Social Accountability Mechanisms:
A Study on the Union Parishads in Bangladesh

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Acronyms

BDO	Basic Democracy Order
CRC	Citizen Report Card
CSC	Community Score Card
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DA	Dearness Allowance
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGI	Local Government Institution
LGSP	Local Government Support Project
HYSAWA	Hygiene Sanitation and Water Supply
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
OBS	Open Budget Session
PAC	Public Affairs Centre
PETS	Public Expenditure Tracking Survey
RTI	Right to Information
SC	Standing Committee
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
TA	Travelling Allowance
UDCC	Union Development Co-ordination Committee
UPs	Union Parishads
UPGP	Union Parishad Governance Project
UZPs	Upazila Parishads
VGD	Vulnerable Group Development
VGF	Vulnerable Group Feeding
WS	Ward Shava

Glossary

Ward Shava	The Ward Shava is a council at Ward Level constituted of all individuals enlisted in the voter list of a ward
SHARIQUE	SHARIQUE means "partnership" in Bangla, is a Helvitas –BIGD Consortium project under implementation with SDC fund
Shava	Meeting often in an open place
Kirtan	Meaning "praise", it is call-and-response chanting performed in South Asia's Hindu devotional traditions
Waaj mahfil	Islamic sermons and speeches delivered to the public
Milad mahfil	An Islamic gathering where the Prophet Muhammad (SM) is praised
Tadbir	Lobbying
Suparish	Recommendation and reference
Iftaar	The evening meal when Muslims end their daily fast at sunset during the holy month of Ramadan
Shalish	Traditional village court for informal dispute resolution
Haat / Bazaar	Village market
Para	Neighbourhood
Somity	Society / Co-operative
Eid ul-Fitaar	A big annual festival of the Muslims
Eid ul-Azha	A big annual festival of the Muslims
Janazah	Islamic funeral prayer; a part of the Islamic funeral ritual
Sunnat-e-Khatna	Muslim ritual for male circumcision
Akika	The Islamic tradition of the sacrifice of an animal on the occasion of a child's birth
Tablighi Jamaat	An Islamic religious movement for spreading faith
Madrasa	A religious school where Islamic education is the main focus of the curriculum
Puja	A prayer ritual performed by Hindus to host, honour and worship one or more deities, or to spiritually celebrate an event
Durga puja	One of the big religious ceremonies of Bengali Hindus
Kaali puja	One of the big religious ceremonies of Bengali Hindus
Khatm-e-tarrabi	The compulsory Muslim prayer in a mosque during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan
Jiafat / Kulkhani	Public feast commemorating a deceased person by Muslims
Sraddho	Public feast commemorating a deceased person by Hindus
Sirat-un-Nabi	Discussion on the life and teaching of the prophet of Islam
Graam Aadalat	Village court

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Finally, and most importantly, we would like to thank the representatives of Sharique, UPGP and HYSAWA in Dhaka, Sylhet, Sunamgonj and Khulna districts, who assisted us to communicate with the respondents and provided us relevant data. Rupantar, Khulna hosted a sharing meeting with local NGOs, government officials and project personnel which helped us to understand many of the ground realities of the UPs.

In spite of our sincere efforts many of the limitations of the studies could not be avoided. The information and facts revealed in the study are also not very palatable to the UPs who exposed their shortcomings and limitations to us. We also tried hard to find out their areas of strengths which no other studies so far revealed. We apologize to the UP leaders, if they are offended by our way of presentation of the data and information. We have done it as part of our commitment towards development of a sound system by revealing its strengths and weaknesses.

However, no person and institution but the authors will remain solely responsible for the opinion and data presented in the report. We are open to comments and criticism and also committed for improvement of the Union Parshad through more research and continuous dialogues.

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Executive Summary

The study has been undertaken to analyse the state of social accountability in the Union Parishad in Bangladesh. The primary objective of the study is to explore the nature and extent of avenues to the citizens to be engaged with the UP activities in different regions as well as UPs under the coverage of special projects and UPs not having coverage of any special project. The study particularly looked at the implementation of the legal-administrative framework particularly the UP Act 2009 (Ward Shava, Plan and Budget Sessions, Standing Committees, UDCC, etc) and the innovations of different projects like SHARIQUE, UPGP and HYSAWA. Besides, the study also adopted strategies to find out the informal traditional practices of responsiveness and accountability developed over the years because of the demands and expectations of the citizens and the community. The UP Chairs and Members passionately respond to those demands. The study reviewed the existing models about governance and development that are rooted in developed countries and looked at the structures, relationships, interests and incentives system through the lens of social accountability specially the community responsiveness. Authors believe (as also literature suggests i.e. IDS 2010) that the Informal institutions and personalized relationships with electorates contribute substantially in ensuring a functional local governance along with reasonable society and culture specific social accountability mechanism developed at the grassroots.

Field level findings demonstrate that, under the current set-up the UP responses to three kinds of legal compliances, semi-legal project requirements and politico-social obligations. These are a) responsibilities and compliance issues embodied in the local government laws of the land, b) requirements of the special projects under implementation at Local government institution levels and c) political responsibility as local political/representative organisation as well as traditional social and community responsibilities emerged out of citizen demand at the local levels. Political responsibilities are ensured by the voting mechanism that occupies a dominant place in shaping and reshaping the relationship between the elected leader and the electorates. UP Chairman and Members spend lot of private resources and personal time behind the electorates in meeting their expectations. In compliance of the laws and the requirement of projects, UPs required maintaining and observing many formalities such as formation of many committees, holding of many meetings and maintenance of lot of records in which they fail miserably. Lastly, as the oldest functioning local government institution, UPs needs to respond to the community by providing the community expected services which mostly remain unaccounted in list of functions incorporated in the UP law. However, the gradual initiatives of making the UPs an administrative entity by grossly ignoring its original nature of social entity is not working effectively in the field. Currently the UP got a mixed character of social, political, administrative and community organisation and maintaining a multiple and overlapping relationships between and amongst the multiple stakeholders. The UP functionaries are found more inclined and comfortable towards compliance of social and community accountability compared to legal and administrative ones mostly the concern of external stakeholders such as bureaucracy, project personnel and NGO professionals. Still, it needs to keep them busy to meet all the ends, the formal-legal and informal-community accountability. They are under the dilemma of strict compliance of legal requirements as administrative and service entity and on the other hand face the competition of enhancing personal credibility and political legitimacy by responding to individual voter's demand,

community pressure and cultural affinity within the means of inadequate resources. At the end, community pressure, traditional political culture and constituency demand prevail. In conclusion, it can be said that UP's social accountability from societal point of view is very strong and effective on the contrary, formal-legal compliance is more than weak and ineffective.

Key words: Local Government, Union Parishad, Social Accountability, Bangladesh Local Government and social accountability

1 Section One: Introduction

1.1 Context of the study

This study is focused on SHARIQUE III, a consortium project funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) on local governance and development. The specific objective of the project is to empower the poor and disadvantaged groups in the project areas in claiming their rights and entitlements towards effectively receiving services provided by the local government bodies. SHARIQUE adopted a citizens' participation approach in the decision making process at the local level. The project's previous two phases also focused in the areas of transparency, accountability and participation of communities. SHARIQUE III covers a total of 207 UPs in 29 UZPs in the districts - Rajshahi, Sunamganj, Chapai Nawabganj and Khulna for a time span of three years (September 2013 - August 2016). In these areas, around 1,900 community groups with about 50,000 members are being addressed by the Programme. Compared to the previous two Phases, it is now following a stronger research and evidence-based policy approach aiming to influence policies and practices at national level through sharing and promoting good practices.

In this backdrop, this study has been undertaken to ascertain the state of social accountability in some selected UPs in both SHARIQUE and non-SHARIQUE areas. The principal objective of the research is to explore, compare and contrast the nature and extent of space available to citizens to directly engage with the UP administration in the selected project and non-project areas. The study tried to locate, list and contextualise the social responsibilities the elected UP representatives' discharge and supposed to be discharging. The study particularly looked at the actual ground level practices of social accountability mechanisms at the UP level after the enactment of Local Government (Union Parishad) Act 2009 (Ward Shava, Plan and Budget Sessions, Standing Committees, Project Committees, Citizen Charter, annual report, RTI , UDCC, etc.). The study also examines the quality of citizenship i.e., citizens' motivation and capacity to engage effectively with their representatives, their ability to give inputs in the budget/policy decisions, as well as their activities to monitor the project implementation process. The study also adopted strategies to list down the activities the chairs and members are engaged as essential part of their duties and obligations; those in turn ensure their legal and social accountability.

1.2 Objective

The overall objectives of the study are:
1. To observe and analyse principles and measures of accountability in general and social accountability in particular as envisioned in the following three instruments and interventions:

  a) Practice of Local Government (Union Parishad) Act 2009 and Rules Promulgated subsequently
  b) Specific programmes and projects aimed at UPs such as SHARIQUE, HYSAWA and UPGP
  c) Socially obligated activities carried out by UP Chairs and members as part of social customs, traditions, and cultural and community practices as community accountability

2. To measure the UPs accountability towards socio-economically disadvantaged citizens, and
3. To find out the practices of the existing interventions which UPs should prioritise and institutionalise towards discharging social accountability.

1.3 Methodology

The term 'social accountability' is broad ('all-encompassing') as are the related concepts such as 'democracy', 'democratic governance,' 'participation' and 'inclusive development'. Perhaps, it goes without saying that, no single scholarly authority can claim sole authorship of the term 'social accountability'. In this study, we consider three types of interpretation of the term as it applied to the Union Parishads of Bangladesh: a) Social and other accountability as defined in the UP laws of Bangladesh b) Social accountability as practiced at UP level and as introduced by different projects c) Social accountability as understood and practiced as part of tradition, custom, community practices and culture of a particular locality.

Figure- 1: Intersection of various forms of Social Accountability

Legal

The accountability mechanisms made obligatory by the LG (Union Parishad) Act 2009 and other related laws

Project

The additional accountability measures relating to project

Traditional

Traditionally followed and socially obligated activities the UP representatives individually and collectively follow

The Study takes the approach on the basis of prior observation of the ground situation and also keeping in mind the interest of long-term sustainability of the efforts so far practiced. Experience shows (SDC 2008) that innovations in LGI interventions are difficult to sustain in the absence of continued donor support. Partially, this has been explained as related to a deficiency with regards to local 'ownership' of the process. By finding a 'middle ground' between international best practices, national laws and traditional customs, we intend to gather an analysis which heightens a) local relevance and thereby b) increasing chances for sustained practice of good governance. In the interest of practicality, the study highlights the activities carried out within the parameter of local customs, social, cultural and community practices since the time available to local representatives is utilised or spent liberally in the traditional social obligations and community attached high value to those as important contributions and desirable performances from their UP representatives. The UP representatives participate in those social activities either out of social obligation, personal passion, and community pressure or to make their electorates happy.

Table 1: Variables from each of the three categories

Legal requirement for ensuring accountability	Project induced accountability mechanism	Community practices as part of tradition, custom and culture of a particular locality
1. Ward Shava (Ward Council) 2. Ward Committee 3. Open budget session 4. Standing committee 5. UP monthly meeting 6. UDCC 7. Annual and Five-year plan 8. RTI compliance 9. Citizen Charter 10 Annual Report	**SHRARIQUE** 1. Civic engagement and training for stakeholders 2. Awareness raising of poor and disadvantaged 3. Promotion of the compliance of legal obligations 4. Developing various support tools 5. Special grant 6. Proactive disclosure **HYSAWA** 1. Promotion of bottom-up planning through Citizen participation and validate plan through ward shava 2. Grants and capacity building to empower UPs 3. Citizens participation in procurement of services/ works and supervision of construction 4. Use of PPR procedure in UP procurement 5. Engagement of all members of UP in decision making 6. Multiple cheque signatories 7. Promotion of open budget and mandatory information display board 8. Citizen being made aware of their rights and obligations 9. Participatory listing of hardcore poor households 8. Ensuring operations & maintenance of WatSan infrastructures **UPGP** 1. Performance indicators as basis for good governance and receiving special grants 2. Performance grant 3. Web page/web portal 4. Annual and Five year plan 5. Activation of standing committees 6.Capacity Development	1. Daily public relations and hearing to people's demand for personalised services 2. Attending religious, social, cultural events 3. Dispute resolution 4. Charity and assistance provided in response to the need of individuals /families 5. Personal contacts , answering various queries and requests over cell phone 6. Total time spent in informal social obligatory activities 7. Personal money and other resources spent behind the socially obligated activities for the voters

In the study, purposive sampling method is preferred to understand the differences in performance of the UPs that are not under any local government capacity-building project and UPs that are enjoying support from a project like SHARIQUE, HYSAWA (Hygiene, Sanitation and Water Supply) or UPGP (Union Parishad Governance Project).

So, purposive sampling is applied to select UPs with desired characteristics. It needs to be mentioned that LGSP (Local Governance Support Project) is active all over the country. A total of nine UPs from five districts were looked at in depth. Six UPs were chosen from Sunamganj and Khulna districts (three from each). In Khulna, one UP was under SHARQUE, one was jointly under SHARIQUE and HYSAWA and one was under UPGP. In Sunamganj, two UPs under SHARIQUE were covered and the third one was under UPGP. Three non-project UPs were also looked into, one each from Sylhet, Chittagong and Dhaka districts[1].

Table-2: The selected UPs and their respective, Upazilas and districts are furnished in the table below:

Union Parishad	Region	Division	District	Upazila	SHARIQUE status	UPGP status	HYSAW A status
Phultala	West	Khulna	Khulna	Phultala	Included	Not included	included
Digholia	West	Khulna	Khulna	Digholia	Included	Not included	Included (2010-2013)
Aichgati	West	Khulna	Khulna	Rupsha	Not included	Included	Not included
Joykolosh	East	Sylhet	Sunamganj	Sunamganj South	Included	Not included	Not included
Charmoholla	East	Sylhet	Sunamganj	Chhatak	Included	Not included	Not included
Kalaruka	East	Sylhet	Sunamganj	Chhatak	Not included	Included	Not included
Khadimnagar	East	Sylhet	Sylhet	Sylhet Sadar	Not included	Not included	Not included
Subadda	East	Dhaka	Dhaka	Keraniganj	Not included	Not included	Not included
Fatehpur	East	Chittagong	Chittagong	Hathazari	Not included	Not included	Not included

The research used mainly qualitative techniques and quantitative methods of reviewing the documents UPs are supposed to maintain. The qualitative methods were interviews, focused group discussions (FGDs), and Key Informants interviews (KIIs). KIIs have been conducted among the Chairmen and Members of the selected UPs. Informal discussions were held with the Secretaries of the selected UPs as well as with CSO activists, NGO executives and project personnel active in UP activities in the selected areas. FGDs were conducted amongst the UP representatives (Chairmen/Members), citizens within the UPs and NGO workers.

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[1] The World Bank has divided Bangladesh primarily into two regions based on spatial location of divisions. The East constitutes of Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and the West is made up of Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna and Barisal divisions. The World Bank has found considerable economic disparity between the two regions with the East doing better. The districts of Sunamganj, Sylhet, Dhaka and Chittagong are situated in the East region while Khulna is in the West region of the country. This would allow us to compare and contrast the performance of UPs from two different socio-economic zones of the country (World Bank 2008).

KIIs

Place	Chairman	Members	Women members
Aichgati, Rupsha, Khulna	√	√ (2interviews)	√
Phultola, Khulna		√	
Khadimnagar, Sadar, Sylhet	√	√	--
Subadda, Keranigonj	√	√	√
Fatehpur, Chittagong	√	√	√

Total KIIs: 11 (eleven)

FGDs *with UP representatives (Chairmen/Members)*

Place	Presence of Chairman	Presence of Members	Presence of Women members	Total participants
Digholia, Khulna	√	√	√	7
Phultola, Khulna	√	√		3
Kalaruka, Chhatak, Sunamganj	--	√	√	6
Joykolosh, Sunamganj	√	√	--	4
Charmoholla, Chhatak, Sunamganj	--	√	√	5
Subadda, Keranigonj	√	√	√	7
Fatehpur, Chittagong	--	√	√	5

Total FGDs conducted with UP representatives: 07 (seven)

FGDs *with citizens*

Place	Presence of men	Presence of women	Total participants
Ward No. 9, Aichgati, Rupsha, Khulna	√	--	10
Ward No. 8, Aichgati, Rupsha, Khulna	√	--	10
Digholia, Khulna	√	√	16
Ward 7, Phultola, Khulna	√	√	21
Ward No. 5, Khadimnagar, Sadar, Sylhet	√	--	15
Joykolosh, Sunamganj South, Sunamganj	√	--	24

Total FGDs with citizens: 6 (six)

FGD *with NGO workers*

Place	NGO representatives present	Total participants
Khulna city	UPGP, SHARIQUE, Rupantor, USAID, UZGP, HYSAWA, Nagrik Oikka	10

Total FGDs with NGO workers: 1 (one).

