

**Review of
Local Institutional Environment
in the Coastal Areas of Bangladesh**

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(PDO-ICZMP)**

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Local Institutional Environment
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FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In order to promote an institutional environment that would enhance the possibilities of coastal households to move towards a situation of sustainable livelihood, a thorough understanding of the existing institutional setting in the immediate environment of the households is necessary. A review of that situation is the subject of this study. The focus under this exercise (Output 5.1 in the Workplan 2003) is on the capacity at the local level to improve people's access to resources, institutions and knowledge. This document will contribute to the development of approaches and methodologies of the PDO-ICZMP and would be used as input for a functional analysis of and models for local institutional arrangements.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADAB	Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh
ADP	Annual Development Plan
AEO	Agricultural Extension Officer
BARD	Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BRDB	Bangladesh Rural Development Board
BDS	Barisal Development Society
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CDSP	Char Development and Settlement Project
CDMP	Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme
CDS	Coastal Development Strategy
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
CODEC	Community Development Centre
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance
DC	Deputy Commissioner
DDCC	District Development Coordination Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DoF	Department of Fisheries
DUS	Dwip Unnayan Sangstha
DRO	District Rural Development Officer (BRDB)
DPHE	Department of Public Health Engineering
FPR	Facilitating Poverty Reduction through Local Governance
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IRDP	Integrated Rural Development Programme
KJDRP	Khulna Jessore Drainage Rehabilitation Project
KSS	Krishak Samabay Samity
KTCCA	Kotwali Thana Central Cooperatives Association
LIs	Local Institutions
LCDI	Local Capacity Development Initiative
LGIs	Local Government Institutions
LCS	Labour Contracting Society
LGED	Local Government Engineering Department
MLGRD&C	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives
MDMR	Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NBDs	Nation Building Departments
PBAEP	Patuakhali Barguna Aquaculture Extension Project
PBOs	Project Based Organisations
PC	Polder Committee
PDO	Programme Development Office
PRDP	Participatory Rural Development Project

PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RDA	Rural Development Academy (Bogra)
RDI	Rural Development Institutions
SDF	Social Development Foundation
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SLGDP	Sirajganj Local Governance Development Project
UAO	Upazila Agricultural Officer
UDCC	Upazila Development Coordination Committee
UE	Upazila Engineer
UEO	Upazila Education Officer
UFO	Upazila Fisheries Officer
ULO	Upazila Livestock Officer
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNO/TNO	Upazila/Thana Nirbahi Officer
UP	Union Parishad
URDO	Upazila Rural Development Officer
UZ	Upazila or Sub District

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1. Objectives of the Review

- 1.1 This review is part of a series of studies on interlinked themes and issues leading to the development of a Coastal Development Strategy (CDS) in 2004. Following the strategy formulation and adoption by the Government of Bangladesh, new institutional arrangements and new programmes of activities are likely to emerge. This review is intended to outline the process with a critical appreciation of the situation in relation to local institutional environment. The outcome of it is expected to ultimately contribute to the prospect of coastal households attaining sustainable livelihoods and socio-economic well-being.
- 1.2 The main objectives of this review were: (a) to have an improved understanding of local institutional arrangements that influence the livelihood situation of the households in the coastal zone, and (b) to provide indications for the development of models of good practice for institutional arrangements at local level. This was mainly to probe into what institutional arrangements can empower and enable local communities so that they can enhance their access to services and obtain control over natural resources. We have also looked into the linkages with central government agencies and between different sectors; how they promote partnership relations (e.g., between public and private sectors) and how these arrangements help create conditions for a conducive environment at local level for improving livelihoods.
- 1.3 In order to address these objectives, this review undertook mainly a desk study of existing relevant literature and held discussions with informed people in Dhaka. In addition two field trips were undertaken to two coastal areas of the country, i.e., Noakhali and Patuakhali-Barguna to observe the realities at field level and discuss the relevant issues with some of the local stakeholders.

2. The Conceptual Framework

- 2.1 As stated previously this review forms a part of a programme of work carried out under the Integrated Coastal Zone Management policy framework. This framework is based on the assumption that a (more) coordinated and integrated approach to development of this area inhabited by a large number of poor would bring about socio-economic change and development. The aim is to “create conditions in which the development of sustainable livelihoods and the integration of the coastal zone into national processes can take place”¹. This review has tried to build on the understanding of the key terms used in different policy and study documents of the ICZM ‘programme’
- 2.2 In Appendix 1 we have briefly discussed some of the relevant terms, including those related to ICZM framework for conceptual clarity. By

¹ Vision for Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Bangladesh : Framework for Action, 2002, p-4.

institution we understand the established arrangements, which include organisational structures and their 'rules of the game' (processes). At the community level we have on the one hand, a set of informal institutions like family, *Gosthi* and *shamaj*, and on the other, formal institutions like the *Union Parishad*, community based organisations, professional associations etc. These latter groups of institutions are further categorised as government, non-government or civil society. We have tried to throw light on each of these 'groups' and see how the pattern of their behaviour affects the lives and livelihoods of communities. The local government institutions at the Union, Upazila and District levels are functioning with some limitations, which we have endeavoured to illustrate, together with some suggestions for possible improvement.

- 2.3 The institutional contour of a typical coastal village² is complex and vibrant. In the backdrop of a social fabric characterised by a high level of inequality, poverty and deprivation, the institutional environment created by the above set of structures are dynamic and forward looking, although for understandable reasons, they are also dependent somewhat on external inputs and influence. What is needed is an assured and coordinated delivery approach of basic needs inputs as well as establishing "entitlements", as Amartya Sen would put it, over productive resources³. This will create local capacity and will help people to acquire the means to sustain on their own.
- 2.4 Institutions and institutional processes being central to the concept of ICZM, the on-going preparatory phase leading up to the development of a Coastal Development Strategy (CDS) has laid strong emphasis on the subject. As a result a number of studies and reviews in this area have already been completed; the first being the seminal work conducted by Dr. ATM Shamsul Huda on the key macro institutions in the country⁴. A number of other studies followed that also addressed the institutional question with a varied degree of emphasis. A synthesising exercise to collate the findings prior to the CDS formulation process deserves consideration. The purpose of this particular review is primarily to map the current institutional arrangements at 'local level' and their linkages with others and to see how they affect the process of achieving the ICZM goal.

3. What the Review Covered.

- 3.1 The review is built around the hypothesis that emphasises an integrated approach to development. As an enabling institutional environment cannot possibly be created by a fragmented and mutually exclusive organisational arrangements it looked at how local level

² For a graphical representation of this description, please go to Appendix-7

'capabilities' that entitlements generate.", Sen, A. 1986 as quoted in Huq, Hamidul, 2001, p-19.

³ "a major failing of traditional development economics has been its tendency to concentrate on supply of goods rather than on ownership and 'entitlements' of people and the 'capabilities' that entitlements generate", Sen, A. 1986 as quoted in Huq, Hamidul, 2001, p-19.

⁴ Huda, ATM Shamsul (2001). *Institutional Review of Selected Ministries and Agencies*. PDO-ICZM, Dhaka.

development efforts and surrounding organisational resources could be best utilised through a coordinated and integrated approach. We have thus tried to examine the local institutional environment in the coastal area within the context of the broader socio-political and economic situation of the country.

- 3.2 For the informal and independent local small private organisations, flexibility is the hallmark. They can change and adapt their plans and activities to suit their genuine needs and demands far more easily than their governmental counterparts. This is because of their local roots and close participation of the community in its affairs. There is a range of so-called 'local institutions'. Apart from people's own local *Samaj* organisations evolved or formed by local initiatives, there are also a range of institutional structures created by external change agents – both government and non-government, who are increasingly becoming instrumental in shaping the socio-cultural ethos of the communities as well as livelihood patterns and even the political affiliations of the people. In this report we have tried to review some of these activities and influences at community level together with their upward linkages wherever applicable. For example, we have reviewed local government institutions, the basic service delivery agencies, NGOs/MFIs (micro-finance institutions) and also to some extent, private sector commercial agencies that are active in the coastal area.

4. Methodology

- 4.1 The review was carried out mainly by a desk research of available literature along with short field trips to the coastal areas (See Appendix 3 for people and places visited). The desk study comprised of a review of books and reports available on the subject, particularly those produced by Bangladeshi authors. In addition the review has also utilised some of Verulam's own data source on local institutions. We have tried to look at both the formal administrative and local government institutions (UP, *Upazila*, District), and the informal civil society organisations (CBOs, Samity groups, etc.) together with private commercial ventures. The upward linkages with district and national level institutions were also briefly reviewed.
- 4.3 Two field visits were also undertaken by the author to two different areas of the coastal region. The char and islands off Noakhali offered a contrast to the more stable and well-settled districts of Patuakhali-Barguna. In both areas we have visited several community groups, spoken with local NGO leaders, a UP Chairperson, a DC, and Upazila level government officials.
- 4.3 The draft of this study report was discussed at a meeting of the Working Group on Institutional Arrangements at ICZM-PDO. Feedback received from this meeting was useful in revising the focus of this report.

5. Structure of the Report

- 5.1 In Chapter 2 of the report we have tried to identify the policy relevances and policy orientations of (mainly) the Government together with how

supportive the policy environment has been in relation to the development of local institutions. Chapter 3 briefly reviews the history of local institutions and their socio-political contexts in order to trace the process of evolution of institutional arrangements at local level. This helps us to see the changing objectives of different regimes and the motivation behind these initiatives. In the fourth chapter we have discussed the current institutional scene at the local level with a range of organisational structures and processes introduced by different government and non-government organisations. In the fifth, we have tried to delineate on the local institutional environment with a particular focus on the coastal areas of the country. Finally, in the concluding chapter (six) we have discussed, among other things, the implications of the findings given in the foregoing chapters for ICZM. In the Appendix, besides different tables of references, we have given definitions of some of the key terms used in this report (Appendix-1).

CHAPTER 2 POLICY CONTEXT

6. The Policy Environment

- 6.1 The rationale for ICZM to take up the issue of institutional development as an important policy theme has been reflected in its key documents. A positive *Institutional environment* was considered crucial in an integrated approach to coastal development. Referring to a UNEP report of 1995, the ICZM Vision paper notes, "One of the most frequent constraints on achieving ICZM is the lack of appropriate *institutional arrangements*. Due to its complex nature, ICZM requires a high level of integration within and between institutional structures. A high level of horizontal integration is particularly necessary between sectoral institutions at the planning stage and a high level of vertical integration is necessary at the implementation stage." When it talks about "institutional environment", the ICZM *programme* refers to an **enabling environment** – one in which human resource base would be developed through capacity and capability enhancement. It therefore envisages education and training activities together with people's participation in the local decision making process as important actions to be pursued.
- 6.2 In order to plan and implement such actions, an analysis of institutions and understanding of their mandates and relevant policy context is essential. In Chapter 4 and 5 we shall discuss the institutional mandates and practices of some of the key local institutions in the country. This chapter will be mainly focusing on some of the broader policy context and perspectives, which support, and in some ways oblige us to implement the intended changes. Hence some relevant policy decisions and legislative clauses that call for strengthening local institutional environment including the creation of an accountable and transparent governance system⁵, has been discussed.

7. The Constitutional Obligations

- 7.1 The state policy enshrined in the national Constitution (Article 11) in this regard calls for "effective participation by the people through their elected representatives in administrations at all levels". This has a clear reference to local government institutions, and at the same time has implications for local institutional environment. An accountable and democratic environment can exist if the conditions of representation and participation by local people are ensured. Under the present situation, except for the *Union Parishad* (UP) and most *Pourashavas* (Municipalities), no other tiers of local government institutions are functional through actual people's representation. This has been seen as a fundamental weakness in the polity of the nation. Despite its pre-election pledges, the present government is yet to re-activate the *Upazila* system with elected representatives. It has appeared from the discussions between some of the members of the

⁵ In this context also see the Working Paper No.009,(January, 2003) *Coastal Zone Management: an Analysis of Different Policy Documents*. PDO-ICZM, Dhaka.

cabinet and the media that a section of MPs see in it potential loss of their own control and authority. Ironically enough, they are the ones who need to initiate and encourage delegation of power to the locally elected representatives! Under the current situation, the revival of the *Zilla Parishad* (District Council) seems to be an impossible prospect.

7.2 However, since the government remains pledge bound and constitutionally obligated to implement the policy of representational public institutions at all tiers of administration, the ICZM programme must try to influence the government to meet its obligations. Without that, as we have discussed in the previous chapter, local institutional environment will continue to remain weak, ineffective and unaccountable.

8. Poverty Reduction Strategy

8.1 Poverty reduction is not only a concern of donor representatives; it is a genuine deterrent and formidable stumbling block to achieving the goals of a democratic and prosperous Bangladesh. In the context of coastal development, its relevance and importance cannot be emphasised enough. Among the many characteristics of poverty, the absence of an enabling institutional environment, as has already been pointed out, is important for coastal Bangladesh where social formation and institutional development in the remote char areas is at best rudimentary. The recently published poverty reduction strategy paper, now re-named as “A National Strategy for Economic Growth Social Development and Poverty Reduction”⁶ lays much emphasis on local institutions.

