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PERFORMANCES OF STANDING COMMITTEES OF UNION PARISHAD (UP) IN BANGLADESH: A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract: The Union Parishad (UP), the lowest layer of local government in Bangladesh, is a well-known formal institution among rural people. This study evaluates the effectiveness of all Standing Committees (SCs) within two UPs, focusing on three core dimensions: knowledge, participation, and practical engagement. Data were collected through interviews with 25 UP representatives (19 males and 6 females). Findings reveal suboptimal performance across all dimensions, with average scores (on a 5-point Likert scale) for knowledge (2.6 and 2.1), participation (2.3 and 1.8), and practice (2.1 and 1.7) in the two UPs, respectively. The study identifies a range of barriers that undermine the effective functioning of Standing Committees (SCs). These are external (e.g., political interference from Members of Parliament and bureaucrats, dominance of local powerbrokers) and internal (e.g., negligence, apathy, limited institutional capacity, and nepotism). The paper concludes with action-oriented, context-specific recommendations aimed at enhancing the operational performance and accountability of SCs in rural governance structures.

Keywords: Bangladesh, local government, standing committee, performance, wellbeing.

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Introduction

The essence of local government comes from decentralising authority from the central government to local administrations (Bhuiyan, 2011). The process of democratisation, effective governance, and active participation of citizens is contingent upon the transfer of authority to local level. Bangladesh adopted the administrative framework of local government from its colonial past, as this nation was under British rule for two centuries and then under Pakistani control for around 24 years (Panday, 2011).

Local government of Bangladesh has a rich history. Its structure and functions have evolved in response to socio-economic and political transformations. This is linked and enshrined in the Bangladesh Constitution (Articles 9, 11, 59, and 60) to uphold democratic values and ensure economic and social justice (Khan, 2008). Three levels comprise the hierarchical framework of local government in rural areas, i.e. 1) Zila Parishad at district level, 2) Upazila Parishad at sub-district level, and 3) Union Parishad (hereinafter also UP) at village level. With nine wards, the Union Parishad is the lowest level of rural local government in Bangladesh (Uddin, 2019). Union Parishads constitute the fundamental tier; and play significant roles for the provision of public services and the promotion of local development. They have a directive to provide essential services like healthcare, education, sanitation, and infrastructure development; thereby enhancing the quality of life of rural dwellers.

The Union Parishad Act 2009 mandates the formation of 13 Standing Committees (hereinafter also SCs) to oversee various sectors, designed to decentralize responsibilities, enhance transparency, promote accountability within local governance structures, and facilitate participatory governance by involving community members in decision-making processes (Majumdar, 2009; Rahman, 2008). The main ideas behind Standing SCs are to accelerate participation, consensus, responsiveness, transparency, accountability, effectiveness and efficiency. Unfortunately, it has been criticised regarding its work. Kabir et al. (2014) identified that each Union Parishad wants to promote a more integrated and holistic approach to local development through its 13 Standing Committees – but recognises that development challenges are often interconnected and multifaceted. The lack of autonomy, community engagement, and participation further exacerbate these challenges (Panday and Jamil, 2011).

Though the UP is an old formal institution, scholarly works evaluating all Standing Committees and improvements are still inadequate. Well-known, numerous studies have been undertaken on Union Parishads. While analysing

several studies on this subject, there is a scarcity of research specifically examining the performance of all SCs. The existing study is quite expensive and evaluative because it measures effectiveness. The main aim of this paper is to measure performance of each Standing Committee through knowledge, participation, and practice exercised by its elected chairman and members. It will compare the performances of two UPs located in semi-urban and remote settings through the lens of access to facilities. The authors describe issues and concerns of SCs and provide data-driven recommendations for improving its performance.

