features

- Wide River with Sandy Area
- Water Bodies
- Khal
- Sandy Area
- Forest Area

Socio-Economic Infrastructures

- Growth Centre
- Small HAVERGAR
- Police Station
- Upazila Health Complex
- Family welfare Centre
- Community Clinic
- Post Office
- College
- High School
- Primary School
- Madressa
- Mosque
- Ashram/Madrasah
- Church/Temple

Settlement

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4.9 Existing Condition in the Study Area

Women empowerment in rural local government, which was discussed in chapter 2 and 3, has been taken in to consideration from the community's perspective in fixing the research objectives. In accordance with this, community's perception toward their women members in local government has been examined through field study. It was necessary to study the geographical, demographical, economical and social aspects of the study area for appreciation of the status of respondents who are the main concern of this thesis. For better appreciation of community's perception toward women empowerment it was also necessary to find out how far the women members could satisfy the local female community with their work in their need. In the following section, there is an analytical discussion on the female community, about their expectation from the women members, which will help in drawing a successful formulation of a policy recommendation for enhancing the power of women in local government.

4.10 Demographic Characteristics of the Study Area

To get a clear picture of the study area a demographic profile both from primary and secondary sources has been collected in details and its salient features are presented in the following paragraphs and tables.

4.10.1 Marital Status

Marital status bears the indication of an area, the adult population and working population, labor force, female workable population and so on. In the following table no. 4.6 shows the marital status of the study area.

Table 4.6: Relation between Age Group and Marital Status of the Respondents

Marital Status	Age Group of the Respondent										Total
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60 & above	
Unmarried	9	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
%	24.32	3.33	1.82	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.07
Married	24	28	49	33	35	21	10	12	15	2	229
%	64.86	93.3	89.1	82.5	94.6	77.8	100.0	100.0	88.2	40.0	84.8
Widow or Divorced	4	1	5	7	2	6	0	0	2	3	30
%	10.81	3.33	9.09	17.50	5.41	22.22	0.00	0.00	11.76	60.00	11.11
Total	37	30	55	40	37	27	10	12	17	5	270
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2002

According to the survey women in the study area were distributed in ten (10) age groups and other three groups according to their marital status. The above table shows that among 270 respondents 37 are from 15-19 age group and 24.3% of them are unmarried which shows a unsatisfying appearance in respect of child marriage; a total of 84.8 % respondent in the study area are married and 11.11% are widow or divorced.

4.10.2 Educational Status

Educational status is the mirror of social attitude. A well educated society can be considered as a progressive society. The educational status of the study area is shown in the following table no. 4.7.

Table 4.7: Educational Status of the Women in the Study Area

Name of Union Parishads	Education Level of the Respondent						Total
	Illiterate	i-v	vi-ix	SSC	HSC	Degree & above	
Paglakanai	14 15.60%	21 23.30%	16 17.80%	25 27.80%	9 10.00%	5 5.60%	90 100.00%
Porahati	22 24.40%	24 25.70%	12 13.30%	17 18.90%	8 8.90%	7 7.80%	90 100.00%
Harishankarpur	12 13.30%	36 40.00%	14 15.60%	18 20.00%	7 7.80%	3 3.30%	90 100.00%
Total	48 17.80%	81 30.00%	42 15.60%	60 22.20%	24 8.90%	15 5.60%	270 100.00%

Source: Field Survey, 2002

The data from the three Union Parishads of Jhineidaha Sadar Thana indicate similar type of education system in the locality for women. Including the three Union Parishads, the maximum number of respondents is educated with primary level (30%). 15.6% women in the study area have SSC educational qualification. Among the three Union Parishads, Paglakanai has the highest respondents from this category, which is 27.5% of the Union Parishad's total respondents. 8.9% respondents have educational qualification of HSC level. Out of 270 respondents only 15 (5.6%) are educated with degree and above level.

4.10.3 Reason behind residing in the locality

People reside in places according to marriage and other requirements such as occupational facility, social security, utility services, communication facility etc. The respondents of this study have mostly resided in this area by marital reason which is shown in the following table no. 4.8.

Table 4.8: Reason behind residing in the locality

Name of Union Parishads	by born		Through marriage		Occupational Reason	
Paglakanai	44	35.7%	44	30.8%	2	28.6%
Porahati	39	32.5%	49	34.3%	2	28.6%
Harishankarpur	37	30.8%	50	35.0%	3	42.9%
Total	120	44.4%	143	53.0%	7	2.6%

Source: Field Survey, 2002

It has been found that, marital reason is the important factor for residing in the locality for the respondents. Table 5.8 shows that, 53% respondents have become resident of the locality through marriage. About 44.4% of the respondents is living in the same locality since birth and 2.6% respondents reside in the study area for occupational reason of their guardian.

4.11 Socio- Economic Background

Socio-economic condition of an area is a parameter of overall progress of the area. In the following section there is an attempt to understand the socio-economic condition of the study areas.

4.11.1: Family Income and Education Level

Income structure of the population shows the economic status of the area, which is mostly related to the educational status of the family as shown in table no. 4.9.

Table 4.9: Relation between Family Income and Education Level of Respondents

Income level of the Respondent	Education level of the respondent														Total	
	Illiterate		I-V		VI-IX		SSC		HSC		Bachelor Degree		Masters Degree & above		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
1001-2000	15	31.3	30	37.0	7	15.7	2	3.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	54	20.0
2001-3000	14	29.2	15	18.5	10	23.8	18	30.0	3	12.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	60	22.2
3001-4000	6	12.5	11	13.6	12	28.6	28	45.7	8	33.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	65	24.1
4001-5000	3	5.3	10	12.3	6	14.3	2	3.3	2	8.3	1	9.1	1	25.0	25	9.3
5001-6000	3	5.3	7	8.6	6	14.3	2	3.3	8	33.3	1	9.1	1	25.0	28	10.4
6001-7000	5	10.4	4	4.9	1	2.4	5	8.3	0	0.0	1	9.1	0	0.0	16	5.9
7001-8000	1	2.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.2	0	0.0	1	25.0	3	1.1
8001-9000	0	0.0	2	2.5	0	0.0	1	1.7	1	4.2	6	54.5	1	25.0	11	4.1
9001-10000	1	2.1	2	2.5	0	0.0	1	1.7		0.0	2	18.2	0	0.0	6	2.2
10001 & above	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.7	1	4.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.7
Total	48	100.0	81	100.0	42	100.0	60	100.0	24	100.0	11	100.0	4	100.0	270	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2002

The literacy rate of an area is a mirror that reflects the social condition of that locality. Conversely, there is a relationship between income level and educational status. Mostly the rural women are less educated and at the same time the families in the rural areas are having lower income level. It is seen from the Table 5.9 that, majority of the respondents (20.0%) are from families with lower income level i.e. tk.1001-2000 per month and in this regard, illiterate women mostly (31.3%) constitutes the same income level. On the other hand, the middle-income level of TK. 3001-4000 holds the highest number of educated respondents (24.1%). Within this group, 28 (45.7%) respondents are having SSC and 8 (33.3%) respondent are having HSC level of educational qualification. There are 11 respondents in educational category of Bachelor degree. According to the table 4.9, 6 Bachelor degree holder respondents are from TK. 8001-9000 income groups, which is the highest (54.5%) in this educational category as well. Only 4 respondents have master degree. They are from (4001-5000) and (8001-9000) income groups.

4.11.2 Profession and Personal Income

Personal income depends on profession. Information on profession and personal income provides idea on job market and the social attitude of an area. The table 4.10 shows relation between personal income and profession of the respondents in the study area.

Table 4.10: Relation between Profession and Personal Income of the Respondent

Profession of the respondent	Personal Income of the Respondent									Total
	0	101-500	501-1000	1001-1500	1501-2000	2001-2500	2501-3000	3001-3500	5001 & above	
home maker	175 (90.7%)	11 (33.3%)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	186 68.9%
student	17 (8.8%)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17 5.3%
day labour/maid servant	0	16 (48.5%)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16 5.9%
Social worker	0	1 (3.0%)	1 (5.3%)	2 (18.2%)	7 (58.3%)	1 (50%)	0	0	0	12 4.4%
Handicraft	0	5 (15.2%)	15 93.8%	9 (81.8%)	2 (15.7%)	0	0	0	0	31 11.5%
service	0	0	0	0	2 (15.7%)	1 (50%)	2 (100%)	1	0	6 2.2%
Business/ Land lord	0	0	0	0	1 (8.3%)	0	0	0	1 (100%)	2 0.7%
Total	192 (100%) (71.1%)	33 (100%) (12.2%)	16 (100%) (5.9%)	11 (100%) (4.1%)	12 (100%) (4.4%)	2 (100%) (0.4%)	2 (100%) (0.7%)	1 (100%) (0.4%)	1 (100%) (0.4%)	270 (100%) (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2002

Now a day, earning a wage is big challenge in our country for both men and women. In the rural area the problem seems to be more acute, which is shown in the Table 4.10. Among 270 female respondents 192 (71.1%) do not earn any income. 33 women earn 101-500 tk. where 16 (48.5%) are day labour or maidservants. There are 6 (2.2%) women who are in service, and whose income ranges from TK. 1501-2000 to TK.3001-3500. The Table 4.10 shows that there is only one respondent who earns 5001 & above, is a landlord.

4.12 Basic Utility Facilities

Villages are the most unprivileged areas in the country in regard to basic utility services-like water supply, sanitation and drainage facility, electricity facilities and health facility etc. The following section provides information on the condition of utility facilities in the study area.

4.12.1 Water Supply:

Insufficiency of safe water for drinking and other household works in rural areas is a common problem in Bangladesh. In study villages, water is collected from hand pumps or pond nearby, which is a hard work as well as time consuming too. In the study areas, there is no provision of piped water supply from government or any other NGOs. Very few residents have piped water by their own electric water pump. The table 4.11 shows that the villagers mainly (88.1%) collect water for drinking or cooking purpose from tube wells and 9.3% respondent use pond water for daily household works.

Table 4.11: Sources of Water in the Study Area

Name of the Union Parishad	Sources of water					
	Piped water		Tube well		Pond	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Paglakanai	0	0.0	75	83.3	15	15.7
Porahati	0	0.0	80	88.9	10	11.1
Harishankarpur	0	0.0	83	92.2	7	7.8
Total	0	0.0	238	88.1	32	11.9

Source: Field Survey, 2002

4.12.2 Drainage and Waste Disposal Facilities

Like any other typical village area, the study area there has no planned drainage and waste disposal facilities. People make drains for their personal use surrounding their premises, which is not sufficient to work as a drainage system. As there is no fixed place for waste disposal in the study area, village people throw their waste in a vacant land near their house, which makes the total environment unhealthy.

Lack of drainage system causes water blockage and water logging in the rainy season which harms the environment and the communication system. In that period specially women remain confined in their house. On the other hand, it is the wife or the female member of the family, who has to manage the cooking for whole family which is a really difficult job for her in that season. Village drainage system includes katcha drains, ponds, tanks (man made or natural), and rivers.

4.12.3 Electricity Facilities

Electricity facility is being gradually provided in the rural area is an indication of development, which increases the total work time for women and men both. In the study area most people are enjoying electricity facility. The number of electricity consumers is increasing day by day. The most of the respondents who enjoys electricity facility are from Paglakanai Union, as this Union Parishad shares its boundary with Jhenaidaha Municipality area.

Table 4.12: Electricity Facilities in the Study Area

Name of Union Parishads	Electricity in the house				Total	
	Yes		No		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%		
Paglakanai	39	43.33	51	55.67	90	100.00
Porahati	34	37.78	56	62.22	90	100.00
Harishankarpur	27	30.00	63	70.00	90	100.00
Total	120	44.44	150	55.56	270	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2002

The Table 4.12 shows 44.44% of the respondent is utilizing the facilities of electricity of which most are connected from the main roads or neighbour's house. Other 55.56% uses kerosene lamps. Women, who have electricity in their houses, enjoy extended night time for their work.

4.13 Different Problems in the Study Area

4.13.1 Problems of Safe Drinking Water Supply

Arsenic is a harmful component for human body. Now days, its presence in hand pumps water has become a common problem in the villages of Bangladesh. Different NGOs worked to increase awareness about the effect of arsenic attack among the villagers in the study area. 95.6% of the respondents have answered in affirmative about the presence of arsenic in their drinking water. Only 2.2% of the respondents are ignorant about it and the same percentage of respondents has answered in negative about the presence of arsenic in drinking water.

Table 4.13: Presence of arsenic in drinking water

Name of the villages	Presence of arsenic in drinking						Total	
	yes		No		No idea		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Khajura	13	85.7	0	0.0	2	13.3	15	100%
Gilabaria	15	100.0		0.0		0.0	15	100%
Gayashpur	13	85.7	1	5.7	1	5.7	15	100%
Baribathan	15	100.0		0.0		0.0	15	100%
Corapara	13	85.7	1	5.7	1	5.7	15	100%
Berbari	15	100.0		0.0		0.0	15	100%
Bhashudevpur	15	100.0		0.0		0.0	15	100%
Rupda	15	100.0		0.0		0.0	15	100%
Kanshi	13	85.7	1	5.7	1	5.7	15	100%
Durgapur	15	100.0		0.0		0.0	15	100%
Bhupatipur	15	100.0		0.0		0.0	15	100%
Porahati	13	85.7	1	5.7	1	5.7	15	100%
Pailanpur	15	100.0		0.0		0.0	15	100%
Harishankarpur	15	100.0		0.0		0.0	15	100%
Aliarbakri	15	100.0		0.0		0.0	15	100%
Paranpur	15	100.0		0.0		0.0	15	100%
Bazidpur	13	85.7	1	5.7	1	5.7	15	100%
Panashi	15	100.0		0.0		0.0	15	100%
Total	258	95.6	6	2.2	6	2.2	270	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2002

In these three Union Parishads, there is no detected case of arsenic affected patient. But lack of proper diagnosis facility for the arsenic affected disease, makes it difficult to

believe that there is no arsenic affected patient in the study area. Total 258 respondents from all the three Union Parishads claim that hand pumps in some particular places are supplying arsenic contaminated water. Some young, self motivated people have tested hand pump water of those areas on their own initiative and found presence of arsenic in it. In the study area, government or local NGOs have not taken any measure to help the people to protect them from the hazardous effect of arsenic contaminated water.

4.13.2 Problems Faced By Community in Local Health Sector

Health care facility is not very satisfactory in the study area. Available facility cannot fulfill the requirement of the community people's need. The following table shows the respondents perception about the present status of health facilities in the study area.