8.2 The draft strategy highlights the need for democratising and strengthening the organisations of/for the poor, such as the NGOs, PBOs and CBOs. This is intended to create an environment whereby *social entrepreneurs* can play a role. This will include a “socially motivated class of managers” specialized in serving the organisations of the poor. “The purpose will be to involve the NGOs/CBOs into a permanent collaborative framework with the government in all relevant spheres of poverty and vulnerability reduction...”. This is an important policy direction in recognising the value of the private voluntary agencies engaged in community development work in the country. In fact, in the remote coastal areas where poverty is endemic, these agencies have proved their effectiveness as social mobilisers. A key decision for the upcoming Coastal Development Strategy (CDS) would be to make use of their special talents for capacity building and skills development at community level.

8.3 In this context the draft strategy paper further states that appropriate legal and institutional reforms will be effected for developing institutional capability of the poor by changing the “institutional rules of the game” (ibid.). It even gives in detail some of the possible actions in this regard. One of those would be to mobilise the newly formed Social

⁶ GoB (2003) *A National Strategy for Economic Growth Social Development and Poverty Reduction*. Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance, Government of Bangladesh, Dhaka.

Development Foundation (SDF) as an umbrella institution fostering social capital formation by promoting CBOs and local associations. Under a section on “Policies and Institutions for Reducing Inequality”, the government commits itself to enhancing access of the poor to natural assets such as common property resources in a bid to mitigate their vulnerability. But more important is the mention of expanding the social assets base by building up grass roots organisations of the poor at village level which would have a better networking capacity and act as a risk insurance mechanism.

9. The Five Year Plan

- 9.1 In the official planning document of the government of Bangladesh, *Institutions* figured together with *Rural Development*, and is termed as the RDI (Rural Development and Institutions) sector⁷. This is part of a larger sectoral categorization titled as “Agriculture, Water Resources and Rural Development”. Under chapter (VIII) Poverty Alleviation, Employment and Human Resources Development, there is also mention of “Institutional Development at Local Level for Implementation of Pro-poor Projects”. It says that production and employment generation will mobilize poor people at grass roots level to enable them to organize themselves, identify their own problems, make their own development decisions etc. This process is supposed to be helped by the government staff, local leaders and local government bodies. The Plan however recognizes the limitations of the existing farmer’s cooperative institutions used for the purpose. Instead of these it proposes to focus on mobilising poor people into small informal groups. The much-degenerated cooperatives however are not to be abolished. It seems that despite their dismal performance, rural cooperative institutions are seen as a vehicle to channel agricultural inputs to farmers who are probably not-so-poor, purely to retain a good agricultural growth rate (?). Although the social cost of this is very high, the authorities are probably averse to taking the ‘political risk’ involved in trying to eradicate them altogether because a large section of power elites who form the frontline workers of the political parties in rural areas are involved with them. Nevertheless, the fact that the 5th Five Year Plan has recognised the weak institutional value of farmer’s cooperatives is in itself a step in the right direction. Moreover it pledges to reform them, although so far no step in that direction has been spelled out. (ibid, pp.162-63).
- 9.2 There is a welcome emphasis in this plan about the “participatory development process” and explains the point quite lucidly as, “Participation ... may be viewed as an exercise of the people’s power in thinking and acting and thereby, realize the essence of democracy in conformity with the constitutional dictum that all power belongs to the people” (Ibid, p-142).
- 9.3 Describing the constraints to local area development initiatives, it says that the various service delivery agencies of the government at

⁷ GoB (1998). *The Fifth Five Year Plan 1997-2002*. Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning, Dhaka.

different levels (district, *Upazila* and union) remain inefficient and somewhat ineffective due to the absence of effective “clienteles” organizations. In the absence of a democratic culture and environment, local institutions have been used to serve the interests of those in power at the centre. Thus local government bodies remain an extended arm of the Ministry of the LGRD and Coops., which in turn retards its natural growth as democratic people’s institutions. Besides these institutions have never been allowed to come out from their heavy dependence on the resource allocation of the central government.

9.4 The plan makes a sufficient emphasis on the development of local government institutions with the objectives of “devolution” and “deconcentration” of decision-making power. In contrast with the old “decentralization” idea, it explains the concept of devolution in some detail. It says, “Devolution establishes reciprocal and mutually benefiting relationships between the central and local government, implying that local governments are not subordinate administrative units but exclusive authorities in their areas....” (ibid).

9.5 All of this might sound like hollow rhetoric against the current context of government’s indecisiveness to translate these ideas into action. Indeed successive governments in power did not deliver the key policy decisions with regard to deconcentration and devolution of power, which is important for creating a positive local institutional environment. Despite this rather unpromising situation, the government has been quite active in making sure that the local *Union Parishad* elections took place on time, and that the *Gram Sarker* establishment process was started. While *Gram Sarker* is still a concept, the UP is an established reality. And what we have learned from that is that unless more authority and responsibilities are devolved and adequate resources are channeled to them, and unless the overall capacity of the UP officials are enhanced and their motivations directed to the right channel, these institutions would further degenerate and lose credibility as democratic institutions.

10. Rural Development Policy

10.1 The National Rural Development Policy 2001 adopted by the Government of Bangladesh adopts a comprehensive livelihood view with a primary focus on human development. The institutional tools to achieve this objective were naturally emphasised and adequately articulated. In fact, it sees its role as to give a policy frame for integration of all activities and all institutions related to development. “The Policy therefore sees rural development as a unifying approach to all aspects of development or livelihood within the rural areas.”⁸ The Policy emphasises greater coordination between various dedicated public sector rural development agencies and programmes, including those of the NGOs.

⁸ Policy Perspectives for Rural Development : A Review of selected Rural Development Practice in Bangladesh”, Phase I Report, March 2002, Verulam Associates Ltd.

10.2 In order to employ the creative energy of rural people and to lead them toward self-reliance, it urges the development and strengthening of grass roots organisations of the poor. This would facilitate increased participation of local people in matters of local governance and resource mobilisation. In conclusion, the RD Policy states itself to be a policy framework for integrated efforts in rural development for the people, their representatives, all government departments, Ministries, and all those who are engaged in poverty alleviation and rural development.

11. Policy towards NGOs and the Private Sector

11.1 The Government recognises the comparative advantage and strength of the NGOs in mobilising communities at the grass root level into informal functional groups for the effective delivery of various support services and capacity building inputs. Encouraged by their success in the delivery of family planning, primary health care, non-formal education, micro-credit, promotion of appropriate technologies and micro enterprise development, the Government seeks increased participation of NGOs in these areas, thus complementing the public sector efforts in infrastructure building and offering favourable policy environment.

11.2 Similarly, taken from the perspective of efficient and sustainable delivery of some of the essential services for disadvantaged communities, the Government encourages the participation of private sector businesses to come forward and play a role. For example, privatisation process of rural water supply and sanitation, agricultural inputs distribution, establishment of plant nurseries etc. are being actively encouraged.

11.3 Although, much of these policy directions are reflected in some of the decisions of the Government, no specific policy guidelines in this respect seem to exist upto now. However, it has been learnt that new guidelines are being drafted and some representatives of the NGOs have been consulted regarding it.

CHAPTER 3 A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF LOCAL INSTITUTIONS

12. A Historical Summary

- 12.1 The purpose of this chapter is to have a quick look at the history of Bangladesh and assess what kind of institutional environment existed at the local level. This is needed in a bid to understand the process, motivation of the authorities and their impact on the lives of people. We will try to see how, and under what circumstances, the local level institutions came into being and compare them with the present day situation.
- 12.2 Clearly we now have a relatively more organisational variety at local level today with GoB projects, NGOs, CBOs and *Banik Samity* etc. How has this change influenced the local socio-economic and institutional environment? What have been the problems and the positive changes that contribute to a creative and enabling institutional environment? Under what socio-political contexts these local institutions started to emerge, and what were the intentions behind the creation of them? An assessment of these issues would help us understand some of the problems inherent in the development of a favourable institutional environment.

13. The Distant Past

- 13.1 The idea of creating local institutions for the purpose of delivering development services and integrating local communities with the mainstream is not very old in the sub-continent. In fact link mechanisms between local communities and the ruling elite was very insignificant given the low level of market penetration and prevalence of a non-monetised, largely barter economy. This is not to say as some romantics would, that in ancient Bengal people lived peacefully in self-sufficient village “Republics”⁹. On the contrary, the present day poverty is the result of a process of alienation and differentiation since time immemorial. Within the context of a caste-based class, the antagonism between groups that was prevailing for centuries¹⁰, a romantic view does not sound very tenable. The existence of the so-called village self-government indicates the existence in isolation rather than integration. We have learned very little about the institutional structure in those days at local level, but some of the processes we know about indicate that a small non-producing elite class extracted surpluses out of the peasantry. The institutional links, if any, only contributed to further alienation and marginalisation of the majority poor people living in the periphery.
- 13.2 A village in ancient times was not an economic or administrative unit and there was no hereditary headman in Bengal. Given the particular physical environment, the villages did not require very much collective

⁹ Referring to Charles Metcalf’s eulogy on pre-colonial India, cited by Tara Chand (1970) *History of Freedom Movement in India*. pp.302-303 in Taher, M. (1986).

¹⁰ Matin, Nilufar (1984) *Process of Land Alienation Among Peasants: A Case Study Of Bangladesh*, M. Phil. Thesis, ISS, The Hague, cited in Taher, M.(1986).

action like communal defence, safeguarding of common property or collective irrigation systems etc. Village solidarity, however, was demonstrated in cultural and religious ceremonies. It is said that the Bengal village was an “Open Village” as opposed to a “Corporate Village”¹¹. The local *samaj* mainly represented the cultural domains, but also at times, the power domain in which rich peasants exercised power or domination over the weaker segment of the population in leadership capacities and acted out brokerage roles in the linkages between the peasantry and the state.”

14. The Moghul Period

14.1 During the Moghul period, the *Dewans* or Revenue Collectors of Bengal were found most active in raising taxes to finance battles and conspicuous consumptions of the Emperors in Delhi. Local developmental efforts were sporadic and minimal. Mentionable records of public services development are noted during the reign of Sher Shah, the non-Moghul Monarch of the Moghal era. Emperor Akbar’s long tenure had also seen some reforms in the areas of revenue administration and legal issues. During the period of Murshid Kuli Khan’s Governorship in the early eighteenth century, when Aurangzeb was Emperor of India, the former carried out some revenue reforms in a bid to expedite his revenue collection drive in Bengal. There was pressure from Delhi for the supply of funds to finance the wars against the Marathas and in the South. These reforms created many *Zamindars* in place of a large number of small landholders. That was the usual pattern of result of the reforms. The impacts of such actions were perhaps not so dramatic as during the British Colonial era when famines and political uprisings threatened the stability of the region. One of the reasons was the lesser developed communications system and isolation, which slowed down the process of surplus expropriation. The other reason was the relative abundance of natural resources in comparison to the needs and size of the population. But beyond the existence of joint-family, kinship, caste and village community (*Village Pachayet*), we do not learn anything about other local institutional structures¹².

15. The British Period

15.1 During the pre-colonial period apart from the revenue-collecting state-agents (*Zamindars*), there were no other social elements of significance who attempted to exploit people economically and politically. Not denying the existence of the caste differences among Hindus and Muslims, the prevailing socio-economic structure (largely free from domination-subordination anathema) proved to be incompatible with the needs of the British colonial rule. So, “The Company *Bahadur*” took the liberty of reshuffling and reshaping the traditional social, political and economic institutions to meet its profit

¹¹ Rahman, HZ and Islam, S.A. (2002) *Local Governance and Community Capacities: Search for New Frontiers*. UPL, Dhaka. Pp. 37-38 Referring to Khan (1996)

¹² Nehru, Jawaharlal (1961). *The Discovery of India*, cited in Haq and Husain (2001). *Rural Development in Historical Perspective*. RDA, Bogra.

motives¹³. Of course, the arrangements under “The Permanent Settlement Act” and its ancillary institutions, including the judicial and magisterial systems, were the devices on which the colonial edifice was built (ibid). The crucial change that deeply affected the largely agrarian community was the sudden loss of access to their most important productive resource - land. The shock of finding themselves stripped of their rights to land (who were now turned into *rai-yats* or tenants) created a lot of social tension and even instigated some isolated political uprisings in some parts of the country.

- 15.2 Concerned that a vast rural area remained almost out of administrative reach of the Government, the British rulers introduced the formal local government institution in 1885, known as *Gram Panchayet* system. This was evolved into the Union Board (UB) system in the late 1920s. The UBs were the first local self-governments in the country that played limited developmental roles within the constraints of bureaucratic controls from above. Like the present day UP Chairpersons, the elites from the rural society led the UBs as elected Presidents. As voting rights were limited, and no secret balloting procedures were in place, the whole system was exposed to influence and manipulations¹⁴.
- 15.3 There had not been any research during the British period on the origin of village institutions. For over a hundred years (1806-1932) no single work focused upon institutions in Bengal. It is assumed that the corporate village life during the colonial period underwent significant disruption. Villages in Bengal never seem to have had a formal institutional shape with established formal leadership pattern. Bengal villages were open villages with no recognition of them as an administrative or economic unit (Khan, 1996). The probable reasons for this may be that the physical environment of Bengal did not require very much collective action. For example, needs for artificial irrigation, community defence, regulation for the use of common property etc. were not there.
- 15.4 However, the *Samaj* was always very active although mobilized more by power elites than by itself. The state machinery used the local institutions of *Samaj* in whatever form they were in, whenever the need arose, but what those needs were is not very clear from the available literature. The assumptions could be based on the broad political interest of the rulers of the respective regimes of the time; patronage (political) distribution, maintenance of law and order, besides some form of “toll collection,” as in the present days.