1.4 Theoretical Framework

Based on the findings from a five-year research programme the study titled 'An upside down view of governance' (IDS 2010) suggests that, the development practitioners need to close off their mental models about governance and development that are rooted in developed countries. The study suggested looking at the structures, relationships, interests and incentives system in the actual governance rather than prioritising reform of formal institutions. Though not in the longer-term, but at least in the short-to-medium term exploring the relationship-based arrangements could be more effective.

However, besides the formal social accountability mechanism, the study would also look at the informal institutions and personalised relationships, as the literature recognises that, they also could be the part of the solution (IDS 2010). We would examine social accountability in terms of the relationship between citizen and the LGI representative and also service providers and service receivers and these have been looked at in three areas and aspects as outlined. These are policy gaps and compliance issues, interventions of different projects from the formal mechanism point of view. And lastly, the traditional community practices from the informal point of views is also the focus of the study.

Figure-2: Path of formal and informal social accountability in the UPs
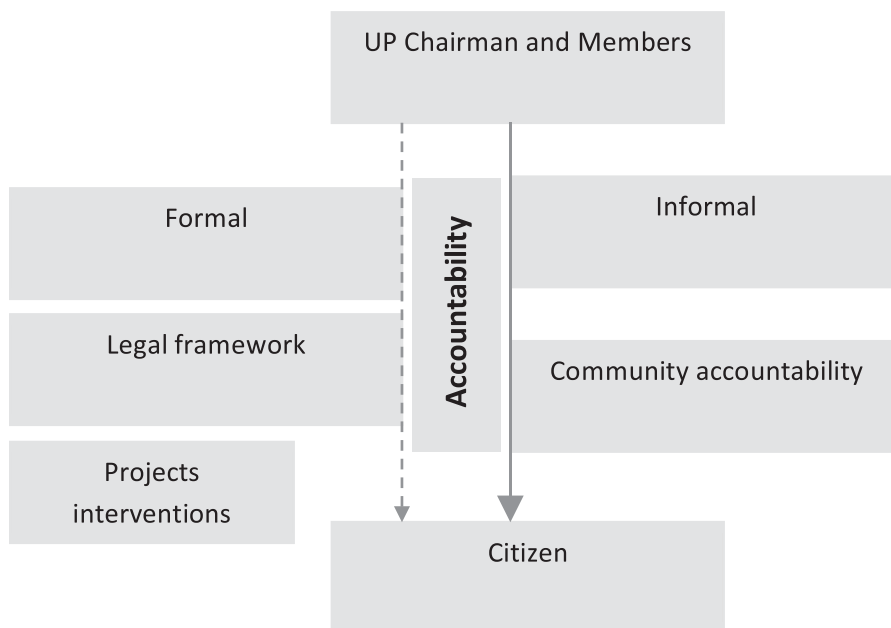
For this, the study explores what informal local institutions are at work, and how they are shaping and reshaping development outcomes (informal revenue generation mechanism for the community development by the local leaders). Thus, we would analyse how the UPs are accountable to their citizens both formally (through legal and projects interventions) and informally (through traditionally practiced socio-cultural activism).

Voting concerns occupy a dominant place in shaping the relationship between the elected leader and the electorates. The notion of keeping the past trend of popularity and creation of new streams of popularity concern the leaders most. They have a general tendency to

satisfy their electorates at any cost. They spend lot of private resources and personal time behind the electorates in meeting their requests and respond to their day to day affairs. The amount of time and money of the studied UP representatives spend for their community were difficult to measure. The phenomenon is not altogether new but trend has substantially changed. The formal-legal issues become less prominent and dominant compared to the informal social obligations.

1.5 Research Questions and Limitations

The study is focused with two research questions. This are- whether the social accountability of the UPs to their citizens are ensured effectively through the formal mechanism? If not what are the gaps? Besides, are there any other avenues through which the communities can ensure the accountability of the UPs? The hypothesis is, whereas the formal mechanism of social accountability hardly works in the real ground, both the giver and holder of the accountability (Mulgan, 2002) have come to a political settlement that they would continue their traditional and informal relationship and thus the holder would ensure their own defined accountability of the giver. With the above mentioned hypothesis, the study intended to analyse the real scenario based on empirical findings from some selected Ups. However, with the limited time and scope it was not possible to get all the intended respondents and participants equally in all the locations which were beyond the control of the research team. Secondly, the research team could not avoid the presence of the UP members or their representatives in the community level FGDs that created obstacles in getting straight comments.

2 *Section Two: An Overview of the UP*

2.1 UP in Bangladesh

During the ancient period, there was village councils popularly known as *Panchayats* and the current UP is considered to be the legacy of those ancient *Panchayats*. Village councils were considered as very competent bodies (Khan 2008) with 'relative autonomy'. In fact all government tasks were performed within their jurisdiction and the control exercised by the central or regional authority over them was nominal. Besides, they had adequate financial resources to perform their multifarious functions (Khan 2008, Khanna, 1977) or they do not need hard cash resources to discharge their responsibilities rather social capital was their main stake to use and utilise. The functions were voluntary in nature and existing social capital were the basic resources they used to utilise. These included civic functions, public order and discipline and judicial functions, such as maintenance of social order, punishment of crimes, settlement of disputes, maintenance and management of communal lands and public utilities, construction of roads, collection of revenue for voluntary social work as well as public works. During the medieval age, the Village *Panchayets* were entrusted with the task of looking after elementary education, irrigation, religious practices and moral conduct, holding of fairs and festivals, maintaining law and order and so on (Khan 2008, referred Siddiqui, 2005: 33). The structure was not formal but there were community tradition, based on those traditions the *Panchayats* used to be formed and functioned.

Though the inception of the British rule weakened the traditional independent village community and its governance and replaced them with a formal–legal system , later under the Basic Democracy Order (BDO) in the 1960s during Pakistani period, the functional jurisdiction and financial resource base of the Union Councils were significantly increased and were linked with the existing state and politics for the first time. The political control of the central government at the grassroots level through LGIs was exercised through local bureaucracy such as Deputy Commissioner (DCs), Sub-divisional Officers (SDOs) and Circle Officers (COs).

After the independence of Bangladesh, under articles 9, 11, 59, and 60 of the Bangladesh Constitution, establishing local government bodies were made mandatory as an indivisible part of state administration (Khan, 2008). The present system of the UP is administered under the Local Government (Union Parishads) Act, 2009. Currently, there are 4,570 Unions in Bangladesh (Bangladesh National Portal, 2014). Each Union is made up of nine Wards. A UP consists of a Chairman and twelve members including three seats exclusively reserved for women. The Chairman and members are elected by direct election every five years. Three reserved women members, one for each of the three General Wards, are also elected through direct election mehod. The functions and powers of the UPs are maintenance of Public order (*Janasringkhla*) in the localities and assisting the appropriate authorities to do the same; adopting and implementing schemes for local development; performing local administrative duties; and providing welfare services to the local population (GoB, 2009).

Figure-3: Union Parishad Organogram
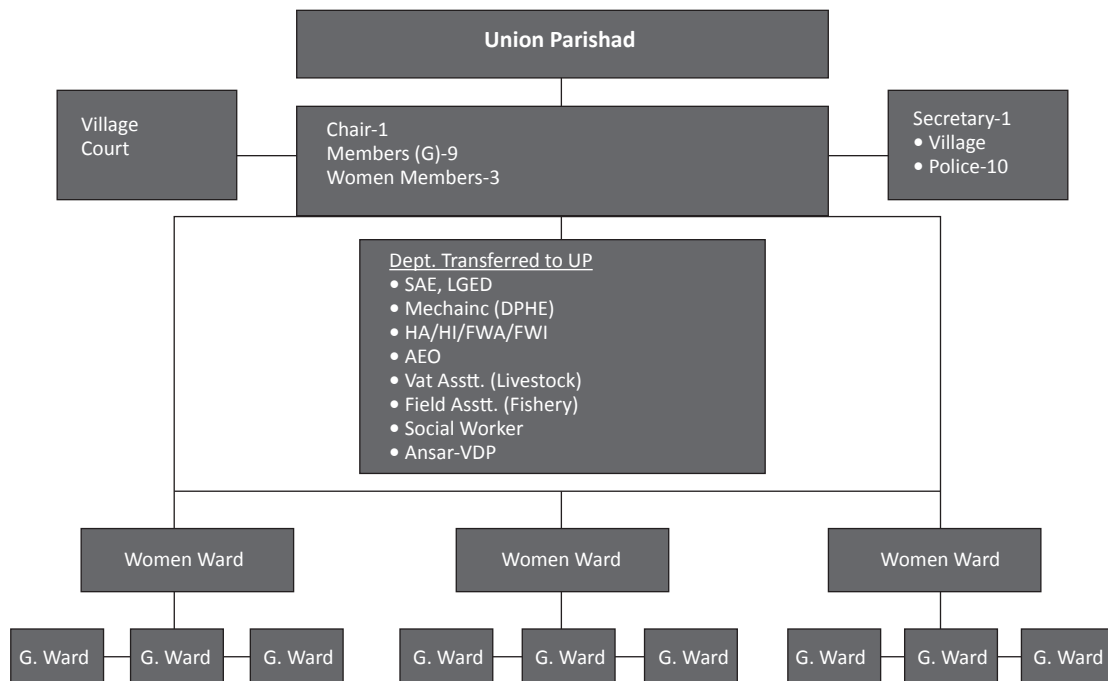
Source: Ahmed, 2014

As the oldest functioning local government institutions in Bangladesh, the common people's affiliation with this institution is very close and intimate. Traditionally the institution developed its own culture of providing the voluntary services to the community. There was hardly any formal mechanism of providing such services in the ancient and medieval villages. The village level institutions such as '*Panchayat*' in any form developed in earlier times were basically social institutions. The gradual initiatives of making the UCs/UPs an administrative and developmental entity through different legal measures could not isolate them from their traditional roots and still under the legal coverage side by side with their relationship with modern state, the very nature of social institution remained undisturbed. The past informal practices however are not unimportant in terms of the rural cultural perspective, for which the institution itself emerged and flourished.

Besides, the legal and administrative initiatives are also not necessarily undermining its welfare centric metaphors. But unlike its traditional circumstances, the current scenario is different with a complicated social, political, administrative and business relationship. The informal community problem solving activities are so strong and inbuilt that, UP cannot avoid them. This is because the informal practices gradually became the indicator of measuring the efficiency of the UPs as perceived and valued by the community, which in turn is regarded as an important community accountability mechanism. Furthermore, the formal obligation of voting for the responsibility rather strengthened the community priorities over all other legal obligations with higher level of hierarchical accountabilities. As a result, UP needs to maintain both the formal and informal relations and tackle the competition of personal credibility and attachment and also administrative formalities with the existing state mechanism as many of the hard cash resources come from formal governmental sources.

Besides, the UPs are not uniform in their real and ground level functions and discharging responsibilities. For instance, the studied UPs are of two types in terms of location and nature of activities. There is a type covered by different special projects and situated in rural setting (Khulna and Sunamgonj). The second types of UPs are not covered by any project other than LGSP and situated in the urban and sub-urban settings (Chittagong, Sylhet and Dhaka). In terms of the infrastructure, the 1st type of UPs are housed in a separate two- storied building in the community with a big open space in the front and located in a peaceful environment. In most cases they have a meeting room, and Union Information Service Centre (UISC) adjacent to the UP offices. The latter is a multistoried building in a chaotic and busy area where a significant number of the inhabitants are outsiders, migrated from different districts for business and other purposes. Even the population size also varies to a large extent. For example in Subadda union of Keranigonj, Dhakh, the total population estimated to be 400,000, with 144,000 voters, whereas the population of the rural type unions vary from 23, 179 (Charmahalla) to 64, 369 (Aichgati) with around 20,000 voters. In the Chittagong and Dhaka unions about half of the populations are settled from outside the upazila and the district, Even Chairmen and members cannot recognise all of the voters but in the rural unions each and every person is personally known to the members and chairs. In the Sylhet Union, outsider factor is not very dominant and anonymity is also not prevalent but types of services the citizen expect are similar to Chittagong and Dhaka. People in three non-project UPs do not care about WS meeting, Open Budget Sessions, Citizen Charter, RTI, even the VGD/ VGF Cards or safety net. Issuing of birth certificate, trade licenses and Informal Dispute Resolution (IDR) of different types are the main demands. Members and chairmen spend a substantive part of their effective time in IDR.

3 Section Three: Social Accountability-Conceptual definition

3.1 What is accountability

Accountability as defined by the World Bank "a set of relationships among service delivery actors with five features; **delegating:** explicit or implicit understanding that a service (or goods embodying the service) will be supplied; **financing:** providing the resources to enable the service to be provided or paying for it; **performing:** supplying the actual service; having **information about performance:** obtaining relevant information and evaluating performance against expectations and formal or informal norms; **enforcing:** being able to impose sanctions for inappropriate performance or provide rewards when performance is appropriate" (Velleman, 2010)

According to the World Bank there are three fundamental threats to ensure good governance and the rule of law in the developing world that refer to the use of public office for private gain, these are corruption, clientelism, and capture. Corruption hampers service delivery system whereas clientelism provides the scope of the unfair channel of public resources to specific client groups and capture provides rents to specific economic actors. The best way to combat this three-headed monster is strengthening accountability mechanism of the government (WB 2005).

A workable accountability mechanism may be devised based on a 'holder-giver' relationship, whereby the holder (persons or institutions entitled to scrutinize activities of the giver) holds the giver (persons or institution responsible for giving service) accountable on agreeable terms (Mulgan, 2002). Such terms vary with the types of the authority assigned to multiple holders-some are hierarchical and some are informal. While hierarchical holder is legally entitled to take corrective actions against any deviation of the giver; informal holders can only create pressure on hierarchical holders to make the giver accountable. However, informal holders in modern democracies can resort to the court of law on certain cases to make the giver accountable. Such pluralistic accountability secures legitimacy for the institution as all stakeholders perceive the outcome produced by the institution mutually agreeable and thereby accept their respective relationships with that institution.

We can therefore define accountability as a proactive process by which public officials inform and justify their plans of action to the citizens and based on that their behavior is reflected. The accountability that public officials are exposed to through the conduct of periodic elections is not enough to guarantee good governance and the rule of law (Przeworski, Stokes, 2003). As a result, social accountability in between the elections is obvious to reduce the three Cs: corruption, clientelism, and capture.

According to GSDRC, There are various forms of official accountability mechanisms these are vertical accountability, horizontal accountability and social accountability. Vertical accountability tools allow citizens to hold institutions and states to account, whether through elections or through social mobilisation or advocacy and lobbying. Horizontal accountability mechanisms involve state entities monitoring and demanding answers from (and sometimes sanctioning) other state entities. Social or 'demand-side' accountability processes allows citizens to be engaged directly with the state and service providers through budgeting, monitoring and other oversight processes (GSDRC, 2014).

3.2 Defining social accountability

Social accountability refers to the mechanism that increases accountability through the participation and involvement of the citizens. Besides, it also complements and reinforces conventional mechanisms of accountability such as political checks and balances. Social accountability mechanisms, also defined as citizen-led monitoring mechanisms allow communities to be directly involved in monitoring government performance, generating evidence and demanding accountability through community monitoring or public expenditure tracking. Literature shows that, this mechanism successfully implemented in developing and transitional countries such as Brazil, India, Indonesia, Mexico and Uganda (GSDRC, 2014).

As we discussed earlier, elections are chances and opportunities for citizens to choose persons to lead and discharge responsibilities from and amongst a limited number of individuals and political parties. The elections do not open an opportunity to express their preferences on specific issues and to participate in the public decision-making process and thus hold public actors accountable for their actions intermittently. Usually social accountability mechanisms refer to different types of actions by the citizen or civil society including demonstrations, protests, advocacy campaigns, investigative journalism etc. But in the recent years, there is a changing pattern in the mechanism due to the increasing access to data analysis tools that emphasise a solid evidence based direct interaction with government counterparts. These tools are participatory public policy-making and budgeting, public expenditure tracking, citizen monitoring and evaluation of public service delivery (Malena, 2004). Social accountability thus complements and strengthens the conventional accountability mechanisms.

As a result, both formal and informal mechanism should be considered when analysing the social accountability in a certain perspective. An informal mechanism refers to creating public pressure through different types of conventional practices, whereas the formal means of social accountability would be presenting evidence to a corruption control agency or filing a legal claim through the court system.