Table 4.14: Problems faced by community in local health sector

Name of the Union Parishad	Long distance to reach the facility		Offensive attitude of the management		Lack of doctors		Doctors are not dutiful		Lack of medicine		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Paglakanai	2	2.2	0	0.0	48	53.3	45	50.0	48	53.3	90	100
Porahati	6	5.7	2	2.2	52	57.8	52	57.8	52	57.8	90	100
Harishankarpur	0	0.0	2	2.2	51	55.7	48	53.3	48	53.3	90	100
Total	8	3.0	4	1.5	151	55.9	145	53.7	148	54.8	270	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002

The respondents were asked about the kind of problems they face in health sector. In this respect they were provided with four problems related to health sector. Most of the respondents found no problems in the health sector of their locality (65.2%). However, 11.2% respondents find lack of specified doctors is a problem in the study area. According to 11.0% respondents, lack of medicine is also a problem in the health sector.

4.13.3 Main Problematic Issue

As the residents of Bangladesh, women have right to get proper education, job opportunity, training facilities, communication, recreation etc. In reality, they are

deprived of most of these facilities. The condition gets more critical in the rural areas. In this section, an attempt was made to know that, how the village women view of their future after inclusion of female members in rural local government. The variables like poverty, joblessness, education and training facilities, violence, and disregard of women's issues etc. are used to sort out the prevailing socio- economic conditions of the women in the study area.

4.13.3.1 Some Major Problematic Issue for women in the study area

Women in rural areas are faced with various barriers to improve their living condition. The problems are more or less same in villages in Bangladesh but their severity is different in different areas, which is shown in the following table no. 4.15.

Table 4.15: Main Problematic Issue in the locality for women

Name of Villages	Poverty/ Joblessness	Lack of Educational facility	Lack of Training	Violence towards women	Conservative Society	Lack of self motivation	Disregard of Women Issues
Khajura	22	24	52	63	68	91	100
Gilabaria	22	24	47	59	77	99	86
Gayashpur	20	25	54	59	75	98	90
Baribathan	23	24	52	57	76	102	87
Corapara	20	28	56	55	78	95	88
Berbari	27	24	40	57	83	95	88
Bhashudevpur	23	22	47	56	82	95	89
Rupda	24	23	46	63	72	96	96
Kanshi	23	22	56	53	77	93	92
Durgapur	25	22	53	55	80	99	85
Bhupatipur	21	24	46	57	84	99	84
Porahati	20	25	52	61	80	90	92
Pailanpur	19	31	52	47	82	99	88
Harishankarpur	16	39	64	39	70	104	87
Aliarbakri	30	15	45	60	87	90	93
Paranpur	25	20	45	60	82	101	87
Bazidpur	22	26	53	71	61	91	96
Panashi	21	27	44	63	71	95	87
Total	403	445	904	1035	1385	1732	1615
Rank of Problems	1	2	3	4	5	7	6

Source: Field Survey, 2002

A questionnaire was supplied with seven options to the respondents to find out the main Problematic issue in the locality. The respondents were asked to rank the options by their severity to them in the ascending order (i.e. to allot minimum number for the option of most grave nature). Joblessness/poverty was recognized as the most problematic issue in the locality by the respondents. Lack of educational facility is the second big problem. Disregard of Women Issues, Conservative Society and lack of self-motivation are identified as the least problematic issues in the society.

4.13.3.2: Reason behind Bad Economic Condition of Local Women

In following Table 4.16, the respondents have expressed their perception toward the main reasons behind their backward economic status.

Table 4.16: Reason behind Bad Economic Condition of Their Locality

Name of Villages	Unequal wage with men.	Unskillfulness of women	No scope for prove ability	Unequal education levels with men.	No ownership of land for women	Religious conservativeness.
Khajura	25	37	48	38	73	70
Gilabaria	30	43	48	31	83	80
Gayashpur	21	38	54	32	74	72
Baribathan	23	40	58	42	82	67
Corapara	23	44	57	25	77	66
Berbari	29	41	54	28	83	80
Bhashudevpur	28	45	57	25	83	71
Rupda	27	47	43	39	82	83
Kanshi	20	39	49	35	73	75
Durgapur	29	46	44	35	84	77
Bhupatipur	28	42	58	29	83	75
Porahati	24	44	53	24	76	72
Pailanpur	17	48	42	43	89	76
Harishankarpur	26	51	52	24	90	72
Aliarbakri	28	49	56	17	88	77
Paranpur	24	51	54	21	90	75
Bazidpur	29	34	33	52	70	73
Panashi	35	39	39	41	80	81
Total	466	778	899	581	1460	1342
Rank of the problems	1	3	4	2	5	6

Source: Field Survey, 2002

The respondents were provided with a questionnaire of five options to understand the main reasons behind their backward condition. They ranked the issues in an ascending order according to its severity to them behind their bad economic condition or poverty. Women in village areas face poverty for various reasons. Unequal wage is being ranked as the prime reason with lowest point of 466 and education level the second with 581 respectively. The respondents agreed that, woman, with their unskillfulness (score, 778) cannot find a positive way to improve their economic conditions. In this regard religious conservativeness and land ownership problems got least importance (score, 1342 and 1460 respectively).

4.13.4 Educational System

Education is a very important variable for understanding the present and future social and economic status for both men and women. Education level adds a progression in all respect of women's life. Higher the education levels makes women more self motivated. However, most of the rural areas in Bangladesh, women are deprived of it. In this section, the respondents find the main obstacles and remedies for rural women's educational system.

Table 4.17: Problems in Women Educational System

Name of the Union Parishads	Lack of Girls' school		Insufficient stipend for female student		Incompatible education system		Negligence about women's education.		Street teaser on girls		Inappropriate school timing for girls	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Paglakanai	48	53.3	76	84.4	3	3.3	63	70.0	31	34.4	12	13.3
Porahati	49	54.4	80	88.9	4	4.4	63	70.0	36	40.0	12	13.3
Harishankarpur	54	60.0	83	92.2	2	2.2	45	50.0	50	55.6	19	21.1
Total	151	55.9	239	88.5	9	3.3	171	63.3	117	43.3	43	15.9

Source: Field survey, 2001

Most of the respondents (88.5%) in the study area opined for 'insufficient stipend for female student' while pointing the main obstacle for backward educational level of female folk. According to 63.3% of the respondents, negligence about women's

education by community people has sickened the condition of female education. 55.9% believes that female education program could be more effective if the number of girls school would have been increased. 43.3% of the respondent is not comfortable to send their female child because of the disturbance of street teaser on girls. Some of the respondents (15.9%) took into account the inappropriate school timing as a barrier in women education

4.13.5 Working Environment for Women in the Study Area.

Women's movement outside home for earning a wage depends on the working therein. In this section, effort was made to know the feature of local women's participation in out door work from the community women's views.

4.13.5.1 Present Environment for Working Women in the Study Area

Working environment for women is as bad as in most of the rural part of the country. However, earning personal income is vital means for women empowerment. The table 4.18 shows the respondents' view about the working environment in the study area.

Table: 4.18: Working environment within the area

Name of Union Parishads	Bad		Improving		Not Improving		Good		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Paglakanai	28	31	11	12	51	57	0	0	90	100
Porahati	28	31	26	29	36	40	0	0	90	100
Harishankarpur	15	17	30	33	45	50	0	0	90	100
Total	71	26	67	25	132	49	0	0	270	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002

From the Table 4.18 it is clear that no respondent has agreed that the working environment for women in their locality is good. According to 49% respondents among the three Union Parishads, working environment for women within their localities have not started improving yet. 26% respondent feels that the working environment is bad for women in the study area. Only 25% of the total respondent believes that the working environment for women is improving due to the initiatives taken by female members.

4.13.5.2 Obstacles Resulting Unsuitable Working Environment for Women in the Locality

The respondents were given questionnaire with multiple choice options to reveal their opinion about the obstacles resulting unsuitable working environment for women in the locality. The revealed data, which is shown in a tabular form in Table 4.19, shows a very positive social change.

Table: 4.19: Obstacles resulting unsuitable working environment for women in the locality

Name of Union Parishads	Less job opportunity		Obstacle created by the village elders.		Fear of violence.		Non-cooperation from Husband		Religious constraints.	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Paglakanaï	62	69	9	10	11	12	24	27	13	14
Porahati	65	72	14	16	20	22	12	13	10	11
Harishankarpur	75	83	9	10	25	28	23	26	15	17
Total	202	75	32	12	56	21	59	22	38	14

Source: Field Survey, 2002

75% of the respondent thinks that lack of job opportunity is the main reason behind this situation. According to 22% of the respondents, 'opposition from husband' is another obstruction which resulting unsuitable working environment for women. The other social obstructions like oppression from local elite or elderly or religious group, fear of violence, etc. also have influenced this condition.

4.13.6 Present Development Programs for Women

There is a need to generate efficient women work force for a suitable working environment, along with social conversion. In compliance with this, there must be the facilities for various training programs for women. The local government has provided some programs like family planning, fisheries, livestock etc. In the table no. 4.20, the reasons behind unfruitfulness of these programs have been depicted. According to 50% of the respondents, these programs could not achieve target, as there is a lack of proper guideline for the trainee after training period. Many (20.9%) think that, these programs are not qualitative or have no real out put. 25.5% respondent stated about weak publicity as another important reason for the programs to be ineffective.

Table 4.20: Reasons behind poor impact of the programs

Name of the Union Parishad	No real out put / not qualitative		No access for all		Weak publicity		Bad communication		Lack of proper guideline after training period	
Paglakanai	24	25.7	3	3.3	25	27.8	4	4.4	55	61.1
Porahati	12	13.3	1	1.1	34	37.8	1	1.1	55	61.1
Harishankarpur	37	41.1	0	0.0	32	35.6	0	0.0	61	67.8
Total	73	27.0	4	1.5	91	33.7	5	1.9	171	63.3

Source: Field Survey, 2002

4.13.7 Effective Salish

Salish is an institution that works as a local court for village people. The Table 4.21 shows from the community's point of view that the female members of rural local government must have control on Salish.

Table 4.21: Female Members' Level of Influence over Salish

Name of the Union Parishads	Ward no.	Name of the villages	Level of Influence on Salish by female member						Total Respondent No.
			good		no		Partial		
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Paglakanai	Ward-1	Khajura	2	13.3	4	25.7	9	60.0	15
		Gilabaria-M	9	60.0	2	13.3	4	25.7	15
	Ward-2	Gayashpur-M	5	33.3	2	13.3	8	53.3	15
		Baribathan	1	5.7	3	20.0	11	73.3	15
	Ward-3	Corapara	2	13.3	3	20.0	10	65.7	15
		Berbari-M	10	65.7	2	13.3	3	20.0	15
Porahati	Ward-1	Bhashudevpur-M	11	73.3	2	13.3	2	13.3	15
		Rupda	1	5.7	3	20.0	11	73.3	15
	Ward-2	Kanshi-M	8	53.3		0.0	7	45.7	15
		Durgapur	1	5.7	2	13.3	12	80.0	15
	Ward-3	Bhupatipur-M	9	60.0	2	13.3	4	25.7	15
		Porahati	3	20.0		0.0	12	80.0	15
Harishankarpur	Ward-1	Pailanpur-M	7	45.7	4	25.7	4	25.7	15
		Harishankarpur	2	13.3		0.0	13	85.7	15
	Ward-2	Aliarbakri	1	5.7	2	13.3	12	80.0	15
		Paranpur-M	6	40.0	2	13.3	7	45.7	15
	Ward-3	Bazidpur	2	13.3	4	25.7	9	60.0	15
		Panashi-M	6	40.0	6	40.0	3	20.0	15
	Total		86	31.9	43	15.9	141	52.2	270

Source: Field Survey, 2002

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In the table, names of the villages with the letter M show the female members' native villages. Though the table depicts a lower level of overall influence of female members in the Salish, yet there is a unique feature depicted in the table above: that is the female members have quite good hold on Salish in their native villages. In the villages of Paglakanai Union Parishad, female members' control on Salish in Gilabaria and Berbari of ward 1 and 3 is recognized as good by 60.0% and 65.7% respondents respectively which are the female members' native villages. The female members get good support from their local people in their village which can be considered as a reason for this situation. On the other hand in female member's native villages, Gayaspur of ward 2, respondents think that the female member in their ward has partial control over Salish (53.5%). The same picture is depicted over the other areas of study.

4.13.8 Loan Facility for Destitute Women from the Union Parishad

The women in the study area were asked frequently to know their perception regarding loan facility for the destitute women in the study area. It was known while interviewing that the amount of money as loan for destitute women is only TK. 500 which is a very little amount of money for the present market of inflation. This amount can be increased upto TK. 1000 with special consideration of the Union Parishad's chairman

Table 4.22: Respondent's Perception about Loan Facility for Destitute Women provided by the Union Parishad in the Study Area

Name of Union Parishads	Moderate		Not sufficient		sufficient	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Paglakanai	0	0%	90	100%	0	0%
Porahati	0	0%	90	100%	0	0%
Harishankarpur	0	0%	90	100%	0	0%
Total	0	0%	90	100%	0	0%

Source: Field Survey, 2002

4.14 Opinion of Women Chairperson and Different NGO Worker in Decision Making Level

The chairperson of Harishankarpur in the study area is a woman. Female chairperson and different NGO workers in decision making level have opined about the female members which is discussed in the following section.

- Women members should be more involved in the decision making body.
- The women in the decision making level should enjoy the same opportunity and importance equal to the male decision maker while working as members of rural local government.
- Women members should have specific functions to be more effective change agents for rural local government.
- Women members should be involved in budget making and have access to the fund for implementing the development work.
- Weekly or monthly meeting should be arranged between the female members and the community women for better understanding within them. It will also help to bring transparency in political atmosphere.
- Steps to be taken to deliver government circular and letters directly to the female members.
- Steps to be taken to regularized the union parishad's monthly meeting. More over, there must be a specification that the corum cannot be formed without at least two female members' presence.

4.17 Opinion of Male Members of Local Government and Male Community People.

- According to the male members in the study area, the female members do not have much work to do in reality as there is one male member for each ward in a Union Parishad. Whereas one female member is responsible for three wards in a Union Parishad who does not perform any particular job. As a result, these female members fail to keep their commitment to the local people of the respective Union Parishad.

- Female members' involvement is required in local government. But it is not a solution to engage one female member for three wards.
- There is one male member in each ward of union parishad, and they are also accountable for development works of their respective wards, so the female members can not be given sole responsibility towards any development work of their wards.
- The female members can handle the social problems regarding local women of their respective constituencies. She can arrange some meeting events with these local women to identify their problems which may help her to find out the actual responsibilities towards these local women.
- Women's involvement in this area is a new phenomenon. As the time passes, these women will be more confident about their responsibility.
- There must be a proper guideline for female members about their duties and responsibilities.
- There must be a regulation for female members to have proper training about the duties of union parishad.