¹³ Prof. Sirajul Islam (1997). For a more detailed discussion on the impact of British Colonial rule on the rural Bangladesh, see his article, *Disciplining the Depressed Classes in Rural Bangladesh: A Critique on Resource Control and Social Stability during Colonial and Post Colonial Eras*, in Schendel, W.v. and Westergaard, K (eds.). (1997). “*Bangladesh in the 1990s: Selected Studies*”.

¹⁴ World Bank (2000). *Bangladesh: A Proposed Rural Development Strategy*. UPL, Dhaka.

16. The Pakistani Period

- 16.1 The period between 1947 and 1971 saw the rule of autocratic Pakistani regimes, which were deeply engrossed in the objective of growth and modernisation. Local institutions were not only seen as engines of growth but also as effective tools for distributing political patronage and thus perpetuate the rule of the regime. The most significant development during this time, after the V-AID experiment, was the foundation of the Comilla Academy (BARD) and the Comilla Model of community development with the material and intellectual backing of the government of the USA. Suffice to say that the institutional structures and systems created under this model worked only for local power elites and they soon degenerated into ineffective and corrupt institutions.¹⁵
- 16.2 Despite its disrepute, the Comilla Model experiment is still spoken about, mainly for its 'integrated approach'. Its leader, Dr. Akhter Hamid Khan, a former civil servant of north Indian origin, wanted to establish different nation building institutions to converge at Upazila level. Kotwali Thana Central Cooperatives Association (or KTCCA, one of the two tiers of the model, the other being the primary village level farmer's cooperatives, known as Krishak Samabay Samity or KSS) was later replicated in different parts of the country through an Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP). It is true that the primary societies were outright failures and so were the Upazila level institutional arrangements, but what still remains valid is the idea of a coordination among different public sector agencies at Upazila level. We have known about new experiments (e.g., UDCC & DDCC) along similar lines being carried out in the country, and we wait to see a consolidation of learning from these before we proceed further.

17. The Post Liberation Period

- 17.1 At the birth of a new nation devastated by war, the planners of the country envisaged a socialistic system of governance but this lofty idea was not matched by any ability to manage the affairs of state, especially in the then chaotic environment created by the unstable socio-economic situation.
- 17.2 Both foreign donors and the Government engaged a few private sector voluntary agencies for distribution of relief and rehabilitation assistance to the destitute people. These agencies soon saw a long-term role in "development" for themselves and began to organise the landless and destitute people into groups. The nature of assistance thereafter underwent a change from relief to capacity building initiatives that lead to self-reliance. Thus a new set of local institutions began to emerge in the form of small informal local *Samities* of the poor and their mentors, the NGOs. More on current local institutions are given in chapter 5.

¹⁵ There are many studies on "Comilla" experiment for reference including one by Taher, M. 1986, op. cit.

18. Present Day Local Institutions

- 18.1 Before British colonial times, there were no rural local institutions of significance, except for very informal indigenous ones with little upward linkage. Some institutional development efforts were undertaken in the late 19th century mainly to control the peasant unrest arising from disenchantment with the prevailing system of exploitation and famine-like conditions. With the creation of Pakistan, the governments of the time were inspired by the concept of growth through increasing production. The means they adopted to achieve their goal was 'modernisation' and the mechanisation of the production process, including that of agriculture. New institutional structures were created. First, the Village Agricultural and Industrial Development (VAID), and later the famous Comilla experiment under the Pakistan Academy for Rural Development (PARA, now named as BARD).
- 18.2 The institutional arrangements ushered in by these efforts and the result have been well researched. Some of the findings indicate a lack of conceptual clarity about the social and community dynamics. The two tier cooperatives structure created under the Model was doomed from the start as it was based upon an assumption that members of a community would work for the collective benefit. That the richer and more powerful members of the community would walk off with the benefits leaving their poorer and weaker brothers marginalized was never envisaged. It also relied unrealistically on the spirit of voluntarism and self-sacrifice. Then these structures were also used for the political ends of the ruling class (Basic Democracy Programme of President Ayub Khan), which further aggravated the village community and caused social polarisation. What the programme did achieve however, was macro-economic growth albeit at high social cost. The institutional structure and process of the Comilla Model, later replicated through IRDP, was the vehicle of disseminating the controversial *Green Revolution* technologies. Livelihood options for poor marginal farmers had further shrunk as a result of the spread of the seed-fertiliser-pesticide-tube-well based production package.
- 18.3 The independence of Bangladesh created a lot of high expectations and hope but no mentionable change took place. The socialist aspirations of the new nation were frustrated by wholesale corruption and mismanagement. Relief and rehabilitation programmes undertaken by the government and external aid agencies also ran into bad water. In this situation a new genre of private social organisations known as NGOs began to emerge. These non-government private voluntary agencies armed with external finance and a spirit of voluntarism and with long term objectives, began to make their mark in the rural development sector. Today their proliferation all over the country is a cause of concern and often envy in the bureaucracy as well as for political leaders because the NGO programmes have created an institutional environment which is accessible, user-friendly and largely responsive to the needs of disadvantaged groups. They actively promote the value of social justice and equality of men and women and help in the formation of informal local organisations that

deliver basic needs services like health, education, water and sanitation, micro-finance and capacity building training. In recent days however, micro-finance has become the main focus for most of these NGOs who see in it a means of organisational sustainability for themselves besides meeting the crucial need of financial services of the poor.

- 18.4 In the area of promoting **local governance**, despite being pledge bound and constitutionally obligated, the political leaders are yet to demonstrate any strong determination and sincerity. The crucial change in the *Upazila Parishad* through reintroduction of the elected Chairpersons, has been indefinitely postponed. Local *Union Parishad* elections have been held quite timely, but reports suggest that this local government body has been increasingly becoming part of the negative national partisan politics. According to a report, the major political parties had discreetly courted almost all the UP Chair Candidates. As a result, 46% of the winning candidates had *Party Affiliation* as 'winning Factor'¹⁶.
- 18.5 While the UPs suffer from a chronic lack of power and authority, a new local government tier has been created beneath the UPs, and elections for the new *Gram Sarkers* (village government) are to be held from July this year. In the absence of an effective local governance system, the local level institutional environment remains not only weak, but delinked with the mainstream. Whetehr this situation will receive any help from the introduction of another tier at the bottom level would only be known after sometime.

19. What Was The Situation In The Coastal Areas?

- 19.1 In the absence of any specific records on the situation that then prevailed in the coastal region, we have to rely on the available literary annals and art works. The accounts of travellers, and sea faring *Soudagars* (Merchants) depict a picture of the middle ages buzzing with economic life adorned by wealth and glory up until the end of the British period when the aviation industry began to flourish. Moghul miniature paintings and English painters have painted the prosperous ports, but life in the remote coastal villages has by and large been unrecorded and unresearched. Of course, one can assume that just as the physical history of the lower deltaic region of Bengal does not have a very long history, it does not also have a long institutional history. A focused study would reveal the changing pattern of life and livelihoods in the coastal zone, which might in turn help in taking more effective steps in making appropriate institutional arrangements.

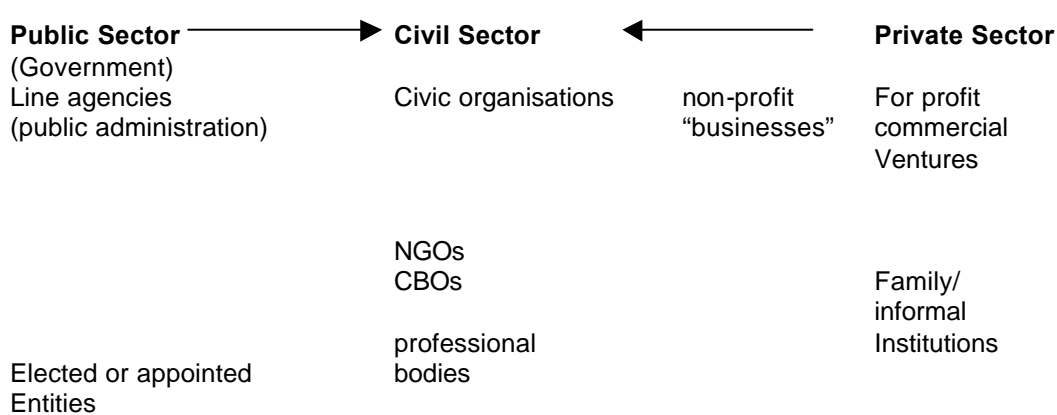
¹⁶ PPRC (2003), *Union Elections, 2003 and the New Rural Leadership: A Research Assessment*. Power and Participation Research Centre, Dhaka.

CHAPTER 4 LOCAL INSTITUTIONS TODAY

20. The Sectoral Relations

- 20.1 In this section, we will discuss the range of local institutions one finds in existence and analyse their functions in order to see how are they contributing, if at all, to the promotion of an enabling environment for local communities. In this discussion, we will highlight the bottlenecks and indicate models of good practice before moving on to the concluding chapter.
- 20.2 The institutional picture at the local community level will comprise of at least three broad category of organisations, Public Sector, Private Sector and a Middle Sector, which we will term as the Civil Sector. This is an emerging sector with increasing socio-political clout and is regarded as the preferred *alternative* to either private – in the sense of the market or public – in the sense of the state. There are many *informal* civil sector organisations like *Samaj*, Goshti (kinship groups), *Shalish, Bari (household or family)* etc. On the other hand, the (more) formal organisations include *Union Parishad*, different committees for Schools, *Madrasha*, Bazaar, Mosque/Temple, *Samities* organised by NGOs, branches of political parties, offices of some of the government departments, etc. There are profit oriented business concerns as well as some with not-for-profit orientation, e.g., NGO who run a seeds trade, sanitary latrine production and sales, etc. The following figure gives a thumbnail picture of the types of the organisations one finds at the local level today: ¹⁷

Figure: 1 The Public-Private Organisational Continuum



20.3 No doubt, all of these institutions have been created with the noble objective of serving the local people and responding to their needs but

¹⁷ For a more detailed picture of local organisation/institution please see Siddiqui, Kamal (1999) *Jagatpur: Poverty and Social Change in Rural Bangladesh*, UPL, Dhaka. Additionally, one can also look at Latif, M.A. (2000) *Situation Analysis of Local Level Institutions*, CDSP-II. The above figure is slightly adapted from Carroll, Thomas, F. (1992) *Intermediary NGOs*. Kumarian Press, Connecticut.

how far are able to live up to these expectations, and what are the stumbling blocks along the way are not clear. The following discussion will concentrate on these questions and will present a brief assessment of a select group of organisations that significantly influence the local institutional environment. We shall use the broad categorisation used in Figure: 2.

21. Public Sector

- 21.1 Different line agencies of public sector organisations are seen active more at the district or even *Upazila* levels, but below this tier their presence is very thin if not totally absent. A lot of blame has been put on the structure of the public administration system, which generally follows a vertical pattern of authority with a minimum delegation to the lower levels from the centre. The accountability structure is flawed and weak. In the absence of elected representatives at *Upazila* and district levels, and in the tug-of-war between the two rival groups of officers of the civil service cadres, the situation gets worse¹⁸.
- 21.2 Local government institutions (LGI's) no doubt play a very significant role in shaping the local institutional environment. They represent the most important formal institutional structure and are potentially very influential in that they (UPs) are a legal entity elected through popular vote. They continue to hold timely elections - tenure after tenure. In the history of Bangladesh no other administrative unit can boast of such punctilious revalidation of its office. The *Upazila* system was introduced, abolished and now hoping to be revived but in what form - remains to be seen. When the fate of *Zila Parishads* (together with *UZ Parishads*) is still uncertain, an announcement (see box below) on the establishment of *Gram Sarkers* does not necessarily create much hope in the minds of people. Constitutionally sanctioned, elected local government at all levels of administration, although a victim of political manipulation and expediency, is one of the basic rights of the people .

Box 1 : Announcement for *Gram Sarker* Election

A recent public announcement after the enactment of a Local Government Bill in parliament says that *Gram Sarker* (or Village Government) elections are going to be held from July 2003. There will be 40,000 *Gram Sarkers* with 15 members each. The UP members will head these village government institutions, while women UP members will act as Advisers.

- The Daily Prothom Alo, 3 April 2003, p-1

¹⁸ There are two main factions among the civil servants in 'cadre service': Engineers, Doctors and Agronomists (known as *Prokrichi* group) find it unacceptable to be managed and supervised at the local level by the (in many cases, junior) civil administrators belonging to Admin cadre.