Glimpse of Local Government

The present structure of local government in Bangladesh has its origin in the British colonial period. The first attempt at establishing local government institutions was made during the latter part of the nineteenth century. The structure, functions, and financial management of local government institutions have undergone many changes from the British colonial period to the present day. Historically, villages were self-reliant before the colonial rule. Every village had its own community-based organisation known as *Panchayet* (village council). All the adult members of the village society constituted it. Apart from taking decisions in social matters, adjudication in disputes and maintenance of law and order were among its main responsibilities. The *Panchayets* used to mobilise resources for the discharge of their traditional functions. The *Panchayet* evolved naturally out of the social needs and was based on public opinion. There was no legal basis or authority behind them. During the British rule the Bengal Village *Chowkidari* Act was passed in 1870 with administrative, economic, and political objectives. This paved the way for setting up local government bodies under the law. Under this act several villages were organised into a union and a *Chowkidari Panchayet* was set up in each union (Local Government Division (LGD), 2011). This is already well documented in historical texts.

LGD (2024) reported that currently there following elected local government bodies exist – 4,578 Union Parishads (UPs), 330 Pourashavas (municipalities), 495 Upazila Parishads, and 12 City Corporations. A Union Parishad consists of one chairman and 12 members. Among the 12 members, three seats are reserved for women. Each Union is divided into nine wards and each ward has one member elected directly by the people's votes. One woman member for the reserved seats is elected by the voters of every three wards. The structure, power, and functions of Union Parishads in Bangladesh have been changed many times since its inception.

Literature Review

This section describes challenges and good practices of Union Parishads and particularised aspects of Standing Committees. It also incorporates international experiences of local government to find out research gaps and establishing rationalisation of this study.

Local governments, being closest to the community, are expected to provide immediate necessary interventions for service delivery (Masuku and Jili,

2019). A UP provides services to citizens at their doorstep. It is the only formal institution to ensure development planning, implementation, participation, transparency and accountability for rural areas of Bangladesh. Haque et al. (2021) revealed that decentralisation of power has emerged as a key strategy to improve service delivery, with the effectiveness and efficiency of SCs being a subject of interest in Bangladesh.

Outside Bangladesh, India's *Panchayati Raj* institutions have successfully promoted participatory governance and improved service delivery, particularly in rural areas (Ahluwalia, 2019). Local governments of Nepal have achieved successes through decentralised planning and budgeting (Pandey, 2011). Maloba (2015) claimed that ward committees of South Africa face challenges in delivering services due to inadequate capacity and resources. Indonesia's decentralisation reforms have been criticised for being overly complex and bureaucratic (Lewis, 2017). In contrast, the decentralised governance system of Sweden has improved service delivery through participatory budgeting and citizen engagement (Schoute et al., 2018), and municipal governments of Brazil have delivered services through participatory budgeting and community participation (Touchton et al., 2021). After scrutinising the decentralised governance system of Denmark, Thijs et al. (2017) noted the importance of institutional capacity, community engagement, and accountability for ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of Standing Committees.

Huque (2011) showed that the absence of a clear policy framework, inadequate training, and political interference undermines the effectiveness of an UP's Standing Committees. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure the effective functioning of local government SCs in Bangladesh. Mphande and Waheduzzaman (2014) further articulated that Standing Committees face challenges including inadequate capacity and resource, limiting their service delivery. SCs continue to face challenges, and learning from these experiences and strengthening their autonomy, capacity and community engagement is crucial to improving their effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery (Ehsan, 2021). Unfortunately, no study focused on all thirteen SCs comprehensively. Fulfilling this gap is the innovation of this study.

While electoral participation in UP elections has improved since 1991, the introduction of party-based elections has led to controversy and decreased enthusiasm among voters (Panday, 2019). Policy and governance reforms of Standing Committees in Union Parishads have significantly impacted on decentralisation, improving transparency, accountability, and citizen participation (Chowdhury and Panday, 2018; Waheduzzaman and Alam, 2015). Despite having gender quotas, participation of women in local government remains limited due to patriarchal structures and attitudes, as well as resource and management limitations (Panday, 2016; Saner et al., 2019).