3.3 Why is social accountability important?

Social accountability ensures good governance by increasing development effectiveness and empowerment. Especially in the developing countries, both the effectiveness of the traditional horizontal accountability mechanism and vertical mechanism (election) proved a weak and blunt instrument for holding government officials accountable. On the contrary, social accountability mechanisms allow ordinary citizen's access to information and voice their demands, and thus ensure accountability of the leaders between elections.

Besides, social accountability mechanisms consider the ability of citizens to be engaged with bureaucrats and politicians in a more systematic manner. Thus, the social accountability tools enhance the possibility of development effectiveness through improved public service delivery, especially in the countries like Bangladesh where the government often cannot deliver key essential services to its citizens due to the misallocation of resources, leakages and corruption. However, by enhancing the availability of information and increasing citizen voice, social accountability mechanisms could play a big role towards improving the effectiveness of service delivery and making public decision-making more transparent and participatory. Social

accountability initiatives can also ensure the empowerment of the marginalised people by providing them necessary information on rights and entitlements.

3.4 Social Accountability Tools in the Literature

There are many tools of social accountability, practiced throughout the world especially in the developing countries. Some of them are discussed below:

• **Participatory Budgeting** is a process of engaging citizens directly in different stages of formulating and implementing budget. Participatory budgeting is considered as one of the effective mechanism of improving budget through target allocation. By promoting civic engagement and social learning, participatory budgeting mechanism ensures transparency in the actions of public officials and thus confirms development effectiveness.

Social Accountability helps to

-Improve the focus of public service delivery
-Monitor government performance and foster responsive governance
-Emphasise the needs of vulnerable groups in policy formulation and implementation
-Demand transparency and expose government failure and corruption
-Facilitate effective links between citizens and local governments in the context of decentralisation
-Empower marginalised groups traditionally excluded from policy processes (UNDP, 2010)

• **The Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS)** is a quantitative survey of the public service providers. Through the survey information on facility characteristics, financial flows, outputs of the services delivered and the accountability arrangements are collected. PETS, a quantitative exercise is complementary to qualitative surveys on the perception of consumers on service delivery. The mechanism is considered to be very influential in highlighting the use and abuse of public money.

• **Citizen Report Cards (CRC)** is a powerful tool that provides public agencies systematic feedbacks from the users of the services. CRCs are participatory surveys that significantly enhance public accountability through the extensive media coverage and civil society advocacy. This mechanism is used in situations where demand side data, such as user perceptions on quality and satisfaction with public services is unavailable (WB, 2005). In recent years, report cards have been supported by the World Bank in Uganda, Albania, the Philippines and Peru. Beyond the World Bank, the methodology has been taken up by municipal presidents in the Ukraine and numerous cities in India. The experience of such a mechanism by Public Affairs Centre (PAC) in Bangalore, India in 1994, and then repeated in 1999 and 2003, shown below in box 1 (Ackerman, 2005).

Box: 1. The Bangalore Citizen Report Card

The original motivation for the citizen report card in Bangalore was the deficient provision of public services in the city. This problem was, and continues to be, widespread for most services. Transportation, telephone, electricity, water, and waste disposal services are all profoundly unsatisfactory, especially in the poorest areas of the city. The hypothesis grounding the report card methodology is that the reason why the services are so poor is because government agencies are not enmeshed in an effective incentive structure. The guiding idea behind the methodology is to introduce market-type incentives to the functioning of government. Through the report card methodology, agencies can see how their performance changes from year to year as well as compare themselves to other agencies in a comparative, competitive dynamic similar to that imposed by the market. All of these occurs through the independent action of civil society and the power of information. Report cards have seven key phases: (i) Identification of Scope, Actors and Purpose (ii) Design of Questionnaires (iii) Sampling (iv) Execution of Survey (v) Data Analysis (vi) Dissemination and (vii) Institutionalisation (World Bank, 2004b). Experience reveals that the three core elements which are most important for a successful initiative are: (a) technical expertise in the design, implementation and analysis of the report card (b) an active civil society that is willing and able to use the information provided in the report card to pressure the government for reform and (c) reform-minded top public officials who are willing and able to use the information to implement changes in service provision.

• **Community Score Card (CSC**) is a community based monitoring tool, considered as the hybrid of the techniques citizen report cards. Like the citizen report card, the CSC process is an instrument to exact social and public accountability and responsiveness from service providers. It creates a linkage between service providers and the community, thus citizens are empowered to provide immediate feedback to service provider. The CSC process facilitates community monitoring and performance evaluation of services, projects and even government administrative units. The beauty of CSC is, it is a grassroots process and could be used in the rural setting. The CSC asks for user perceptions on quality, efficiency and transparency. One of the best examples of the community score card practice is Malawi, as shown below in box 2 (Ackerman, 2005).

Box 2: Community Score card in Malawi

The community score card methodology was first developed in Malawi by CARE International through its Local Initiatives for Health (LIFH) project in 2002. The model applied in Malawi includes four basic elements. First, facilitators organise community meetings with villages surrounding the specific health center to be evaluated. At these meetings the participants are asked to talk about their health problems, their access and use of health services, and their opinions of the health center under evaluation. The facilitator then works to help the participants design a list of indicators that can be used to evaluate the health center. Finally, the participants are asked to rank the performance of the health center along each one of the indicators. Second, the staff at the health clinic goes through a similar process. They are asked to discuss the present situation at the clinic, develop a series of indicators, and rank their performance along these indicators. Third, an "interface meeting" is organised where community members and clinic staff present their respective scorecards, compare the outcomes, and try to work together to design solutions to the common problems identified. Fourth, the action plans need to be implemented and followed up. There is evidence that there was significant improvement in the service of the health center between the two interface meetings that took place in Malawi and that most of this improvement can be attributed to the implementation of the community scorecard. Almost all of the indicators received higher scores in the second scorecard and there was quite significant improvement.

- **Social Audit** is a process of collecting information on the resources of a service provider and thus analyses and shares publicly in a participatory fashion. The main concern of a social audit is to measure how the resources are used for social purposes. The scope of social audits may differ, that could be used for investigating the work of all government departments over a number of years in several districts. On the other hand this also could be used to manage a particular project in one village at a given time. Most social audits usually consist of the activities like producing evidence-based information, creating awareness among both service giver and taker, improving citizens' access to information.

- **A Citizen's charter** is a document that informs citizens about a service regarding the standards, timeframe, procedures, cost and other related issues. In this mechanism, separate charters are usually designed and listed for different levels of organisations and agencies. The aim of the Citizen's charter is to improve the quality of services by publishing standards which users can expect for each service they receive from the Government. The purpose of the citizen's charter is to inform citizens about their rights and entitlements, so that they can exercise considerable pressure on service providers to improve their performance.

- **Public hearing** refers to a formal meeting at the community level with the presence of local government officials and citizens. In the meeting they have the opportunity to exchange information and opinions on community affairs. Community budgets would be a typical example of public hearings. This mechanism is considered as an important tool to raise citizen's concerns in front of elected officials and bureaucrats, thus providing important feedback to the officials regarding citizens' experiences and views.

3.5 Legal framework of social accountability in Bangladesh

The UP act 2009 promotes transparency by requiring the proactive disclosure of information on the development plans, the UP budget and UP services by every UP through open budget sessions at citizen gatherings at UP level, Ward Shava meetings in each of the nine wards and through the publication of a 'citizen charter[2]'. The UP Act obliges UP members to consider Ward Shava decisions. If any decision taken by the Ward Shava is not adopted in the final list of the UP it must be justified or explained in the WS Meetings. The list of priorities received from the Ward Shava cannot be modified by the UP and it must have reflection in the UP Plan and budget.

Besides, the Right to Information Act 2009 has the provision of preserving and proactively publicising all information in relation to decisions, procurements and activities whether executed or proposed to guarantee equal access for all citizens. It also includes the right of every citizen of Bangladesh to obtain any information about a *Parishad* upon demand in a prescribed form and the responsibility for duty bearers to provide this information. Standing committee is another channel which allows citizens to participate, monitor and evaluate UP decisions (Section 45, UP Law). Standing committees' role is to oversee and supervise UP activities concerning their jurisdiction.

In a broad sense, under UP law 2009, a social accountability initiative includes the following areas: Ward Shava and Open meeting at ward level:

Ward Shava and Open meeting at ward level:
The Ward Shava is constituted of all individuals enlisted in the voter list of a ward, and consists of meetings chaired by the elected ward representative, who is a UP member. During these meetings, information on current development activities, financial affairs and schemes is provided to allow citizens to supervise, evaluate UP activities and make recommendations. Furthermore, the Ward Shava can propose projects, prioritises schemes and development programmes to be implemented, review UP reports and identify shortcomings.

Moreover, the Ward Shava contributes in the realisation of development and health programmes and in raising public awareness related to health, environmental and social topics (Local Government (Union Parishad) Act 2009: chapter two). To ensure that the needs of all citizens are considered during such meetings, the ward meeting quorum is constituted of one twentieth of the total voters residing in the respective ward. The Ward Shava can take place only when that proportion of the ward population is present; in order to ensure the attendance of Ward Shava members, the UP must circulate a public notice at least seven days before the meeting takes place. The Ward Shavas must be organised only twice a year.

Open Budget Sessions:
This budget is prepared before the commencement of each financial year and presented to local people in an open budget session. The annual income and expenditure statements of the Union Parishad are presented at an open budget meeting along with the succeeding year's income and expenditure plan. The respective UP chairman announces the budget of the UP in front of local

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[2]   A citizen charter includes details on the services provided by UP, citizens' responsibilities for services and consequences for violation of commitments.

people. Participatory budget declaration is one of the most important tasks of UP which entails projection of income and expenditure of UP before the people. People can raise questions, queries and make comments on any of the issues of the proposed budget and plan.

Standing Committee:

The roles of standing committees in Union Parishad are crucial, important and significant to improving the service delivery at grassroots level. Each UP has 13 standing committees. Basically, the members of standing committees organise regular meetings among themselves to address the problems covered under the ToR of the Committee in their respective sectors, locality and find out the means and ways to resolve the problems in a structured manner. Each committee is headed by one UP member as chairman and comprises four to six local persons including sitting UP members (and one expert member if needed), who should have specific qualifications for serving the committee. The head of the committee contacts possible members in order to invite them to participate; the invitation can be accepted or declined. UPs are bound to deliberate and consider standing committee proposals and comments. Out of 13, 10 standing committees deal with specific sectors of development and remaining three committees are responsible for (1) finance, budget accounts and audit, (2) establishment and (3)tax assessment and collection. The Extension workers and local officials are supposed to join the committees of their relevance. But clear instruction from their parent departments are not issued or in force.

Right to Information:

The Act makes provisions for ensuring free flow of information and people's right to information. The freedom of thought, conscience and speech is recognised in the Constitution as a fundamental right and the right to information is an alienable part of it. Since all powers of the Republic belong to the people, it is necessary to ensure right to information for their empowerment and accountability of the concerned establishment.

3.6 Social Accountability mechanism under different projects

SHARIQUE on social accountability

SHARIQUE introduced its project to empower the poor and marginalised to claim their rights and entitlements from local government. It trains local government representatives to make them aware of their legally defined roles and responsibilities by forming standing committees, organising Ward Shavas and open budget sessions, applying dispositions for the right to information and collecting taxes. Besides, it trains citizens as well as their representatives on the legally-defined roles and responsibilities. For instances, their right and duty to participate in planning events such as Ward Shava and open budget meetings and their duty to pay taxes. These trainings inform citizen of possible ways to supervise and influence the functioning of their local government, allowing them to gain confidence, to take better advantage of these mechanisms, and to benefit from the legal framework on transparency, participation and accountability. Trainings on how to establish such meetings both allow UP's elected representatives and executives to realise the potential of these events and satisfy citizens' expectations (SHARIQUE 2013).

Illustration of potential different budget priorities (Illustration: SHARIQUE), Engeli, 2011

SHARIQUE has been making villagers aware of open budget meetings in which the planned UP budget is presented and discussed. The UP Act mandates the announcement of such events through invitation letters given to literate persons (which make up between 20 to 60 per cent of inhabitants of the wards included in this research. SHARIQUE uses microphone announcements about these events to inform a greater part of the population. Besides, SHARIQUE also trains members of citizen groups and UP members on topics such as the Right to Information Act, so that they can transfer knowledge. In the earlier phases SHARIQUE provided 5 lac taka to each of the Up under its project for the above purposes based on their performance. Currently it is providing 80,000 taka for the pro-active disclosure to every UP under project and five to six lac taka based on the Performance Monitoring Tools (PMT) in these UPs.

UPGP on social accountability

The specific objective of UPGP is strengthening LGIs and developing capacities of local governments and other stakeholders to foster participatory local development, pro-poor service delivery for accelerating the achievement of the MDGs. The project is to evaluate innovations to improve the functional and institutional capacity and democratic accountability of UPs and to increase citizen involvement in order to achieve effective, efficient and accountable delivery of pro-poor infrastructure and services. This includes a significant gender mainstreaming effort, looking at local women leadership empowerment, participation and voice. UPGP is designed to produce three key results, which are: firstly- strengthening democratic accountability of the UP through citizen engagement, to be achieved through support to the UP chairs, and members to

perform their functions and through increased citizen engagement including in Standing Committees and Ward Shavas, secondly- innovations in pro poor and MDG-oriented planning and financing of service delivery by the UPs and thirdly- strengthening national capacity for effective policy review and monitoring, lesson learning and capacity development of LGIs for improved local governance. The UPGP project covers the following areas in Bangladesh.

Table 3: UPGP project areas

	Division	District
01.	Dhaka	Kishoreganj
02.	Chittagong	Brahmanbaria
03.	Sylhet	Sunamganj
04.	Rajshahi	Sirajganj
05.	Khulna	Khulna
06.	Barisal	Barguna
07.	Rangpur	Rangpur

Output 1 of the project covers to strengthen democratic accountability and transparency of the Union Parishad through citizen engagement, which is designed to improve the operation of governance structures and accountability systems and processes within UPs in selected UPs. However, lessons learning from selected UPs replicated all over Bangladesh through advocacy. LGSP – LIC expended much effort to secure the establishment of Standing Committees and the holding of open budget sessions and display of information in UP offices. Additionally the programme demonstrates ways to make operational the UP Act 2009 and its provisions for the newly established Ward Shavas. It focuses on the representative aspects of Union Parishad governance.

The Output aims to strengthen the formal structures, functions and systems of the UP including operation of Standing Committees and Ward Shavas as well as the informal processes of engagement within these structures and between representatives and constituents at Union and Ward level. The Output addresses two dimensions of improving democratic accountability at UP level. The first would be the functional dimension of UP affairs with a focus on ensuring that UP members fulfill statutory provisions and function more effectively with regard to their stipulated roles, responsibilities and obligations. The UP Act 2009 provides a detailed framework of powers, functions and responsibilities and UPGP aims to build the capacity of UP Chairpersons and Ward Members to implement these new responsibilities, identifying and removing bottlenecks and ensuring that elected representatives are supported with the right skills and capacities.

The second dimension is that of equitable and inclusive engagement between citizens and the UP and ultimately deepening the values of local democracy as well as ensuring pro-poor service delivery. Activities include activation of the Ward Shavas, strengthening of the Standing Committees which provide a forum for citizens to represent specific interest groups in areas such as health, education and agriculture as well as the interests of women and poorer members of the community, and support to Women's Development (UNCDF, 2011)

HYSAWA on social accountability

In greater Khulna region HYSAWA is supporting 70 Unions (and about 450 UPs across the country), 60% of these Unions are hard to reach in terms of providing water supply and sanitation to all. Through financing WS infrastructure HYSAWA unlike its other working areas is facilitating to create institutional and technical condition for transparency in decision making, fiscal discipline and financial accountability in participating UPs in this region. HYSAWA Fund plays an important role in promoting the GoB intention of decentralisation of the local governments. HYSAWA mobilises resources and capacity building support to Local Government Institutions and communities to empower them to manage decentralised water and sanitation services in Bangladesh.

The HYSAWA Fund and its implementing partners primarily aim at empowering local government institutions to plan and manage hygiene, sanitation and water supply services in an effective, accountable and inclusive manner. Hygiene, sanitation and water services are considered as an entry point for promotion of local governance. The basic assumption is that through implementing these services, the LGIs will learn how to provide other public services in general in a way that citizens expect and how best to target the population that are in dire need.

Social accountability issues are embedded into the objectives of HYSAWA Fund's programme design. The following expected outcomes of HYSAWA programme points its intention directed towards social accountability issues:

1. Local governments manage public service delivery – in particular WASH – in a more accountable, effective and inclusive manner.

2. Capacities of Union Parishads to provide space to citizens – and especially the poor and marginalised – to democratically participate in planning and monitoring of public services are improved.

3. Union Parishads are able to apply existing laws and guidelines related to Public Finance Management and democratic processes.

4. Union Parishads are capacitated to secure the sustainable management and maintenance of their public infrastructure – in particular such related to WASH.