22. Union Parishad

- 22.1 The *Union Parishad* is often glorified for its continued democratic existence with regular elections to elect public representatives but it is also a fact that this body of local government continues to remain very weak with very little authority or power. However if we review the list of activities in the Union Planning Book¹⁹ it is amazing just how broad its mandate is. The UP has among other things, been also given the responsibility for *raising funds* for its activities but in effect, it is the task of collecting some local taxes. The collectable tax under current arrangements is too meagre to encourage the *Parishad* members to bother about it. The UP also needs to develop a yearly plan, but financing of that plan is always uncertain. The block grant under the ADP is the only source of finance they can count on. As a result these elected representatives feel helpless in the face of the many unmet demands of the local people.
- 22.2 However in some UP's where the Chairperson is clever, and can wield 'political' support from above (not necessarily from the electorate), he can achieve more for his constituency. But these are more informal ways of dealings than any institutionalised procedure that can be adopted by all other UP Chairpersons. This kind of "success" often leads to jealousy among the local administration (UZ), resulting in tacit non-cooperation. With the *Upazila* remaining without elected representatives for a long time, the UP's seem to exist in a vacuum with no natural upward link. They can barely relate to similar bodies of administration above. This situation has given rise to a very strange set of "rules of the game", which promotes a rather contorted system of hierarchy in local governance. UP Chairs rotationally preside over the monthly *Upazila* Development Coordination Committee meetings, but in effect the UNO, if not the local MP who has an advisory role in this committee, exercise real power²⁰. While we have the UP officials lacking in experience and skill to be able to manage their offices properly, the MP's interference in local decision making processes further frustrate the prospect of establishing the rule of law and good governance in the country.
- 22.3 The *Union Parishad* is currently the only elected local administrative tier, which is closest to the local communities. But despite having a legitimate mandate to 'govern,' they are unable to assert their authority because they have to almost fully rely on resources sanctioned from the central government, which often comes late and is far too

¹⁹ GoB. (1999). *Union Planning Book*. Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, Local Government Division. Local Government and Engineering Department, Dhaka, pp.3-5. (a translated excerpt from the book has been given in Appendix 2)

²⁰ A recent 'round-table' conference in Dhaka on local governance highlighted the problem of undesirable interference of the MPs in the matters of *Union Parishads* (The Daily Star, April 2003).

inadequate for their needs. Local resource creation for the purpose of local development has not been successful as an endeavour²¹.

- 22.4 With the inclusion of 3 women members (reserved seats) in each UP in the recent years this local government body acquired a new dimension. This is a significant step forward in an attempt to mainstreaming the women in the governance process from the bottom. In the UP election of 2003, twenty two women have returned as elected Chairs through open contest with men. However, the attitude of the male counterparts towards women have not changed very much yet. Nonetheless, the women members of UP are definitely gaining in experience and gradually finding their place in the local governance system. "The trend in general shows that reserved seats have served to boost confidence as well as frustration in not being able to secure functional roles. Women are using their confidence to compete more for the open seats" (PPRC study on UP elections, 2003, op. cit).

23. The Upazila

- 23.1 Among the different tiers of administration, *Upazila* is considered to be pivotal in the decision making structure of the government provided that the restoration of the *Upazila* system with elected representatives in its charge happens (Verulam, 2002). It has relatively better linkage and contacts with grass roots people through the Union *Parishads* and a strong link with the national level public agencies through its links with the District. The current *Upazila* administration has an important method of coordination with different levels of administration (e.g., UDCC and DDCC). To get an idea about the range of departments and some of their functions at *Upazila*, please see Appendixes 5 and 6.
- 23.2 *Upazila* Development Coordination Committee – which is presided by the UP Chairs on rotational basis, and the UNO as the Member Secretary - is known to be a useful coordination forum. The usual agenda for such meetings is a) development budget, b) progress of different projects, c) formation of any sub-committee, if needed, d) discussing local problems and d) taking necessary decisions. Because of this monthly forum, a positive working relationship between UZ and UP is being developed. The provision of UP Chairs presiding over the UZ Coordination Committee has been well accepted by UPs more for its symbolic value than practical. Implementation of the reform measures recommended for this tier of administration would make it more effective local institution. Because, this is where majority of the government departments (or nation building departments) reside and work, this is the first point of link for the local people to the national agencies. Some of these agencies may be also present at Union level, but the quality of its presence is not very strong.
- 23.3 The close proximity of the offices of different departments, usually within the same office complex in the *Upazila*, makes coordination and

²¹ For detailed discussions and analysis on the issue of reforming local governance structure and local government administration please see, besides others, Siddiqui, Kamal. 2000, Siddiqui, Kamal. 1994, Ahmed, Tofail, 2000, Rahman, HZ, 2002.

information sharing much easier compared with the District. There is also a degree of accountability of government work to the people through *Union Parishads* and local civil society groups. According to a Deputy Commissioner of a coastal district, more work gets done at *Upazila* level than at District level because of the closer coordination and less interference from political leaders.

24. District Level Coordination

- 24.1 The monthly coordination meeting of DDCC is attended by the heads of the respective departments or represented by senior district officials. Although the district heads of many departments are often found absent from, it does not affect the meeting much because, this is not a decision making body, and is mainly an information sharing and recommendation making meeting. When the local Minister as Adviser to DDCC, attends such a coordination meeting, more decisive recommendations than usual are observed (although this arrangement has been recently challenged in the High Court for its alleged violation of constitutional provisions).
- 24.2 One of the main reasons for the limited coordination between the district level public agencies is that each agency is vertically linked with its respective Ministry in Dhaka. Staff are accountable to their respective departmental higher authorities. Yet local institutional environment at the district level is relatively stronger almost all the important nation-building agencies are represented in the district and have a senior level officer in charge. Theoretically speaking, these agencies could link themselves more closely with the village level communities through their *Upazila* networks and *Union Parishads* so as to channel their services and receive some feed back on them. In the absence of a democratic structure there is no mechanism or means to ensure that this happens.
- 24.3 The *Zila Parishad* has remained virtually inactive for a long time and there has not been much effort made to revive it, while DCs continue to function in an administrative vacuum in which their control and coordination role is constrained by the limited authority vested in them²². The vacuum created by this is contributing to the weakening of the overall governance situation in the country.
- 24.4 On the other hand, those members of local government (UPs for example) who have the blessings of top level political leaders, succeeded in achieving impressive results for their area, overshadowing the authority of the local administration. The undefined role of the political leaders in local affairs - in the backdrop of the void created by the vacant offices of *Upazila* and *Zila Parishads*, have contributed to a very disparaging governing system.

²² Currently, the *Zilla Parishad* affairs is managed by a mid-level admin officer, designated as Secretary, under supervision of the DC.

The Meso Perspective

- 24.5 Among the different tiers of local government administration, *Upazila* offers the strongest and most effective upward and downward institutional links. With the restoration of the UZ system, complete with elected Chairpersons and “*Parishads*” comprised of the UP Chairs, this administrative body will lend more credibility to the system and be an effective people’s organisation. This will obviously also leave a positive mark on the local institutional environment we have been discussing in this review.
- 24.6 There are several reasons for this. It is closer to the grass roots people and its realities. The officers live in the local (rural) environment and are thus familiar with the local reality. The inter-agency coordination and participation/representation of the people through this level of administration is more effective than at other tiers of administration. Through an effective and regular linkage mechanism, the *Upazila* has a positively strong upward linkage through its main executive officer (UNO) with the district (UNOs directly reporting to the DC). It is hoped that the present government will revive the *Upazila Parishads*, and will soon hold *Upazila* polls. Realisation of this decision will directly influence the local institutions in terms of creating a more enabling and accountable institutional environment as indicated earlier.
- 24.7 A number of initiatives to strengthen these organisations (UP’s) and capacity of the members has been going on in different parts of the country. One of the important elements of these programmes is the development of local level development plans through community participation. A summary of these initiatives is given at Appendix -3.

25. Gram Sarker

- 25.1 It is too early to comment on how the GSs would fare as grass roots level local government organisations in future. It would be interesting to observe how the introduction of village government structure changes the institutional environment at village level (actually ‘ward’ level comprising 1 to 3 villages on average?). When strengthening of the UP’s still remain as a challenge, how much chance the GSs would have to flourish under the present mindset and relationship with upper tiers of administration. On the positive side, the *Gram Sarkers* could potentially form a formidable political force for accountability and transparency at all levels and could demand their rightful share in the decision making process of the national government. The organisational arrangements at the local level for many projects and NGO programmes might need changes to adapt to these changed circumstances. ICZM strategy would need to closely observe this LGI, before making plans. In any case, the post election period will be able to tell us a lot more than at present.

26. Private Sector

- 26.1 From the perspective of developing the local economy and the creation of employment opportunities, development of the private business sector is very important under present day global economic order.

Industrial development creates employment and other income earning opportunities for the local people. One however, needs to be watchful about any negative social, environmental and long term economic consequences. There are some relatively large scale, high-budget businesses like salt production, shrimp cultivation, or ship breaking in some easily accessibly coastal areas but they are usually financed and owned by non-local rich people. Some of these commercial activities are controversial due to their high environmental cost. In large urban centres where the market is fairly developed, necessary supporting institutional arrangements are more quickly created but in the remote areas, it requires a lot of patronisation and external support. Because the purchasing capacity of the local people is often limited, the market tends to be limited as well and in an underdeveloped market environment, commercial ventures do not thrive. As a result people's access to services, income and employment are also limited. This is a vicious cycle not uncommon in some of the remote coastal areas of the country, particularly the char areas.

- 26.2 There are *Bazaar Committees* and *Banik Samities* who mainly try to bring some sort of 'order' to local trade and commerce but on their own they can do very little to gain access to services like, finance (credit), information, transport, technical know-how (training). The richer merchants in some coastal areas maintain contacts with some of the urban institutions in Noakhali, Chittagong or Dhaka. For small entrepreneurs, these opportunities are denied – which eventually aggravates the situation and creates inequality and deprivation for many people.
- 26.3 Some efforts have recently been made by the government and NGO projects to organise the disadvantaged professional groups in the coastal areas. For example a fisherfolk network named “Coastal Fisherfolk Community Network” or COFCON has been formed with the help of a group of NGOs.
- 26.4 Promotion of similar linkages between the professional groups in the coastal areas with those in the larger urban centres is needed but because business organisations have a profit motive, NGOs and other development agencies tend to avoid them. Creative support mechanisms need to be found to assist the business community in a way that it does not promote inequality, but creates a condition that is conducive to the economic development of the area. Dedicated research on economic prospects of the coastal zone and ways to promote those needs to be initiated²³.

27. Civil Sector

- 27.1 The pattern of the density of civil society organisations, starting from the capital of the country seems to progressively thin out at community level. But one set of organisations conspicuously thrives in the vacuum at community level, that are not so strong at the national/urban level.

²³ Since writing this report it was learnt that ICZM project has already commissioned a study on private sector development in the coastal area.

As for example the *Samaj* institutions, CBOs and NGOs. However, although in the remoter areas local community structures are more cohesive and strong, the presence of external support agencies like NGOs is not necessarily consequently strong.

- 27.2 There is no denying the fact that where they have extended their operations, the NGOs turn out to be pervasive. They organise the disadvantaged communities into small groups (or *Samity*), undertake solidarity building and awareness raising orientation meetings, and encourage building a savings fund. After this they move into various other capacity building activities depending upon their access to development finances. Small local NGOs, usually starved for funds, try to concentrate on savings and credit activities with the groups while also trying to generate some revenue from economic ventures like, nursery raising, fish cultivation, cattle raising and so on. Those branches of the larger NGOs who have closer links with donors and public sector agencies can be seen engaged in more diverse range of activities. Sometimes larger national NGOs subcontract the local ones to implement some of their projects.
- 27.3 The shining presence of another group of actors is also seen – both at the District/*Upazila* levels as well as at community level are those belonging to large donor financed projects (e.g., CDSP, DANIDA projects etc.). These projects are formally joint GoB-Donor projects, and hence might come under the public sector but because the institutional rules of the game are radically different here and because these agencies work through project based non-government staff with a work culture totally different from government offices (less bureaucratic), they are generally equated with the civil sector groups. Like the private agencies (NGOs mainly), these projects also play the role of intermediary between the donor/govt. and the local people.
- 27.4 These projects positively utilise government links to introduce inter-agency coordination and resource delivery mechanisms for the poor (e.g., leasing out water bodies or *khas* lands to the landless poor).
- 27.5 Thus these agencies/projects become very important to local communities – to the extent that they begin to downplay the value of their own indigenous social organisations. As a result ownership development of local affairs and the prospect of local leadership development are hampered. The community based organisations (CBOs) remain dependent and weak. Dedicated efforts to develop local leadership and local level institutions are seldom to be found. We have NGO organised Samities, and project organised “Water Committees” which are termed as CBOs. However many questions are raised about their true ownership and future sustainability.

28. Community Based Organisations

- 28.1 The NGO organized groups are meant to evolve as local rural institutions, but have they? How feasible has the proposition been? How does one define a CBO? Community based organisations with broad socio-economic objectives and local leadership is idealised as a

very useful body for local institutional arrangements. They are perceived as being a representative body of local people and not necessarily affiliated to a political group. They usually represent the majority, and leadership is from within the group of people belonging to the same socio-economic 'class'.

28.2 The local youth clubs perhaps are perhaps the closest to this category of organisations. The other types of organisations we see at local level are not formed by the community from their own volition or consent of the local people. Even the local youth clubs now seem to have been transformed into NGOs by an emerging class of young "social entrepreneurs". One main problem with small NGOs for not qualifying as CBOs could be that they are more guided by "funds" than by independent local choice and needs. Then they expand and form new *samities* and cover many communal groups rather than one, hence their CBO character is lost. There are community based informal social structures like *Samaj*, School and Mosque/Mandir Committees etc. These are the ones that remain CBOs, but as they are not able to represent the general interest of the community, they usually maintain a low profile.