Authors identified a mixed scenario, positive and negative aspects, about SCs, and proceeded further to evaluate their performance intensively. This study has envisioned the elucidation of the Performance of Standing Committees from the perspective of their populations as a dependent variable. The Conceptual Framework of this study is depicted in Figure 1, where

the Performance of SCs is founded on three principles, namely Knowledge, Participation, and Practice.

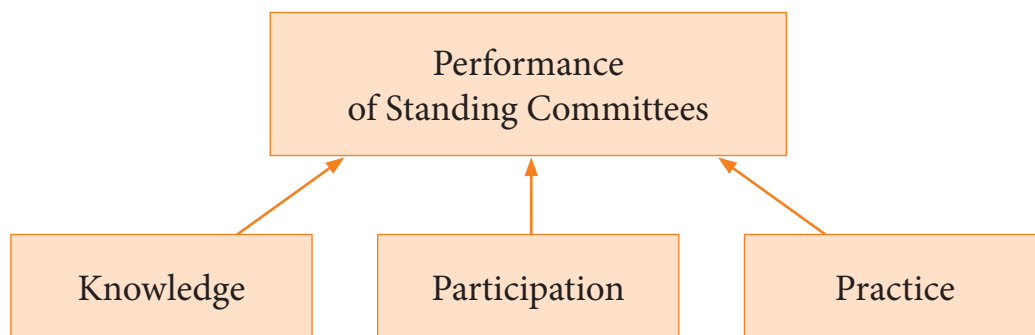


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Source: Created by the authors.

Methods

Study design

Study design is the blueprint for fulfilling objectives. Akanda (2023) considered it as an overall structure of research which facilitates delivering evidence needed to answer the research problem. It is stage-by-stage procedure for method selection, sampling strategy, data collection, ensuring reliability and validity, and analysis to acquire objectives. On the basis of that, a quantitative method was followed for data collection. A questionnaire survey was developed and used.

Study location and respondents

This study was conducted in two Union Parishads of Gaibandha district, located in the northern region of Bangladesh. Shahapara UP is situated in a semi-urban setting under Gaibandha Sadar Upazila, approximately twelve kilometres west of Gaibandha district, while Katabari UP, is located under Gobindaganj Upazila, some thirty five kilometres southwest of the district in a more remote area, facing communication hazards, electricity problems, and a lack of modern amenities. These conditions provide a meaningful contrast between the two locations. The respondents in this study included the Chairman, Members, and Women (reserved seats), with a total of 25 participants (19 males and 6 females). The survey was conducted using both close-ended and open-ended questions, with 16 questions aligned to the study's objectives. According to the Local Government (Union Parishad) Act of 2009, each UP committee must consist of five or seven elected representatives, and the Act also allows for the inclusion of socially respected individuals, civil society members, and women representatives as co-opted members to assist in the functioning of the Parishad. However, this study did not include co-opted members in the interviews.

While this research focused on only two UPs within Gaibandha district, it was part of a broader research initiative that covered 26 Standing Committees

across the northern region of Bangladesh. The findings are considered generalisable to other UPs nationwide due to the uniformity of the operational procedures and legal frameworks that govern them. Union Parishads across the country follow similar procedures, committee formations, and service delivery methods, making the results of this study applicable to other areas. Despite some differences in leadership, the basic structure and functions of each UP resemble one another closely, making the findings from this study a reliable representation of broader trends observed in UPs throughout Bangladesh. It is noteworthy that this study addressed semi-urban and remote rural settings which closely model the general geographical coverage of UPs in Bangladesh.