The intrinsic feature of HYSAWA Fund's approach towards social accountability is that the Fund actually makes Local Government Institutions, especially Union Parishads, practice social accountability in their daily works as opposed to enhancing their knowledge on this field only and making it a hypothetical activity. HYSAWA Fund also promotes accountability of the community people towards society by facilitating their engagement with LGIs in the planning and monitoring, through making efforts to change their unhygienic and harmful behavior and by helping women take a leadership role during project implementation. Such examples include engagement of volunteers and that of the group leaders in community forums having been trained to facilitate mobilisation activities in their own communities.

The various mechanisms that HYSAWA employs in its projects actually make the UPs adhere to the basic principles of social accountability, and at the same time make the people participate in decision-making and in the selection of priorities to be pursued in their respective areas. For instance, HYSAWA promotes formation of community groups popularly known as Community Development Forum (CDF) that serve as platform to take collective decisions by the communities themselves in a transparent way. The CDF members are trained and supported hands-on so that they can analyze and identify their development needs and able to place those needs in appropriate forums like Ward WatSan Committee, Ward Shava and at UP.

Attended by the various section of the population, particularly poor and women, the community meetings allow the participants to be directly engaged with local government representatives and staff employed by them through planning and monitoring process. The opinions the people express are given preference during scheme implementation. Because these meetings have given them voice, the poor and marginalised people no longer feel powerless and also it helps advance common good and social interest, and offers mutually-beneficial solutions. Community mapping and wealth ranking (PRA tools) are some of the tools that are used in HYSAWA supported projects to assess the financial situation of the people and resources in the UPs. The mapping provides local government authorities with crucial information to decide where to extend their outreach for the provision of services in communities' best interest, thus creating conditions for accountability. The people in the community meeting receives, in addition to WASH messages, information on the roles, responsibilities and obligation of LGIs towards their citizens and vice versa, which in the long run is going to pay off dividends in terms accountable public service delivery.

As part of its social accountability initiatives, HYSAWA Fund facilitates holding open budget sessions in most Union Parishads. The budget is deemed critical to realise financial accountability as it is prepared based on the communities' demands raised at CDF and Ward Council meetings, and is presented before the very people for their confirmation. To assist capacity development and ensure accountability of the UP and its functionaries, HYSAWA has a set of programme strategies and interventions that along with its other institutional objectives contribute to enhance the accountability of the UPs. Specific to accountability, HYSAWA provides formal training to UP functionaries, raising their awareness about accountability concept and its necessity for them at project level. Certain tools and systems are also developed along with instruction manuals to that end.

Working with HYSAWA, the UPs are learning first-hand the usage of Public Procurement Rules (PPR) 2008. PPR is an effective and efficient mechanism that offers a transparent and accountable means of purchasing goods and services. In compliance with these rules, a committee is formed for evaluation purposes during procurement stage which being an accountability measure provides tenderers with fair and equitable treatment. By equipping the UPs with PPR tool, and making it mandatory to follow, HYSAWA filters out a lot of the UPs who are unwilling to comply, thus helping them to internalise the values of social accountability and good governance. HYSAWA also applies various fiduciary risk management mechanisms like provision of multiple cheque signatories, bank manager orientation for fiduciary risk minimisation, payments from bank upon

UP meeting resolution, collective decision-making by UP body, finance monitoring and audit, and capacity-building of local procurement committees, all of which have provided avenues in mitigating potential threats to social accountability mechanisms.

HYSAWA understands no amount of training or resources will be enough to improve accountability unless the quality of its hardware (construction) activities being implemented by the UPs is supervised by the citizens for whom these were meant for. The procurement committees and project implementation committees (PICs) formed with citizens are key to this approach by which both UPs and their contractors are held accountable for the infrastructure development. UPs are also setting mechanisms for ensuring operations and maintenance of the schemes. Mandatory user certification on the completion of works is another accountability measure that holds the service providers, and by extension the UPs that selected the providers, accountable to community.

The list of beneficiaries of social safety-net programs has always been dubious. In order to close the gap between peoples' expectation and externally influenced list, HYSAWA Fund projects are currently facilitating development of a more participatory and mutually agreed inventory of real hardcore population, which will be further developed, discussed and approved in the respective ward meetings. This will be then put up to the UP for endorsement and future records and public display. HYSAWA is also promoting web-based reporting and mandatory disclosure of project information and fund management both within Union Parishad as well as to the people in general. Banks have been oriented not to entertain any cheque without a copy of the UP resolution.

4 *Section Four: Field Level Findings*

4.1 Formal Mechanism of Social Accountability

4.1.1   Interventions and Compliances

This section looks at different types of social accountability mechanism under the Union Parishad Law 2009 and the compliance of the laws in the UPs in the lens of the activities of UP officials. Besides, different projects like SHARIQUE, UPGP and HYSAWA have few of their own accountability mechanisms to ensure democratic practices at the UP level. Most of those developed as innovations for facilitating the different mandates of UP law (2009). This section with formal and legal accountability mechanism also includes the findings of the effectiveness of the projects induced social accountability mechanisms as practiced in the UPs covered under those projects. The UP law 2009 includes a wide range of tools, methods, and strategies (see table 4) that involve ordinary citizens and civil society in the process of development activities in UPs to ensure the transparency and accountability and thus to make the development initiatives more participatory and effective in the local level.

Table 4: Legal provision of Citizen Engagement under UP laws 2009

UP Act 2009	Content
Article 4	**Ward Shava**
Article 4 (1)	Formulate one Ward Shava in each ward of the union parishad
Article 4 (2)	Each Ward Shava will consist of the voters of the respective ward
Article 5	**Open shava at ward level**
Article 5 (1)	Every Ward Shava will arrange at least 2 shavas in a year within its area/boundary
Article 5 (2)	At least 5% of total voters will constitute the Quorum for open shava at ward level
Article 42 (1)	**Parishad Meetings**
	Every parishad will organize at least one meeting in parishad office in each month during office hour.
Article 45 (1)	**Formulation of Standing Committee and its activities**
	Every parishad will formulate 13 standing committee in order to accomplish its activities
Article 45 (9)	Every standing committee will meet at least once in every two months
Article 57	**Budget**
Article 57 (2)	Organising an open Budget Session, the Union parishad will present its annual budget in the presence of respective standing committee and local people
Article 65	**Taxation**
Article 78 &79	**Right to information**
Schedule-2 & SRO No 18/2013	**Annual/Five Year Plan**
Article 49 & 76	**UDCC/ Citizen Charter/Annual Report**

Based on the above table of legal framework, the actual scenario of social accountability practices in the UPs is discussed below:

4.1.2   Ward Shava as a tool of Social Accountability

There is no confusion about the prospects of the Ward Shava (WS) in the UPs. In most cases both the citizen and UP officials recognise the fact that WS is an effective avenue of the social accountability in the local level. One of the Members of Jaykolosh UP in the Sunamgonj district recognised the fact in the following way-

> *WS is a process of ensuring transparency. This is important for us as it is an avenue to change people's negative perception about UPs. Earlier people used to think Chairmen and Members are thieves. With the initiative of WS, the concept started to change. It is possible to inform people about the actual scenario including the government allocation to the UPs through WS.*

However, the importance of the WS does not reflect in the actual practices at UP level. Field data shows that although all nine studied UPs tend to claim that WS is being organised on regular basis in most of the wards, neither the document nor the qualitative findings support it. For instance, an UP secretary of Khadim Nagar union claimed that they conducted 18 Ward Shavas in the previous year. However, the statement did not match with the record/register of the UP, which documented only one Ward Shava. Moreover, the number of the documented WS, the meeting date, discussions, decisions and proceedings are also not recorded in the proceedings of the meetings. The list of members attended the meeting is also not recorded properly.

Participation in WS meetings varies across the Wards. In some places it is unexpectedly low (39 in a Ward under Kalaruka UP), whereas few other UPs ensured higher number of participants (212 in a Ward under Aichgati UP). Besides, the record books do not contain the proper information of meeting discussions, list of schemes proposed, name of the person who mooted the proposals, etc. In addition, the participation in such meetings is not based on the voter list, rather it was perceived as loose gathering with anybody and everybody who could be made available. Holding WS meeting twice a year only fulfils a legal requirement without proper compliance. During the FGD with the local people, it has been observed that, there are few people, somehow loyal to the UP members (as observed during FGD), actually dominate such meetings. It has also been found during FGD that, in most cases, people hardly can recall the date, agenda and discussions of WS. However, the Ward Sava is still a formality in the UPs without any substantive content in it.

However, the finding does not necessarily undermine the necessity of the WS as an important tool of social accountability. Both the UP members and Chairman have keen interest in WS as expressed during the discussion. This is because, they think that, with the WS meeting it is possible to make effective plan to address local problems and implement programme in a participatory way. The resources they receive from government could be disclosed in the meeting that removes confusion from the people's mind who are not aware of the fact that the resources UP gets from the government are not adequate for all the demands generated in WS level.

Ward Shava meetings have been conceived as a forum for unheard voices of the deprived people, especially village women, which is supposed to give them voice to raise their problems to UP system. There are two broad types of participation in the WSs and participants in general brought two different types of demands. The hardcore poor participate in the WS to enlist them in VGD, VGF and all other social protection and social safety net programmes; whereas relatively solvent

people participate to demand new or repair of roads, culverts, drains and different infrastructural development that connect their houses and businesses.

Farmers, laborers, etc., join the meetings to know about whether the UP is going to support them, usually the elderly, educated, service holders and community leaders go there to talk. Besides, the discussion also include topics like dowry, child marriage (FGD with the Chairman and Members in the Charmahalla Union) drugs and eave-teasing etc. In some places women's participation is very low (i.e. 8 and 10 women were present respectively in WS meetings of ward 1 and 6 of Aichgati union); however, in one or two places such as – at ward 3 of Joykalash UP, women's participation is noticeable, even more than male participation (68 women participants out of 116 participants).

The above scenario is in the studied rural level UPs which are also covered by the project interventions. On the contrary, the scenarios of the studied sub-urban UPs are quite different. WS are totally neglected in these areas. During the interview with the UP Members in Subadda Union, it was revealed that, WS was organizsd two years back. Neither the UP nor the people take any interest in WS meeting. Even the UP could not remember the date/month of organising such meetings. As we discussed earlier, a significant portion of population these UPs are outsiders and non voters, and the local people are also very busy with their business and other professions, it is extremely difficult to arrange such meetings. In Chittagong too, there are clear evidence that no single WS meeting held in last two years. Non compliance did not create any problem for them to receive LGSP grant and GoB support. In Sunamganj, the UPs got technical and financial support from projects to hold meetings. In Khulna, because of Hysawa support for community water infrastructures WS had some relevance, still the recording of the meetings were very poor in Hysawa unions too. They formed smaller community groups around a water service structure that make the WS a little bit more relevant and effective.

Table 5: Ward Shava participation at a glance

Description	Aichgati	Khadimnagar	Kalaruka	Charmahallah	Joykalash
Number of Ward Shava meeting held in financial year 2013-14 (documented in the meeting proceedings)	04	01	11	04	09
Scenario of Participation in Ward Shava meeting (across the Wards)	69-212	50	39-47	46-113	68-116
Women Participation in Ward Shava meeting (ranges across the Wards)	6-10	0	0-5	2-41	11-68
Information on Scheme Proposal	15	No	No	No	No
Information on Citizens' voices (as recorded)*	No	No	No	No	No

* In some unions long scheme list are in the record but it hardly proves that citizen's ability to raise their demand since the information on the scheme proposers are not documented.

However, UP members are also largely unhappy with the fact that, holding WS has some visible and invisible expenses. There is no budget allocation for WS meeting and other expenditure. The members and Chairs think that government should provide separate allocation for holding those meetings, as one of the constraints of the WS is no provision for financial support. One UP Member in Joykalash expressed the concern in the following way:

> *Because of WS my personal expenditure went high. To organise a WS meeting, I have to spend about 5 to 7 thousand taka, for which we do not get any fund from UP.*

Besides, there is other side of the WS, which raise questions about the effectiveness and sustainability of WS. UP Members and Chairman shared that, UPs are eventually losing people's trust since it would not be possible for the authority to implement all proposed demand of the Ward Shava meeting. In the WS meeting people propose so many schemes and expect to fulfill those by the UP. However, it is a challenge for the UP to prioritise the demands from the people and list those accordingly. Because, compared to the demand and expectations of people, UPs receive limited resources from government and unable to fulfill all the demands raise at the WS meetings. As a result, people undermine the effectiveness of the WS and think it as wastage of time and eventually people lose their interest towards Ward Shava.

Furthermore, among the studied UPs, it has been found that the designated authorities are conscious about fulfilling the quorum of Ward Shavas, which is also one of the important agenda of SHARIQUE, whereas they overlook the legal binding of ensuring minimum 5% voter's participation. However, besides ensuring citizen's participation, SHARIQUE also works to enrich their ability to raise voice in the ward planning meetings, which is not reflected in the plan and budget documents. The document of these meetings show that participants proposed bunch of scheme names, nevertheless, it does not incorporate proposers' name and occupation that would help researchers to identify whether the participation of women and hardcore poor citizens are been ensured.

Table 6: Ward Shava Findings

Description	Legal and project provisions	Practical Experience
Ward Shava meeting	Two meetings in a year in each ward of the UP	-Most of the cases the UPs organise the meeting -In sub urban and non project areas WS is neglected
Participation	At least 5% of total voters for quorum	-UP documentation does not list voter based participation
Representation of Women	Women should equally participate in the meeting	- Women representation is nominal. In many places it is not more than 25 total participation.
Voices of disadvantaged Group	Disadvantaged group (women, older, poor) of the society will be able to speak openly and freely in the meeting	-No documentation to comment whether the disadvantaged group is able to raise their voice or not.

There are legal confusions everywhere from the government to the NGO executive and UP representatives to the general people; the confusions are:

1. The difference between Ward Shava and Ward Shava Meeting. There prevails a misconception that WS means two meetings a year. In real term, it is not. Shava in Bangla understood as 'Meeting'. In the UP law, by shava, it means Council or Parishad. People in the ground did not understand the inner meaning and spirit of 'Shava'. In India it is known as "Gram Shava". In Indian culture, by Gram shava, they understand 'Village Council'. While copying the provision from existing Panchayat Raj Institution Laws of West Bengal and Kerala local cultural aspect has not been properly taken care of during local adoption in Bangladesh. It has to be made clear to the UP functionaries; UP citizen and the LG activists who work for UPs at the ground level that WS is virtually a 'Ward Council' or 'Ward Parishad', mere holding a meeting is not the purpose of WS. The WS will have to be gradually turned into a vibrant citizen forum at the Wards.

2. There is a lack of clarity and proper understanding regarding the issues of official membership, role and functions and the modality of discharging functions of the WS members. According to the law all the persons registered in the voter list are eligible member of the Ward Council. In the current practice, eligibility criteria of membership are not followed while assessing the quorum of the WS. As a result, the meetings are turned to be a pandemonium.

3. No clean and clear agenda of the WS are found. Only people are asked to name schemes and register demands which do not seem right way to make citizen forum effective.

4. The provisions included in the UP Law regarding WS is also confusing and no clear guideline is provided to the UPs by explaining the detail procedures regarding the WS.

5. The functioning of a WS involve reasonable amount of expenses. There is no guidance regarding the expenses for making WSs functional and holding of two WS meetings.

The reasons listed above are only few , there are other reasons too that contribute to the non-functioning of WS and all these need urgent attention from the policy makers and practitioners.

4.1.3   Open Budget Session and its effectiveness as social accountability tool

The Open Budget Session (OBS) is another mechanism to ensure accountability at the union level. Study shows that the scenario of the OBS is also similar to the WS meeting. According to the Open Budget record books, all of them (among the studied UPs, who maintain such records) organise OBS once in a year. In this occasion, the UP chairman openly announces its income and expenditure and feasible scheme list for the selected financial year in the presence of general public of the respective UP.

However, the review of budget session's proceedings and Budget Book shows that records are not properly maintained and preserved. In most cases, these books only document some random signature of attendees. Besides, they do not document any relevant discussions and remarks. During the visit of Joykalash and Charmahalla under Sunamgonj district (covered by SHARIQUE project) it has been found that the attendance in the budget session varies from 60 to 84 whereas voters in JoyKalash and Charmahalla are 24,000 and 12,783 respectively. Moreover, it has also been found that some (Aichgati, kalaruka) of studied UPs, even there is no record book except the budget. However, women's participation in OBS also varies from two to twenty three in number across the union. In the studied UPs (Phultala, Dighalia and Aichgati of Khulna, Fatehpur of

Chittagong and Subaddya of Keranigonj Dhaka), no such participant list was found.