CHAPTER 5

LOCAL WOMEN'S PERCEPTION TOWARDS FEMALE MEMBERS' ACTION AS SOCIAL CHANGE AGENTS

5.1 Introduction

The female members are included in local government to bring changes in rural women's lives. The women in rural area lack every components of good living such as economic activities, women's issues in the environment, violation of women's human right, lack of access to health, access to education and literacy, mechanism for promoting the advancement of women etc. The government of Bangladesh has involved these female members primarily to listen to this destitute part of the society and solve their problems. In this section, the respondents have expressed their assessment regarding the female members' action as a change agent of their life.

5.2 Education for Women

Education is a human right. For bringing balance between men and women, women's literacy rate must be enhanced. In many ways women's education is hindered mainly due to traditional practices like child marriage, sexual harassment, poverty etc. The women member in rural local government has the responsibility to act to improve the condition. The Table 5.1 shows how these women members are helping the rural women to enhance their education level. In this regard they were supplied a questionnaire of multiple choice with five different indicators.

Table 5.1: Female Members Action for Improved Female Education System

Action by female members for women education.	Name of Union Parishads						Total (N=270)	
	Paglakanai		Porahati		Harishankarpur		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Supplying monetary support	12	9.0	20	16.3	15	10.6	47	11.8
Increasing awareness for female education	87	64.9	75	61.0	81	56.0	243	60.9
Shifting in school hour	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Increase no of school	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Punishing street teasers on female students	35	26.1	28	22.8	46	32.4	109	26.3
Total	134	100.0	123	100.0	142	100.0	399	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2002

According to the most of the respondents (60.9%), the female members are working to increase awareness for women education. The female members are also taking part in punishing the street teasers on girls, which is expressed by 26.3% of the respondents. Only 11.8% respondents said that the female members are responsible in supplying monetary support to the female students.

5.3 Working Environment for Women

The working environment in the study area provides an opportunity to women for working out side home and brings changes in their lives. However, the level of women's participation in job market in the study area shows a negative feature. All the respondents from the three Union Parishads opined that women's participation in out door work is much less than men. According to them unfavorable working environment is responsible for this situation. Female members' contribution to improve this situation is an indicator of their success as a social change agent. Table 5.2 provides information regarding female members' action for improving working environment for local women.

Table 5.2: Female Members Contribution for Improved Working Environment

Name of Union Parishads	Support Provided									
	create job opportunities		Increase training facility		Provide small loan		Increase awareness		Influence NGOs to create job opportunity	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Paglakanai	0	0	0	0	19	21.1	63	70	20	22.2
Porahati	0	0	0	0	15	16.7	51	56.7	19	21.1
Harishankarpur	0	0	0	0	31	34.4	82	91.1	33	36.7
Total (N=270)	0	0	0	0	65	24.1	196	72.6	72	26.7

Source: Field Survey, 2002

Among all the three Union Parishads, most of the respondents (72.6%) said, the female members are helping them in poverty alleviation by increasing awareness. 24.1% agreed that the female members have arranged for small loan for the poor women and only 26.7% respondents said, the female members only could influence NGOs to create job opportunity. According to the respondents, the female members have no authority to create job opportunities or increase training facility.

5.4 Presence of Arsenic in Drinking Water:

At present, people in many part of the country are suffering from diseases due to the toxic element called arsenic, in tube well water. It has very detrimental effect which causing incurable diseases and even death to many people. In the study area, we did not find any arsenic affected patient but the presence of this harmful component has recognized in tube well water in many parts of these three Union Parishads. Different NGOs and local Government members are working to save people from its effect.

Table 5.3: Female Members' Contribution in Solving Arsenic Problems in Drinking Water

Name of Union Parishad	Marking the affected tube wells		Establishing tube well in arsenic free area		Providing method for disaffected water from arsenic		Total Respondents (N=270)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Paglakanai	46	51.1	16	16.8	0	0.0	90	100.0
Porahati	58	64.4	46	51.1	0	0.0	90	100.0
Harishankarpur	59	65.6	33	36.7	0	0.0	90	100.0
Total	163	60.4	95	35.2	0	0.0	270	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2002

According to the responses, we see that the female members have mostly marked the affected tube wells (60.4%) as an easy measure to solve the arsenic problem in the locality. Secondly, they helped in establishing new tube well in arsenic free area (35.2%). The female members could not provide method for disaffected arsenic from water, as there is no such program from the government.

5.5 Female Members' Role in Providing Different Facilities for Local Women

For betterment of women in the study area, the local government in Bangladesh has initiated various programs. The following table 6.4 depicts that, how far the female members have contributed to these programs as a means to women empowerment for the local women. According to 99.6% respondents, female members have some contribution in small credit programs and 98.9% respondents have contribution in family planning program. Female members help the old age citizens of the villages through the old age allowance programs, which is recognized by 98.9% respondents. 50.4% respondents have recognized the female members' contribution in local government's tube well program. 3.0% and 4.4% respondents have support unit for landless people through landless society.

Table 5.4: Female Members' Contribution in Different Development Programs

Name of Union Parishads	Female members' contribution in the following programs															
	Latrine		Family planning		Landless society		Credit program		Old age allowance		Livestock/ Fisheries		Mohila shomily		Tube well	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Paglakanai	6	6.7	87	96.7	7	6.8	90	100.0	89	98.9	28	31.1	0	0.0	43	46.8
Porahati	2	2.2	90	100.0	1	1.1	89	98.9	86	95.6	9	10.0	0	0.0	39	43.3
Harishankarpur	4	4.4	90	100.0	0	0.0	90	100.0	89	98.9	15	16.7	0	0.0	54	60.0
Total (N=270)	12	4.4	267	98.9	8	3.0	269	99.6	264	96.8	52	19.3	0	0.0	136	50.4

Source: Field Survey, 2002

5.6 Expectation of Local Women for Socio- Economic and Legal Services from Local Government through Female Members

In the following section, the women community has expressed demand for their rights to education facility and training facility for job opportunity and other community facilities such as communication, health care facilities, etc.

5.6.1 Training Facilities

Vocational training has a great impact for women workers to make them skilled. There is a need for different training facilities for men and women. In Table 5.5 the women in the study area have demanded better training facilities for their job facility.

Table 5.5: Community's Demand for Improved Training facilities

Name of Union Parishads	Training facilities					
	separate facilities for women		increase option in vocational training facility		Total (N=270)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Paglakanai	39	43.3	51	56.7	90	100
Porahati	53	58.9	37	41.1	90	100
Harishankarpur	48	53.3	42	46.7	90	100
Total	140	51.9	130	48.1	270	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002

Women are mostly interested to be engaged in work, which they can do by sitting in their house like sewing, handicraft, poultry raising, livestock rearing, etc. So, 51.9% respondent has pleaded for separate training facilities for them that match their requirements. Another 48.1% pleaded for increasing option for vocational training facilities.

5.6.2 Communication System

Community's progress depends on its communication set up. The people in rural areas of Bangladesh do not enjoy proper communication facilities. Like other villages, for domestic movement roads are mostly muddy in the study area. The women community in the study area has asked help from the female members to facilitate them with improved transport facility and roadways. The following table 5.6 shows the priority of their demand.

Table 5.6: Community's Demand for Improved Communication System

Name of Union Parishads	Communication Services					
	Roads need improvement		Improve public transport facilities		Total (N=270)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Paglakanai	62	68.9	28	31.1	90	100
Porahati	51	56.7	39	43.3	90	100
Harishankarpur	41	45.6	49	54.4	90	100
Total	154	56.0	116	43.0	270	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002

According to 57% respondent, improving road conditions is the prime need for communication system. Otherwise, 43% demanded an improved public transport facility to establish communications with important places outside the village.

5.6.3 Dowry/ Marital Problems

Dowry custom has remained as the prime reason behind precarious condition of women for a long time in this sub continent and more acute in the villages of this area. The condition in the study area is not much different from this situation. In the Table 5.7, the respondents have expressed their opinion about the way to stop dowry and marital problems in their locality.

Table 5.7: Community's Demand to Stop Dowry/ Marital Problems

Name of Union Parishads	Dowry/ marital problems					
	Increase mass awareness		Implementation of existing laws		Total (N=270)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Paglakanai	35	38.9	55	61.1	90	100
Porahati	30	33.3	60	66.7	90	100
Harishankarpur	27	30.0	63	70.0	90	100
Total	92	34.1	178	65.9	270	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002

The above Table 5.7 shows that 65.9% of the total respondents from the three Union Parishads demanded female members exert their influence in implementing the existing law. Other 34.1% want the female members to be active for increasing awareness among general people about the bad impact of dowry custom and the legal status against it.

5.6.4 Law and Order Situation

Now days the law and order situation in Bangladesh is not beyond question. The majority people here are poor, which make their position weaker against the few rich people. The powerful people (economically or politically) dominate the country's law and order situation, which is depicted in the following Table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Community's Demand to Control Law and Order Situation

Name of Union Parishads	Measures to improve law and order situation					
	Ensure proper use of existing laws		Ensure equal right for all		Total (N=270)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Paglakanai	52	56.8	38	42.2	90	100
Porahati	52	56.8	38	42.2	90	100
Harishankarpur	58	64.4	32	35.6	90	100
Total	162	60.0	108	40.0	270	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002

The above Table shows that 40% of the respondents want female members to be impartial while sitting in the Salish to judge among powerful and powerless. Other 60% demanded them to be active to ensure proper use of existing law.

5.6.5 Violence against Women

Violence is considered as one of the prime reasons for women's backwardness. According to the respondents, the women members in local government are responsible to provide the community women security from violence. In the following table, 5.9 respondents have suggested few measures to stop violence.

Table 5.9: Community's Demand to Stop Violence

Name of Union Parishads	Demands to Stop Violence							
	Control over law enforcing agencies by the female members		Increase job opportunity for young generation		Create adequate entertainment facilities		Total (N=270)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Paglakanai	55	61.1	35	38.9		0.0	90	100
Porahati	55	61.1	34	36.8	1	1.1	90	100
Harishankarpur	54	60.0	35	38.9	1	1.1	90	100
Total	164	60.7	104	38.5	2	0.7	270	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002

To stop violence against women is one of the main reasons for involving women in rural local government. 60.7% respondent believes that if the female members could exercise their control over the law enforcing agencies, which is constitutionally approved, will help to reduce the rate of violence against women. In this respect the respondents have emphasized the employment opportunities. 38.5% respondent has put emphasis on increasing job opportunity for young generation, which will help to reduce violence against women.

5.6.6 Utility Facilities

Ensuring proper utility facilities for all the citizens in different parts of the country is an important responsibility for a government. In the following table 5.10, the respondents have demanded for help from women members of local government for different utility facilities, which they lack.

Table 5.10: Community's Demand for Utility Services

Name of Union Parishads	Utility Services					
	Provide sanitation facilities, electric and water supply for all		Improve communication system by government provided telecom facility		Total (N=270)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Paglakanai	77	85.6	13	14.4	90	100
Porahati	69	76.7	21	23.3	90	100
Harishankarpur	81	90.0	9	10.0	90	100
Total	227	84.1	43	15.9	270	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002

Lack of facilities like electricity, water supply and sanitation facilities degrade the quality of life of the respondents in the study area. About 84.1% respondent demanded the female members to appeal for sanitation facilities, electric and water supply for the villagers and 15.9% want to female members to work for government provided telecom facility to improve communication system.

5.6.7 Community Facilities

To interact with the other female members in the society and exchange their views and ideas, it is essential that the women have access to community facilities like library, club etc. But in most cases in rural areas these kind of facilities are almost absent or women do not have access to such present facilities as the traditional idea is that women do not have any use of such facility. The community facilities which respondents have demanded for are shown in Table 5.11

Table 5.11: Community's Demand for Improved Community Facilities

Name of Union Parishads	Community facilities					
	Establishment of libraries, clubs and parks		Espacial corner for female entrepreneur in market place		Total (N=270)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Paglakanai	77	85.6	13	14.4	90	100
Porahati	62	68.9	28	31.1	90	100
Harishankarpur	73	81.1	17	18.9	90	100
Total	212	78.5	58	21.5	270	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002

In the three Union Parishads there is only one library in the Harishankarpur Union, which again remains closed due to negligence of authority. Renowned mathematician K.P Bashu had established the library. People in this area demanded the female

members to initiate program to save this library. Apart from this, most of the respondents (78.5%) from the three Union Parishads feel it necessary to have library, clubs and parks in their locality. Few respondents, who are engaged in retail, demanded the female members to arrange them a corner for women in the market place which will be reserved especial for them.

5.6.7 Social Problems

There are number of social problems which are hindering women's development such as violence, breaking marriage law, imbalance in property ownership and lack of income generation activities compared to male members of the society.

Table 5.12: Community's Demand to Solve Social Problems

Name of Union Parishads	Social problems							
	Rehabilitate the women effected by violence		Increase aware ness		increase power of female members		Total (N=270)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Paglakanai	23	25.6	19	21.1	48	53.3	90	100
Porahati	19	21.1	18	20.0	53	58.9	90	100
Harishankarpur	26	28.9	14	15.6	50	55.6	90	100
Total	68	25.2	51	18.9	151	55.9	270	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002

To eliminate social problem the respondents want the female members to be more active to rehabilitated women affected by violence and increase awareness among common people (25.2% and 18.9% respectively). More than 55% respondents evaluated that the increased power of female members can be an important measure to control social problems.

5.6.8 Health Facilities

Health facility is one of the basic need and rights for the women member of the community. Due to lacking of these facilities every year a considerable number female member of the society die and suffer from different diseases. For better and safe living the female members of the community demand different types of facilities, particularly for their own.

Table 5.13: Communities demand for improved Health Facilities

Name of Union Parishads	Social problems									
	Appoint MBBS doctors		Activities needs monitoring		Improve the pathological/medicine support		Long distance to reach the facility		Total (N=270)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%			No.	%
Paglakanai	48	53.3	87	96.7	45	50.0	5	5.6	90	100
Porahati	52	56.8	86	95.6	52	56.8	12	13.3	90	100
Harishankarpur	53	58.9	89	98.9	48	53.3	0	0.0	90	100
Total	153	56.7	262	96.0	145	53.7	17	6.3	270	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002

The community people have suggested three measures to solve the problems in local health sector. According to the respondents, there are sufficient satellite clinics for them. However, majority of the respondents (60%) suggested that the female members' should monitor the activities of the health worker. Appointment of MBBS doctors is the second measure for them.

5.7 Respondents' Perception towards Female Members' General Performance

Respondents' perception towards female members' general performance is shown in Table 5.14.