Data collection

Authors carried out their fieldwork in July 2024. The third author visited two Union Parishads and interviewed participants using printed questionnaires. Relevant documents of each UP were reviewed with the consent of the authorities. One respondent was a member of more than two or three SCs. Therefore, the author listed the name of all members under each Standing Committee. A wide range of information was obtained in the personal interviews from each participant. This included biographic information, the name and members of SC, formation and operational procedure of the committee, roles and responsibilities, periodic meetings of the committee, approvals of meeting decision, follow-ups, coordination with other departments, transparency and accountability, decentralisation, and areas of improvement.

Reliability and Validity of Data

Sarstedt et al. (2019) and Halim et al. (2020) strongly agreed that data reliability and validity are preconditions for quality research. The author asked the same question two or three times from different perspectives for a required answer. This study considers domains of questionnaire validity using Babbie's (2020) indications. These are: 1) face validity, 2) content validity, and 3) construct validity. Authors followed survey instrument and measured accurately for ensuring respective validities. Data was also cross-checked with other members where applicable.

Data analysis procedure

The data that was collected was entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software. Based on the study objectives, data were analysed and arrayed sequentially such as demographic information, knowledge measurement, participation, and practice. Authors systematically calculated the score of respective dimensions for each committee. For example, a Finance and Establishment Committee had five members. They received different individual scores in the 'Knowledge Dimension' section of the questionnaire. Then the author calculated the average score of five members for this dimension. The same process was followed for other dimensions under different SCs. It helped for thematic analysis. In addition, authors elucidated the overall score of the two UPs in graphical format (Figure 2).

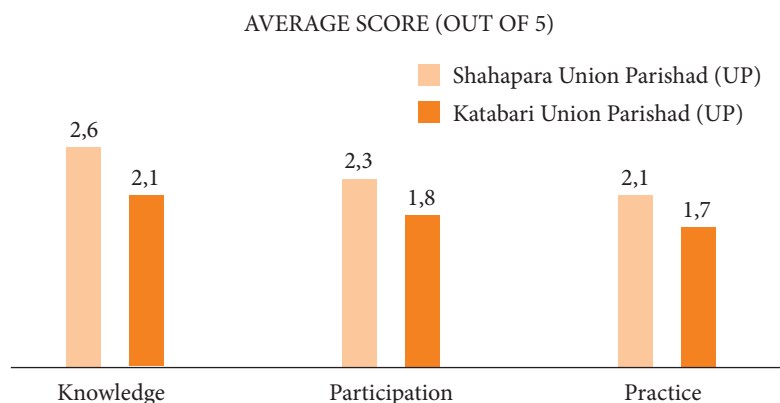


Figure 2. Average Score

Ethical Considerations

All ethical considerations from data collection to publication were followed by authors. The respondents of the questionnaire survey were clearly informed about this academic work; and data privacy was strictly maintained. They attended voluntarily. Nobody knows who participated except the authors. The authors adhered to principles of bias-free for the selection of each of the Union Parishad respondents, data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Authors were very careful to choose word(s) and asking questions that respected the dignity of respondents. Citations and quotations of respective literatures were appropriately acknowledged in this paper.

Limitations of study

This study was conducted only in two Union Parishads. Thus, results of this present study should be generalised only with some care. One male member of the Katabari UP died during the course of the study. Some interviews were conducted via telephone, which missed the opportunity for face to face engagement and rapport building – potentially missing more feedback from these respondents. The authors acknowledge that the level of communication and trust with the informants were affected in telephone interviewing. All respondents had received a number of training sessions but authors were only able to review the main Union Parishad Operational Manual. Authors conducted this research without approval from any institution.

Findings

Participants' information

Men and women respondents of the Shahapara UP are younger and more educated. Business (e.g. shopkeeper, grocer, wood trader, construction-related raw materials supplier) is the dominant occupational category in this UP than representatives of Katabari UP. Most of the women (83.33%) of both study areas are housewives. All respondents are Muslims and married. Table 1 reveals biographical information of the respondents.