Table 7: Open Budget Session (2014)

Description	Aichgati	Phultala	Khadimnagar	Charmahallah	Joykalash
Number of Open budget session for the fiscal year 2013-14	1	1	1	1	1
Information on the number of Participation male/female	No	No	60 (M-58, F-2)	84 (M-63, F 21)	67(M-44, F- 23)
Information on the discussion and agenda	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Information on the citizen's voice	No	No	No	No	No

4.1.4   Social Accountability through Standing Committees (SC)

As per law there should be 13 standing committees in all UPs on different development issues. In the UPs under review, it is evident that, among 13 standing committee, only few (Birth-Death Registration, Agriculture, Fisheries and Livestock, Tax Assessment and collection, Education, Health and Family Planning) not all SCs are visible over the year in three of the UPs. In six other UPs, the standing committees were not visible. For example, the SCs so far have not followed the normal rule of the functioning of a committee such as discussions and decisions on the basis of pre-fixed agenda. Most of the UP members who are supposed to be the chair and member of the standing committees are not aware of their roles and responsibilities; even they do not know the name of the committees they hold position. These facts are evident through the interviews with the UP members and Chairs. Besides, in the FGD, the UP members could not recall the name of the Standing Committee they are chairing. Even UP members do not know the numbers and names of the standing committees.

The content analysis of sanding committee meeting minutes of all studied UPs shows that record is not properly maintained. The record books for standing committees of all studied UPs do not carry proper meeting minutes. For instance, in some record books, meeting dates are mentioned without proper meeting proceedings. In few cases SC chairs' signature is seen on the blank pages (i.e.Aichgati and Phultala UP record books). Moreover, in some UPs, SC proceedings, meeting dates and name of attendees are in the book without proper meeting minutes (Khadim nagar and Phultala) with discussion, decision and signature of the members attended the meeting. Besides, most of the standing committee meetings do not document agenda and discussions. However, some standing committees such as- Agriculture Fisheries and Livestock, Tax Assessment and collection and Birth-Death Registration are more or less functional in the UPs, covered by SHARIQUE project in Sunamgonj district. Moreover the meetings are not organised regularly in these UPs too. Significantly, the meeting minutes are not well documented in any unions of Khulna district. The Chittagong and Dhaka no books of records on SCs are maintained at all.

Table 8: Standing Committee Activity

Description	Aichgati	Phultala	Khadimnagar	Kalaruka	Char mahallah	Joykalash	Subadda	Fatehpur
Number of SC	13	13	13	13	13	13	----	----
Meeting attendees (average person)	5	5	5	5	5	6	----	----
Number of meeting in one year per committee	The number of meeting varies from committee to committee. However, due to unavailability of documents it was not possible to find the exact figure.							

4.1.5 UP monthly meeting

Available documents of UP show that, most of them maintain the obligation of holding UP monthly meetings. Nonetheless, from the available records, it is found that meetings are held without any agenda and the discussions are not based on fixed agenda or issues, rather meetings are being held as routine matter. Usually chairman informs the members regarding allocations in such meetings. Moreover, some discussions take place in the meetings when only approval of schemes under LGSP and FFW, TR and GR are the issue. The proceedings of the meetings are incomplete in most cases and discussions are not properly recorded. The situation is same in all the studied unions irrespective of project and non-project areas. But there is evidence that meetings are held in every month in all the UPs.

Table 9: State of UP monthly meeting (as documented by the UPs)

Description	Aichgati	Phultala	Khadimnagar	Kalaruka	Char mahallah	Joykalash	Subadda	Fatehpur
Information on the number of monthly meeting in one year (as documented)	Incomplete information	Incomplete information	12	12	Incomplete information	Incomplete information	Incomplete information	Incomplete information
Information on Meeting attendance /male-female (range)	----	----	Male (8-10) Female (0-3)	Male (9-10) Female 2-3)	----	----	-----	----
Information on discussions and decisions (asrecorded)	----	----	Yes	Yes	----	----	-----	----

4.1.6   Social Accountability through UDCC meeting

UDCC meeting is very crucial for ensuring welfare of the UPs, which is not often possible to make effective due to the absence of important government departments. Besides, many UPs (like Phultala) are not capable enough to organise such meetings. SHARIQUE has the agenda to facilitate the UDCC meeting in the UPs, which was evident in Phultala UP in Khulna and Joykalash in Sunamgonj.

Other UPs (such as Joykalash and Khadimnagar) conduct UDCC meetings irregularly whereas few others (like charmahalla, Subadda and Fatehpur) are still incapable to organise UDCC meetings. In case of Khadimnagar and Charmahalla UP, the record book only shows the meeting dates without any agenda, discussions and decisions. On the contrary, the UDCC record book of Jaykalash shows that they organised some fruitful UDCC meetings where the participants discussed issues like, health and family Planning, education and cultural activities, etc, though they failed to cover other important issues like, fisheries, livestock, social welfare. The failure is largely due to the absence of the representatives from those departments.

While asked about the reasons for not holding the UDCC meetings, the UP Chairs provided the following reasons: (1) The government officials are reluctant to attend the meetings, (2) Those attend do not share proper information and reluctant to implement the decisions taken in the UDCC (3) The arrangement of UDCC is expensive, UPs seldom can afford such meetings and (4) The UP secretary cannot manage enough time to organise and maintain the UDCC without additional assistance.

The NGOs working in the UP areas, showed sincere efforts to contribute in the UDCCs. The seven ministries posted their staff at the UP level do not show sincere commitment to obey the circular on UDCC issued by the LG Division. They try to say that their parent ministries and departments have not issued any instructions regarding the UDCC.

Table 10: State of UDCC meeting as documented by the UPs

Description	Aichgati	Phultala	Khadimnagar	Kalaruka	Charmahallah	Joykalash
Number of meeting in a year (documented)	No	No	2	No	1	2
Meeting attendance	----	----	Total 26-47 (women 4-7)	----	Total 16 (women 2)	Total 22-25 (women 1-2)
Discussions and decisions (documented)	----	----	Yes	----	No	Yes

No instance of UDCC were found in Fatehpur and Subaddaya .The sub-Assistant Agriculture Officers visit UP and attend other meetings at the UP premise in Fatehpur. In Subadda, the secretary is new and she could not show any instance of such meeting.

4.1.7   Social Accountability through RTI

Article 78 of the UP Act 2009 incorporates the provision of right to get information from the UP. According to this provision every union secretary is responsible to provide information to the

citizen as per their demand. The UP would publish a chart containing information list that citizens are supposed to get from the UP. The secretary of studied UPs informed that, though Information cell is available, people hardly ask for information. In most cases including SHARIQUE and UPGP areas, a sign board showing the detail of services and budget information are available in the UPs. Besides, UP also implemented the provision of information cells though it does not contain all necessary information as enunciated in the RTI. It only bears information related to birth and death registration, online application, etc. Moreover, all studied UPs have their own Website, though none of the sites are updated. In the FGDs when the participants were asked about it, none showed interest in the Websites. In Subadda of Keranigonj, the Union Information Service centre is situated outside the UP as the UP could not accommodate the centre in its premise. As requirement of RTI Chittagong and Dhaka UP do not maintain any information cell.

Table 11: State of RTI Act implementation

Description	Aichgati	Digholia	Phultala	Khadimnagar	Kalaruka	Charmahallah	Joykalash
Availability of information cell	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Status of information cell	Barely contains detail list of information , which citizens are supposed to demand in UP						
Status of Citizen's query	No such record was available in the UP						
Availability of website	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Status of UP website	Hardly contain updated information						
Status of Citizen's visit	Hardly anyone visit and seek information						

4.1.8 Special Committee on social accountability

Beside the above mechanism, there are special committees like Community Development Forum, Ward WatSan Committee on social accountability innovated by projects (HYSAWA). For Instance, in Digholia UP, under HYSAWA project, there are such committees responsible for the maintenance of the tube-well and other establishments initiated by the HYSAWA project. HYSAWA ensured the community ownership though the community contribution in the project. Due to the partial ownership of the tube-well they are more conscious about it and thus ensure the community accountability. There are partner NGOs who engaged staff to regularly supervise and guide the people.

4.1.9   Tax assessment and collection compliance

From the FGD with the local people (Aichgati, Khadimnagar, Charmahalla, Joykalash), it has been found that most of them do not pay taxes whereas some are still unaware about the responsibility of Paying tax. It does not mean that, people are unwilling to pay tax, rather the UPs are not serious about the collection of taxes. The UP Chairs and Members are not committed to tax collection rather they are happy with whatever resources they can collect from government and special projects under implementation in their unions. The tax pressure may make them vulnerable to the voters and popularity might be at stake. As a result, to avoid administrative and legal bindings about tax collection, sometimes, UP chairman pay tax on behalf of the citizen. The willingness of the citizen to pay tax with the proper initiative of the UPs is evident in some UPs. For instance, the UP chairman of the Subadda Union claimed that, they collected 1.6 million taka as tax from the citizen. Many UP Chairmen and Members suggested that, government could take an initiative to keep a provision of providing tax slip to the tax payers and thus make the tax slip compulsory to receive different services. In such case, people would be bound to pay tax at the local level. The tax record is also not frustrating in Dhaka and Chittagong. Dhaka and Chittagong collected more than 2 million taka as local revenues. Though those UPs are not supported by any project and they also do not follow any standard procedures for other activities such as WS, OBM, UDCC and SCs. This may seem contradictory but this is a fact. The reasons need to be explored through further investigation.

Table 12: State of population and budget in the UPs

Union	Total population	Total Budget (2013-14)	UPs' collection
Charmahalla	23,179	88,41,944	49,430
Joykalash	46,900	83,43,004	59,035
Kalaruka	33,238	1,08,91564	-----
Khadimnagar	56,460	1,32,14,738	2,48,639
Phultala	30,568	1,27,71,728	2,14,525
Digholia	29,518	2,23,69,493	12,09,703
Aichgati	64,369	1,04,15,306	2,05,025
Shubadda	2,25,865	3,44,59,468	17,02,150
Fatehpur	49, 000	92,85, 047	8, 80,000

Author's compilation

The willingness of the citizen to pay tax with the proper initiative of the UPs is evident in some UPs. For instance, the UP chairman of the Digholia union claimed that, they collected more than 12 lak taka as tax from the citizen (table 12). Many UP Chairmen and Members suggested that, government could take an initiative to keep a provision of providing tax slip to the tax payers and thus make the tax slip compulsory to receive different services. In such case, people would be bound to pay tax in the local level.

5 Section Five: Informal Mechanism of Social Accountability

5.1 Informal Mechanism: Social Accountability through Community Actions

From the above discussion, it is evident that, both the UPs and the community are less concern about the formal accountability mechanism. However, it does not mean that UPs are not accountable to its citizen. Being a social institution, it follows and practices some principles on which the local power relationship and accountability mechanism is maintained, which are basically informal in nature. This informal accountability mechanism could be termed as 'community accountability' (Incite, 2014, Campbell Town City Council, 2014). Community accountability is a community-based strategy, rather than a police/prison-based strategy, to address violence within communities. It is a process in which a community – a group of friends, a family, a workplace, a neighborhood, etc. -- work together to provide safety and support, promote values and practices, address problems of the members of the community, and transform the political condition (Incite, 2014).

The principle of community accountability acknowledges power dynamics and prioritises the general safety and other welfare issues of the members of the community. Thus the community accountability ensures both individual and collective accountability.

Figure: 6 Principle of Community Accountability (Source: Incite, 2005)

Principles of Community Accountability (Chart)
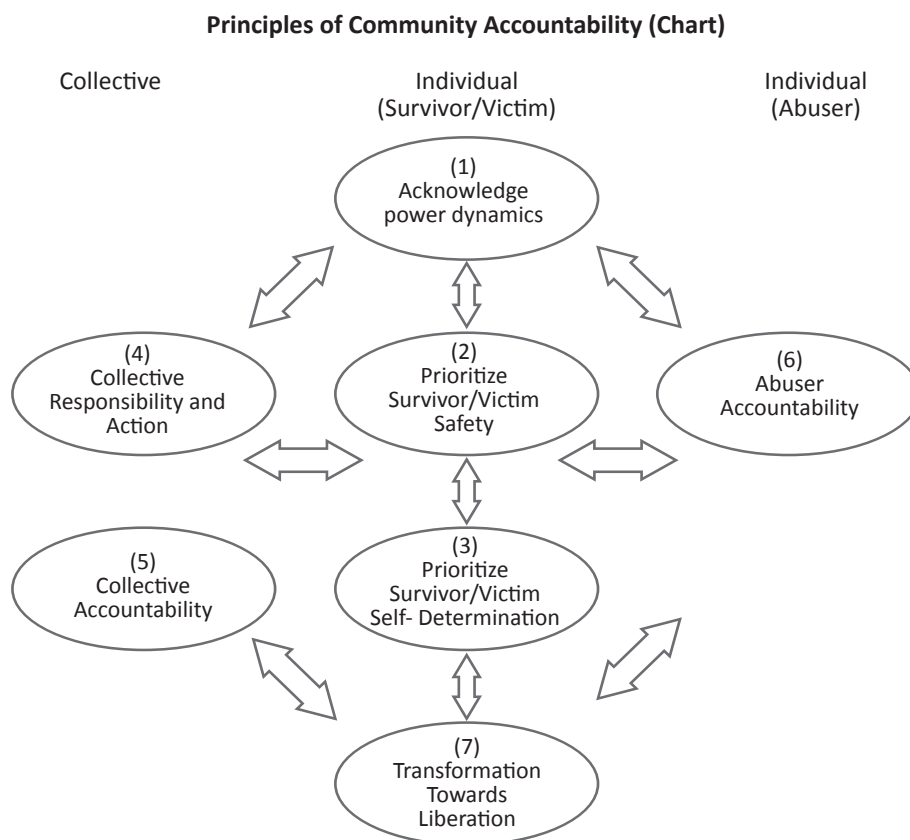
Drawing on this approach, we can say that the community accountability in the UP-level in the context of Bangladesh is also widely practiced through many informal mechanisms, elaborated in the following:

5.2 Community demands and Informal Avenues of Accountability

Profession of UP Chair and Members interviewed

-Business, Contractor, Agriculture, Natural Healer, political worker

In order to ascertain the demands from the local communities towards the UP representatives, six FGDs amongst the citizens were conducted in the six UPs of Khulna, Sylhet and Sunamgonj. In these FGDs, common traditional expectations of the people and the roles that the local traditions, customs and culture expect and demand of the UP Chairmen/members came out in the surface.

When the voters vote for a Chairman or a member candidate, they are usually driven by some expectations to be fulfilled by the candidates once they are in power. We found there were some commonalities in the answers of the voters regarding their expectations. One of the common expectations that they all had in their mind was the chairman and members would provide support during their day to day personal and social needs. It is a feeling that the UP representatives are always with them in their good and bad days. In a FGD with the citizen in Aichgati Union, people expressed their expectations in the following way:

> *We expect them (UP Chair and Members) to be with us during our joy and sorrows (Shuk and Dhuk), to assist us in our distressful days and we expect their attention, compassion and sympathy during the time of our needs. It does not mean that they will always come with money, moral support is also very important. In our social, religious and cultural festivals and gatherings we want them with us.*

Beside the above expectation, large number of the citizens also expects the improvement of existing infrastructures in the communications sector like roads, bridge, culverts etc; in public health infrastructure like improvement in water and sanitation, building new community clinics and installation of tube wells; improving agricultural facility like irrigation; in education sector improvement in school buildings etc and other development work. A recurrent demand from the poor is getting support from various social safety net programmes like VGD/VGF, Allowances for widow, elderly and disabled. Still others wanted the UP representatives to maintain law and order, stay away from corruption and help in case of police harassment.

UPs are expected to ensure rule of law in the community. The most expected role and function besides the long list of services is thus resolving disputes of various kinds through village courts or *Shalish*. Informal Dispute Resolution (IDR) has become the most wanted role of UP members and Chairs in the rural areas. People look towards the 'village influentials' to resolve disputes of all types and nature.

People of all religion expect their representatives in all their religious, cultural, private and family functions. Many of the poor seek personal help and assistance in their distress as well as information needed on treatment during illness, *tadbir* for jobs and trade, *superish* (recommendation and reference), mediation for marriage and many other social occasions. They also act as guarantors of loans and businesses of different kinds.