Table 5.14: Respondents' Impression towards Female Members' General Performance (N=270)

Female members' General Performance	Level of satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
Role as a change agent in rural local government	Good	58	21.5
	Satisfactory	200	74.1
	Unsatisfactory	12	4.4
	Total	270	100.0
Available in time of need.	Yes	255	94.4
	No	0	0
	No idea	15	5.6
	Total	270	100.0
Number of formal meetings with female members in a month.	Once	0	0
	Twice	0	0
	No idea	1	.4
	Not fixed	269	99.6
	Total	270	100.0
Performance in birth and marriage registration	Good	262	96.0
	no idea	8	3.0
	Total	270	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2002

- Female members' involvement in rural local government has brought further hope for rural women. 74.1% respondents believe that the female members can bring changes in society in favor of women.
- Most of the respondents say that the female members are available in time of need. But there is no fixed time schedule for formal meeting with female members.
- Female members' performance for birth and marriage registration, health sanitation and family planning campaign is considered as good by the respondents (according to 97% and 74.4% of the respondents respectively).

5.8 Respondents' Perception towards Female Members' Role in Different Sector in General

Table 5.15: Impression towards Female Members' General Performance (N=270)

Female members' role in different sector	Level of satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
Influence as developing agent for female education system	yes	92	34.1
	no	39	14.4
	Partial	139	51.5
	Total	270	100.0
Performance for health and family planning campaign	Good	201	74.4
	Satisfactory	29	10.7
	no idea	40	14.8
	Total	270	100.0
Level of Control over <i>Salish</i> by the female members	Full	43	15.9
	Partial	141	52.2
	No control	86	31.9
	Total	270	100.0
Performance in punishing the criminals of women harassment	Good	62	23.0
	Satisfactory	1	.4
	Unsatisfactory	104	38.5
	no authority	103	38.1
	Total	270	100.0
Performance in accelerating the development work of NGOs within the locality	Good	268	99.3
	Unsatisfactory	1	.4
	no idea	1	.4
	Total	270	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2002

- All the respondents from the three Union Parishads have agreed with the need of female education. However, according to 51.5% of the respondents, the female

members have partial influence to improve this sector. About 34.1% says they have full influence.

- The *Salish* has a great impact in the village life especially for women. Naturally they want the female members to be very influential over the decision making process of *Salish*. The respondents assessed their activities in a negative way in this regard. 52.2% and 15.9% of the respondents say that the female members have partial and full control respectively over *Salish*. While 31.9% say they have no control over *Salish*.
- The female members provide support to NGOs. According to 99.3% of the respondents, they work for accelerating NGOs activities for women empowerment in rural areas.

5.9 Reason for Poor Performance in *Salish* by the Female Members

Female members in local government have been proved to have a poor performance in *Salish*, especially in villages other than their own (native). The reasons behind lower influence of these female members have shown in the Table no.5.16.

Table 5.16: Reasons for Lower Influence of the Female Members in *Salish* (N=270)

Name of the Union Parishads	Irregular presence in <i>Salish</i>		Disregard by local male member		Disregard by local people		Other	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Paglakanai	57	63.3	52	56.8	8	8.9	2	2.2
Porahati	55	61.1	41	45.6	7	6.8	3	3.3
Harishankarpur	45	50.0	53	58.9	8	8.9	2	2.2
Total	157	58.1	146	54.1	23	8.5	7	2.6

Source: Field survey, 2001

The respondents from the three Union Parishads have selected all the given four options as reasons behind female members' control over *Salish*. According to the Table 5.16, maximum respondents (58.1%) have agreed with the female members' irregular presence in *Salish* as the prime reasons for this situation. Other 54.1% of the respondents believe that disregards for female members' decision by the local people make their presence in *Salish* useless. 8.5% respondent believes that the female members do not voice out in favor of disadvantaged people. Some respondents (2.6%) spoke for other reasons like violence against female members,

disregard by local male members and chairman etc. make the female members performance weak in decision making process of Salish.

5.10 Respondents' Expectation from the Female Members

The female members' involvement in rural local government has opened a new door to women empowerment. The female folk in the village areas are looking at the female members with lots of positive views. In this section, the respondents have expressed their views for the female members as change agents for rural women's lives.

The respondents have elected their female members with a hope to change their lives. After observing few years of the female members' involvement in the local government, the respondents are now in a position to assess their performance and needed qualities. According to the respondents, the female members must have some of the following leadership quality to serve in the local government.

Table 5.17: Leadership Quality in Female Members (N=270)

Required leadership quality in female members	Union Parishads						Total	
	Paglakanai		Porahati		Harishankarpur		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Honesty and courage	75	83.3	80	88.9	81	90.0	236	86.4
Organizational capacity	68	75.6	81	90.0	70	76.8	219	81.1
Education and knowledge	72	80.0	58	64.4	56	62.2	186	68.9
Insight and patience	14	15.6	13	14.4	13	14.4	40	14.8
Responsive to women's issues	42	46.7	21	23.3	48	53.3	111	41.1
Economically well of.	2	2.2	0	0.0	1	1.1	5.2	1.9
Total Respondents	90	100	90	100	90	100	270	100

Source: Field survey, 2001

The respondents were asked about the quality of their female members. They were provided with a close-ended questionnaire of six leadership qualities for their local female members. The respondents were allowed to give multiple answers in this regard. To the respondents (86.4%), honesty and courage is the main required quality that the female members should possess. Female members' organizational capacity is

another essential qualification for 81.1% respondents. For a leader education and knowledge is cardinal quality as per 68.9% respondents. 14.4% responses favour the quality of Insight and patience to handle situation for the women leaders in rural local government. The respondents showed their interest for female members who are responsive to women's issues (41.1% responses). The respondents do not view the economic condition of the female members as being important for enhancing leadership quality (1.9% of the responses).

5.11 Demands for Improved Educational Facility

The respondents suggested a number of areas where the female members can play their role to solve educational problems. According to the respondents an increase in financial support for female students will help in bringing up the educational level of female folk. About 57% respondents suggested this option. Incompatible school time is another important obstacle (20.7% of the respondents believe) to female education. 38% of the respondents want to bring changes in educational system, which will be suitable for rural women. In this regard they also demanded for social security and increase numbers of schools (12.2% and 10% respectively) as well.

Table 5.18: Respondents' Demand for Improved Educational System (N=270).

Measures suggested by respondents	Name of Union Parishads						Total	
	Paglakanai		Porahati		Harishankarpur			
Bring change in educational system	17	18.9%	11	12.2%	10	11.1	38	14.4%
Increase monetary support	44	48.9%	47	52.2%	63	70.0%	154	56.0%
Provide social security for female students	7	6.8%	5	5.6%	0	0.0%	12	4.4%
Shifting in school hour	16	16.8%	24	26.7%	16	16.8%	56	20.7%
Increase no of school	6	6.7%	3	3.3%	1	1.1%	10	3.7%
Total	90	100.0%	90	100.0%	90	100.0%	270	100.0%

Source: Field survey, 2001

5.12 Respondents' Demand for Different Development Programs Facilities:

In addition to the contemporary programs, the women in study area demanded for the following programs from local government, which they believed to be helpful for improvement in their socio-economic condition.

Table 5.19: Demand for Different Facilities Provided by Local Government (N=270).

Name of existing programs by local government	Name of Union Parishad			Total	%
	Paglakanai	Porahati	Harishankarpur		
Mohila shomily	6	2	4	12	1.4
Landless society	87	90	90	267	30.6
Family planning	7	1	0	8	0.9
Credit program	90	89	90	269	30.8
Livestock	89	86	89	264	30.3
Fisheries	28	9	15	52	6.0
Latrine	0	0	0	0	0
Tube well	0	0	0	0	0
Total	309	275	288	872	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2001

For their betterment, the women in the study area have demanded the local government to start credit programs (30.8%) and support the landless (30.6%) people through landless society. According to the respondents, the local government may help the rural women to initiate livestock (30.3%) and fisheries (6.0%).

5.13 Demanded Poverty Eradication Measures

Nowadays, women's ratio below poverty level is being increasing rapidly. The condition is more critical for developing countries like Bangladesh. Especially in the villages in Bangladesh, women are mostly in the grip of poverty. In the table 5.20, the respondents in the study villages have made the following suggestions to improve their economical condition:

Table 5.20: Suggestion to the Female Members for Eradicating Poverty (N=270)

Name of Union Parishads	Poverty/ economic problems solving Measures			Total
	create job opportunities by establishing cottage industries	distribution of khash land among landless people	small loan among poor people	
Paglakanai	54	9	27	90
	60.0%	10.0%	30.0%	100.0%
Porahati	46	12	32	90
	51.1%	13.3%	35.6%	100.0%
Harishankarpur	36	5	49	90
	40.0%	5.6%	54.4%	100.0%
Total	136	26	108	270
	50.4%	9.6%	40.0%	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2002

The above table shows that, half of the respondents (50.4%) in all the three Union Parishads, want the female members to help them in poverty alleviation by creating job opportunities by establishing cottage industries. About 40% ask them to arrange for small loan for poor women and only 9.6% demanded that the female members to urge government for distributing *Khas* land among landless women.

In chapter 3 there is a discussion about different dimensions of empowerment, which includes that empowerment is about power and about changing the balance of power. It also emphasized on participation in political structures and formal decision-making process. During the present study, it was understood that the concept of empowering women in local government has been influenced from the collective dimension of empowerment (discussed in chapter 3). But after analyzing the community's perception towards their local female members, it can be said that the female members are not empowered enough in social and political regime, which resulted community's unsatisfied impression for these female members.

CHAPTER 6

STATUS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FEMALE MEMBERS IN THE STUDY AREA

6.1 Introduction

The government of Bangladesh realizes that women's participation in local government institution is much needed for increasing women's empowerment and their participation in development activities. So, women are encouraged to participate in the socio-political decision making process at the local level. These female members in rural local government are the main discussion subject for this thesis. The main objectives of this study are to identify the condition of women empowerment in local government and the problems and prospect of their position as Union Parishad members. In the following section an attempt is made to understand the extent and nature of participation of female members at the Union Parishad level. In the socio economic and political decision making process the perception of female members are also analyzed. All the nine female members from the study area (Paglakanai, Porahati and Harishankarpur Union Parishads) were interviewed for this purpose. The level of the female members' empowerment is considered in the three operational dimensions; personal, relational and collective, according to the definition of empowerment in chapter 4 in this thesis.

6.2 Socio-Economic Background of the Female Members of Union Parishad

Socio-economic background of the Union Parishad female members has been considered as the personal dimension of empowerment, which is an important factor for performing their role as leaders. The better socio-economic status may have positive impact on their performance in the activities of the Union Parishad. The assessment of the socio-economic background may provide a scope to compare the findings of other studies conducted previously. To describe the socio-economic background of the women members, relevant variables such as age, education, marital status, land occupation, length of stay in the study area, household size and income are being considered.

6.2.1 Age Distribution Pattern

According to the Local Government Amendment Act 1993, a candidate for the membership of the Union Parishad must be at least twenty-five years old.

The Table below implies that the female members are of 30 years to 49 years. Highest number of female members (4) is from 30-34 age group. People like to have a woman with energy and vision especially from new generation as a leader, which may have influenced the age of the female members. It takes a considerable time to earn confidence of the voters about one's competence and capability as a leader. This may also explain the age pattern of the female members.

Table 6.1: Age Distribution Pattern of the Female Members.

Name of Union Parishad	Age groups			
	30-34	35-39	40-44	45& above
Paglakanai	2	1	0	0
Porahati	1	1	1	0
Harishankarpur	1	1	0	1
Total	4 (44%)	3 (33%)	1(11%)	1 (11%)

Source: Field Survey, 2002

6.2.2 Marital Status

Marital status acts as a transforming agent for being active social worker of women in Bangladesh, especially, when a local elected body has to work day and night for people, police, Salish (village court) or relief etc. In the context of a patriarchal society, the women in Bangladesh have to give priority to household works first and then other out door works. She has to make happy all the members in her family. A woman of a rural family has to take permission from her husband and from elder in-laws in the family (if in a joint family). Some time they are only permitted to go outside when their husbands or any other male members (may be younger than her by age) accompany them.

Personally, the female members in rural areas do not enjoy working outside home. They prefer their husbands or other male members of their families to perform their responsibility on behalf of them. They only attend the meetings in union council office. According to the Table 6.1, 80% of the female members of the three Union Parishads are married and 20% of them are widowed. From the voter's point of view

it can be said that they prefer their leader to have a sound family life, as they did not choose any divorced female members.

Table 6.2 Marital Status of Female Members in the Study Area

Marital Status	No.	%
Married	8	80
Divorced	0	0
Widowed	2	20
Unmarried	0	0

Source Field Survey, 2002

6.2.3 Income Level

Income is one of the most important indicators of socio-economic status of people. But it is very difficult to collect accurate data on income. Generally people do not keep records about their income and do not want to disclose it accurately to others. Moreover, in Bangladesh the wife does not usually know her husband's income. Respondents furnished data from their memories. On the other hand, almost every female member has admitted that income level of their families plays a great role in performing their duties. The female members who are economically well off say that administration, police or even the *mastans* (unruly people) cannot dodge their state due to their economic status. But the female members from lower middle class families have complained that they face constrains from the government and administration to work for people and some time they are also being ignored by the local people.

Table 6.3 Income Status of Female Members' Family in the Study Area

Income ranges of Female Members' Family.	No.	%
Upto 3000	6	66.7
3001-5000	3	33.3
5001 and above	0	0
Total	9	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2002

The Table 6.3 shows that 66.7% of the female members are from lowest income group (upto 3000 Tk./month). Only 33.3% female members' monthly income ranges

from 3001-5000. None of the female members belonging to family with an income range above 5000 Tk. per month.

6.2.4 Occupational Pattern and Personal Income of the Female Members

Occupation provides a way to earn income and power to have control over own will. In this regard, the female members in the study area are ill fated. Only two of these nine women are lucky to be associated with service and have opportunity to earn a wage. One of them is a teacher in a government school and another is associated with poultry business. However, none of them earns more than 2000 taka per month. Other 7 female members get only the local government and Union Parishad grant of 700 taka. (Taka 400 and Taka 300 respectively).

Table 6.4 Occupational Pattern and Personal Income of the Female Members

Income/month	Main Occupation					
	Members in local government	Business	Handicraft	Poultry	Teacher	Other
Upto 1000	7	0	0	0	0	0
1001-2000	0	0	0	1	1	0
2001-3000	0	0	0	0	0	0
3001-4000	0	0	0	0	0	0
4001 and above	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source Field Survey, 2002

6.2.5 Land Ownership Pattern

Land ownership pattern determines the economic condition of rural people in Bangladesh. Women in a family with agricultural occupation have more scope to spend time for public activities. Moreover, as a country of agriculture based economy, the people of Bangladesh still show respect to the large landowners. Therefore, their occupation provides wider scope for becoming leader in the local government bodies like Union Parishad.