28.3 The *Samity* structures formed at the behest of development projects and NGOs act as functional groups with a defined set of tasks – related to both social and livelihood. There is very little effort for building CBOs, which should evolve as independent people's organisations and survive with or without any 'projects'. Personnel of the Projects and NGOs are concerned that local groups formed under their patronage perform a prescribed set of tasks, which meets the output tables of the project log-frames. Many NGOs and Projects state "institution building" as one of their objectives, but what they bring out is some informal groups with project bound activities. There is also not much capacity building effort for promoting independent community based organisations.

28.4 The coastal area also abounds with project based organisations (may we term them as PBOs?). This 'proliferation' of institutional structures at local level is perhaps leaving very little room for independent CBOs to emerge. With the coming of *Gram Sarkers*, would the prospects for CBOs be lessened? A part of the problem can be attributed to the pervasive nature of external support agencies that occupy the essential area needed for CBO development.

29. The NGOs

29.1 The NGOs began coming into the scene of social development at a point in history when they filled certain needs and gaps and when they saw themselves as temporary actors in a role as catalyst. The idea was to make people aware of the socio-economic realities that they lived in and how could they attain self reliance by the proper utilisation of local resources, improvement of their technical skills and capacities and linking themselves with public sector service delivery institutions. The major thrust of NGOs has been targeting the vulnerable poor people within the community, which typically

represented the landless households. The main features of the NGO approach have been social mobilisation, empowerment of women, income generation and employment creation and micro-finance.

- 29.2 Instead of concentrating on the whole community, the NGOs mainly 'target' the poor and marginalized people and emphasise individual and group self-reliance. The groups are informal, largely homogenous and poor. But not the poorest of the poor – the bottom 20% of the population who are not sure where their next meal is coming from. After about three decades since the major NGOs came into being, one tends to ask questions on their relevance and comparative advantage? Do they play a complementary role (to government initiatives) in rural development? Or are they independent civil society institutions in their own right and are they working as parallel groups alongside government institutions? If working mostly with foreign funds, what is their legitimacy as social organisations?
- 29.3 However, the popularity of the informal groups across RD or social development projects today may be attributed to the achievements of the NGOs in their experiments with the marginalized population, i.e., landless and assetless households. Today micro-finance remains not only pervasive but the single most important feature of NGO programmes in Bangladesh. However, NGOs would still like to emphasise the needs of social empowerment of the poor, particularly women and marginal communities, side by side with economic empowerment. Hence their working agenda is also weighted by gender awareness, local governance, community empowerment and other similar issues.
- 29.4 The main issues and challenges that confront NGOs today include reaching the poorest of the poor or ultra poor, financial self-sustainability, social acceptability as legitimate people's organisation, overlapping of MF activities etc. Besides supervised credit delivery and savings, they also mobilise people in different social, legal and political actions.

CHAPTER 5 COASTAL ZONE

30. Local Institutions in the Coastal Zone

- 30.1 This chapter exclusively deals with the institutional environment in the coastal area. The coastal area in Bangladesh does not have a separate institutional identity, as it is not regarded as a separate administrative unit. So, generally speaking the administrative structure and institutional arrangements of the area is not different from the rest of the country. Of course, its unique physical location, distinct natural and ecological features affect the social and economic existence of the local population.
- 30.2 The “local institutional” scene is also not radically different from the rest of the country. But because of extreme poverty and vulnerability and because of the ‘peripheral’ existence of the area, the institutional rules of the game in some of the areas are somewhat different. Some of the observations in this chapter will reflect the findings from the field visits made to the coastal areas in connection to this review. Therefore, this chapter will mainly complement the analysis of the previous chapter and highlight some of the outstanding elements of the institutional environment of the coastal zone.

31. The Administrative Machinery

- 31.1 The coastal districts and *Upazilas* in the main land have all the required public and private sector agencies. At *Union Parishad* and Community level, the institutional picture is not very different from the average for the rest of the country. However in the islands and char areas it is very different. For example, in the Hatiya *Upazila* we have the offices of all the different government agencies, but people and resources are too meagre. Linkage with the district and Dhaka is very thin, despite the fact that the structure and process of UDCC and DDCC are present. Owing to the poor communication link between the island and the main land, the officers from the district and central government do not find much encouragement to visit these places as often as they should.
- 31.2 An *Upazila* in comparison to a district is considered a more important administrative tier because there is relatively less “interference” from outside. At District level many projects are undertaken which are not necessarily based on need or on the availability of resources. As a result many projects remain incomplete year after year whereas many unplanned activities are implemented through undue political influence. For example, there were 344 schemes undertaken by LGED in 7 *Upazilas* of Patuakhali district but due to resource constraints, only a fraction could be taken up for implementation.
- 31.3 In some of the districts, unless an influential MP or a Minister interferes, many important projects remain incomplete. Quite often this influence is seen as politically biased and not on need. The ‘kindness’ of MPs and Ministers kill local initiatives and severely damage the decision making process. If this trend is not stopped, devolution of

power and authority and effective decentralisation of the administration will never take place.

- 31.4 Coordination at district level during the implementation phase does work to some extent, but very little coordination takes place at the planning stage. Participation of political leaders in the decision-making process and priority setting should improve the situation somewhat. For example, in most areas of the coast, agriculture should be the priority because there are huge tracts of undeveloped and uncultivated land. While the majority of the local people are dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods, not much public or private investment in this sector is forthcoming. The economy of the area could be improved by focusing on increased agricultural production.
- 31.5 Local Government institutions at UP and UZ levels remains weak, as is elsewhere in the country, and they are weaker in the fringes than in the centre.
- 31.6 The key central government agencies are present in the *Upazila*, e.g., the postal department, the Land and *Tehsil* offices, Agricultural Extension offices, Health, Education departments and so on. The offices of the major political parties are also found to be very active however the presence of these agencies does not necessarily mean a positive institutional environment. While the political parties are busy with their factional and partisan interests, the public sector agencies suffer for trained and motivated people and supervision. In the absence of elected local representatives, the accountability structures of these departments are weak and the full potential of these agencies is never realised.

32. Community in Char Areas

- 32.1 The institutional environment in the remote coastal areas is obviously less prominent and less complex due to the nature of the low profile socio-economic activities. But the broad institutional framework remains the same – one that is based on a skewed power relationship between a large working class population dominated by a small group of *Jotedars*. This determines the institutional environment, which is characterised by patronisation and exploitation. Lack of access to resources and services automatically determine the low social and economic status of the majority people.
- 32.2 That the local *Samaj* Institutions are vocal, active and concerned are evident from their participation in the development of local socio-religious micro-institutions like the Committees for the mosque/temples, schools and bazaars etc. They often assume responsibilities in resolving local disputes and participating in socio-cultural activities. The rural communities living in the coastal region who are not living on chars or islands, are not necessarily much different from other rural communities in the backward areas of the country. But a vast number of people in the coastal areas live in precarious conditions on chars and remote islands and on embankments and polders. These are the most vulnerable groups most of whom have either lost their land to

river erosion, migrated from another area for lack of food and employment, or women and children who have been abandoned by their main male bread earners. Life in these places is, to say the least, very different and very difficult especially for female heads of households.

33. Projects and NGOs

- 33.1 In newly accreted char lands particularly, community based social structures are in their formative stage. The *Samaj* and *Goshthi* are not consolidated, assertive and active enough. Very few public sector agencies are seen as operational. Health, education, water supply and employment opportunities are in short supply. Because of the communication problem, even the presence of the NGOs is often seen to be not so strong. Linkage with the local administration is pathetically poor. For example in the Nijhum Dwip, a ward of Jahajmara Union in Hatiya, about two hours away by boat, there is not a single health centre for the approximately 15,000 people on the island, The UP is represented through one lonely UP member who is frustrated by his inability to do anything for the area. Needs for water and sanitation have not been met by the concerned agency despite being paid for by a donor-funded project. Under this situation, local NGOs come forward to provide some basic health care services along with micro-credit and the like.
- 33.2 NGOs and donor-supported projects create a lot of enthusiasm among the local community. Their staffs are found to be relatively more enthusiastic as they are well motivated, well managed and well paid. They have been quick to respond to some of the urgent problems of the local people. NGOs are assigned a very strategic role in view of their considerable networking capacity at household level, organising skills, flexibility of operation, and their ability to field a large number of motivated workers at short notice.
- 33.3 All the major national NGOs are active in the coastal areas and their supervision and monitoring structures are relatively more effective. Similarly some donor-funded projects are also active and their presence is highly visible. People of course view them as an elite class of 'highly paid' development professionals and so try to cooperate with them. There are also large locally based NGOs like, DUS, CODEC, Coast; who are also taken seriously by the local administration and others. However, the key power holders are the public sector agencies and the lack of coordination between themselves make the prospect of the full realisation of the local potential of rapid development rather elusive.
- 33.4 Endowed with a similar flexibility and motivation, the donor assisted projects with the help of Government agencies also demonstrate creativity and effectiveness in resource mobilisation and innovative institutional arrangements. For example, CDSP-II in Noakhali area played an active role (formalised at the national/central level) in coordinating activities between 5 different government institutions and a group of NGOs led by BRAC. This institutional arrangement was

expected to facilitate the project to work through the existing organisations and extend support to those areas where government services are unable to reach adequately enough. At the same time this is to stimulate the required coordination and integration among the different agencies concerned.

- 33.5 The other highlight of the programme, in so far as the local community is concerned, is the local level participatory planning exercise at Union level. The process of planning is a very effective tool to sensitise the local community about the overall institutional environment they live in and the resource potentials of the area²⁴. There are similar attempts in other parts of the country given in Appendix-3 of this report, but the one by CDSP is specific to the coastal area.
- 33.6 DANIDA assisted Patuakhali Barguna Aquaculture Extension Project, implemented jointly with the Department of Fisheries is set out to mobilise the local communities with the help of local NGOs, and to identify common resource water bodies for the cultivation of fish. This is a model venture to bring a large tract of unutilised water resources under productive ventures, which not only provide opportunities for livelihood for the poor but also contribute to the increase of total productivity and growth. DANIDA has similar projects on water and sanitation and livestock development with interesting institutional arrangements²⁵.
- 33.7 Questions regarding the sustainability of such arrangements and relationships in the long run and in the absence of donor support are often raised. Similarly concerns are expressed that the NGO support of essential services (health, education, credit, water and sanitation etc.) may abruptly come to an end should donor support suddenly stop. Notwithstanding these 'threats', the influence these programmes are creating in the short to medium term on local institutional environment is going to last for a long time. Hopefully a similar lasting effect will also guide the national agencies to behave in a more productive and cohesive manner²⁶.

34. Networking Organisations

- 34.1 Besides the fixed coordination arrangements between the public sector agencies (UDCC and DDCC and NGO Coordination Committees at district and *Upazila* levels), there are also some other functional coordination mechanisms in existence. Besides this there are also coordination mechanisms between certain special technical projects and relevant government agencies (e.g., PBAEP led by DoF and

²⁴ See for an *Overview of Local Level Planning in CDSP-II*, Technical Report No.9, April 2003.

²⁵ This review could not cover these and some other similar institutional arrangements of different programme and projects (e.g., special institutional arrangements by KJDRP, CODEC, DUS, Rupantar and CARE LIFT projects) due to time constraint. PDO-ICZM however, covers some of these gaps through other similar studies.

²⁶ For a detailed analysis see Huda, M.N (2002) *Analysis of Projects Contributing to the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) process*. PDO-ICZM Paper No.11, PDO-ICZM, Dhaka

DANIDA). These projects directly liaise with local NGOs who assist them in the mobilisation of local communities.

- 34.2 The NGO Apex body ADAB has area based Chapter Coordination offices. They have been representing (although recently there has been a dispute with the government and another 'Federation' of NGOs in this respect) local NGOs at the district level as well as conducting some social campaigns in favour of the rights of the disadvantaged groups of people. This gave local NGOs an institutional anchor, a platform from which they could raise their collective voice. It also intends to help the local civil society to uphold the values of democracy, secularism and cultural openness. It undertakes programmes (e.g., Social Justice Programme) on preventing injustice to marginalized people and particularly women. It observes different days of significance to remind people of certain progressive values. It is trying to give people a positive cultural and institutional environment in which to live. In these efforts, the local NGOs have been the vehicle for reaching out to remote communities in the coast as elsewhere.
- 34.3 In the past there were attempts by ADAB to federate the NGO organised landless groups at local to national levels, but this did not get very far due to the diverse and complex nature of groups formed by numerous and heterogeneous groups of NGOs in the country. ADAB has also played a role in *Khas* land distribution among the landless. Besides ADAB, there are also some networking NGOs dedicated to the coastal areas, like COFCON, CDP, Coastal NGO Forum etc. There have also been experiments by the large national NGOs like Proshika and ADAB to form regional NGO networks around pertinent local themes and priorities but due mainly to inadequate management arrangement, these networks were unable to achieve their intended results²⁷.