From the FGDs it was gathered that people were moderately satisfied with the performance of the UP leaders. There were no serious complaints. In few cases, Chairman and Members are elected for second and third times. As discussed earlier, UP Chair and Members are more responsive to the informal accountability not only for vote, even for self-accountability and moral obligation towards their neighbors and villagers. The UP Chairman of Aichgati Union, Khulna, for instance shared,

> *I entered into politics as a contestant in the UP election. My maternal uncle was UP Chair. He suddenly died. I had just passed intermediate examination and was looking for getting admission in the college. People of the Union wanted somebody to take his place. They came to my mother. She consented and made me to promise on few things to her. I should serve the people and the poor without expecting any return in cash or kind, should always remain ready to respond to people's call and never show arrogance. I try to follow my mother's advice. She is alive. Still every day before leaving house, I take her blessings and permission. She is my source of inspiration for holding the public office of UP as chair person.*

This is an inner story of a UP chair. However, the responsiveness through informal, social activities is numerous and every member and Chairman has got his/her own narratives. It is a sort of very personalised way of perceived role and function of a public person to assume responsibilities beyond legal obligations. Some of the common informal social activities which make the UP representative accountable to the citizen are discussed below.

5.2.1 Traditional Practices of Community Relationship

Apart from those social accountability tools and processes stipulated in the UP laws and innovations implemented by various donor-funded projects, the UP representatives perform many daily duties which could be described as informal and absolutely done at their own instinct. These are traditional custom bound practices and the activities expected from them by their respective communities. These activities keep them in close touch with their constituencies. They serve the voters with different personalised services. Alongside official UP work, these are usually myriad social, problem-solving and charitable activities. Besides, the day-to-day activities of the UP as per legal obligations, the UP Chairmen and members have to perform many other public responsibilities all the time, which are not formally accounted and documented. In the interviews, the research team explored these undocumented social roles of UP officials, which serve as important tools of customary social accountability mechanisms the UP representatives have to be engaged with. It was found that most of the UP Chairmans and Members need to maintain a personal business/profession that helps them to manage the expenses of existing social relations.

5.2.2   Daily public interactions beside regular mandatory UP duties

Many common public duties performed everyday by UP representatives emerged from interviews with them. We identified 14 common types of daily activities across the selected UPs which are listed in the box.

It was found that many of them walk around the village in the morning or in the evening to listen to people's problems in order to solve petty problems. It is a common practice to sit with groups of local people every day, usually in various premises like the sitting room, common place in the village *haat-bazaar*, or in the tea stalls, and to listen to their personal or collective problems. Personal problems could be illness, mal-treatment, wedlock , family feuds, quarrel with neighbors and business partners, even politics or poverty related issues for which people seek personal help; or request for cards for widows, elderly people, the handicapped, maternity allowance, VGF/VGD cards etc. Collective problems are usually complaints related to infrastructure like roads, tube wells, drains, water supply, sanitation, culverts etc.

Regular activities of Chair and Members other than Mandatory responsibilities

1. Advising socio-cultural organisations like trade unions, clubs, voluntary and religious organisations.

2. Overseeing various social safety net programmes.

3. Looking after and repairing various infrastructures like schools, roads, tube wells, culverts, sanitation etc.

4. Meeting with NGOs.

5. Helping people during their illness.

6. Bearing the cost of refreshment and travel of local people and hospitality to people visiting from outside.

7. Traveling around the UP to solve people's problems.

8. Helping people in getting birth registration, widow and elderly allowance, VGF/VGD, handicapped person's cards etc.

9. Helping people entangled with politically motivated or falsely filed police cases.

10. Giving advice, making *tadbir*, acting as guarantor and making *superish.*

11. Attesting various documents of general people.

12. Helping poor students to get admitted into schools and colleges.

13. Attending various cultural, social, religious programmes.

14. Helping the poor and disadvantaged in general with cash, kind, logistics and advice.

In such informal daily sittings, the elected representatives provide various advices to different people. These advices range from treatment of illness to marriage proposals or breaking of marriages, opening of bank accounts and getting microcredit and so on. One of the frequent tasks is rescuing people from police harassments. Usually these are the people who are facing police harassment without any substantive reasons or facing politically motivated cases. Another major daily activity is attending meetings other than those related to the UP, like meetings with various NGOs, political party and groups and Community-based Organisations (*Para* based clubs and *somities*) working in the locality. Solving sexual harassment related crimes, promiscuity, polygamy, divorce, drug abuse, etc take huge amount of time of the representatives.

5.2.3   Attending religious, social, cultural events

The Chairmen and Members are expected to fulfill some social duties like attending various religious, social and cultural events in the localities. Participation in these activities can be categorised into four groups as follows:

<u>Religious festivals:</u> During Eid-ul-Azha one of the Chairs sacrificed up to three cattle heahds and other did the same depending on economic condition, as the poor in the community expects meat from them. This cost them a handsome amount of money. One the chairs alone spend up to Tk. one hundred thousand during the last Eid-ul-Azha. They usually distribute meat among the local people irrespective of poor and non-poor. During Eid-ul-Fitaar they are obliged to donate cloths, food, gifts etc. Again, depending on economic condition, they spend extra amount of money on those occasions. Some of them regularly distribute *Iftaar* during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. They are required to organise *Khatm-e-tarrabi* in the nearby mosques as well. It has financial implications too.

> **Regular informal activities of UP Chair and Members**
>
> **1.** During Eid-ul-Fitaar, donating cloths, foods and gifts to the poor or relatives and during Eid-ul-Azha, sacrificing cattle and distributing meat.
>
> **2.** Attending social functions like marriage, Janazah, Sunnat-e-Khatna, funeral, Akika, burials, birthdays etc. Average 5/6 engagements are common on Fridays and Saturdays.
>
> **3.** Involved with various religious institutions like mosques, madrasas, temples etc. and attending religious programmes and festivals of all religions like Eid, Puja, Waaj and Milad mahfil, Kirtan etc.
>
> **4.** Observing and spending for national, political and cultural days of importance.
>
> **5.** Donation to all the political parties for arranging meetings and rallies etc.

<u>Social occasions:</u> Every month they attend on an average 8-10 marriage ceremonies where they spend on average taka between Tk. 6000-8000 thousand. On Fridays and Saturdays they are especially busy attending marriages and other social occasions like Jiafat, Sunnat-e-Khatna, ear piercing, birthdays etc. They also attend funeral related activities of different religions like Janazah, burial, Kulkhani, cremation, Sraddho etc. and help the organisers if they are poor.

<u>Cultural occasions:</u> Chairmen/Members spend money for observing various national and social occasions as well. They are expected to give donations for cultural events like musical concert, sports tournaments, picnic, arranging various programmes by local clubs etc. Invariably, the participation of UP members and Chairs means donation.

<u>Hospitality:</u> They perform some activities relating to hosting people as well. When they sit in any tea stall in the locality, or take the rickshaw, van or boat inside the village, it is expected that they pay the bills. They also have to entertain people who come to their houses with tea, snacks, tobacco etc.

Hospitalities are offered to the distinguished people visit from other villages and towns, officials visit their localities cost them some money every month as well.

Box: 3 Case study-1: Chairman, Aichgati, Rupsha, Khulna

The Chairman of Aichgati union in Khulna is from a well-off family with business-background. He is involved in brick kiln and construction business. He came to politics on the behest of his mother who told him to serve the people but forbade him from taking any facility from the UP. Total number of votes in his constituency is 32,400 (app.). He is a 3rd time Chairman. He won by a margin of 10,000 votes in his first term by getting 14,000 (app.) votes. In the second term, he won by a margin of 3,000 votes (got approximately 10,000 votes). In the third election, he had 6 more contestants but still managed to widen the gap to 4,200 votes as he got 11,000 (app.) votes. He performs many daily public services and activities beside regular UP duties. He is advisor to most of the socio-cultural organisations and institutions of the locality like unions of construction workers, boatmen, rickshaw-van pullers; sports clubs; Sirat-un-Nabi committee; and volunteer organisations etc. So, he has to spend time with those. Moreover, he is involved with the monitoring of overall socio-economic development of the UP. He has to look after the maintenance and repair of various infrastructures like schools, roads etc. He has to go to the Upazila Parishad, which is quiet far, 4-5 times a month. There is no TA/DA for such travels of UP Chairmen. Added to that is the fact that 8-10 NGOs are working in the area. So, he has to meet with them intermittently. Besides, he has to attend various religious, social, cultural occasions and spend money to support those occasions. For instance, during each Eid-ul-Azha, he sacrifices two cattle worth total tk. 1,20,000 and distributes most of the meat among the villagers. Every Friday and Saturday, he has 3-4 social festivals and functions to attend like marriage, Janazah, Sunnat-e-Khatna etc. In the month of October (2014) alone, he attended 8 marriages, which cost him tk. 8000; there was also 1 Sunnat-e-Khatna. In addition, he had to bear a large sum of tk. 29,500 for the marriage of a daughter of an office assistant of the UP whom he engaged personally to help the UP secretary.

A large part of his time is spent in dispute resolution. On average, 40-50 *Shaalish* are held every month. Charity and almsgiving forms a large part of his social duty and responsibility. Every month, he gives away his honorarium from the govt. to various social and religious organisations like mosques, madrasas, schools, and other societies and clubs. His family donated land to establish mosques and madrasas and he donates Tk. 5,000-6,000 to those every month. Moreover, he has to do other occasional charity work as well like distributing warm cloths during the winter. Use of modern technology like mobile phone is another avenue for his social engagement, service delivery and accountability. His cell phone remains open 24 hours. People call even in the middle of the night for various reasons. In each day, Tk. 90-100 is spent for talk-time recharge. He has to spend tk. 30,000-40,000 each month for these purposes from his family income.

5.2.4   Access through mobile phone 24 hours

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Accountability through cell phone

1. Their cell phone is open 24 hours. People even call in the middle of the night with complaints and problems.

2. People give missed calls. Then they have to call back.

3. On request, public use their cell phones for their personal calls.

4. On average talk-time recharge cost per three days Tk.100.

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Extensive use of the mobile phone has been found among the Chairmen/Members of the selected UPs as a means of maintaining social connections as well as responsiveness to peoples demand. Four common traits have been identified in their mobile use (see box). Their cell phones are open 24-hours a day. People call them at any time of the day or night to lodge complaints, to seek help and advice. Sometimes, people, especially the poor give 'missed calls' from others' mobile phone. Then members realise that somebody wants him/her to call and they do so. Every day they receive on an average 25-30 calls. One UP Chairman's and few members' call list were examined in Khulna to understand the situation. All of them told that they are spending more for cell phone bill because of their position in the UP. In addition to the bills, it is observed that availability through cell phone ensures direct accountability too. The Chairman of Aichgati UP in Khulna shared the following:

> *I receive many calls from my voters regarding their problems. Some of my voters even do not call directly. They communicate through "missed call", and then I have to call them back. However, I must call back as I can't dissatisfy him/her. Because he/she might have voted for me and will vote for me again in the next election.*

At times, they have to give the phone to the public for use on request. Each day they spend between tk. 50 to tk. 100 for talk-time recharges out of which 50% is contributed towards public purposes. This means the monthly cost incurred by them is around tk. 1500 to tk. 3000. This has emerged as an important aspect of the informal social accountability mechanism of the UPs, as people regardless of poor and rich can directly contact their representatives any time of the day and can ask various questions and communicate their problems. This keeps constant social pressure on the UP representatives for delivering various tangible and intangible services. Many of the *Tadbirs* and *suparish*(s) are made by using cell phones. Cell phones now-a-days are regarded as an effective means for accountability mechanism by default.

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UP Chair and Members' role in informal dispute resolution

1. Types of dispute are between family members, couples, neighbors, villagers over land, tree, disagreement, property etc.

2. 30-40 traditional village *Shaalish* a month.

3. Attend the Graam Aadalat (village court).

4. People come even in the middle of night to lodge complaints.

5. Coordinate with police for maintaining law and order in the locality.

6. Some *Shaalish* may take 2-3 days of repeated meetings.

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5.2.5   Dispute resolution

Dispute resolution is an important duty of the UP representatives that they perform through village court, informal *Shaalish*, mediation etc. They settle between 15-45 disputes every month. These mediations include family disputes among husband-wife, family members, divorce plea etc., conflict between neighbors regarding trees, property etc. People come to them even in the middle of the night for lodging complains.

At times they have to bear the cost of arranging *Shaalish* in their own premises. Sometimes they attend *Shaalish* meetings in other UPs as well acting as juries. IDR takes almost fifty per cent of their effective time as UP representatives. The disputes, conflicts, crimes of different nature are increasing day by day. There emerges different disorders in the society due to forced entry or denial in some business or other's premise and property, drug abuses, eve-teasing, sex crime and scandals, love and elopement related social conflict, martial disharmony, extra marital affairs, promiscuity, polygamy, strike and blockade related political conflicts in the localities; all UP representatives have to share the first burnt of all those affairs. If these issues are not resolved in the bud, those become very big and complex. It takes enormous amount of time, energy and tactics to mitigate those conflicts and disputes. It also demands experience, expertise, credibility, trust, special skill and tact.The usefulness and popularity of a member and chair to a large extent depend on their apt and skill in mitigating disputes even more than their development credentials.

5.2.6   Charity and almsgiving

With respect to charity and almsgiving, Seven common types have been noticed by the interviewees. The UP representatives spend some amount every month for madrasas, mosques, Tablig Jamaat, religious institutions, schools and other societies or unions of organised workers, construction workers, boatmen, rickshaw-van pullers etc.

They give financial assistance to the sick, injured, older people and the poor in addition to the safety net deliveries. This amounts from Tk. 3000 to Tk. 15000 every month. They distribute warm cloths among the poor during winter season. Sometimes they give away clothes, meat, rice, paddy, coconut etc.

1. Give donation to various social and religious organizations like mosques, madrasas, schools, clubs and societies.

2. Financial help to the poor, the sick, old and injured people and the marginalised on daily basis.

3. Distribute warm cloths to the poor during winter.

4. Giving away in kind help to the poor like meat, cloths, rice, paddy, coconut etc. from their own stock.

5. People at times take loan and do not pay back.

6. Helping the poor in family problems like marriage, funeral etc.

7. Work as midwife for free (women member).

to the poor from their own stocks. They help poor students too by giving money for buying books and uniforms or getting admitted to schools and colleges. This is especially the case during the months of January and February.

Box: 4. Case Study, Member, Ward no. 7, Phultola, Khulna

The Member has some farm land and also works as a natural healer. It is his role as a healer that makes him more accessible to the general people and keeps him in constant contact with them. Total vote in his area is 2500 (app.). He is a first time member and the people of the locality want him to stand for the next election as well. Looking into his mechanism for public accountability could be a good way to assess informal accountability process. He performs many day to day activities for the people. Every evening, he goes from house to house to listen to people's problems. He helps to solve infrastructure problems in the area like constructing drains, tube wells etc. Sometimes, he donates from his own pocket; in one instance he donated tk. 5000 to repair a drain. He has to help those facing police harassment or politically motivated cases. People even come to him for help in order to open bank accounts or get small loans from banks. He attends many religious and social occasions, give donation for puja, Eid and attend marriages. He spends tk.500 in each marriage for purchasing gift. During Eid-ul-Fitaar, Tk.4000 is spent for donating cloths, food, gifts etc. and donates meat during Eid-ul-Azha. He needs to donate for local cultural and sports tournaments as well.

He performs his duties as moderator of *Shaalish* quite frequently. He is involved in charitable work. He helps financially poor and the old people. Every month, tk. 2000 is donated among the poor. Every year, he donates tk. 2000 among poor students for book, uniform etc. People have very easy access to him. He has engraved his mobile phone number in various public places of the village like on the bench of the local tea stall, school, mosques etc.. He has to recharge talk-time of tk. 100 everyday which amounts to tk. 3000 per month. If his daily public work is calculated, he works every day for 5-7 hours, and each month Tk.5000-10000 is spent for his voters.

5.2.7 A Comparative Analysis of the Cost, Benefit and functions of the UPs

"It is a completely loss project" as repeatedly mentioned by the UP Members in Khulna and Sunamgonj, when asked them about the salary and other benefit they receive from the government and non government projects. Depending on the age, social status, occupation, gender of the Chairmen/Members, total money spent by them in a month varies within a range of tk. 5 thousand to tk. 60 thousand. Not surprisingly, the cost incurred by a Chairman is bigger than that of Members. Women still spend but compared to male it is less. The money they spend and the honorarium they get do not match. A UP Chairman and Member get 3000 and 1800 taka respectively from government as salary whereas their monthly expenses associated with the position are much higher. There is also no provision for TA/DA when they have to visit far places on public demand. In most cases they manage the cost from their own business or family business. Many of them are members of a joint family and other family members allow the Members and Chairs to spend from their family fund for public purposes. Besides, some of them generate money from migrant family members and friends, whereas some also request the rich people in the community to donate for the help and assistance they are expected to provide to others.