Table 1

Biographical characteristics of respondents

Elements	Particulars	Shahapara UP			Katabari UP		
		C	M	W	C	M	W
Age	From 26 to 30 years	-	-	-	-	-	1
	From 31 to 35 years	-	-	1	-	-	-
	From 36 to 40 years	-	1	1	-	1	-
	From 41 to 45 years	-	4	1	-	2	1
	From 46 to 50 years	-	2	-	1	2	-
	From 51 to 55 years	-	2	-	-	1	1
	Over 55 years	1	-	-	-	2	-
	Total	1	9	3	1	8	3
Education	Signature knowledge	-	-	-	-	1	-
	Primary school	-	-	-	-	2	-
	High school	-	5	-	-	1	3
	SSC	-	2	1	-	1	-
	HSC	-	2	2	-	3	-
	Graduate	1	-	-	1	-	-
	Total	1	9	3	1	8	3
Occupation	Agriculture	-	-	-	-	2	-
	Business	-	7	-	-	3	-
	Private service	-	1	1	1	1	-
	Local doctor	-	-	-	-	1	-
	Housewife	-	-	2	-	-	3
	Teacher	1	-	-	-	-	-
	Unemployed	-	1	-	-	1	-
	Total	1	9	3	1	8	3
Income	Taka 1,500 to 3,999	-	1	2	-	1	3
	Taka 4,000 to 7,999	-	1	-	-	3	-
	Taka 8,000 to 14,999	-	1	1	-	1	-
	Taka 15,000 to 19,999	-	3	-	-	2	-
	Taka 20,000 to 29,999	1	2	-	-	1	-
	Taka 30,000 and up	-	1	-	1	-	-
	Total	1	9	3	1	8	3

Note: C= Chairman, M= Member, W= Women (reserved seats).

Source: Created by the authors (here-and-after, unless otherwise stated).

Knowledge, Participation, and Practice by the respondents are the descriptors to measure performance of Standing Committees. Major issues and concerns about its performance are also explained. Figure 2 shows the dimension-based average score (out of 5) of each UP and Annex 2 shows the individual score of each SC.

Knowledge

Sufficient knowledge about a Standing Committee's name, membership, formation process, roles and responsibilities are preconditions for the effective and efficient performance of each committee. Unfortunately, a number of respondents, especially the women of Katabari UP do not clearly know names of the committees that they are members of. Knowledge about the 'Law and Order Committee' is comparatively higher in both UPs namely 3.2 and 2.9, out of 5, respectively. The Chairman is the president of this committee. He nominates advanced and knowledgeable persons to this team. Others like the Social Welfare and Community Centres Committee, Cottage Industries and Cooperatives Committee are neglected. Interestingly, the respondents had more ideas about construction works, local arbitration, Vulnerable Group Development (VGD), and Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF), etc.

All respondents in the study had received a three-day, non-residential training on the operational manual of UP from their respective Upazila. In addition, they participated in issue-based trainings and orientations on topics such as sustainable development, information and communication technology, good governance, social mapping, disaster risk reduction, child protection, and health and nutrition trainings were all organised by various NGOs. The primary goal of these trainings was to enhance the responsibility and accountability of the Union Parishad members. However, it was observed that despite the informational value of these sessions, many participants were not highly responsive or engaged during the trainings. Most respondents were frequently late, lacked attentiveness, and were primarily motivated by incentives such as food, remuneration, and transportation reimbursement rather than a genuine interest in acquiring knowledge to bring about change.

When asked about the effectiveness of the training, the respondents acknowledged its informational value and expressed that they had gained important knowledge. They also stated that the topics discussed were occasionally brought up in their general meetings, indicating some degree of engagement. However, the author found that these trainings had minimal impact on knowledge building and actual service delivery. For example, the Standing Committee formation process, its operational procedures, and the roles and responsibilities of each member were three basic questions asked to each respondent. Unfortunately, the majority (60%) of them failed to give correct answers. While the trainings were informative, they did not result in significant improvements in the members' performance or procedural changes. Many members of the Union Parishads continued to display ignorance, ineffectiveness, and a lack of accountability in their roles. Furthermore, the SCs had no clearly defined terms of reference, and there was a reluctance among the chairmen to delegate author-

ity, further hindering the effectiveness of the committees. This reluctance and lack of awareness about the proper functions and jurisdictions of the Standing Committees were identified as major obstacles to the overall effectiveness of the committee system and service delivery.