35. Gender in Local Institutions

- 35.1 The organisational culture and orientation determine the level of emphasis put on gender issues in implementing development programmes and projects. In this regard NGOs are found more sensitive than public sector institutions. One UP Chairperson we met had actually played down the role of women UP members in a sarcastic way by saying they are only helpful in handling the 'disgraceful' social issues like divorce and polygamy!
- 35.2 In the GoB-donor projects, gender issues figure high on their agenda but in practice, there are problems inherent in the local socio-cultural patterns which does not always favour attempts at mainstreaming gender balance issues to the desired level. For example, one community level fisherfolk group of 70 members organised by PBAEP and a local NGO in Barguna district had only one woman. This is certainly not a good example of gender balance, but it so happens that fishing practices in the coastal Bangladesh has systematically excluded

²⁷ In this regard, see review reports by Verulam Associates Ltd. on Big NGOs and "Review of Proshika's Assistance to Other Organisations Programme (AOOP)".

women – although in fish processing and ancillary activities women do play an important if unrecognised role. In CDSP-II the local institutional structures created comprise functional groups like, Polder Committee (PC), Sub-Polder Committee (SPC), Water Management Committees (WMC), Tubewell User Group (UG) and Agriculture demonstration Groups etc. There are stipulations in the structure of these committees about specific gender balance, and it is being largely maintained. For an excellent summary of the “Relevant Institutions for Coastal Management” please see “*Coastal Zone Profile: PDO-ICZM* (September 2002) pp-132-140.

36. Main Institutional Constraints

- 36.1 Some of the main institutional bottlenecks are noted below which constraints the creation of an intended enabling environment discussed before. Besides non-implementation of the relevant policy directives, the following are the specific problems at different levels in the coastal area.
- 36.2 **Vulnerability in Remote Chars:** Institutional assistance in remote char areas remain almost nil. Often unscrupulous land grabbing *jotedars* entice groups of extremely poor households to come and live in these chars to maintain an unauthorised occupation of land for them. In return, these poor men, women and children adopt an extremely vulnerable life with almost no livelihood opportunities except fishing in the river. They are vulnerable to attacks by bandits and natural calamities. Physical and social security is denied to them on the pretext of their unauthorised existence. Strict enforcement of law and order, together with survival support for these families is, from a humanitarian point of view, urgently required.
- 36.3 **Lack of Education:** The level of general education among the poor people, particularly among women in the coastal areas is very low. We were unable to get current statistical data, but it appeared that the people struggling for survival had little awareness about the need of it. Particularly for children of poor households a school is an unfamiliar thing. School facilities are grossly inadequate and so is the level of awareness about it among concerned people. This determines to a large extent the level of human development status of the area. At least for the future generation of the coastal dwellers, a massive educational campaign by the concerned people is needed.
- 36.4 **Tug of War between Prokrichi and Civil Admin cadre:** This problem at field level (District and Upazila) appears to be more real than thought. This is often the cause of non-cooperation and non-coordination between public sector agencies. To resolve this problem government level intervention and political good-will is needed.
- 36.5 **Lack of Power of Local Institutions:** In the absence of democratically elected local institution (except for the UP) the process of decision making is at best non-transparent and at worst, corrupt. This situation is often complicated by interference of MPs in local affairs which is most undesirable. Under this situation, local

institutional environment will always remain weak and ineffective. This requires policy advocacy and lobbying at national level to make change possible.

- 36.6 **Lack of coordination:** The main coordination mechanism now practised through monthly inter-agency meetings in the offices of UNO and DC (and in some UPs) are useful but only to a limited extent at the post-decision stage. There is almost no coordination between these agencies at the planning stage at the local level, while some of the root causes of professional jealousy and rivalry between different cadres of public servants continues to persist. In the absence of any elected local representatives, the myriad public sector agencies remain free from effective local control or accountability. There are however examples of project induced good practices of coordination in some parts of the country (including CDSP and some other similar projects in the Coastal Zone), which would give indications for ICZM for developing any future models.
- 36.7 **Gender disparity:** Mainstreaming of gender issues need efforts – both at community and organisational level. Unless favourable institutional policies and actions are in place, the local level institutional environment cannot in this regard, be expected to change. We have examples of services received by women that were meant to empower them but are actually used by men in the background leading to the perpetuation of gender inequality. Particular efforts are needed to change the patronising attitude of some of the male dominated UPs as well.
- 36.8 In the squatter settlements on the Polders and Char areas, the incidence of single mothers or female headed households is on the rise. With their male partners abandoning the family and migrating to new places, many women have been compelled to shoulder a life of uncertainty and vulnerability for themselves and her children. This is not only a problem of today, but a problem for tomorrow also. Since they are in the extremely poor category, these women are often left out of development support like micro-finance, access to common property resources, etc. therefore priority interventions are needed to address the problems of these women and children.
- 36.9 **Law and Order:** Like everywhere else in the country, the situation of law and order in the coastal areas is bad particularly in the Char areas where land mafia and banditry are rampant. This makes development interventions very difficult but it is a situation that requires more than just police protection. If things are to improve, social interventions to improve local living conditions would bring about better results than police actions.
- 36.10 **The Fading Diversity:** The current trend in the changing demographic composition of ethnic population in the coastal areas to a monolithic one can be a reason for concern! With the decline of population belonging to faiths other than Islam, the area would be fast losing, among other things, the rich cultural and livelihoods diversity it once had.

- 36.11 **Lack of Participation:** Provision of a lot of services would not in themselves create the conditions needed for a sustainable and enabling environment. It requires the active participation of the community in assessing, reviewing and deciding about the services (and goods) provided, and in some cases sharing of the costs. Good practices in this regard may be found in some coastal projects.
- 36.12 **Access to Resources:** Among the few available common property resources (e.g., land, water bodies, forest resources), fishing in the river estuaries and near the coast is the most significant source of livelihood for many poor households living on the *charlands*. Theoretically, access to them is open to anybody but in practice, poor people do not have access simply because they lack the means (boat and equipment which are rather costly) to avail access. As a result it only aids the social polarisation process of local communities. It is heartening to note though, that some development projects have already been addressing this particular issue by introducing alternative measures to give some of the poor fisher's community access to such means.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS

37. The Key Issues and Conclusions

- 37.1 **Policy Recognition:** Recognition of the need for strong local institutional environment as a necessary precondition for sustainable social and economic development has been echoed in almost all of the key policy documents we reviewed. However the key steps required to translate these policies into action have remained unaccomplished. Democratisation of local government institutions and devolution of power to local levels has not happened adequately enough. This review has tried to highlight some of the national obligations in this respect. Much of the success for creating enabling local institutional environment actually hinges upon successfully meeting these obligations
- 37.2 **Local Institutions as Political Power base:** Notwithstanding the short-coming of present day governments of Bangladesh, we must acknowledge that there has been a paradigm shift in the perceptions of the current rulers with regard to local institutions compared to the past. The colonial and pre-colonial rulers viewed local institutions mainly as a tool for surplus extraction from the poor peasants, while the present day rulers generally view them as a tool for mobilising poor communities for 'development' and poverty alleviation. The perspectives of using local institutions to distribute political patronage in order to perpetuate the power base of the rulers still persists, albeit covertly.
- 37.3 **Multi Agency Framework:** The analysis of local institutional arrangements may lead us to conclude that for community level development we are now moving from a State-centric model of the past to a complex multi agency framework comprising public, civil and private sector actors today. The pattern of role distribution that is emerging from this process indicates that infrastructure related work is carried out by public sector agencies, while service delivery of "software" type (e.g., health education, primary education, water and sanitation, micro-finance and community mobilisation for a range of socio-economic development) work are shared by both NGOs and public sector agencies. Some institutional arrangements are paving roads for the private sector to enter into the scene though these are largely dominated by the supply of consumer products and construction contracts.
- 37.4 The organisational flexibility of NGOs creates more space for innovation and effective delivery of basic needs services to disadvantaged communities. Today's NGOs, particularly the large national ones, are increasingly opting for specialised services, e.g., ASA for micro-credit, Proshika for 'social empowerment' and some coastal NGOs focusing on fisherfolk communities. Some of the NGOs are also engaged in the promotion of the market for products produced by their client groups (e.g., commodities like processed food, handicraft items and garments), while at the same time trying to stimulate a

market led delivery system of 'public goods' (e.g., sanitary latrines, tube wells, tree saplings etc.). Under this situation, we are inclined to move towards a multi-agency framework (e.g., CDSP-II) so that all the key concerns are addressed by the respective specialist agencies, although the key purpose of such an arrangement is coordination and integration between the different actors.

37.5 Institutional Power Relations: In theory both private sector and public sector exist to serve the civil sector – the mass people. Under an ideal democratic system one would expect to see the civil sector comprising community groups, NGOs, CBOs etc. is at the centre of the power or decision making process. In reality we see the dominance of the Public Sector agencies in collaboration with the incumbent government. The voice of the civil sector is either weak or subdued by the overwhelming power of the civil administrators. However the local private sector has begun to emerge as a power – but it is still very weak with a poor and small client base. The NGOs, although they do not carry any representational value, do have substantial influence with the local community because, they are usually the first to approach the community with assistance of a social and economic nature. NGOs are largely sustained by foreign donations and the government now wants to regulate their activities. This situation can be improved by the government (particularly the elected local government) taking a more active role in local development and delegating responsibilities to NGOs and CBOs. NGOs exist because due to the lack of effort by public sector agencies, an opening occurs for them to fill. Efforts to strengthen the CBOs (and PBOs) would address the sustainability and representational issues of local institutions

37.6 NGOs as Windows to the Outside World: Numerous small and large NGOs dominate the rural institutional environment with (mainly) their organised poor women's groups and micro-finance. These organisations (NGOs) provide an institutional sanctuary of a sort to those groups of people normally excluded. They also deal with some of the issues that have been socially taboo and discuss and work on matters of importance to women like injustice, i.e., unjust divorce, polygamy, child marriage, violence against women etc. These NGOs act as the window to the outside world of ideas and actions. They also offer institutional links with other networks and national level organisations (e.g., ADAB, BRAC, Proshika, BLAST, Naripakkho, Department of Women's Affairs etc.).

37.7 Local NGOs also offer advice and help to women and men to gain access to common property resources for livelihood enhancement. They offer services in the area of micro-finance, primary health-care, small business activities etc. but they are often inadequate in the coastal areas.

37.8 NGOs were created to privatize the social development services for the poor. But somehow with their advocacy and lobbying activities they became very much part of the civil sector (CSO). Although, this claim is sometimes disputed because of their links with external support

agencies, and at times frowned upon by the establishment, both national and international NGOs in the country have earned a level of credibility and legitimacy in representing the views and concerns of the civil society.

- 37.9 **Poor Perception about Local Government Bodies:** For poor coastal households, the existence of other institutions like educational, public health, local government and different 'nation building' institutions are very much absent still. In comparison to that, NGO support in health, education and micro-finance are visible and people ask for more of them. Poor households do not have a very high opinion of the Union *Parishad* and *Pourashavas*, saying, "they only come to us before elections." This impression needs to be changed by undertaking increased pro-poor programmes by the local bodies.

38. Elements of Good Practices for ICZM

- 38.1 For the promotion of sustainable enabling institutional environment the following references to good practices has been presented for consideration. The introduction of good practices however presupposes simultaneous attempts to remove the main institutional bottlenecks listed in the previous chapter.
- 38.2 **An HID Plan for ICZM:** There are many economic resources and potential in the coastal areas that have been reviewed and discussed by the ICZM programme but the realisation of these potentials hinges upon the development of human and social capital. Creation of an enabling institutional environment has been rightly identified as a key element in enhancing the socio-economic status of the people and their communities in the coastal zone. The planned Coastal Development Strategy (CDS) by ICZM may include an HID Plan that is based on the recognition of people's own capability to change.
- 38.3 **Creative Financing Mechanisms:** So far as an enabling environment is concerned, and looking at it from the context of a growing concern of taking away people's initiatives and development projects making them dependent, future support mechanisms for community-based activities need innovation and deep thinking. ICZM might draw relevant lessons from the experiments of the 'competitive funding' procedures as practiced by some agencies in Bangladesh (e.g., DFID Support to Agricultural Ministry) and elsewhere. Through new mechanisms of financing and support, local institutions including the UP's can acquire the capacity to bid for funding in the way some NGO's do.
- 38.4 **Review of Educational Situation:** Educational facilities at local level are inadequate. The teacher-learner ratio has been eschewed by an insufficient number of teachers. The drop out rate is very high. Methods of teaching, the curriculum and the incentive structure, etc. need a general review to include a comprehensive educational development plan in ICZM.
- 38.5 **Revenue Collection Mechanisms:** Local revenue generation through the collection of taxes and rates are very underdeveloped in

Bangladesh. For the UP members and the Chairperson, tax collection is considered 'very risky'. That tax is an effective tool to establish an accountable governance system is not fully perceived by the concerned people therefore awareness needs to be created among the local communities that the better off section of the community might legitimately be asked to share some of their wealth for local development. Besides, efforts to give poor people in the coastal zone an increased access to common property resources need to be geared up.