Table 6.5: Land Ownership Pattern of the Female Members' Family

Land Ownership Class (acres)	No.	%
Landless (0-0.4)	1	11.1
Small farmer (0.4-2.49)	6	66.7
Medium farmer (2.50-7.49)	2	22.2
Total	9	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002

In the study area, 66.7% female members belong to a family of small farmers, 22.2% is from medium and 11.1% is from land less family. None of them belongs to a large farmer's family.

6.2.6 Type and Size of Household

Usually, in rural areas of Bangladesh, are joint families. It is implied from the survey that most of the female members live in a single family, which indicates that it is difficult for women to be a part of local government being a member of a joint family. As the female members have a single family, their household size is also limited. The single families with 6-8 members contain 88.9% and only 11.1% of female members belong to joint family with 9-11 members.

6.2.7 Educational Level

Education is being considered as the prime factor of empowerment. High level of education produces high level of confidence. Education helps the female members of the Union Parishad to understand the rules and regulations of the Union Parishad and to participate in Union Parishad activities efficiently. Education also develops one's capability to participate in decision making process. The educational levels of female members of the Union Parishad are presented in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6: Educational Level of Female Members of the Study Area

Education Level	No.	%
HSC & Above	0	0
SSC	1	11
Secondary	3	33
Primary	4	44
Illiterate	1	11
Total	9	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002

From the above Table 6.6, we see that 4 female members in the Union Parishad are having education of primary level and 3 of secondary level. Only a single women member is qualified by SSC level and one of the 9 female members is illiterate as well. None of them has entered the collage. The rural women, without enough education and knowledge, have to depend on training programs.

6.2.8 Training of Female Members

Training is an essential prerequisite for an individual in performing job responsibilities efficiently. The female members without adequate educational qualification need to be informed about their responsibilities and functions as a member of local government. In this regard, training programs are of great importance, which they do not get in a proper way. The women members reported that all of them had received training as women members on Road, culvert and bridge constructions, Prevention of Women Oppression and Violence, Family Planning and Health Services. The Table 6.7 shows, about 33.3% women members attended a one day training workshop regarding the responsibilities of women members in local government institution organized by the Khan Foundation, a leading NGO for women development. Few (44.4%) local female members have received training on Mother and Childcare and Co-operative, Adult Education and Management from locally working NGOs like Asha, Rupantar, AID etc.

Table 6.7: Training Background of Female Members

Areas of training	No. of trained female members in different Union Parishads			
	Paglakanai	Porahati	Harishankarpur	Total
Local Government	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	3 (33.3%)
Horticulture	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (11.1%)
Mother and child care	3 (100%)	1 (33.3%)	3 (100%)	7 (76.8%)
Family Planning and Health Services	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	9 (100%)
Prevention of Women Oppression and Violence	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	9 (100%)
Poultry rearing	1 (33.3%)	0	2(66.6%)	4 (44.4%)
Management of Union Parishad	0	0	2(66.6%)	2 (22.2%)
Environment and forestation	0	0	0	0 (0%)
Co-operative, adult education management etc.	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (33.3%)	3 (33.3%)
Road, culvert and bridge constructions.	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	9 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2002

6.2.9 Political Background

Political background has a very significant role in political empowerment of women in Bangladesh. Party wise differences do not causes any trouble for getting support for women members if they have a relative in political field. The Table 6.8 depicts that only 11% of the female members of the study area, do have relations with political figure who influence her involvement in rural local government. The other female members are encouraged by the local people to take part in the election of Local Government. They get public support but lack administrative or legal support and thus they remain deprived of the proper political power.

Table 6.8: Political Background of Female Members

Name of Union Parishad	Bear of political background	
	No.	Total
Paglakanai	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Porahati	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Harishankarpur	1 (33.3%)	1 (11%)

Source: Field Survey, 2002

6.2.10 Length of Stay and Way behind Residing in the Study Area

The female members in the study area are mostly living in the Union for long time. Only two of them from Paglakanai and Harishankarpur Union Parishad are staying in their respective locality for less than 15 years. Five female members are living in the locality from their birth. The female members who became residents in the locality through marriage are living for 15-29 years.

Table 6.9: Length of Stay and Way behind Residing in the Study Area

How the members became resident of the area	Length of Stay				
	Since Birth	45-59	30-44	15-29	1-14
Native land	5 (55.6%)	0	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Through marriage	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (22.2%)	0 (0%)
Occupational reason of guardian	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (11.1%)	1 (11.1%)
Others	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Source: Field Survey, 2002

6.3 Constitutional and Legislative Right of Women Members

According to the constitutional provision of Bangladesh, women members deserve equal rights for participation in all the development and political activities. Such participation is expected to maximize the use of their human capabilities leading to increase their contribution to social and economical development, which can be considered as the collective dimension of empowerment. In this regard attempt has been made to analyze the participation of women members of the Union Parishad in discussion, decision making, development activities, of the Union Parishad. Factors related to participation and discrimination of women members in participation was also analyzed. In addition to this, women members' participation in public gathering is analyzed to know their intention to reach the goal for acting as change agents.

6.3.1 Participation Rate in Discussion Meeting

Participation in discussion meeting by the women members of the Union Parishad helps to identify the local problems and their solutions especially in women related activities. In reality, large number of women members was not participating in discussions at the meetings. The participation rate in different meetings is presented in Table 6.10.

Table 6.10: Participation Rate in Discussing Meeting

Name of Union Parishad	Participation in Discussing Meeting		
	Regular	Irregular	Not at all
Paglakanai	0 (0%)	2 (66.6%)	1(33.3%)
Porahati	0 (0%)	1 (33.3%)	2 (66.6%)
Harishankarpur	2 (66.6%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)
Total	2 (22.2%)	4 (44.4%)	3 (33.3%)

Source: Field Survey, 2002

Highest participation rate in discussion meeting is observed of the women members in Harishankarpur Union Parishad. Attendance in discussion meeting by the female members of Porahati Union Parishad is the lowest. Only one, out of the three female members, attends discussion meetings irregularly. This proves that, the female members do not attend these meetings in sufficient number.

6.3.2 Women Members' Participation Rate in Decision Making Process

In Bangladesh, women have very little participation in decision making process even at the household level activities. In this section, attempt was made to analyze the participation rate of women members in decision making process at Union level. The women members had very limited participation in decision making process. In most of the cases their proposals were not taken into consideration. Participation of women members in decision making process was lower than their participation in discussion which is shown in the following Table 6.12.

Table 6.12: Participation Rate in Decision Making Process

Name of Union Parishad	Participation in Decision Making Process		
	Regular	Irregular	Not at all
Paglakanai	0 (0%)	1(33.3%)	2 (66.6%)
Porahati	0 (0%)	1 (33.3%)	2 (66.6%)
Harishankarpur	2 (66.6%)	0 (0%)	1 (33.3%)
Total	2 (22.2%)	2 (22.2%)	5 (55.6%)

Source: Field Survey, 2002

In decision making process, female members from Harishankarpur have higher participation rate which is 66.6%. It is to be noticed that as the chairman of that respective Union Parishad is also a woman, the female members enjoy better position than the female members of other Union Parishads. Among three female members of Harishankarpur Union Parishad, two are regular participant in the decision making process. From the other Union Parishads (Paglakanai and Porahati), female members do not participate in decision making process at all. Out of the total 55.6% female members avoid the meetings as they feel that their opinions are not getting due importance by the male members and chairmen of the Union Parishads.

6.3.3 Participation of Women Members in Development Activities

Women members' participation in development activities plays an important role in increasing their socio-political status. Higher socio-political status provides higher role on decision making process. In order to assess their participation five sub areas were considered. These were identification of local problems, project preparation, project implementation, project monitoring and project evaluation.

Table 6.12: Women Members' Participation Rate in Development Activities

Name of Union Parishad	Participation in Development Activities									
	Problem identification		Project Preparation		Project Implementation		Project Monitoring		Project Evaluation	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Paglakanai	3	100.0	0	0.0	1	33.3	3	100.0	0	0.0
Porahati	3	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	100.0	0	0.0
Harishankarpur	3	100.0	0	0.0	2	66.7	3	100.0	0	0.0
Total	9	(100%)	0	0.0	3	(33.3%)	9	(100%)	0	0.0

Source: Field Survey, 2002

Women members in all the three Union Parishad take part in problem identification and project monitoring. In implementing the project, two women members from Harishankarpur and one member from Paglakanai have agreed their involvement.

6.3.4 Participation Rate of Women Members in Women Related Activities

The Union Parishad ordinance does not specify the activities for male and female members of the Union Parishad. The manual on Union Parishad published by the National Institute of Local Government in 1992 identified some specialized activities for women members. On the basis of this manual, female members have been given some responsibilities which are mostly women related activities such as; Women and Child Development, Education Development, Development of Family Planning And Health Services, Extension of Cottage Industries, Prevention of Women Oppression and Violence and Environmental Development. The following Table 6.13

Table 6.13: Women Members' Participation Rate in Women Related Activities

Women Related Responsibilities	Name of the Union Parishad						Total	
	Paglakanai		Porahati		Harishankarpur		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Women and Child Development	1	33	2	67	3	100	6	67
Education Development	1	33	1	33	3	100	5	56
Development of Family Planning and Health Services	3	100	3	100	3	100	9	100
Extension of Cottage Industries	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prevention of Women Oppression and Violence	2	67	2	67	3	100	7	78
Environmental Development	0	0	0	0	1	33	1	11

Source: Field Survey, 2002

Women members' participation in the promotion of family planning and health services is highest (100%) for all the three Union Parishads. In addition, the lowest participation by female members is observed in the extension of cottage industries. In most of the Union Parishads, no initiative was taken for the development of cottage industry. Even it was not known to most of the female members that the development of cottage industries is related to Union Parishad activities. Environmental development is another area, which is neglected by the female members. Only one female member indicated her participation in this regard. Highest women members' participation rate is observed in the case of prevention of women oppression and violence, which constitute 78%.

6.3.5 Women Members' Participation in Public Meeting

The women members in rural local government are working for rural women as a change agent. They are supposed to uphold the interest of disadvantaged part of the society- the village women. In order to solve their problems, the female members are needed to maintain a close contact with these village women. While surveying, it was noticed that in the three Union Parishads, there is no formal meeting of the female members with the village women. The female members are informed about village women's problems, when the need arises. In some cases, the female members meet the village women informally, as a supporting agent for NGOs in their activities

6.3.6 Sources of Inspiration for Membership

It was difficult for women in rural area to participate in general election of local government without support from their own family, local voters or strong personal motivation. In the study area, the local voter's inspiration was of great influence in women members' involvement in local government. About 33.3% women members were inspired by the local people. Nearly their families and the recent NGO activities have inspired 22.2% women members in the study area as well. Only one of these nine female members was self-motivated.

Table 6.14: Sources of Inspiration for Membership

Sources of Inspiration for Membership	Name of Union Parishad						Total
	Paglakanai		Porahati		Harishankarpur		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Inspired by family	1	33.3	0	0.0	1	33.3	2 (22.2%)
Recent NGOs' activities	0	0.0	2	66.7	0	0.0	2 (22.2%)
Personal views	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	33.3	1 (11.1%)
Lenient Social Environment	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	33.3	1 (11.1%)
Inspired by Local People	2	66.7	1	33.3	0	0.0	3 (33.3%)

Source: Field Survey, 2002

6.3.7 Problems of Female Members in Participating in Rural Local Government

The constitution of Bangladesh provides equal rights to women as men in all spheres of life. However, political awareness, consciousness and participation had not inculcated among women both at national and local levels due to socio-cultural situation of the country. In fact, the problems of women's participation are more of structural than organizational. These are wide-spread illiteracy, confinement in household works, old tradition of subordinate role, religious and cultural factors and lack of training and motivational facilities. In conducting the focus group discussion, Union Parishad women members were asked to mention the problems they face in participation at local level politics.

Table 6.15: Problems to be taken care immediately in the study area

Nature of problems	Name of Union Parishad							
	Paglakanai		Porahati		Harishankarpur		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Financial inability	2	66.7	1	33.3	3	100.0	6	66.7
Social obstruction	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Religious obstruction	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Lack of confidence by local elite on female members	2	66.7	2	66.7	1	33.3	5	55.6
Lacking of education and experience	1	33.3	2	66.7	2	66.7	5	55.6
Disregard by the Union Parishad's Chairman/Members	1	33.3	2	66.7	0	0.0	3	33.3
Criminals activities in the locality	1	33.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	11.1

Source: Field Survey, 2002

According to their declaration, financial inability is the main problem in performing their duties. They also quoted 'lack of education and experience' as an important reason for their weak achievement (Rank-2). Other important problems identified by them are; Disregard by the Union Parishad's Chairman/Members (Rank-3), Criminal activities in the locality (Rank-4), Social and Religious obstruction (Rank-5) etc.

6.3.8 Using of Local Funds for Development Purpose by the Women Members'

The constitution of Bangladesh has provided the female members right to be the chairpersons of at least one third of Project Implement Committees. In this regard, every union can design eight development projects each worth Tk. 25000 (earlier 10000). They will also be the chairpersons of ward-based Hand Tube-well site selection committees. The elected women members are responsible as members in other important union level committees on primary and mass education, disaster management and so on under a number of different ministries.

Table 6.16: Use of Local Funds

Name of Union Parishad	Using of Local Resources/Funds		
	Full	Partial	Not at all
Paglakanai	0 (0%)	2 (66.6%)	1 (33.3%)
Porahati	0 (0%)	2 (66.6%)	1 (33.3%)
Harishankarpur	2 (66.6%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)
Total	2 (22.2%)	5 (55.6%)	2 (22.2%)

Source: Field Survey, 2002

While inquiring on female members' ability to use these resources and funds of local government, it was found that only 22.2% female members are able to use these funds in full extend. Using level of local funds/resources is partial by more than 55% of the female members. For other 22.2%, it was negligible which is shown in the above Table 6.16.

6.4 Main Responsibility for Female Members

Female members' performing responsibilities toward the community has been considered as measure to realize the level of empowerment that operating within the relational dimension. The female members are included as change agent in rural local government with a wide view to help the destitute village women. Inquiry was made to know whether these female members were involved in any rural local government's development program. The following Table 6.17 shows the female members' performed responsibility.

Table 6.17: Female Members' Main Performed Responsibilities

Undertaken Responsibilities	No. of Female Members Involved			
	Paglakanaï	Porahati	Harishankarpur	Total
Agriculture Development	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Bazar development	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Project implementation Committee	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Education Development	3(100%)	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	9 (100%)
Promotion of Cottage Industry	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Promotion of Family Planning	3(100%)	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	9 (100%)
Prevention of Women Oppression/Violence	3(100%)	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	9 (100%)
Destitute Relief	1(33.3%)	0 (0%)	2(66.6%)	3 (33.3%)
Management of Union Parishad	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Environment and forestation	0(00.0%)	0 (0%)	2(66.6%)	2 22.2%)
Pond/Canal Excavation/Re-excavation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Water supply, sanitation and health service	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	9(100%)
Road, culvert and bridge constructions.	1 (33.3%)	1 (0%)	2(66.6%)	4 (44.4%)

Source: Field Survey, 2002

According to Table 6.18, the highest (100%) participation by female members was for; Promotion of Family Planning and Health Services, Prevention of Women Oppression and Violence, Education Development. Other development programs, in

which the female members have marginal participation, are Road and Culverts (44.4%), Relief for Destitute (33.3%), Environment and Afforestation (22.2%).