Participation

Woman and man have equal rights to contest for the posts of chairman and member – but no woman has contested with a man for those posts. In total, six women are in reserved seats which shows a bleak picture of women's representation in the election.

Regular attendance in meetings, agenda-based discussions, addressing problems of the population, opinion sharing, consensus, responsiveness, and following-up of planned activities are all major elements of participation. The 'Finance and Establishment Committee' obtained the highest scores (3.1 for the Shahapara UP and 2.7 for the Katabari UP) in participation dimension. All meeting minutes of the respective committees are kept by the secretary of a Union Parishad. However, in most cases, the committee exists only on paper. Committee members put signatures on resolutions at a convenient time after these are written by the secretary. He writes it professionally based on a five-year plan, a yearly budget, and on a ward meeting decision. No compliance team can identify fallacies without in-depth investigation. A reluctance to attend meetings, short discussions, dominating behaviour (especially from politically affiliated male members), and extreme dependency on the secretary have been viewed as hindrances to fruitful participation. The Chairman and members of a UP are supposed to follow and implement advice of the Member of Parliament or his representative. In Table 2, willingness and functions of UP representatives are prioritized.

Table 2

Willingness and functions of Union Parishad (UP) representatives

Functions	Rank
Construction and maintenance of roads, bridges, and culverts	1
To attend and play a role in local <i>shalish</i> (arbitration)	2
Distribution of VGD/VGF cards and allowances to disadvantaged households. Implementation of FFWP*, in Bengali, <i>Kabikha</i>	3
To attend social programmes, gatherings, and festivals	4
Birth registration and certificates issue	5
To visit educational institutions	6
Distribution of ring slab for sanitary latrine	7
To facilitate conducting households survey	8
Improving health services	9

* Food for Works Program – (FFWP).

Practice

Representation of the view of the people in planning and implementation, transparency and accountability, roles for decentralisation, and coordination with service providing organisations are low in both Union Parishads. Sluggish performance of Standing Committees is the result of influence of political leaders and social touts, lack of pressure from common people, lack of initiatives by UP representatives, limited knowledge and skills, lack of accountability to the general population, and apathy. Undesirably, the members of SC could not act within the spirit of self-governance due to unwarranted meddling of the local administration along with the Member of Parliament or his nominated person. Factually, the national government does not take proper initiatives for the decentralisation of the Union Parishads. Efficient operation of the Union Parishads is never possible without political commitment.

Comparison

External socio-political factors like political interference, meddling of bureaucrats, influence of political parties (e.g the wings of the Bangladesh Awami League), budget constraints, and lack of decentralisation are common for both of the Union Parishads. But the performance of Standing Committees from the perspective of knowledge, participation, and practice is slightly different for two reasons. Firstly, representatives of the Shahapara UP are more educated, young and energetic. The claiming of rights and provisions by citizens is comparatively higher because of the semi-urban location, easy transportation, awareness and monitoring by authority. The Katabari UP lags behind in these respects.

Discussion

This section discusses the results of fieldwork conducted to investigate the presence of echo and discordant relationships with past studies. Findings from the field reveal that the knowledge of the respondents was below standard. The main obstacles to the effectiveness of standing committees include, among others, insincerity, irregular attendance at meetings, existence of the committee only on paper and high dependence on the UP secretary, dominance of influential male members, nepotism and influence of party politics. Likewise, Shil and Chowdhury (2023) noted that while Standing Committees are comprised formally, their operational shortfalls are due to the lack of sincerity of its chairman.