- 38.6 **Local Level Planning as a Basis for Support:** Local level participatory planning as a basis for institutional mobilisation has proved to be a successful instrument in many projects in the country. It also has a symbolic value in instilling in the minds of people a sense of belonging and in creating an environment of trust and confidence in their own capacities and strengths. The closest example of such practices can be found in CDSP-II where a pilot project is being carried out in the coastal *Char* areas. These may offer ICZM some interesting insight into local resource mobilisation methods. For a detailed set of notes on these experiments elsewhere in the country, please see Appendix 3.
- 38.7 A synthesis of experiments from different places might reveal if any one of the models could be replicated in the coastal area or if a substantial adaptation may be warranted.
- 38.8 **Comprehensive Approach to Disaster Risk Reduction:** Natural disasters cause a great deal of disruption to coastal life and livelihoods almost every year. The Government is now orientated to shift the emphasis of disaster management towards a comprehensive risk reduction approach. It recognises that many people are vulnerable to a variety of hazards and that there is a strong relationship between the degree to which these hazards affect people and their overall socio-economic status (GoB, 2003). ICZM may find it worthwhile in building strategic alliance with the upcoming Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP) of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief.
- 38.9 **Basis for Support to Local Institutions:** ICZM strategy might adopt a two-pronged institutional development strategy, one that would help in encapacitating local government institutions (*Union Parishad* and *Upazila*) to play their roles more effectively, and the other which would try to utilise the expertise of social development organisations (CBOs, NGOs, CSOs), including the appropriate business concerns, to deliver specific services to the local community that contribute to achieving the ICZM goals. The basis for support to these institutions would be: – adherence to the principles of participation and democracy and are explicitly committed to eradicating inequality and poverty.

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APPENDICES

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APPENDIX 1 : TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

1. Coastal Zone

- 1.1 For Bangladesh the area is comprised of the land, river estuaries, the sea and islands adjacent to the land-water interface of southern part of the country now comprising 19 administrative districts. The importance of the coastal zone in Bangladesh lies in its dichotomous existence; on the one hand the majority of the people living in this area are exposed to a range of vulnerabilities including chronic poverty and seasonal cyclonic disasters, river erosion and violence, while on the other hand it offers huge untapped potential for the national economy. Currently, there are about 33 million people living in the area, 53% of who are poor and 26% are categorised as extremely poor. For the majority of the people, access to productive resources is extremely limited and supply of basic needs and services like, food, fuel, fresh water, education and health are in an appalling state. There are numerous agencies responsible for the development of the coastal zone, but without much coordination between them, thus the full utilisation of institutional resources is not achieved. Hence, an Integrated approach to managing the development of the coastal zone was conceived and the ICZM initiative came into being.
- 1.2 The socio-economic and ecological setting of the coastal area is complex, and its developmental challenges are tough but instead of drawing more attention to the coastal region and its people, they have suffered from utter neglect and a high level of vulnerability to natural calamities and their associated risks. Instead of converting the coastal area as a front line economic zone, we have turned it into a virtual backyard of large areas of poverty and underdevelopment.
- 1.3 The need for a comprehensive and integrated approach to planning for the development of the coastal zone in Bangladesh cannot be exaggerated. We need to plan how we are going to cope with the demographic and ecological changes predicted both in the short and long term? With the predicted level of rise in the sea water and increase in the population size, the problem of the coastal zone and its people will exacerbate in the coming years unless determined efforts are undertaken to reverse the trend. The main interventions for development of the area and its people had started during the nineteen sixties with a Coastal Embankment Project. This was followed by Land Reclamation Project (LRP), Delta Development Project, and many surveys and studies. Currently, there are about 30 different projects being implemented in the coastal zone without any comprehensive coordination mechanism in place. However, there are examples of a few experiments on coordination, networking and collaboration in the country which we shall try to highlight in this report as examples of good practices.

2. What is Institution?

- 2.1 Institutions are structures and processes through which certain goals of the stakeholders are achieved. “Hierarchy, organogram, rules, procedures, staffing, deployment and the like belong to the structural component.” The process component “consists of such things as interpersonal relationships, morale, motivation, cooperation, conflict and other imperceptible attributes.” (Huda, ATM Shamsul, 2001, p-2). Some “institutions” may choose to remain rigidly confined to their own organisational boundaries due to policy constraints, but they must be versatile enough to cut across organisational frames and across sectoral divisions. Institution refers to an “endurable status and role, sets of which collectively shape the behaviour of a group of people” Institutions could also be understood as social forms through which resources (land, state-funded development initiatives, disaster relief, religious taxes etc.) are allocated and inherent in these allocation processes are “forms of power – patterns of influence, authority, governance, representation, political participation and accountability that structure every day life. In other words, an institution has a stable pattern of behaviour that is recognised by society, while “Institutional development” means the initiation of changes in society normally outside the boundaries of any single organisation. This should create an enabling environment in civil society for development to take place.

3. What is “Local Institutional Environment”?

- 3.1 Existence of a strong and vibrant local institutional (LI) environment ensures that a process of building *social capital* is active. Hence, a positive LI environment would also indicate the existence of an *enabling environment* in which the local community is not just a passive recipient of services, but a partner in all its affairs. This is considered to be an effective tool to combat *social exclusion* and poverty. To assess the “local institutional environment” in the coastal area, the review focuses on the different established arrangements set in motion by the community itself, as well as by external agencies (Government, CBOs and NGOs) in the immediate vicinity of the coastal households. As this is shaped and affected by its linkages with other local, regional and national agencies, we have also tried to assess the effects of those links that influence the livelihood situation of the people in the coastal zone.

4. What Constitutes Local Institutional Environment?

- 4.1 *Samaj*, usually comprised of more than one village is an important local institution. Although not very structured and visible, people often hold it in high esteem. It may or may not have an agreed leadership structure, but there would be a pattern of informal leadership comprising the *Murubbis* (respected village elders). *Samaj* is basically a kind of custodian of essential social values and norms. It sometimes holds the village *Shalish* (arbitration council) and mobilises the community in times of death, disasters and festivities.

- 4.2 If there is a mosque or a temple, a bazaar, a children's school in the area, each would have a local committee. Needless to say often one person is a member of more than one organisation. Rules for these committees often transcend the governance boundary of these bodies. These committees sometimes tend to play a wider social role as well. In fact these social and sometimes professional groups at village level form part of the umbrella *Samaj* Institution. The UP member is an important person there. He, or in exceptional cases, she (there's also a woman UP member for every 3 Wards) is the formal link with the government through the local government institution. He is primarily concerned about raising local demands in infrastructure building in Union *Parishad* meetings, and when allocations come he supervises the work.
- 4.3 Then we have a number of informal small *Samities* organised by the local project or NGOs. (e.g., a Polder or Water Committee organised by CDSP/KJDRP or a micro-finance group formed by Proshika). These are highly supervised and well structured groups with specific social and business objectives. They are the institutional windows for more contemporary value orientation of a universal nature. Women and men begin to familiarise themselves with the concepts of participatory decision making and action, gender equality, equitable social systems, political or human rights, social capital building, environmental sustainability, micro-finance, entrepreneurship and so on.
- 4.4 For more practical needs of the people at household level related to health, education, employment, agricultural inputs etc. they look up to the Government for support. The state or the government is represented at the grassroots through the offices like *Union Parishad*, health centers, schools etc. In the coastal areas the spread of these institutions vary – but their presence is generally very thin compared with other places. As many NGOs work in these places at the household and family levels, they either try to link the people with the available government services, or they themselves offer some of those services. In Char areas the overall institutional environment is very thin with irregular and inadequate provision of essential services. As a result, people often need to travel long distance to the main land to avail some of those services. This is often very difficult and costly.

APPENDIX 2 : EXCERPTS FROM THE UNION PLANNING BOOK □

The Activities of the *Union Parishad*

- Management and Maintenance (*MM*) of the Waterways and (road) Communication system.
- MM of public places, open yards, gardens and playgrounds.
- Arranging lights for public places and roads
- Planting trees in public places and on roads and MM of those.
- MM of graveyards, cremation grounds, public meeting places and other public properties and assets.
- Arranging accommodation for tourists/travellers and their management.
- Prevention of public nuisance and their causes.
- Maintenance of cleanliness and hygienic environment of the Union.
- Ensuring cow dung and garbage collection/removal.
- Controlling criminal and harmful businesses.
- Removal and control of animal carcasses.
- Regulating the slaughter of animals.
- Regulating building construction and renovation activities.
- Controlling risky buildings and structures.
- MM of public wells, ponds and all water sources.
- Prevention of drinking water sources from pollution.
- MM of the environment and character of the residential areas.
- Arranging Fairs and Exhibitions.
- Observance of public festivals.
- Undertaking rescue and relief measures during natural calamities like, fire, floods, earthquake etc.
- Helping widows, orphans, poor and distressed people.
- Improvement of Sports.
- Encouraging the development of industries, rural crafts, social development, cooperatives etc.
- Ensuring increased food production.
- Arranging primary health care facilities.
- Arranging libraries and reading halls.
- Cooperate with activities similar to those of the UPs.
- Assist in the educational development as instructed by the DC.
- To foster general welfare of the inhabitants or visitors to the UP, undertake measures like health-care, security, comfort and other required facilities.

Formation Of Standing Committees For *Union Parishad*

2.3 The *Union Parishad* after its first meeting of the year or in any meeting as early as possible may form standing committees in order to accomplish the following activities:

- Finance and Institution
- Education
- Health, Family Planning, prevention of epidemics and sanitation

- Audit and Accounts
- Agriculture and other development activities
- Social welfare and other Community Centres
- Cottage Industries and Cooperatives

2.4 The *Union Parishad* may form additional standing committees by prior approval of the DC for activities determined by regulation (or resolution?).

Constitution of Fund for the *Union Parishad*

Each *Union Parishad* will have a fund known as “The Union Fund”. The Fund will be formed with the following:

- Balance cf. from the date the *Union Parishad* Act came into effect.
- All taxes, fees and levies raised under the UP Act.
- All rents and profits earned from the properties under control of the UP.
- Income earned from any work carried out through contracts signed under the UPs Act or any other contemporary laws of the country.
- All contributions received from any individual or institution.
- All income received from trusts under the management of the UP
- All grants received from the government and other authorities.

4. Taxes leviable by the *Union Parishad*

By prior approval of the Deputy Commissioner, the UP may impose taxes, rates, fees etc. as determined by the regulations:

- Either on the annual value of the residential land or by the established procedures of the Union.
- Taxes on professions, businesses and callings
- Taxes on cinema, plays, theatre, and other forms of amusement
- Licence and Permit fees as approved by the *Parishad*.
- Fees or lease money from the *Haat*, *Bazaar*, and Ferry crossings ear-marked by the government and situated within the boundary of the UP.
- Fees/lease money from the water bodies within the UP.

APPENDIX 3 : LOCAL LEVEL PLANNING

EXAMPLES OF INSTITUTIONALISING PARTICIPATION

A number of development programmes and projects have now adopted a process of involving local communities particularly at Union *Parishad* level, to prepare local area development plans. Although preparing plans is by no means an end in itself, it gives an opportunity for grass roots people to identify the resources and articulate their needs. Alongside other sectoral and development plans, local disaster action plans (LDAP) have also been drafted by the Disaster Management Bureau (DMB) for the hazard-prone localities. Although due to resource constraints, the implementation of prioritised actions is often difficult, the process of developing the plans, which is a step towards institutionalised participation, is in itself considered a great enabler to local people and institutions. Synopsis of some of these initiatives are given:

Union Development Plans of CDSP-II.

In the Southern Coastal districts of Noakhali and Chittagong, CDSP-II is implementing a large rural development project with water management as the entry point for local communities. This is quite a unique programme under a consortium of five different government agencies (Water Board, Ministry of Land, Department of Public Health Engineering, Department of Agricultural Extension, Local Government Engineering Department) and the biggest national NGO, BRAC leading five other local NGOs.

The process of developing (Pilot) Union Level Plans begins with a survey of all villages (using PRA methods) under each Union and sharing the results with the community. A village level committee is formed for planning purposes where people identify and prioritise problems and suggest activities to address them. A workshop is then organised at the Union *Parishad* office with all UP members and 2/3 representatives from each village to agree on a draft Union Plan.

These plans identify the needs for an education facility, drinking water, playground, cyclone shelter etc. besides, "improvement of water logging situation" and "stopping the destruction of the forest ". These plans are sent to the *Upazila* Development Coordination Committee (UDCC), which mainly decides on the allocation of resources at UP level. However, besides the UDCC, the Union Plans are also shared with different government agencies together with other NGOs and relevant local projects. Financing these plans however, still remained a challenge.

The project still offers a good example of integrating the local community and different public and private sector development organisations into a project framework for achieving specified developmental goals.

Local Capacity Development Initiative (LCDI)

SIDA support in Greater Faridpur region had gone through different phases with changing emphasis on different components of its work at different times, ranging from rural infrastructure development programmes with a heavy component of mainly roads and rural markets / “growth centres” development to production and employment programme (PEP), etc.

Following a decision to close the RESP, a Feasibility Study in 2000 to investigate the potential for a Local Governance and Production Programme (LGPP) was undertaken. Thus SIDA’s programme activities in Greater Faridpur underwent a shift of focus from “infrastructure and employment/production” led rural development to a broader poverty reduction and democratisation programme. In this connection a pilot Local Capacity Development Initiative (LCDI) has been developed.

LCDI aims to test methodologies to enhance decentralised decision making in four Unions of Greater Faridpur. The concept is based on institutionalising interaction of local communities with local elected bodies or Union *Parishads*. They are to jointly plan, design, implement and maintain local development projects, which have a broader poverty alleviation and vulnerability reduction focus.

Like other local governance projects, the LCDI also aims to strengthen and sensitise the interface between central government line-agencies and the local institutions at the Union level. The programme views “better local governance and enhanced democratic representation as the key to sustainable poverty reduction”. The guiding principle for LCDI is that local communities can reduce their own poverty levels by having the tools for decision-making and resources for implementation. Among the major activities, the LCDI organises ward-level planning meetings in all the Unions where it works, local level development schemes are identified, reviewed and approved at the Unions and agreements between UPs and LCDI/LGED are signed for release of funds for local development activities.