6.5 Support From Local Women Towards Female Members

Support from local women towards the female members is another criterion for measuring the relational dimension of empowerment. The female members work for the community from which they have been elected. To perform their duties properly the female members need to have support from the local women. The following Table 6.18 has shown the level of support by the female members of the community.

Table 6.18: Community's Support for Female Members

Name of Union Parishad	Level of Support		
	Full	Moderate	Not at all
Paglakanai	3 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Porahati	3 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Harishankarpur	3 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total	9 (100%)	100 (0%)	100 (0%)

Source: Field Survey, 2002

All the female members from the three Union Parishads said that the local women provide full support to them.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter describes the physical settings and the existing socio-economic conditions based on which the analytical findings are presented in a summarized form and conclusion has been drawn according to the findings, with some specific recommendations.

Without proper infrastructure and utility facilities, the study area remains in a disadvantageous position. Therefore, without sincere acknowledgement of the local government authority, it seemed difficult to expand the utility facilities for the community.

The Paglakanai Union Parishad has an access to the highway. The other two Union Parishads, Porahati and Harishankarpur, do not have such facility that results in a difficult communication system with these two Union Parishads. An adequate source of potable water was lacking as water from tube-wells is arsenic affected in some places. Human and solid waste disposal methods found unsatisfactory in the study area. Most of the community people do not have access to electricity. Government covers 58% of health services in the study area. Most of the respondents' have considered the existing health facilities as moderate.

In case of socio-economic characteristics, with an eye on literacy, the respondents showed that the high proportion of the respondents has high school level of education and mostly they are from middle income families. Mostly the respondents are from middle income group and the survey result shows that most of the families have monthly income between TK. 3001 and TK. 4000.

In the study area all the respondents view their socio-economic condition as lower than men. Joblessness or poverty is considered as the main problematic issue (score 403) and next to it, education facilities ranked second (score 445). But incase of violence attitude of the society is not a big deal for local women in the study area.

The respondents have found unequal treatment towards women in the job market as the main reason behind women's joblessness or poverty (score 466). Unequal educational qualification and lack of skill of women are also known to be reasons behind their backwardness in the job market (rank 2 and 3 respectively). The respondents have expressed that they need a scope to explore their ability to eradicate their unemployed condition (rank 5). For poverty eradication 50% of the respondents asked for establishment of cottage industries and 40% asked for small loan facilities. In this regard, the respondents are hopeful to get support from the female members.

Most of the respondents are aware about the existing educational system of women and about 70% of the respondents are found literate. They mostly believe that the financial incentives for female students in the present education enhancement program of the government are not sufficient for smooth running of their education. About 57% of the respondents opined for motivation of the female students, to increase the allowance money, as the classes are higher. Unsatisfactory performance of the teachers is found as the second reason for unsatisfactory status of women education in the local areas. About 20.7% asked to bring changes in present educational system. About 37% of the respondents have got vocational training of which only 4% trained by the government managed formal institutions. Sewing is the most preferable subject for vocational training whereas handicraft and poultry remained second and third choice respectively. Half of the respondents believe that lack of proper support and backup to the trainee after completion of their training, failed to achieve the targeted goal. According to 26% respondents their training program failed due to lack of proper publicity and 20.9% respondent opined that they did not find any suitable programs to be trained in which have proper job market.

For betterment of their present economic condition, 91.7% respondents want development programs like credit for landless society and livestock to be started under the provision of local government.

Among 270 respondents there are 90 respondents who had faced incidence of violence against women like murder, rape and violation of marriage law in their

families. Female members conciliated through 'Salish' in the cases of breaking marriage law. To solve dowry and marital problems of the society some 65 percent respondents asked the female members to work for increasing mass awareness. Accordingly about 61 percent respondents feel that female members should have power to activate the law enforcing agencies and 39.3% asked them to increasing job facilities for young generation to control law and order situation in their locality.

To improve the physical facilities and social infrastructure 57% respondents feel that the condition of the roads has to be improved and 43% respondents wants to improve public transport facilities has to be improved. As a sex and power balance about 56% respondents wants the female members to be able to take steps to punish the guilty. They should be given more power by government in case of handling social problems like religious fundamentalism, gender inequality.

From community view points most of the respondents believes that the female members can bring changes in their lives. In this connection 100% of the respondents want to have their social problems solved by them and they want the female members to play an important role in village "Salish". Respondents also feel that the community people should respect the opinion given by the female members. to punish the guilty and to discharge their duties properly, the female members must have enough to control the law and order situation in the society.

Side by side, as a leader of locality, about 45% of the respondents want the female members to have honesty and courage and 31.9% want them to be educated and knowledgeable to manage their responsibilities.

To have the clear idea on socio-economic background of the women members relevant variables such as age, educational and marital status, occupation etc. have been studied. According to collected data it implies that the female members are the age group of 30-34 which indicates that comparatively younger generation got impotence and also popular to the general people as well as voters. Most of them

(80%) are married and 2 out of 8 are widow which is only 20 percent of the total elected female members.

Although income is one of the important socio-economic indicators and economically well-off should come into picture but in practice it has been found about 66.7% of the female members came from, lowest income group and 33.3% came from lower-middle income group which indicate that well-off member of the society are not interested to join politics and take part in the administration due to political unrest and insecurity in the society. In case of land ownership pattern exempt all the members except one have their own homeland and agricultural land.

Education is one of indicator that helps the social leader to understand the rules regulations of the union Parishad and to participate in various activities efficiently. 44% of the elected members have secondary and higher secondary degree and three are illiterate also but the percentage is 11%. But most of them have practical training in different fields like road, culvert and bridge construction, prevention of women oppression and violence, family planning as well as health services and mostly these are short period training imparted to the female members.

To become community leaders political background has a significant role. But only 11% of the members do have relation with active political figure and the rest do not have any relationship at all, but the positive side is that almost all of them are living in their respective areas for a long period of time and with good works gained them popularity in the area gradually.

According to the constitutional provision all women members deserve equal right for participation in all development and political activities but in practice a great discrimination could be observed. In most of the cases they do not take part and participate in discussions at the meetings as their views are not given due importance. Similarly the female members have limited participation in decision making process and in most cases this opinion of proposal are not taken in to consideration but the positive aspect, however is that participation of women members in different activities are gradually increasing.

The women members' participation in development activities plays an important role and from questionnaire survey it is found that the female members are active and

taking effective part in the development activities in their own areas and they are also taking part in women related activities. Such activities are gradually increasing which is a positive indication.

The present constitution of Bangladesh has provided the female members right to be the chairpersons of at least one third of project implementation committees. In this regard every union can design eight development projects. Side by side they will be the chairpersons of ward-based hand tube well site selection committee. The elected women members are also responsible as members in other important union level committees on primary and mass education programs, disaster management and so on. But at the time of survey while inquiring it was found that only 22.2% of female members are able to use these funds in full extend. Using level of local fund and resources is moderate by more than 55% of the female members.

In case of principle duties and responsibilities for female members they are included as change agent in rural local government with a wide view to help the destitute village women. Inquiry was made to know whether these female members were involved in any rural local government's development programs but from the field information it is shown that 100% participation by female members only in Promotion of family planning and health services, Prevention of women oppression and violence, Education development. In other development program have shown minimal and no participation of female members.

The above discussion on the finding from the study we can draw the following bottom line of problems:

- Traditionally our Government is male dominated. So, the male administrators in government could not welcome the female members' involvement in local government warmly.
- Male members are not enthusiastic to extend their co-operation to the female members. Some time they create obstruction for female members to utilize their constitutional rights.
- Still today the rural women have not realized the importance of getting involved in rural administration and so women from educated and elite family do not wish to join this field of governance.

- The elected female members mostly come from lower classes of society and weak educational status that makes themselves less confident about their rights. At the same time the male members and the local people neglect their decisions as well.
- The female members want to have their opinion heard in most of the development works. But that is not the case most of the times. On the other hand, the majority of the male members get their opinion accepted in most cases.
- Rural women have some common family and social problems which includes harassment due to *fatwa* and dowry and lack of access to education and job and so on. These women were delighted to elect the female members in rural local government with a hope to get rid of the problem. But, the female members have also overlooked these problems of the rural women and have concentrated in obtaining profit from local government development projects.
- Though the NGO activities are helping the women to increase their consciousness but government initiative is very poor in this regard.
- The female members are not empowered authoritatively at all.
- The female members could not serve especially the female folk according to their desire, which makes the respondents hopeless. Now they look for the next term of election to elect female members who will help to fulfill their expectations.

At the end, from the community point of view, we can conclude that to empower the female members in rural local government, must have to bring constitutional change to give these female members equal power in response to male members and there has to be a equal power balance in rural local government.

Recommendations:

1. For developing socio-political awareness and consciousness within the society, women should be involved in social, economic and political activities. Therefore the government for self-reliance of women should adopt adult education programs especially on election process, women development and their rights and some income generating programs.
2. For rural women's development, the female members should have authority to initiate training and education facilities rather than increase awareness.

3. For directly elected women members, the minimum education qualification should be SSC and it must be strictly followed during the election process.
4. Measures should be taken for building organizational capacity within the Union Parishad. Training facilities should be provided in each level of the organogram of the Union Parishad.
5. All the male and female members in the Union Parishad should work coherently for all out development area. In achieving this goal, the inherent inferiority attitude towards the female members must be removed.
6. Voluntary organizations can help a lot in enabling women to function positively in the Union Parishad. Voluntary organizations and NGOs should come forward to interact with the women members to discuss their problems and help finding solutions and inform them of government schemes and programs.
7. The women members should work for wider participation of the poor and other women in the field of development. Women members should widely be accepted as active part of the Union Parishad's decision-making body to ensure that collective effort is made to make the best use of resources in the interests of the poor especially the women.
8. Government should make use of press and electronic media in developing awareness for women's involvement in development activities. It can also play a key role to solve the problems of religious and social constraints and lack of security for women in the society.
9. There should be a power balance in the Union Parishad that is, the ratio of male and female member should be equal within the Union Parishad.
10. The Union Parishad provides loan facility for destitute women amounting TK. 500 which is very meager at the present context. The amount should be increased to a proportionate level.
11. The government should enforce the conditions of law and order for protecting the female members while working as a public representative.
12. Training is imperative for women members to perform their duties effectively and help them to be successful. This training should be imparted at the grassroots level where the Union Parishad actually operates.

13. There should be a constant monitoring process to assess whether the training programs are fruitful or not. If necessary, more short-term training courses should be conducted.
14. Women members should attend the meetings regularly, a nominal conveyance allowance may be provided to the women members from Union Parishad fund. Besides, regular timely payment of honorarium to the women members from the Union Parishad fund needs to be ensured.
15. There should be some arrangement which ensures regular meeting of the female members with community women in Union Parishad.

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Appendix:01 Priority Ranking Matrix

Table 01: Priority (Technique) Matrix for The Ranking of Problems by Getting Mini Score for Main Problematic Issues for Women Empowerment in the study area.

	SP	Respondents scoring for the Ranking of Main Problematic issues for village khajura						
		Poverty/ Joblessness	Lack of Educational facility	Lack of Training	Violence	Conservative Society	Lack of self motivation	Disregard of Women Issues
Khajura	1	1	2	3	4	6	7	5
	2	2	1	4	3	5	6	7
	3	2	1	3	4	5	6	7
	4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	5	1	2	5	4	3	7	6
	6	1	2	5	6	3	4	7
	7	1	2	3	6	4	5	7
	8	1	2	5	4	3	6	7
	9	3	1	2	5	4	6	7
	10	2	1	3	4	5	6	7
	11	2	1	3	4	5	7	6
	12	2	1	4	3	5	7	6
	13	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	14	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	15	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	RV	22	24	52	63	68	91	100
Gilabaria	1	1	2	4	6	3	7	5
	2	1	3	2	4	6	7	5
	3	1	2	1	4	5	6	3
	4	2	1	4	3	5	6	7
	5	1	2	3	4	5	7	6
	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	7	2	1	3	4	6	5	7
	8	2	1	4	3	6	7	5
	9	2	1	4	3	5	7	6
	10	1	2	4	3	6	7	5
	11	2	1	3	4	5	6	7
	12	1	2	3	4	5	7	6
	13	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	14	1	2	3	5	4	7	6
	15	2	1	3	4	5	7	6
	RV	22	24	47	59	77	99	86
Gayashpur	1	1	2	3	4	6	7	5
	2	2	1	4	3	5	7	6
	3	1	2	4	3	5	7	6
	4	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	5	1	2	4	3	5	7	6
	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	7	2	1	3	4	5	7	6
	8	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	9	1	2	4	3	6	7	5

	SP	Respondents scoring for the Ranking of Main Problematic issues for village khajura						
		Poverty/ Joblessness	Lack of Educational facility	Lack of Training	Violence	Conservative Society	Lack of self motivation	Disregard of Women Issues
	10	1	2	4	3	5	7	6
	11	2	1	3	4	6	7	6
	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	13	1	2	5	4	3	7	6
	14	1	2	5	6	3	4	7
	15	19	23	51	53	71	93	83
	RV	1	2	3	6	4	5	7
Baribathan	1	1	2	4	3	6	7	5
	2	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	3	2	1	3	4	6	7	6
	4	1	2	3	4	5	7	6
	5	1	2	4	3	5	7	6
	6	1	2	3	4	5	7	6
	7	2	1	4	3	5	7	6
	8	2	1	4	3	6	7	5
	9	2	1	4	3	6	7	5
	10	1	2	4	3	5	7	6
	11	1	2	5	4	3	6	7
	12	3	1	2	5	4	6	7
	13	2	1	3	4	5	6	7
	14	1	2	4	6	3	7	5
	15	1	3	2	4	6	7	5
	RV	24	26	55	63	80	107	94
Corapara	1	1	3	5	2	6	7	4
	2	1	2	4	3	6	7	5
	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	4	1	2	4	3	6	7	5
	5	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	6	2	1	4	3	6	7	5
	7	2	1	4	3	6	5	7
	8	1	4	2	3	5	6	7
	9	2	1	3	4	5	7	6
	10	1	2	4	3	6	7	5
	11	2	1	4	3	6	7	5
	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	13	1	2	5	4	3	7	6
	14	1	2	5	6	3	4	7
	15	1	2	3	6	4	5	7
	RV	20	28	56	55	78	95	88
Berbari	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	2	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	3	2	1	4	3	6	7	5
	4	1	2	4	3	6	7	5
	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	6	2	1	3	4	5	6	7
	7	2	1	3	4	6	5	7
	8	3	2	1	4	6	7	5
	9	3	2	1	4	6	7	5
	10	3	2	1	4	6	7	5