Ahmed (2016) identified that the government has introduced provisions for open budget meetings and council of Standing Committees to enhance participation, but studies have shown that these meetings are often held to comply with legal requirements rather than to genuinely engage citizens. This study finds that representation of the general population is very low. Some people attend open meetings without the authority to be a collective voice, makes it a cosmetic or token participation. Problems of the general population are not properly addressed by members of Standing Committee due to lack of accountability to that population. It has been looked upon as a negligence of committee members and they fail to undertake duties diligently.

Participation and empowerment are essential for socio-political development, with empowerment being a process of internal and external change (Ud-

din, 2019). This study clearly reveals that critical factors of external environment particularly the interference of a Member of Parliament or his affiliated person(s) and local administration ruin empowerment and decentralisation of the Union Parishads which adversely affect on performance of SCs. Islam (2017) quoted,

“Since committees run under the statuses of less formal rules, committee members are in a good position to discuss issues in an unceremonious and pleasant manner and to develop relationships with committee colleagues who represent different interests of the community. That does remain as spirit in creating a reciprocal milieu in which compromises on small matters and technical improvements in overall functioning can be agreed upon.”

None of the Standing Committees has terms of reference. This study shows that ensuring this is one of the policy objectives necessary to eliminate the problems that hinder the work of the Standing Committee.

The Government of Bangladesh launched the Local Government Support Project (hereinafter also LGSP) in 2007, funded by the World Bank/IDA, to enhance local governance and service delivery by strengthening the UPs’ basic service delivery capabilities. The LGSP provided support in five key areas: performance-based financing, management procedures, local accountability institutions, human resource development, and national policy coordination (Rahman, 2018).

This study identifies that the average score in knowledge (2.6 and 2.1), participation (2.3 and 1.8), and practice (2.1 and 1.7) for the two studied UPs respectively (see Figure 2). Authors realise that above scores might be below without external supports. Touchton et al. (2021) appreciated participatory budgeting and community participation of local government for improved service delivery in Brazil. Both Union Parishads arrange public gatherings in ward meetings, and open budgeting – but the problems of the general population are neither properly addressed in development plans nor are they appropriately executed.

Recommendations

The existing study aims to provide specific, data-driven, and solution-oriented recommendations by identifying key stakeholders involved in the processes and mechanisms of implementation. Major stakeholders are: The Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives; The Local Government Division, The Member of Parliament for the respective constituencies, The Deputy Director (Local Government) in the district, Upazila Parishad, Upazila Nirbahi Officer, donor agencies, members of the civil society, implementing NGOs, and the general population. The proper roles of these stakeholders are summarised as follows:

- Establish political commitments to empower and decentralise a Union Parishad. Proper execution of existing acts, rules, manuals, guidelines rather than adaptation of new and clumsy issues.
- Keep the Union Parishad and the activities of Standing Committees free from interference of Member of Parliament or his favorite person(s).
- The Local Government Division should prepare Terms of Reference and/or Standard Operating Procedure for each Standing Committee. They should ensure fruitful training and orientation for each committee member through

Upazila Parishad and local administration. The Deputy Director (Local Government) must make surprise/spot visits at random to confirm the quality of service delivery in practice.

- Effective trainings and orientations are needed for representatives of a UP, developing action plans and periodic follow-up by assigned personnel of Upazila Parishad and Upazila Nirbahi Officer.
- Periodically assess the level of knowledge of each member of the Standing Committee in accordance with the assessment format and save points in individual profiles.
- Upazila and District Administration should take necessary steps and intensive follow-up for accurate and proper documentations of all committee meetings.
- Increase fruitful and comprehensive monitoring from the Upazila Parishad and the Upazila administration rather than planned and casual meetings.
- Make regular updates on public information board(s) with necessary facts and figures like monthly budget and expenditure, meeting schedule of Standing Committees, and the names of committee members.