Table 13: An overview of the time and expenditure of the UPs

Ups	Major area of expenditure	Time spent (daily average)	Cost (monthly average)	Monthly salaries	Informal Cost managed through
Chair	-Trip to the Upazila Parishad (chairman) - donation to poor -Donation to mosques, madrasas, schools etc. -Helping the poor families for marriage, education, medical treatment et,. -Mobile bill -Eid, puja and other donation on religious occasions, -Attending social functions -Donation for observing national, political and cultural days -Donation to all the political parties for arranging meetings and rallies etc.	8-9 hours	39250	3000	**-**Own business/family income -Sell properties /personal belongings -Donation from the relatives/migrant wage earner family members or friends -Donation from the rich who live in towns
Members		8-9 hours	15666	1800	
Female Members		8-9 hours	11200	1800	

It is almost impossible for the UP Chairman and Members to avoid the informal responsibilities Traditionally imposed by the society and thus they must manage the cost to satisfy their voters. FGDs show that the common citizens are less worried about the rules and procedures enforced by the government or the practices encouraged by the projects like various meetings, mechanisms etc. They are more concerned about what day-to-day services and support they expect from their representatives, by formal and informal means. They do not demand accounts of UP earnings and expenses or information on government grants rather demand construction of infrastructures and fair distributions of various social safety net programmes. The UP representatives and the citizens in general attach less emphasis on formal accountability tools and concern more on traditional, informal and customary practices of social accountability. The community perception of 'Social accountability' is totally different from accountability tools academics and international best practices suggest. There are similarities in spirit but the forms and activities are very different. The more personal contact one can maintain, the more popular and accountable S/he is rated. The very essence of social accountability is intimate personal contact.

The amount of time UP members and Chairs spend as elected representative in order to discharge their duties and obligations is never accounted. It has been found that the effective time they spend for public purposes not less than 8-9 hours a day. Even during the public holidays, they have to go through a very busy schedule. A similar finding has been recorded in Barkat et al (2015:70), a detail and elaborate study that covered other local bodies(Pourashava, UZP and City Corporation) including UPs.

6 Section six: Observations, Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Observations

6.1.1:   The power, function and role assigned to the UPs though the formal-legal source and the actual function they perform and role they play are though not altogether different in type and nature but emphasis and intensities are quite opposite. The elected representatives spend most of their effective time, energy and resources in performing informal socio-community obligations rather than comply the formal-legal activities. There exists a gap and contradiction between De Jure and De facto role and functions which was never assessed and reconciled.

6.1.2:   Inadequacy of secretarial assistance compels the UPs to avoid and ignore many of the legal compliance. Legal bindings are also found disproportionate to their own requirement and capacity which need to be reassessed. For example how many committees are actually required and how many meetings at what cost they can arrange in a year need careful reassessment (a list of committees are shown in the next page in table 14). Meeting and committee provisions should not be imposed from the top; it has to be decided by the UPs themselves.

6.1.3:   The UP chairs, members and secretaries are found over-burdened with socially obligated responsibilities. Conflict mitigation alone is taking most of their effective time and energy. With the increase of population and in the absence any judiciary at upazila level the whole burden of disputes are coming on the UP which is beyond their capacity and perennially exerting undue pressure on them. At the end in many cases they cannot deliver justice because of social and political influence. This is crucial issue demands urgent attention for ensuring justice on the one hand and reducing extra burden from UP on the other.

6.1.4:   The population of union is not uniform but number of wards and ward members are 12 in all the UPs of Bangladesh. For example, in Subadda UP of Keranigonj ,(Dhaka) total population stands about 400.000 and the voter is found to the tune of 150,000.It has become unmanageable for a Member to keep contact and serve about 44,000 ward population. The UP found overcrowded on the day we visited. No one can listen to any one. The lone secretary cannot do a single job properly because of people's pressure. The situation in Fatehpur of Chittagong is also almost same. In Fatehpur per member population is not less than 12000. How much load and burden(accountability) one lone member can sustain , at what cost need to be reassessed.

6.1.5:   The special projects are mostly concentrated in the Western region of the country. The projects (UPGP, Haysawa, SDLG, and Sharique) are playing a positive support role in improving general governance as well as accountability mechanisms. A method need to be devised to disseminate the innovative experiences of project all over the country. Mentoring and monitoring efforts equally for all UPs need to be developed. Otherwise conceptual and capacity deficit across the region will become much more wide.

Table 14: UP-level Committees, Meetings and Reporting

Sl. No.	Name of the Committee/Meeting/Report	No. of committees	No. of meetings in a year	No. reports, proceedings and returns that the UP Secretary has to prepare
01	Union Development Coordination Committee (UDCC)	01	1X6=06	06
02	Union Planning Committee	01		
03	Standing Committee	13	13X6=78	78
04	Ward Sava	09	9X2=18	
05	Scheme Supervision Committee (SSC)	09		
06	Procurement Committee	01		
07	Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC)	01		
08	Grievance Redress Committee	01	1X12=12	
09	Annual Development Plan (ADP)	01		
10	Food for Work (Kabikha)	05		05
11	Test Relief (TR)	09		20
12	1% fund	15		
13	Haat-Bazzar Lease Committee	01		
14	VGD Committee	01		
15	Karmasrijon (Employment program for the poor)	05		
16	UP regular meeting (minimum)		1X12=12	
17	Open meeting for UP member to share budget allocation		1X1=01	
18	Open budget meeting		1X1=01	
19	Special meeting to approve UP budget by UP body		1X1=01	
20	Quarterly meeting on budget utilization at UP level		1X4=04	
21	Scheme screen meeting		1X3=03	
22	Scheme progress sharing meeting at the UP level		1X4=04	
23	BGCC meeting		1X4=04	
24	Monthly Report			20
25	Quarterly Report			04
26	Half Yearly Report			02
27	Yearly Report			01
28	LGSP related Reports			18
29	Widow, Old Age allowances committees and Reports			12
	Total	**73**	**144**	**166**

Source: Ahmed (2014). *Findings Overview for LGSP-II in Jessore, Nilphamari and Satkhira.* Manusher Jonno Foundation, CARTA Program, August 2014.

6.2 Conclusion

As the oldest functioning local government institution, the UP conventionally developed its own culture of community services and community accountability. As a result, the affiliation and attachment of the community with this institution is very close, intensive and deep rooted. Though surprising, it was found that though the UP Chair and Members are in most cases aware and understand the laws and rules applicable to UPs but the compliance level is highly discouraging. The competent authorises such as DLG and DDLG , UNO and often the audit teams visit and inspect the UPs but general situation of compliance do not improve substantially. The NGO staffs embedded with the UPs also expressed their helplessness to improve many of the deep rooted compliance problems due to cultural practices and preferences.

As statutory and administrative entity the formal administrative role has taken only as secondary. The UP representatives are more passionately engaged in social and community led responsibilities, the local political culture drives them to concentrate on those areas as their primary responsibilities. The voting system reinforced and perpetuated the local culture driven activities as well. As local tax structure is not strictly enforced and people do not pay for the services to UPs , the citizen care less about UP's income and spending. The situation to some extent like this, "do not ask our money for UP activity, whatever you get from government spend judiciously". It has been found in Chittagong that the credible and enlightened leadership are not at all interested to contest for any of the UP positions. The Chittagong University Campus is situated within the area of the Union under study. This is one of the unions where there are almost 15oo graduates but the Chair could only cross hurdles of the primary school and the member's education level is also not qualitatively different.

In Subadda of Keranigonj , the same situation is observed. The rich, educated, respected people are keeping themselves away from these institutions. The general people though feel personal attachment of UP representative in rural situation; it seems they do not have profound respect but sort of 'give and take' relations. It is not a patron-client relationship of traditional nature as described in many of the studies rather "voters' consider members and chairs their clients as they support them with votes and the voters assume role of patrons. There is an underlying feeling that the elected UP executives need their votes for the positions they enjoy. By virtue of the positions they(elected members and chairs) can grab many lucrative businesses and make money. The people do not think that UP representatives are making money from UPs rather they utilise UP leadership identity in exploiting many other lucrative money making ventures. We are not sure about the genuineness of the mode or feeling of general public as detail investigation could not be made. It was also not exactly incorporated in the original ToR, but the situation though latent and implicit, it is certain and sure that there exists a wide gap between the electorates and elected leadership in their role perception and understanding of the limitations of each others. This may need further study.

The situation varies from area to area, especially in the sub-urban and peri-urban situation; there is a clear degeneration trend in the leadership and the citizen. The institution is grossly undermined and service role is also reduced to a sort hidden contract. The rich and even the middle class do not care the institution much. There is a tendency to undermine the authority of Chairs and members rather they prefer relationsips with officials like police, UNO, MP etc.

The general situation in respect of accountability mechanism is concerned it is revealed that the UP are overloaded with three-fold responsibilities. These are (a) political role and responsibility (b) compliance of responsibilities as embodied in the law and rules as well as special projects, and (c) traditional responsibilities expected by the society they represent. The formal-legal responsibilities and project activities require them to hold many meetings, prepare many reports and returns to submit, too many meetings, trainings, workshops and discussions to attend outside the unions and too many rules and procedures to follow. As far as the human and material resources at their disposal are concerned it is too little and so poor that they cannot cope. It has been the situation that on an average one UP has to have almost 70 committees and 200 meetings in a year.

The lone Secretary has to prepare almost 29 reports and returns besides writing all the proceedings of all those meetings.[3] It is almost an impossible proposition to hold so many meetings in a year. The lone Secretary has other routine secretarial works and public relations jobs to perform every day too. Subsequently, the UPs just as best as they can, try to comply with the rules and regulations on paper rather than in letter and spirit. The Chair and Members in most cases leave all the office matters with the Secretaries and they lack capacity to supervise the works of the UP Secretaries. The performance audit and mentoring support through inspection from government department is almost absent at UP. Wherever the UPs get some assistance from project and NGOs, they welcome that assistance and compliance situation is relatively better. The legal requirements as embodied in the law and rules either they do not understand or even if they understand just avoid them because of the lack of capacity and support.

As a result, the UP executives follow a straight path. The UP representatives concentrate more on the traditional social and community obligations which are crucial towards bringing more votes and virtually need no paper works or any hierarchical accountability. They remain accountable to their electorates through use and abuse of various informal means even spending their own time, resources and positions. In the formal-legal official discourse this may be taken as a big dilemma. Laws, rules and innovations are being tried relentlessly through training, motivation and empowerment initiatives year after years. The UPs are not coming out of their traditional confinement. The other side of the dilemma is that the social and community accountability mechanism is strongly followed ignoring the legal mechanisms though the UP is a legal entity. It could be said that, the bottom-up socially evolved institutions are more successful in enforcing 'Social Accountability' as opposed to top-down politically constructed ones. Social and legal construct on UPs need to be reconciled in future by seriously considering its political motivations.

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[3]   MJF Study on accountability issues of UP under CARTA by Tofail Ahmed (2014)

6.3 Recommendations

6.3.1: The performance evaluation of UPs should include social and community led activities. The expenditure they incur while attending community activities to be accounted and recognised.

6.3.2: The amount of time the UP executives are devoting for the public services also need to be accounted and recognised.

6.3.3: The staff support need to be reassessed and increased. All UPs irrespective of population should not get equal treatment in respect of manpower requirement and even confining Wards into nine for all. The number wards may be increased based on voter and population.

6.3.4: The UPs not getting project support should get mentoring and intensive monitoring support from government.

6.3.5: Immediate transfer of the officials of seven ministries posted at UP level may solve the problem to a large extent. This will help to make the Standing Committees and the UDCCs effective.

6.3.6: Extension and consolidation of taxation system is found to be a key to make UPs more accountable to the citizen. As citizens are not properly taxed, they also remain indifferent towards UP activities. Taxation could be an effective tool to accountability mechanism.

6.3.7 The project may try to introduce 'social audit', public hearings and 'report card' in few of the selected areas to see results.

6.3.8: The UPs now-a-days are essentially a political organisation as the elected executives are local politicians. Perhaps, this is the time to devise a separate judicial system at Upazila and Union levels. Local Government Institutions are not appropriate for discharging judicial responsibilities; at best they can be assigned and engaged in selective cases in mitigation role and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) function under the supervision of formal courts. Judicial functions at all levels need to be separated.

6.3.9: Financial management and planning function at UP level is also play a key role in establishing accountability. These two are the weakest areas that make the real accountability loose and fluid.

6.3.10: The use of ICT in all the activities of UP has to strengthened and proper support and capacity building is required for promoting ICT at the UPs.

6.3.11: Detail guidelines are needed for Institutionalising wrad shova/ward planning, open budget, activate standing committee, use of information technology, PICs and PMCs;

6.3.12: Partnering with communities, community-based organisations (CBOs/CDFs), and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including advocacy groups, on community-based initiatives need to encouraged.

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Appendix

Appendix 01: Degree of compliance of Social Accountability by UPs under law

UP Act 2009	Content	Compliance						
		Aichgati Union Parishad	Digholia Union Parishad	Phultala Union Parishad	Khadimnagar Union Parishad	Kalaruka Union Parishad	Chormohalla Union Parishad	Joykalash Union Parishad
Article 4	Ward Shava							
Article 4(1)	Formulate one Ward Shava in each ward of the union parishad	√			√	√	√	√
Article 4(2)	Each Ward Shava will consist of the voters of the respective ward	√		√	√	√	√	√
Article 5	Open shava at ward level							
Article 5(1)	Every Ward Shava will arrange at least 2 shavas in a year within its area/boundary			During data collection the Ward Shava books were not available in the union parishad office.	The record books were lack of open shava holding date, meeting discussions, decisions and proper proceedings.	In total 11 Ward Shava record were found. The record book of some open shavas lack of proper demand list, meeting proceeding	In total 4 open shava proceedings were found.	In total 9 Open Shava proceedings were found.
	At least	In the		Provision	Provision	The	Provision	Provision

Article 5(2)	5% of total voters will constitute the Quorum for open shava at ward level	open shava of 9 no ward, the condition of quorum was minimally met. Only 69 people were present out of 1098 voters of the respective ward. In the open shava of 1 no ward, only one woman attended the shava.		of Quorum was met	of Quorum was met	record book of 8 no. ward describes that there were only 39 attendees in the shava.	of Quorum was met	of Quorum was met
Article 42	Parishad Shava							
Article 42(1)	Every parishad will organize at least one shava in parishad office in each month during office hour.	No document was available on parishad shava during filed trip		No document was available on parishad shava during filed trip	The UP arranges regular parishad shava in this Union. For instance, 13th January 2014, 25th March 2014	Twelve Parishad shava (monthly meeting) proceedings were found since July 2013 to till date. The content analysis revealed that some of the meetings were lack	No document was available on parishad shava during filed trip	No document was available on parishad shava during filed trip

						of proper agenda and there was not that much discussion on important issues in those meetings. It shows that some meetings are being held for following the provision only. For instance, the monthly meeting of March, May, June 2014 lack of proper agenda to discuss in the meeting.		
Article 45	Formulation of Standing Committee and its activities							
Article 45(1)	Every parishad will formulate 13 standing committee in order to	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

	accomplish its activities							
Article 45(9)	Every standing committee will meet at least once in every two months	In some SC register books, only meeting dates are mentioned without proper meeting proceedings. For instance, Education, Health and Family Planning and Tax Assessment and collection committee.		In some SC record book only meeting dates are mentioned for instance, Education Health and Family Planning. In other cases, only meeting dates and name of attendees are mentioned for instance, Birth-Death Registration committee.	Dates are missing in few meeting proceedings	We got one meeting proceeding on Education Health and Family Planning and Karnirupan oo adai SC.	There are some meeting minutes available in UP, which shows that there is lack of regular SC meeting in this UP	SC on Agriculture Fisheries and Livestock, Kar Nirupon oo Adai and Birth-Death Registration met on regular basis that is once in every two months.
Article 57	Budget	Total Budget of 2013-2014: 10805970.68 BDT		Total Budget of 2013-2014: 12771728 BDT	Total Budget of 2013-2014: 13214738 BDT	Total Budget of 2013-2014: 10891564.72	Total Budget of 2013-14: 9155669	Total Budget of 2013-14: 8343004
Article 57(2)	Organizing an open Budget Session, the Union parishad will present its annual	√		The UP organized the open budget session on 29th May 2013 for fiscal year 2013-2014.	It took place on 21st April, 2014 for the fiscal year 2014-15. The record book carries		The open budget session for the financial year 2014-15 was being held on 27th May 2014. In total 84	The open budget shava was organized by the UP on 12th May 2013 for the fiscal year 2013-14.

	budget in the presence of respective standing committee and local people				only signature of attendees and lacks of budget related discussions and remarks on it.		people were presented in the open budget shava.	
Article 65	Taxation	Low rate of tax collection from households		Low rate of tax collection from households	No record of taxation from households	No record of taxation from households	No record of taxation from households	No record of taxation from households
Article 78	Right to get information	Information cell is available Website is available but not up to date	Information cell is available	Information cell is available Website is available but not up to date	Information cell is available Website is available but not up to date	Information cell is available Website is available but not up to date	Information cell is available Website is available but not up to date	Information cell is available Website is available but not up to date
	Five Year Plan	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	UDCC			Till the date of our visit, there was no record of UDCC meeting.	Held on 30th January 2014, 12th May 2014,	No document available on UDCC meeting	One UDCC meeting minutes was found from the UP dated 14/09/14. Sixteen members were present in the meeting. No record of any agenda or discussions or decisions.	Two UDCC meeting minutes were found from the UP dated 25/02/14 and 21/08/14