Participatory Rural Development Project (PRDP)

Dubbed as “Link Model”, the PRDP is a joint BRDB-JICA (for Government of Japan) programme designed to develop an alternative rural development model by developing and strengthening linkage among rural community, Union *Parishad*, Nation Building Departments and NGOs. One of its objectives is to design and implement micro infrastructure projects through local level planning.

Facilitating Poverty Reduction through Local Governance (FPR)

FPR is a very recent pilot initiative launched by UNDP/Ministry of LGD in Bangladesh. This is an experiment at an alternative poverty reduction strategy from the bottom by maximising the use of existing institutional resources laid out by the government and other civil society organisations. The focus of this programme is on how decision-making processes can be made more transparent, accountable and responsive to local needs, and how this would

consequently affect the reduction of poverty. This programme is also looking at the local level (UP) planning process and proposing activities aiming to reduce socio-economic vulnerability of the poor.

Sirajganj Local Governance Development Programme (SLGDP)

SLGDP is a UNDP sponsored initiative aimed at capacity enhancement of UP members and chairpersons of 81 Unions of 9 *Upazilas*. Besides capacity building training for the UP members on planning, administration and management linked to discharging their duties, the project tries to ensure active participation of community members, particularly women UP members, in planning and implementation of the projects. The government departments at *Upazila* level also have a role of organising training at the Union *Parishads* on different technical subjects relevant to the department.

Apart from capacity building training support, the project provides each participating Union *Parishad* with an annual block grant (of approximately Tk. 4 lakh) against locally developed and prioritised “schemes”. Allocated funds are mainly spent on road construction, construction of schools and markets, while some other activities under the list of “acceptable schemes under SLGDP” remain unaddressed.

Note: The above examples are all experiments in local resource mobilization and institutional development. What these projects essentially aim to achieve is the maximization of existing institutional resources and their potentials through increased coordination and capacity enhancement.

Source: CDMP, 2002, (draft) MDMR/UNDP-DFID.

APPENDIX – 4 : LIST OF PEOPLE AND PLACES VISITED

Name of People/Groups	Designation, Name of Organisation/Office	Place	Date of Visit
Hatiya – Noakhali			
Stuart Pearson	Team Leader, CDSP-II	Sonapur, Noakhali	23 Mar. 03
Jainal Abedin	Institutional Adviser, CDSP-II	Sonapur, Noakhali	23 Mar. 03
Md. Belal Uddin Biswas	Field Coordinator, Hatiya CDSP-II	Hatiya Island	23 Mar 03
Local Area Development Committee of Nijhum Dwip LADP	CDSP-II, Nijhum Dwip	Nama Bazar Primary School Nijhum Dwip	24 Mar 03
Md. Shamsuddin Tibriz	Programme Coordinator, Dwip Unnayan Sangstha	Hatiya (Central)	24 Mar 03
Jahajmara Sub-Polder Committee (SPC)	CDSP-II Site Office, Jahajmara Union	Jahajmara, Hatiya	25 Mar 03
Women Farmers Group, Dwip Unnayan Sangstha	Jahajmara Area Office, BRAC CDSP/DUS	Jahajmara, Hatiya	25 Mar 03
Mr. Rafiqul Islam	Director, Dwip Unnayan Sangstha	Hatiya	25 Mar 03
Mr. Md. Amir Hossain	<i>Upazila</i> Agriculture Officer	Hatiya <i>Upazila</i> Complex	25 Mar 03
Mr. Zahir Ahmed	Agricultural Extension Officer	Hatiya <i>Upazila</i> Complex	25 Mar 03
Mr. Abdul Khaleque	Assistant Project Coordinator, Care Bangladesh, Hatiya	Hatiya DUS Office Complex	25 Mar 03
<i>Upazila</i> Nirbahi Officer	Hatiya <i>Upazila</i>	Residence of UNO, Hatiya	25 Mar 03
CDSP II Staff	Sonapur, Noakhali	WAPDA Complex, Sonapur.	25 Mar 03
PATUAKHALI – BARGUNA VISIT			
Mr. Harun	Trainer, CODEC	Karamjatala, Ballabhpur, Patuakhali	18 April 03
Mr. Mohiuddin Ahmed	Chapter Coordinator, ADAB	Patuakhali	19 April 03
Mr. Prashanta Bhushan Barua	Deputy Commissioner	Patuakhali	19 April 03
Mr. Mohd.	Deputy Director, BRDB	Town Kalikapur	19 April 03

Name of People/Groups	Designation, Name of Organisation/Office	Place	Date of Visit
Salamatullah		Patuakhali	
Atul Chadra Paul	Chief Coordinator, VDO	Met in ADAB Office	19 April 03
Ms. Afroza	Director, Adarsha Mahila Sangstha	Sadar Road, Patuakhali	20 April 03
Ms. Laxmi Rani Saha	Member Alor Shandhan <i>Samity</i> and owner of a small grocery shop in town	Patuakhali Town	20 April 03
Ms. Rani Begum	Member Alor Shandhan <i>Samity</i> and has a business of broom/door-mat making.	Patuakhali Town	20 April 03
Ekota <i>Samity</i> (across the Loukathi river)	Group of 15 (of 20) women Members of Adarsha Mahila Sangstha.	Loukathi Union Sadar <i>Upazila</i> , Patuakhali	20 April 03
Mr. Wahidunnabi	Project Director, Patuakhali Barguna Aquaculture Extension Project (PBAEP)	Patuakhali	20 April 03
Ms. Shamsunnahar	Director, Anirban Mahila Sangstha	Kalikapur, Patuakhali	20 April 03
<i>Samity</i> members of Anirban Mahila Sangstha	Group of 20 Women Members from two groups	Kalikapur, Patuakhali	20 April 03
AMTALI - BARGUNA			
Gazi Motiur Rahman	Director, Khalifa Foundation	Amtali, Barguna	21 April 03
Abul Kalam	Member, Community Based Fisheries Management of jalmohals project of PBAEP	Village Kaunia, Chaura Union, Amtali, Barguna	21 April 03
Nazrul Islam	Member, Community Based Fisheries Management of jalmohals project of PBAEP	Amtali, Barguna	21 April 03
Md. Shahjahan Talukder	Chairman, Chaura Union <i>Parishad</i>	Amtali, Barguna	21 April 03

APPENDIX –5 : LIST OF UPAZILA LEVEL GOVT. OFFICES & DEPARTMENTS

S.L No.	5. Name of the Office or Department / Head of the Office
1.	Upazila Nirbahi Office / UNO
2.	Upazila Engineering Office /UE
3.	Upazila Primary Education Office
4.	Upazila Secondary Education Office /UEO
5.	Upazila Fisheries Office /UFO
6.	Upazila Livestock Office / ULO
7.	Upazila BRDB Office / URDO
8.	Upazila Relief & Rehabilitation Office / URRO
9.	Upazila Samaj Sheba Office
10.	Upazila Agriculture Office /UAO
11.	Upazila Cooperative Office /UCO
12.	Upazila Statistics Office / USO
13.	Upazila Health & Family Planning Office
14.	Public Health Engineering Office
15.	Youth Development Office
16.	Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation - BADC (Seeds)
17.	Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation - BADC (Fertilizer)
18.	Total Literacy Movement (TLM)
19.	Upazila Police / OC
20.	Upazila Land Office / AC Land
21.	Upazila Ansar-VDP
22.	Upazila Food Office
23.	Upazila Education Engineering Office
24.	Upazila Account Office (Non-existent at Sadar Upazila)

APPENDIX – 6 : LIST OF UPAZILA LEVEL COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

SL.	Name of Committee / meeting	Members	Date/ period
1	UDCC Meeting	UNO, All UP Chairmen, UP Women members-3, Upazila department heads	25 th of each month
2	Law & Order Committee meeting	Madrasha teacher-2, OC, High School teacher-8, All UP chairmen, Freedom Fighter-1, Upazila officer-5, Ansar – VDP, AC Land, Women UP member-2, MP selected person-3, Minister Selected-2, MP as advisor.	14 th & 25 th of each month
3	Women & Child abuse prohibition committee meeting	UNO, OC, Samaj Sheba Officer, Ansar-VDP, All UP Chairmen	25 th of each month
4	Agriculture Rehabilitation Committee meeting	UNO, Agriculture Officer, UP chairmen, BRDB, BADC (seed), NGO rep-1, Upazila food controller.	no fixed date
5	Fertilizer monitoring meeting	UNO, Agriculture Officer, UP chairmen, BRDB, BADC (seed), NGO rep-1, Upazila food controller.	no fixed date
6	Rat killing committee meeting	UNO, Agriculture Officer, UP chairmen, BRDB, BADC (seed), NGO rep-1, Upazila food controller.	no fixed date
7	Education Committee meeting	UNO, UEO, UP Chairman-1, Health & Family Planning Officer, Head teacher of a high school-1, one male and one female person interested in education development, Govt. Pri. School Head teacher-1, Govt. Pri. School managing committee chairman-1, Reg. Non-govt. pri. School head teacher-1, Upazila Engineer.	Not fixed date
8	Compulsory education implementation and monitoring committee meeting	UNO, UEO, All Chairmen, Persons interested in edn. -1 male and 1 female	no fixed date
9	Departmental promotion committee meeting (education)	UNO, UEO, UP Chairman-1, Health & Family Planning Officer, Head teacher of a high school-1, one male and one female person interested in education development, Govt. Pri. School Head teacher-1, Govt. Pri. School managing	no fixed date

SL.	Name of Committee / meeting	Members	Date/ period
		committee chairman-1, Reg. Non-govt. pri. School head teacher-1, Upazila Engineer.	
10	Primary scholarship examination committee meeting	UNO, UEO, Health & Family Planning Officer, OC, Head teacher of a high school	Nov. to Dec. each year
11	Book distribution committee meeting	UNO, UEO, All AUEO	December each year
12	Food committee meeting	UNO, food officer, Agriculture officer, sub-asst. director seeds,	
13	Family planning committee meeting	Family Planning Officer	25 th of each month
14	Rural Development committee meeting	RDO	no fixed date
15	Rural poverty alleviation program committee meeting		no fixed date
16	Disaster management committee meeting	PIO	no fixed date
17	VGD committee meeting	UNO, PIO, All Chairmen, Agriculture Officer, Livestock Officer, Fisheries Officer, Health & Family Planning Officer, Education Officer, Food Controller, Samaj Sheba Officer, RDO, Surabaya Officer, NGO rep-1,	no fixed date
18	VGF committee meeting	UNO, PIO, All Chairmen, Agriculture Officer, Livestock Officer, Fisheries Officer, Health & Family Planning Officer, Education Officer, Food Controller, Same Sheba Officer, RDO, Surabaya Officer, NGO rep-1,	no fixed date
19	Rural infrastructure safe-guard committee meeting (TR)	UNO, PIO, MP - adviser, All Chairmen, Upazila Engineer, Sub-Asst. Engineer DPHE. School Head teacher or College Principal.	no fixed date

SL.	Name of Committee / meeting	Members	Date/ period
20	Rural infrastructure renovation committee meeting (Kabikha)	UNO, PIO, MP - adviser, All Chairmen, Upazila Engineer, Sub-Asst. Engineer DPHE Education Officer, Food Controller, Samaj Sheba Officer, RDO, Samabaya Officer, NGO rep-1,	no fixed date
21	Rural social services program implementation committee meeting	UNO, Upazila Social Sevice Officer, Agriculture officer, Education Officer, UFO, UHFPO, UFPO, ULO, Upazila Engineer, Upazila dphe,	As per requirement
	Old age pension implementation committee.	UNO, Upazila Social Sevice Officer, All UP chairmen, District Accounts Officer, Manager Sonali, Janata, Rajshahi Krishi uNNAYAN BANK, Principal of a college, 3 honourable persons. one rep from fredom fighters.	25 th of each month
23	Widow and divorced destitute women support committee meeting	UNO, Upazila Social Sevice Officer, All UP chairmen, District Accounts Officer, Manager Sonali, Janata, Rajshahi Krishi uNNAYAN BANK, 2 honourable persons.	25 th of each month
24	Freedom fighter support committee meeting	UNO, Upazila Social Sevice Officer, All UP chairmen, District Accounts Officer, Manager Sonali, Janata, Rajshahi Krishi UNNAYAN BANK, 2 honourable one male and one female persons. Paurashava chairman/representative. 2 representatives from freedom fighters comand council.	as per requirement
25	Social welfare committee meeting	UNO, Upazila Social Service Officer, Education Officer, UHFPO, UFPO, YOUTH dev. Upazila DPHE, Upazila Woman affairs officer, Cooperaive officer, RDO, All UP chairmen 2male and one female social worker	As per requirement
26	Housing program monitoring and coordination committee meeting		no fixed date
27	NGO coordination meeting	UNO, All NGOs	25 th of each month

SL.	Name of Committee / meeting	Members	Date/ period
28	Agriculture loan recovery committee meeting	UNO, All Bank Managers, All UP Chairmen, Agriculture officer	14 th & 25 th of each month
29	Khas land allocation committee	UNO, AC Land,	no fixed date

APPENDIX – 7 : COMPONENTS OF INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