	SP	Respondents scoring for the Ranking of Main Problematic issues for village khajura						
		Poverty/ Joblessness	Lack of Educational facility	Lack of Training	Violence	Conservative Society	Lack of self motivation	Disregard of Women Issues
Berbari	11	1	2	1	4	5	6	3
	12	2	1	4	3	5	6	7
	13	1	2	3	4	5	7	6
	14	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	15	2	1	3	4	6	5	7
	RV	27	24	40	57	83	95	88
Bhashudevpur	1	1	2	3	4	6	7	5
	2	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	3	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	4	1	2	4	3	5	6	7
	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	6	1	2	4	3	6	7	5
	7	2	1	3	4	6	5	7
	8	2	1	4	3	6	7	5
	9	2	1	3	4	5	6	7
	10	2	1	3	4	5	7	6
	11	1	2	1	4	5	6	3
	12	2	1	4	3	5	6	7
	13	1	2	3	4	5	7	6
	14	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	15	2	1	3	4	6	5	7
RV	23	22	47	56	82	95	89	
Rupda	1	1	2	3	4	5	7	6
	2	2	1	3	4	5	7	6
	3	1	2	3	4	5	7	6
	4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	5	2	1	3	4	5	6	7
	6	2	1	3	4	5	6	7
	7	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	9	2	1	3	4	5	6	7
	10	2	1	3	4	5	6	7
	11	1	2	5	4	3	6	7
	12	3	1	2	5	4	6	7
	13	2	1	3	4	5	6	7
	14	1	2	4	6	3	7	5
	15	1	3	2	4	6	7	5
RV	24	23	46	63	72	96	96	
Kanshi	1	2	1	3	4	5	6	7
	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	3	2	1	4	2	6	5	7
	4	1	2	4	2	6	7	5
	5	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	6	2	1	4	2	6	7	5
	7	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	8	2	1	4	3	5	6	7
	9	2	1	4	2	5	6	7
	10	1	2	4	3	6	7	5
	11	2	1	4	3	6	7	5

	SP	Respondents scoring for the Ranking of Main Problematic issues for village khajura						
		Poverty/ Joblessness	Lack of Educational facility	Lack of Training	Violence	Conservative Society	Lack of self motivation	Disregard of Women Issues
Kanshi	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	13	1	2	5	4	3	7	6
	14	1	2	5	6	3	4	7
	15	1	2	3	6	4	5	7
	RV	23	22	56	53	77	93	92
Durgapur	1	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	2	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	3	2	1	4	3	6	7	5
	4	2	1	4	3	6	7	5
	5	2	1	4	3	6	5	7
	6	2	1	4	2	6	7	5
	7	1	2	4	3	6	7	5
	8	2	1	4	3	6	7	5
	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	10	1	2	4	3	6	7	5
	11	1	2	5	4	3	6	7
	12	3	1	2	5	4	6	7
	13	2	1	3	4	5	6	7
	14	1	2	4	6	3	7	5
	15	1	3	2	4	6	7	5
RV	25	22	53	55	80	99	85	
Bhupatipur	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	2	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	3	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	4	1	2	3	4	5	7	6
	5	1	2	3	4	6	7	6
	6	1	2	4	3	6	7	5
	7	2	1	4	3	6	7	5
	8	1	2	3	4	6	7	5
	9	1	2	3	4	6	7	5
	10	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	11	1	2	1	4	5	6	3
	12	2	1	4	3	5	6	7
	13	1	2	3	4	5	7	6
	14	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	15	2	1	3	4	6	5	7
RV	21	24	46	57	84	99	84	
Porahati	1	1	2	3	4	6	5	7
	2	1	2	3	4	6	7	5
	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	4	2	1	3	4	6	5	7
	5	1	2	3	4	6	5	7
	6	1	2	3	4	6	7	5
	7	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	8	2	1	4	3	6	7	5
	9	2	1	3	4	6	5	7
	10	1	2	4	3	6	7	5
	11	2	1	4	3	6	7	5
	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	SP	Respondents scoring for the Ranking of Main Problematic issues for village khajura						
		Poverty/ Joblessness	Lack of Educational facility	Lack of Training	Violence	Conservative Society	Lack of self motivation	Disregard of Women Issues
Porahati	13	1	2	5	4	3	7	6
	14	1	2	5	6	3	4	7
	15	1	2	3	6	4	5	7
	RV	20	25	52	61	80	90	92
Pailanpur	1	2	1	4	3	6	7	5
	2	1	2	4	2	6	5	7
	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	4	1	2	3	4	6	7	5
	5	1	4	3	2	6	7	5
	6	1	3	2	4	5	7	6
	7	1	3	4	2	6	5	7
	8	2	1	4	3	5	7	6
	9	1	3	4	2	5	7	6
	10	1	2	4	3	6	7	5
	11	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	12	1	2	4	3	5	7	6
	13	2	1	4	3	5	7	6
	14	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	15	1	2	3	4	5	7	5
	RV	19	31	52	47	82	99	88
	Harishankarpur	1	1	4	3	2	6	7
2		1	3	4	2	5	7	6
3		1	4	5	2	3	7	6
4		1	2	5	3	4	7	6
5		1	3	5	2	4	7	6
6		1	3	5	2	4	7	6
7		1	3	5	2	4	6	6
8		1	3	5	2	4	7	6
9		2	1	3	4	6	7	5
10		1	3	5	2	4	7	6
11		1	2	4	3	5	7	6
12		1	2	4	3	5	7	6
13		1	2	4	3	5	7	6
14		1	2	4	3	6	7	5
15		1	2	3	4	5	7	6
RV	16	39	64	39	70	104	87	
Aliarbakri	1	2	1	3	4	5	7	6
	2	2	1	3	4	5	6	7
	3	2	1	3	4	6	5	7
	4	2	1	3	4	6	5	7
	5	2	1	3	4	5	7	6
	6	2	1	3	4	6	5	7
	7	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	8	2	1	3	4	6	5	7
	9	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	10	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	11	2	1	3	4	6	5	7
	12	2	1	3	4	6	5	7
	13	2	1	3	4	6	7	5

	SP	Respondents scoring for the Ranking of Main Problematic issues for village khajura						
		Poverty/ Joblessness	Lack of Educational facility	Lack of Training	Violence	Conservative Society	Lack of self motivation	Disregard of Women Issues
Aliarbakri	14	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	15	2	1	3	4	6	5	7
	RV	30	15	45	60	87	90	93
Paranpur	1	2	1	3	4	5	7	6
	2	2	1	3	4	5	7	6
	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	4	2	1	3	4	5	7	6
	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	6	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	7	2	1	3	4	5	7	6
	8	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	9	1	2	3	4	6	7	5
	10	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	11	1	2	3	4	6	7	5
	12	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	13	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	14	2	1	3	4	6	7	5
	15	2	1	3	4	5	6	7
	RV	25	20	45	60	82	101	87
Bazidpur	1	1	2	5	4	3	6	7
	2	3	1	2	5	4	6	7
	3	2	1	3	4	5	6	7
	4	1	2	4	6	3	7	5
	5	1	3	2	4	6	7	5
	6	1	2	3	6	4	5	7
	7	1	2	5	4	3	6	7
	8	3	1	2	5	4	6	7
	9	2	1	3	4	5	6	7
	10	1	2	4	6	3	7	5
	11	2	1	4	3	6	7	5
	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	13	1	2	5	4	3	7	6
	14	1	2	5	6	3	4	7
	15	1	2	3	6	4	5	7
RV	22	26	53	71	61	91	96	
Panashi	1	1	2	5	4	3	6	7
	2	3	1	2	5	4	6	7
	3	2	1	3	4	5	6	7
	4	1	2	4	6	3	7	5
	5	1	3	2	4	6	7	5
	6	1	2	1	4	5	6	3
	7	2	1	4	3	5	6	7
	8	1	2	3	4	5	7	6
	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	10	2	1	3	4	6	5	7
	11	1	2	4	6	3	7	5
	12	1	3	2	4	6	7	5
	13	1	2	1	4	5	6	3
	14	2	1	4	3	5	6	7

	SP	Respondents scoring for the Ranking of Main Problematic issues for village khajura						
		Poverty/ Joblessness	Lack of Educational facility	Lack of Training	Violence	Conservative Society	Lack of self motivation	Disregard of Women Issues
Panashi	15	1	2	3	4	5	7	6
	RV	21	27	44	63	71	95	87

Source: Field Survey, 2002

Note: SP= Serial of Respondents

RV= Relative value

Appendix:02 Priority Ranking Matrix

Table 02: Priority (Technique) Matrix for the Ranking of Problems by Getting Mini Score for reason behind bad economical condition of local women

Name of Villages	SP	Respondents scoring for the Ranking of reason behind bad economical condition					
		Unequal wage with men.	Unskilled worker.	No scope to explore ability	Unequal education levels with men.	No ownership of land of their	Religious conservatism.
Khajura	1	1	3	4	2	6	5
	2	2	3	5	1	6	4
	3	1	3	5	2	6	4
	4	2	3	4	1	5	6
	5	1	1	2	2	1	2
	6	1	1	2	2	1	2
	7	1	3	2	5	4	6
	8	2	1	3	4	5	6
	9	2	3	1	4	5	6
	10	4	1	2	3	6	5
	11	2	3	4	1	6	5
	12	3	4	5	1	6	2
	13	1	2	3	4	5	6
	14	1	4	3	2	5	6
	15	1	2	3	4	6	5
	RV	25	37	48	38	73	70
Gilabaria	1	1	4	2	5	6	3
	2	3	2	1	4	5	6
	3	1	4	2	3	5	6
	4	3	2	4	1	5	6
	5	2	3	4	1	6	5
	6	3	2	4	1	5	6
	7	4	2	3	1	5	6
	8	2	3	4	1	6	5
	9	2	3	4	1	5	6
	10	1	4	3	2	6	5
	11	2	4	3	1	6	5
	12	1	2	3	4	5	6
	13	1	2	3	4	6	5
	14	2	3	4	1	6	5
	15	2	3	4	1	6	5
	RV	30	43	48	31	83	80
Gayashpur	1	3	2	4	1	5	6
	2	2	1	4	3	5	6
	3	1	4	5	2	6	3
	4	1	3	4	2	5	6
	5	1	2	4	3	6	5
	6	1	2	4	3	6	5
	7	2	3	4	1	6	5

Name of Villages	SP	Respondents scoring for the Ranking of reason behind bad economical condition					
		Unequal wage with men.	Unskilled worker.	No scope to explore ability	Unequal education levels with men.	No ownership of land of their	Religious conservatism.
	8	1	3	4	2	6	5
	9	1	3	4	2	6	5
	10	2	3	4	1	6	5
	11	1	4	3	2	6	5
	12	2	3	4	1	5	6
	13	1	1	2	2	1	2
	14	1	1	2	2	1	2
	15	1	3	2	5	4	6
	RV	21	38	54	32	74	72
Baribathan	1	1	2	3	4	5	6
	2	2	3	4	1	6	5
	3	1	2	4	3	6	5
	4	1	3	6	2	5	3
	5	1	3	5	2	6	4
	6	1	3	6	2	5	3
	7	1	3	6	2	5	3
	8	1	4	6	2	5	3
	9	1	3	4	2	6	5
	10	1	3	5	2	6	4
	11	2	1	3	4	5	6
	12	2	3	1	4	5	6
	13	4	1	2	3	6	5
	14	1	4	2	5	6	3
	15	3	2	1	4	5	6
	RV	23	40	58	42	82	67
Corapara	1	2	4	5	1	6	3
	2	1	3	4	2	6	5
	3	1	4	5	2	6	4
	4	1	3	4	2	6	5
	5	2	3	4	1	6	5
	6	2	3	4	1	6	5
	7	2	3	4	1	6	5
	8	2	3	4	1	6	5
	9	2	3	4	1	6	5
	10	1	4	5	2	6	3
	11	2	3	4	1	6	5
	12	2	3	4	1	5	6
	13	1	1	2	2	1	2
	14	1	1	2	2	1	2
	15	1	3	2	5	4	6
	RV	23	44	57	25	77	66
Berbari	1	1	2	3	4	5	6
	2	1	3	2	4	6	5
	3	1	3	4	2	5	6
	4	2	4	5	1	6	3
	5	1	2	3	4	5	6
	6	2	3	4	1	6	5

Name of Villages	SP	Respondents scoring for the Ranking of reason behind bad economical condition					
		Unequal wage with men.	Unskilled worker.	No scope to explore ability	Unequal education levels with men.	No ownership of land of their	Religious conservatism
Berbari	7	1	3	4	2	6	5
	8	3	2	4	1	6	5
	9	2	3	4	1	6	5
	10	2	3	4	1	6	5
	11	1	4	2	3	5	6
	12	3	2	4	1	5	6
	13	2	3	4	1	6	5
	14	3	2	4	1	5	6
	15	4	2	3	1	5	6
	RV	29	41	54	28	83	80
Bhashudevpur	1	1	3	4	2	6	5
	2	1	4	5	2	6	3
	3	2	4	3	1	6	5
	4	1	4	5	2	6	3
	5	1	2	3	4	5	6
	6	1	4	3	2	6	5
	7	2	3	4	1	5	6
	8	3	2	5	1	6	4
	9	1	3	4	2	5	6
	10	2	3	4	1	6	5
	11	1	4	2	3	5	6
	12	3	2	4	1	5	6
	13	2	3	4	1	6	5
	14	3	2	4	1	5	6
	15	4	2	3	1	5	6
	RV	28	45	57	25	83	77
Rupda	1	2	3	4	1	6	5
	2	1	4	5	2	6	3
	3	1	4	5	2	6	3
	4	1	2	3	4	5	6
	5	2	4	3	1	5	6
	6	2	4	3	1	5	6
	7	2	4	3	1	6	5
	8	1	3	2	4	6	5
	9	1	4	3	2	5	6
	10	2	4	3	1	5	6
	11	2	1	3	4	5	6
	12	2	3	1	4	5	6
	13	4	1	2	3	6	5
	14	1	4	2	5	6	3
	15	3	2	1	4	5	6
	RV	27	47	43	39	82	77
Kanshi	1	1	3	4	2	5	6
	2	1	2	3	4	5	6
	3	1	4	3	2	5	6
	4	1	3	4	2	5	6
	5	2	1	3	4	6	5