Conclusion

This study concludes with some learning and suggestive measures for a more promising future of the UPs in Bangladesh. Regrettably, SCs are not fully empowered, or equipped for shouldering all responsibilities. It will not be wise to expect benchmarks from Standing Committees where all public institutions of Bangladesh face governance challenges. Despite these challenges, reform initiatives have promoted the SCs for fostering citizen-centric development. The general population want to be involved in the development process. The effective performance of a Standing Committee can be one of the instruments for development and good governance.

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ANNEX 1

Questionnaire on performances of standing committees of Union Parishad (UP) in Bangladesh: A descriptive analysis

Union Parishad (UP): Name of Standing Committee (SC): Respondent name:
Representation of respondent: Chairman / Member / Women (reserved seats)
Age: Sex: Education: Occupation: Monthly income (in Taka): Mobile No.:

Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good
1	2	3	4	5

Knowledge						
<i>The Standing Committee (SC) where I am a member; I know</i>						
1	the name of standing committee	1	2	3	4	5
2	name of others who are member of this committee	1	2	3	4	5
3	formation process of the committee	1	2	3	4	5
4	operational procedure of the committee	1	2	3	4	5
5	roles and responsibilities of the committee	1	2	3	4	5
6	issue-based major learnings received from different trainings	1	2	3	4	5

Participation						
<i>As a member of this Standing Committee (SC); I</i>						
1	know meeting schedule previously	1	2	3	4	5
2	attend regularly in meeting of the committee	1	2	3	4	5
3	represent views and problems of people in the meeting	1	2	3	4	5
4	follow-up approval of our recommendations in general meeting	1	2	3	4	5
5	oversee the implementation of planned activities	1	2	3	4	5
6	can apply the learning of trainings for better participation	1	2	3	4	5

Practice						
<i>The Standing Committee (SC) where I am a member; I can</i>						
1	speak freely without fear and favor	1	2	3	4	5
2	ensure coordination with different service providing departments	1	2	3	4	5
3	ensure participation of people in planning and implementation	1	2	3	4	5
4	ensure transparency and accountability of Union Parishad (UP)	1	2	3	4	5
5	play roles for decentralization of Union Parishad (UP)	1	2	3	4	5
6	affirm that trainings have improved transparency practices	1	2	3	4	5

Do you have any suggestion for performance improvement of Standing Committee (SC)?

ANNEX 2

Performance scoring of two Union Parishads (UPs)

Standing Committee (SC)	Shahapara Union Parishad (UP)			Katabari Union Parishad (UP)		
	Knowledge	Participation	Practice	Knowledge	Participation	Practice
1) Finance and Establishment Committee	3.0	3.1	3.3	2.8	2.7	2.9
2) Audit and Accounts Committee	2.9	2.7	2.6	2.3	2.2	2.0
3) Law and Order Committee	3.2	3.0	2.7	2.9	2.6	2.2
4) Agriculture and Other Development Works Committee	2.8	2.4	2.1	2.1	1.9	1.8
5) Fisheries and Livestock Committee	2.7	2.3	2.0	2.0	1.8	1.7
6) Health, Family Planning and Epidemic Control Committee	2.8	2.2	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.6
7) Education and Mass Education Committee	2.8	2.5	2.3	2.2	2.0	1.9
8) Union Public Works Committee	2.3	1.9	2.0	1.8	1.5	1.5
9) Committee for Welfare of Women and Children, Sports and Culture	2.5	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.4	1.4
10) Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Committee	2.9	2.1	2.2	2.1	1.9	2.0
11) Committee for Conservation of the Environment and Tree Plantation	2.2	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.4	1.2
12) Social Welfare and Community Centers Committee	2.1	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.5	1.3
13) Cottage Industries and Cooperatives Committee	2.0	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.3	1.2

Note: 1 = Very Poor; 2 = Poor; 3 = Fair; 4 = Good; and 5 = Very Good.