Appendix 02: Matrix of social accountability mechanisms under different projects

Name of the Project	Accountability Mechanisms	Accountability Indicators	Name of UP	Compliance	Status of output
SHARIQUE	Training on Ward Planning Training on UP central planning Training on Participatory budget review meeting Training on Implementation and monitoring of UP plans	UP level open budget sharing meeting Audit by the standing committees Degree of citizens' participation and their ability to claim their demands considered in the ward planning meetings % of people known about their Assessed holding tax	Phultala	just started it activities in Phultala UP from September 2014	SHARIQUE is in its initial phase
			Joykalash	√	Joykalash is successful in holding its open budget session. However, it has also been noticed that the participation was not as high as ward planning meeting. Regarding the Standing Committee it has been found that some standing committees are fully functional whereas, others are not very active. Citizen participation In Ward Shava meeting is quite good compared to the open budget session and the participants are able to raise their voice in the ward planning meeting. Citizens of this UP are familiar about taxation but the degree of tax compliance rate is nominal.
			Chormohalla	√	Charmahalla is successful in holding its open budget session. However, the participant list shows the disproportionate

					representation of women of this UP. The available standing committee meeting minutes shows that there is lack of regular SC meeting in this UP Only one ward sabha meeting is recorded in UP. And the record book also lack of scheme proposers' name. Citizens of this UP are familiar about taxation but the degree of tax compliance rate is nominal.
			Digholia	The project was in its initial phase during data collection.	SHARIQUE is in its initial phase
HYSAWA	Community Development Forum (CDF) Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) Ward WatSan Committee		Digholia	√	The committee is very active in maintaining the assets established by the HYSAWA project and are conscious about its uses.
UPGP	Forum for citizens focusing on local women leadership empowerme nt, participation and voice	secure the establishment of Standing Committees holding of open budget sessions display of information	Aichgati	√	Though there is 13 standing committee in this union, but all committees do not meet or hold meeting on regular basis. Aichgati successfully organized its annual

					Open Budget Session. The information display mechanism only publishes the available UP service. Nonetheless the UP is still indifferent in publishing information about project, fund allocation, etc.
			Kalaruka	√	Though there is 13 standing committee in this union, but all committees do not meet or hold meeting on regular basis. Even the committee meeting minutes are not well documented. This UP has successfully organized its annual Open Budget Session. In kalaruka information cell and Website are available but the website is not up to date. There is not big sign board for describing the available UP services for the common citizen in Kalaruka.

Appendix 3: Ward based Detail of the Perspectives from the community

Location	Primary expectations while voting for candidates and level of satisfaction	Most important roles of UP representatives	Any change in UP leadership	Knowledge of Ward Shava/Open budget session/UDCC/ Standing committee	Who becomes member of such committees and raise voices	Awareness about grants the UP gets from the govt.	Knowledge about complaint lodging mechanism	Knowledge about RTI	Compliance with Tax regulations
Ward No. 5, Khadimnagar, Sadar, Sylhet	1. Improvement of education institutions, 2. Infrastructure and communications system like bridge, culverts etc. 3. Health infrastructure like Community clinics, 4. Agricultural facility like irrigation, 5. Help in getting electricity connection. Moderately satisfied.	1. Construction of bridge, roads, culverts etc. 2. Dispute resolution relating to family or land 3. Support in case of police harassment, 4. Maintaining law and order, 5. Improvement in education and agriculture	Yes. The leaders of yesteryears were better qualified in terms of education and skill. They had better command of people around them. They could maintain law and order and were skilled at dispute resolution.	Not informed. There is no announcement to let them know. The UP representatives do not inform them.	Those selected by the UP Chairmen/ Members. These are people who are close to UP representatives. These people are not that active.	Not informed	Some of them know about it. Two of them lodged complaints and got partial solution.	Not informed	Tax has not been collected so far. But needs to be collected. Tax should be fixed after consultation with the general people
Joykoloosh, Sunamganj South, Sunamganj	1. Roads, bridges and communication system, 2. Educational institutions, 3. Water and sanitation. Moderately satisfied.	1. Construction of bridge, roads, culverts etc. 2. Dispute resolution relating to family or land, 3. Providing sanitation, 4. Improving education	Yes. Leaders now are smarter and more responsive to the general population.	Some of them know. They went to these meetings a couple of times. They think that these meetings are important and their participation may have partially improved the outcomes.	Some do not know about the process. Some said that people are selected by the UP Chairmen/ Members. These are people who are close to UP representatives. Some of them are active.	Not fully informed	Some of them know about it and had lodged complains; got partial solution.	Some know and two of them had demanded information. Got partial response.	People are not interested
Ward No. 9, Aichgati, Rupsha, Khulna	1. Development work, 2. Improvement in infrastructure, 3. Maintaining law and order, 4. Avoiding corruption. Moderately satisfied.	1. Helping in times of need and illness, 2. Attending religious and cultural functions, 3. Providing various information	Yes. UP representatives take advice from the elders and community leaders	Some of them know. Some went to these one or two times. They see these meetings as important. The last Ward Shava was held in May 2014. There were 150-170 people present. The number of women was higher.	Acquaintances of UP leaders. Usually the powerful people like the rich, businessmen, landlords, professionals etc. they speak up in these meetings. The demands are for human development or resources.	Not informed	Not fully informed. But they give complain informally to the UP members if they see any anomaly in project work.	Not informed	The UP representatives do not want to collect tax

Ward No. 8, Aichgati, Rupshya, Khulna	1. Tube well, 2. Sanitation, 3. Various social security cards. Moderately satisfied.	1. Helping in times of need and illness, 2. Attending religious and cultural functions, 3. Providing social safety net cards	No change	Some of them know. Various demands are raised there like construction of roads, drains, irrigation, social safety net protection etc. The participation of women is less in these meetings as they face various social constraints.	Do not know	Not informed	Not informed. But goes to the UP member is there is any problem	Not informed	People do not like being asked for tax by the UP representatives
Ward 7, Phultola, Khulna	1. Communication and transportation, 2. Helping in case of police harassment, 3. Helping the poor with VGD/VGF and other social safety net cards, 4. Help in times of need and illness. Quite satisfied.	1. Dispute resolution, 2. Helping the poor	No change	Some of them know. Various demands are raised there like service, resource allocation, social safety net protection cards etc. The last meeting was held 2-3 months ago, 70 people were present. Only 10-15 were women. Farmers, poor people, laborers etc. people go to these meetings. Usually the elderly, educated, service holders and community leaders talk in these meetings	Those close to the UP Chairmen and members get selected	Some people are partially informed. They know that fund for road and drain construction come from the govt.	Some of them know. One of them once filed a complaint regarding a road construction on work. The problem was partially mitigated.	Some know. The slowness of internet hampers their getting information	People do not pay tax. In spite of encouraging them, they are not interested in paying.

Appendix 4: Informal Social Accountability: findings across the UPs

Common professions of UP representatives	Business, Contractor, Agriculture, Natural Healer, political worker, Midwife and housewife (Women member).
Daily public service and activities beside regular UP duties (14 common types)	1. Advising socio-cultural organizations and institutions like trade unions, clubs, volunteer and religious organizations. 2. Involved with the overall socio-economic development like overseeing various social safety net programs. 3. Looking after and repairing various infrastructures like schools, roads, tube wells, culverts, sanitation etc. 4. Meeting with NGOs. 5. Listening to people's problems like illness, complains etc. and trying to help them. 6. Bearing the cost of refreshment and travel of local people. 7. Traveling around the UP to solve people's problems. 8. Helping people in getting birth registration, widow and elderly allowance, VGF/VGD, handicapped cards etc. 9. Helping people entangled with politically motivated or falsely filed policy cases. 10. Giving advice to the local population. 11. Attesting various documents of general people. 12. Helping poor students to get admitted into schools and colleges and continue education. 13. Attending various cultural, social, religious programmes and sports tournaments. 14. Helping the poor and disadvantaged in general with cash, kind, logistics and advice.
Attending and spending towards religious, social, cultural etc. occasions (5 common types)	1. During Eid-ul-Fitaar, donating cloths, foods and gifts to the poor or relatives. During Eid-ul-Azha, Sacrificing cattle and distributing meat. 2. Attending social functions like marriage, Janaza, Sunnat-e-Khatna, funeral, Akika, burials, birthdays etc. of all religions. These are most frequent on Fridays and Saturdays. They have to contribute large sums as gifts or donations to these social occasions. 3. Involvement with various religious institutions like mosques, madrasas, Taablig Jamaat, Mujaheed committee, temples etc. and attending religious programs and festivals of all religions like eid, puja, waaj, meelad, kirtan etc and. donating them. Distributing Iftaar during Ramadan. 4. Observing and spending for various national, political and cultural days of importance. Donation and giving costly prizes like LED TV for local sports tournaments. 5. Donation to all the political parties for arranging meetings and rallies etc.
Dispute resolution (9 general duties)	1. They spend large portion of their time to resolve dispute between family members, couples, neighbors, villagers over land, tree, disagreement, property etc. in 30-40 traditional village Shaalish a month. 2. Attend the Graam Aadalat (village court).

	3. If the traditional Shaalish happens in their own premises then bear the cost of arranging like food, seating arrangement etc. 4. People come even in the middle of night to lodge complaints. 5. Attending Shaalish of other UPs as jury. 6. Mediating heightened tension between various groups in the locality. 7. Coordinating with police for maintaining law and order in the locality. 8. Some Shaalish are time consuming, may take 2-3 days of repeated meetings. 9. At times, record-keeping of Shaalish is also their duty.
Charity and almsgiving (7 common traits)	1. Giving donation to various social and religious organizations like mosques, madrasas, schools, clubs and societies. 2. Financial help to the poor, the sick, old and injured people and the marginalized on daily basis. 3. Distributing warm cloths to the poor during winter. 4. Giving away in kind help to the poor like meat, cloths, rice, paddy, coconut etc. from their own stock. 5. People at times take loan and do not pay back. 6. Helping the poor in family problems like marriage, funeral etc. 7. Working as midwife for free (women member).
Use of mobile technology (4 common traits)	1. Their cell phone is open all day and night. People even call in the middle of the night with complaints and problems. 2. People give missed calls. Then they have to call back. 3. Give phone to the public on request for using. 4. On average talk-time recharge cost per day in 100 taka.
Total time spent each day for public service (3 requirements)	1. Diverts many hours from work and family life. 2. They have to be accessible to people at any time of the day. 3. On average 5-7 hours a day.
Total spending out of pocket in a month (7 common patterns)	1. They spend large sums of money to fulfill their social and customary duties as public representatives. 2. The cost of Chairmen is usually higher than that of members as the expectation from them is higher. For chairmen it is on average 30-40 thousand taka and for members it is 5-15 thousand taka. 3. Sometimes they sell their property like land, tree, fruits and vegetables to supply this money. 4. Women members take money from their husbands and sons. 5. Even arranging Ward Shava is costly for them as there is no mentionable budget for that.

	6. Their honorarium is very nominal; and is barely 25% of their transport and mobile bills as they do not get any TA/DA. 7. In very rare cases some of them have taken loans to live up to the expectations from the community.
Plans for re-elections (Split response)	-- Some want to be re-elected. Why? - Likes the nature of work; enjoys public service; self-satisfaction to see advancement of the locality and society; demand from the people; for recognition and honor. -- Many others do not want to run again. Reasons: high cost; time consuming; disruption to day-to-day life; political pressure and hassle; bureaucratic and political interventions

Appendix 5: Monthly spending pattern of Chairmen, Members and Women Members

UP	Activity head/month	Total cost/month	Total time spent/day
Aichgati, Rupsha, Khulna	1. Trip to the Upazila Parishad (5 times X tk.200 = tk.1,000) 2. Social and religious functions (12 X tk.1000 = tk.12,000) 3. Gives away monthly govt. honorarium for charitable purpose (tk.3,000) 4. Donation to mosques, madrasas, schools etc. (tk.6,000) 5. Helping the poor (30 days X tk.500 = tk.15,000) 6. Mobile bill (30 days X tk.100 = 3,000)	Tk.40,000	8-9 hours
Khadimnagar, Sadar, Sylhet	1. Social and religious functions (12 X tk.2000 = tk.24,000) 2. Mobile bill (30 days X tk.100 =3,000) 3. Helping the poor (30 days X tk.500 = tk.15,000) 4. Donation to religious, cultural and social organizations and functions (tk.15,000)	Tk.57,000	8-9 hours
Digholia, Khulna	1. Social and religious functions (12 X tk.1000 = tk.12,000) 2. Mobile bill (30 days X tk.100 = 3,000) 3. Helping the poor (30 days X tk.300 = tk.9,000) 4. Donation to mosques, madrasas, schools etc. (tk.4,000) 5. Donation to cultural and social organizations and functions (tk.11,000)	Tk.39,000	8 hours
Joykolosh, Sunamganj South, Sunamganj	1. Paying for light refreshment and travel of the local people (30 days X tk.200 = tk.6,000) 2. Social and religious functions (10 X tk.500 = tk.5,000) 3. Mobile bill (30 days X tk.90 = 2,700) 4. Helping the poor (30 days X tk.250 = tk.7,500)	Tk.21,200	4-5 hours

Monthly spending pattern of Members

UP	Activity head/month	Total cost/month	Total time spent/day
Ward no. 3, Aichgati, Rupsha, Khulna	1. Paying for light refreshment and travel of the local people (30 days X tk.150 = tk.4,500) 2. Social and religious functions (12 X tk.500 = tk.6,000) 3. Donation to religious institutions and movements etc. (tk.4,000) 5. Helping the poor (30 days X tk.200 = tk.6,000) 6. Mobile bill (30 days X tk.70 = 2,100)	Tk.22,600	10 hours
Ward no. 7, Phultola, Khulna	1. Social and religious functions (10 X tk.500 = tk.5,000) 2. Helping the poor (30 days X tk.100 = tk.3,000) 3. Mobile bill (30 days X tk.100 = 3,000)	Tk.11,000	5-7 hours
Charmoholla, Chhatak, Sunamganj	1. Social and religious functions (10 X tk.500 = tk.5,000) 2. Helping the poor (30 days X tk.200 = tk.6,000) 3. Mobile bill (30 days X tk.80 = 2,400)	Tk.13,400	6 hours

Monthly spending pattern of Woman Members

UP	Activity head/month	Total cost/month	Total time spent/day
Ward no. 7, 8 & 9 Aichgati, Rupsha, Khulna	1. Providing light refreshment in the form of *Paan-Supari* to those who come to her house (tk.1,000) 2. Social and religious functions (12 X tk.500 = tk.6,000) 3. Traveling around the three wards for public service (tk.3,000) 5. Helping the poor (30 days X tk.100 = tk.3,000)	Tk.13,000	10-12 hours
Ward no. 1-9, Kalaruka, Chhatak, Sunamganj	1. Social and religious functions (9 X tk.500 = tk.4,500) 2. Donation to religious institutions (tk.1000) 3. Helping the poor (30 days X tk.100 = tk.3,000) 4. Mobile bill (30 days X tk.30 = 900)	Tk.9,400	4-5 hours

Appendix 6: Methodology-Analysis of different issues

Analysis of relevant documents include:

UP laws and Rules: Whether laws and rules are kept in UP offices, asked whether those were read and understood;

Ward Shava (Ward Council): Resolutions of Ward Shava meetings ,decisions of the meetings, attendance, follow up of decisions and implementation records of decisions taken and expenses for arranging the meetings;

Union Development Coordination Committee (UDCC): frequency of the meetings, attendance, discussions and decisions and implementation of decisions and expenses; Standing Committee (SC): Composition, meetings, resolutions, decisions and implementation of decisions and expenses;

Open Budget Sessions (OBS): Notice and publicity, attendance, discussion, decisions and expenses;

Annual and Five Year Plan: How plans were prepared, total number of projects and schemes in the plan, total amount of money, sources of money, monitoring of plans and evaluation process if any, participation of people especially the poor, any technical assistance received for making plans and expenses for making plan;

Citizen Charter: Whether they are properly displayed or not, to what extent the common people can understandable them, the effect of the Charter on the performance of the UP;

KIIs, FGDs and Informal discussions: The tables below elaborately show the extent of data collection done through the above methods. Time constraints, and availability of and access to the targeted persons acted as limitations on these activities.

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