Name of Villages	SP	Respondents scoring for the Ranking of reason behind bad economical condition					
		Unequal wage with men.	Unskilled worker.	No scope to explore ability	Unequal education levels with men.	No ownership of land of their	Religious conservatism.
	6	1	4	3	2	6	5
	7	2	1	4	3	6	5
	8	2	4	3	1	6	5
	9	1	3	4	2	6	5
	10	1	3	4	2	6	5
	11	2	3	4	1	6	5
	12	2	3	4	1	5	6
	13	1	1	2	2	1	2
	14	1	1	2	2	1	2
	15	1	3	2	5	4	6
	RV	20	39	49	35	73	75
Durgapur	1	2	4	3	1	6	5
	2	2	4	3	1	5	6
	3	2	3	4	1	5	6
	4	1	4	3	2	6	5
	5	2	3	4	1	6	5
	6	1	4	3	2	6	5
	7	2	3	4	1	6	5
	8	2	4	3	1	6	5
	9	1	2	3	4	5	6
	10	2	4	5	1	6	3
	11	2	1	3	4	5	6
	12	2	3	1	4	5	6
	13	4	1	2	3	6	5
	14	1	4	2	5	6	3
	15	3	2	1	4	5	6
	RV	29	46	44	35	84	77
Bhupatipur	1	1	2	3	4	5	6
	2	2	3	5	1	6	4
	3	3	4	5	1	6	2
	4	1	2	3	4	5	6
	5	1	2	6	4	5	3
	6	1	4	3	2	6	5
	7	1	3	4	2	6	5
	8	2	3	4	1	6	5
	9	1	3	4	2	6	5
	10	2	3	4	1	6	5
	11	1	4	2	3	5	6
	12	3	2	4	1	5	6
	13	2	3	4	1	6	5
	14	3	2	4	1	5	6
	15	4	2	3	1	5	6
	RV	28	42	58	29	83	75
Porahati	1	2	3	4	1	5	6
	2	2	3	4	1	6	5
	3	2	3	4	1	6	5

Name of Villages	SP	Respondents scoring for the Ranking of reason behind bad economical condition					
		Unequal wage with men.	Unskilled worker.	No scope to explore ability	Unequal education levels with men.	No ownership of land of their	Religious conservatism.
Porahati	4	1	3	4	2	6	5
	5	1	4	3	2	6	5
	6	2	3	4	1	6	5
	7	2	4	5	1	6	5
	8	1	4	3	2	6	5
	9	2	3	4	1	6	5
	10	2	3	4	1	6	5
	11	2	3	4	1	6	5
	12	2	3	4	1	5	6
	13	1	1	2	2	1	2
	14	1	1	2	2	1	2
	15	1	3	2	5	4	6
	RV	24	44	53	24	76	72
	Pailanpur	1	1	2	3	4	6
2		2	3	4	1	6	5
3		1	2	3	4	6	5
4		1	4	3	2	6	5
5		1	4	3	2	6	5
6		1	3	2	4	6	5
7		1	4	2	3	6	5
8		1	2	3	4	6	5
9		1	4	2	3	6	5
10		1	4	2	3	6	5
11		2	3	4	1	6	5
12		1	4	3	2	6	5
13		1	4	3	2	6	5
14		1	2	3	4	5	6
15		1	3	2	4	6	5
RV		17	48	42	43	89	76
Harishankarpur	1	1	3	4	2	6	5
	2	1	4	3	2	6	5
	3	2	4	3	1	6	5
	4	1	4	3	2	6	5
	5	1	4	3	2	6	5
	6	1	4	3	2	6	5
	7	2	4	3	1	6	5
	8	2	4	3	1	6	5
	9	2	4	3	1	6	5
	10	5	3	4	1	6	2
	11	1	2	4	3	6	5
	12	1	2	4	3	6	5
	13	2	3	4	1	6	5
	14	2	3	4	1	6	5
	15	2	3	4	1	6	5
	RV	26	51	52	24	90	72
Aliarbakri	1	2	3	4	1	6	5
	2	1	3	4	2	6	5

Name of Villages	SP	Respondents scoring for the Ranking of reason behind bad economical condition					
		Unequal wage with men.	Unskilled worker.	No scope to explore ability	Unequal education levels with men.	No ownership of land of their	Religious conservatism.
Aliarbakri	3	2	4	3	1	6	5
	4	2	4	3	1	6	5
	5	2	3	4	1	6	5
	6	1	3	4	2	6	5
	7	2	3	4	1	6	5
	8	2	3	4	1	6	5
	9	2	3	4	1	6	5
	10	2	3	4	1	6	5
	11	2	4	3	1	6	5
	12	2	4	3	1	5	6
	13	2	3	4	1	5	6
	14	2	3	4	1	6	5
	15	2	3	4	1	6	5
	RV	28	49	56	17	88	77
	Paranpur	1	2	4	3	1	6
2		1	3	4	2	6	5
3		2	3	4	1	6	5
4		2	3	4	1	6	5
5		2	3	4	1	6	5
6		2	4	3	1	6	5
7		2	4	3	1	6	5
8		1	3	4	2	6	5
9		1	4	3	2	6	5
10		1	3	4	2	6	5
11		1	3	4	2	6	5
12		2	3	4	1	6	5
13		1	4	3	2	6	5
14		2	3	4	1	6	5
15		2	4	3	1	6	5
RV	24	51	54	21	90	75	
Bazidpur	1	2	1	3	4	5	6
	2	2	3	1	4	5	6
	3	4	1	2	3	6	5
	4	1	4	2	5	6	3
	5	3	2	1	4	5	6
	6	1	3	2	5	4	6
	7	2	1	3	4	5	6
	8	2	3	1	4	5	6
	9	4	1	2	3	6	5
	10	1	4	2	5	6	3
	11	2	3	4	1	6	5
	12	2	3	4	1	5	6
	13	1	1	2	2	1	2
	14	1	1	2	2	1	2
	15	1	3	2	5	4	6
RV	29	34	33	52	70	73	

Name of Villages	SP	Respondents scoring for the Ranking of reason behind bad economical condition					
		Unequal wage with men.	Unskilled worker.	No scope to explore ability	Unequal education levels with men.	No ownership of land of their	Religious conservatism.
Panashi	1	2	1	3	4	5	6
	2	2	3	1	4	5	6
	3	4	1	2	3	6	5
	4	1	4	2	5	6	3
	5	3	2	1	4	5	6
	6	1	4	2	3	5	6
	7	3	2	4	1	5	6
	8	2	3	4	1	6	5
	9	3	2	4	1	5	6
	10	4	2	3	1	5	6
	11	1	4	2	5	6	3
	12	3	2	1	4	5	6
	13	1	4	2	3	5	6
	14	3	2	4	1	5	6
	15	2	3	4	1	6	5
	RV	35	39	39	41	80	81
Total		466	778	899	581	1460	1342
Rank		1	3	4	2	5	6

Source: Field Survey, 2002

Note: SP= Serial of Respondents

RV= Relative value

Name of the locality:

Name of the village:

Ward no:

Name of the union Parishad:

Name of the respondent:

Questionnaire for Community People/ Social worker

1. Information concerning households

Member	Name	Age	Educational level	Relation with the head of the family	Occupation	Income per month
1						

2. Length of stay in the locality
3. How did you become resident of the locality? by born/through marriage/ occupational reasons of the family.
4. What are the main sources of water in your locality? Pond/Piped Water/Tube Well
5. Do you have drainage facility in the locality? yes/no
6. Do you have electric facility in the locality? yes/no
7. What are the major problems in your locality?
 - poverty/ landlessness
 - lack of job opportunity
 - lack of educational opportunity
 - lack of training facility
 - violence
 - Conservative society
 - No concern for woman
8. Do you think that the woman involvement in the local govt. will be able to bring any changes in your life?

Yes/ No/Not concerned

9. Can you express your problems to the female members?

Yes/ No/Not concerned

10. Do you have any meeting programs with the women members?

Yes/ No/Not concerned

11. If yes, How many times in a month

- i. Ones ii. Twice iii. Thrice iv. More than three times

12. i. Can justice be achieved through *shalish*?

Yes/ No/Not concerned

ii. Do the female members have influence over the shalish?

iii. If no, why do you think so?

They do not attend the shalish regularly

The community people do not care for their advice

They do not voice out in favor of women or humiliated people

Other (mention)

13. What are the qualities you would like to see in your women members?

Prioritize the following:

- i. Organizational capacity
- ii. Honesty and courage
- iii. Responsive to women's need
- iv. Education and knowledge
- v. Insight and patience to handle situation
- vi. Economically well of.

14. Do you think that women's education is needed for their betterment?

Yes/ No/Not concerned

15. Are the women members helping the women folk in your locality to be educated?

Yes/ No/Not concerned? How.

- i. By increasing the no. of school nearby
- ii. Providing allowances for female student
- iii. By changing school time for the girls
- iv. By motivation community people for women education.
- v. By enforcing law and order against the teaser on girls
- vi. others (mention)

16. Do you have any incidence of early marriage is a bad culture in the society?

Yes/ No/Not concerned? If yes, can the female members stop this culture by enforcing marriage law?

17. What are the main reasons behind the bad economic condition in your locality? Prioritize.

- i. Women do not have land of their own.
- ii. Not skilled at work.
- iii. Unequal wage.
- iv. Unequal education level.
- v. Religious conservatism.
- vi. Separate ownership of the women not considered.

18. What is the women's participation rate in out door work in your locality?

- vii. Better than the men.
- viii. Equal to the men.
- ix. Worse than the men.
- x. I don't know.

19. (If not equal) What are the reasons behind poor participation rate in out door work by the women?

- xi. It will take time to change the system.
- xii. Obstacle created by the village elders.
- xiii. Unwillingness of the women.
- xiv. Husbands do not want their wives work outside.
- xv. Believing that it will go against religion.
- xvi. Fear of violence.

20. Do you have any training facility to make the female folk skilled in the locality by the woman members? yes/no

If yes, which is the supporting organization? Government/NGO/ Private.

21. What types of training facilities are available there?

- i. Sewing ii. Poultry iii. Livestock iv. Hatchery v. handicrafts
- vi. Plantation vii. Health care viii. Environmental awareness.

22. Who provide health facility in your locality? Government/NGO/ Private.

23. Do you get proper health care facility in the locality?

Yes/ No/Not concerned

If no, why?

- i. Due to long distance
- ii. Offensive attitude of the management
- iii. Non-availability of doctors
- iv. Doctors do not attend properly
- v. Lack of medicine
- vi. Others

24. Do you feel the female members can take measures to improve the system?

Yes No Not concerned

25. Have the women members informed you about the necessity of registering birth and marriage?

Yes No

26. Do you think the violence (rape, killing, acid throwing etc.) against women in the locality has reduced in the present time?

Yes No

27. If yes, what do you think about the level of influence of the female member?

- i. Full influence.
- ii. Partial Influence.
- iii. No influence at all.

iv. Not known.

28. Is there any case of harassment by "Fatwa" in your locality?

Yes No Not concerned

29. If yes, Has the woman member taken any step to stop "Fatwa" enforcement?

Yes No Not concerned

30. Do you think the woman member can take strong part in punishing the guilty?

Yes No Not concerned

31. Do you suffer from arsenic affected drinking water?

Yes No Not concerned

32. Has the female members taken any steps to solve the problem of drinking water?

Yes No Not concerned

If yes, what type of steps

- i. marking the arsenic affected tube wells
- ii. establishing more tube well in the arsenic free area
- iii. providing method for disaffected water from arsenic
- iv. other

33. Does the local government provide you sanitary facilities?

Yes No Not concerned

34. If no, can the female members help you in these problem and how?

- i. by helping local people to get loan for latrine
- ii. by providing pit latrine through donor agencies
- iii. by making people aware about clean and healthy life
- iv. others (mention)

35. Is there any program of the following planned by the local government:

- i. Mohila Shamity
- ii. Landless society
- iii. Family planning
- iv. Credit program
- v. Livestock
- vi. Fisheries
- vii. Tube well.
- viii. Latrine
- ix. Do not know.

36. If yes, do you think these programs are viable to improve the quality of life the women in this area?

Yes No Not concerned

37. If no, why do you think so?

Programs have no real out put / not qualitative.

Do not have access for all

Weak publicity about these programs

Bad communication

Do not know

38. Do you think that female members in local government are accelerating the development work of NGOs within the locality?

Yes No Not concerned

39. What types of changes do you expect in the following sectors in your locality?

Problems	Expected incentives
Poverty/ economic problems	
Health/ Family planning	
Education	
Communication	
Dowry/ marital problems	
Law and order	
Violence	
Job opportunity	
Training facilities	
Social problems	
Community facilities	
Recreational facilities	

Questionnaire for the female members in the locality

Name of the locality:

Name of the village:

Ward no:

Name of the Union Parishad:

Name of the women member:

1. Information concerning households

Respondent	Age	Marital status	Education level	Occupation	Amount of Land	Income per month	Income of the family/month	Type of the hh	Size of hh
1									

2. Length of stay in the locality?

3. How have you become resident of this locality?

i. Native land ii. Through marriage iii. Occupational reason of your guardian iv. Others

4. What has influenced you to be a member in local government?

i. Inspired by family. ii. Recent NGOs' activities. iii. Personal views

iv. Lenient social environment v. other.

5. Do you have any relatives involved in politics?

6. Do you belong to any political party?

7. Do you have proper training as a member of Local Government on the following areas

i. Local Government ii. Horticulture iii. Mother and child care iv. Family Planning and Health Services
v. Prevention of Women Oppression and Violence vi. Poultry rearing vii. Management of Union Parishad
viii. Environment and forestation ix. Co-operative x. adult education management etc. xi. Road, culvert
and bridge constructions.

8. Do you participate in discussion meeting? Regular/ Irregular/not at all.

9. Do you participate in public meeting? Regular/ Irregular/not at all.

10. Do you have freedom to make decision while working as a member in local government?

If no, what are the reasons you think behind this situation?

a. Financial inability b. Lack of education and experience. Disregard by the chairman/members

d. Social obstruction e. Religious obstruction f. lack of confidence by local elite on female

members g. Criminals activities in the locality

11. Do you feel any obstacles to move within your area?

If yes, what type of obstructions?

- a. Do not get enough conveyance b. Social obstruction
c. Religious obstruction d. e. Others.

10. Do you enjoy the equal right as the male members to use the local resources/funds for development purpose in your locality? Full/moderate/ not at all.

11. Do you get full support from the local people? Full/moderate/ not at all.

12. What are the activities you perform which are women related?

13. I. Extension of Cottage Industries

14. ii. Development of Family Planning and Health Services iii. Education Development iv. Women and Child Development v. Prevention of Women Oppression and Violence vi. Environmental Development

15. What are the development projects you have undertaken in your locality?

Name of the Union Parishads	Project identification	Project preparation	Project Implementation	Project monitoring	Project evaluation
Paglakanai					
Porahati					
Harishankarpur					

