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**Revisiting the Reforms of
Rural Local Government Institutions in Bangladesh:
From Past to Present**
Shah Md. Azimul Ehsan
Dr. Mohammad Kamruzzaman

Abstract

Rural Local government institutions (RLGIs) in the territory now comprising Bangladesh have undergone many experiments since British period. Although some experiments intended to decentralize or devolve authority to the local government, they failed to sustain due to the lack of political commitment. Therefore, a principle- agent relationship still prevails between national and local government bodies. Besides, sporadic nature of experiments by different party in powers did not allow the RLGIs to evolve in a harmonious way. With the change of governments, policy on local government also kept changing. Thus, local government bodies have not been given a chance to act as a continuing working organization. In the absence of any definite set of policies, concepts such as ‘local self-government’ and ‘devolution of authority’ are hardly applicable to our local bodies yet. Hence RLGIs in Bangladesh, even after having a tradition and practice of hundreds of years, still is not regarded and respected fully as effective, functional and credible service delivery mechanism. This paper using qualitative research tools, collecting data from secondary sources unravels all these facts.

Key Words : Rural Local Government Institutions, colonial legacy, Union Parishad, Upazilla Parishad, Local Government, Bangladesh.

1.0 Introduction

The land comprising present day territory of Bangladesh is an ancient area with a long recorded history of several thousand years. In its recent past it was ruled under Pakistan (1947-1971), British Empire (1765-1947), the Mughals and other Muslim Sultanates, and also Hindu rulers. It has glorious past of local government administration system. It is said that village self-government in the sub-continent is as old as village themselves (Siddiqui, 2005). However, the Statutory local government in the sub-continent is British innovation. Ahmed (2012) observes that following the ‘Sepoy mutiny’ of 1857, there was not only a disruption in the law and order situation, but the revenue collection had also gone down which threw the government into a situation close to bankruptcy. On the other hand, the newly

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emerged western educated elites in the urban areas started to demand the right of participation in the administration at the central level. Against this background, the government tried to broaden its base in the rural areas. Accordingly, the Government passed the Village Chaukidari Act of 1870, in an attempt to revive the traditional Panchayet system. Thus, the first legislation on the local government may be traced back during the period of British colonial administration. The seminal legal instrument that created firm legal basis for local government came with the famous 'Resolutions' passed by Lord Ripon in 1882. Subsequently, the Bengal Local Self-Government Act 1885 was passed through which Union Committees (UCs) were established. Construction of unsealed roads, primary education, and sanitation, upkeep of tanks and ponds and registration of vital statistics etc. were the key responsibilities of UCs. Later the legal system of local government gradually developed with the enactment of laws in 1909, 1919 and 1935 (Bhuiyan, 2014).

In the post independent era, new laws replaced old laws in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Though the Basic Democracy Order 1959 provided the foundation of the local government bodies in Pakistan, it is the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh which provides the main source and legal sanctions to the establishment of the local government bodies in the independent Bangladesh. Currently in Bangladesh, we have five units of local government institutions (LGIs) in rural and urban areas with five different sets of legal instruments. The individual units are: Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad and Zila Parishad in rural areas and Pourashava (municipality) and City Corporation in urban areas. Besides, there are traditional LGIs in CHT under the coverage of 'Hill Tracts Manual 1900'. A new system of district council also established in three of the hill districts namely Hill District Councils, which is distinct and different from the 61 plain land districts.

The latest laws under which each of the units is governed are as follows: Local Government (Union Parishad) Act of 2009, Upazila Parishad Act of 1998 (as amended in 2009 and also in 2011), Zila Parishad Act of 2000, Local Government (Pourashava) Act of 2009, Local Government (City Corporation) Act of 2009. Beside the main legislations, there are hundreds of subordinate legislations carrying the full force of law in each of the tier and unit. However, the way the legislations are enacted and executed, each tier and unit has become a watertight compartment. The interdependence and inter-organizational relationships are generally ignored. As a result, local government is not growing as composite and comprehensive system. This paper focuses on how the legislative development of the Rural Local Government Institutions (RLGIs) in the present Bangladesh has evolved over the years. Using historical approach, this study will highlight the reform initiatives which were made in RLGIs during the British era, Pakistan era and post independent era, with the objective of unraveling whether these reform attempts have been able to turn those RLGIs into local self-government or whether such reforms were manipulated with political intentions, for creating local support base.

2.0 Methodology

Since the ancient era, the development of local government for the areas of present-day Bangladesh has been primarily based on the rural sectors. The study of the rural local government sector is thus a continuous process. Such an issue is so best addressed by the historical approach which this study adopts. It is mainly based on the secondary sources including books, government gazettes, journals, articles, reports and newspapers; which again have been cross-checked very minutely. Data analysis is conducted in manual process aggregating data with relevance to the content.

3.0 Literature Review

A substantial literature prevails on various aspects of local government in Bangladesh. There are some studies (published within the last decade) covering a variety of related issues and provide some useful background.

Abdul Waheed and Saminah (2012) discusses about the present local government institutions at both rural and urban level. The current structure of Local Government in Bangladesh went through a long period of evolution. In addition, changes were brought in these institutions after the independence of Bangladesh. The central government has heavy control over these institutions. These institutions have weakness in their management, and that is why they are not being able to render their services in a satisfactory way.

Farzana Nasrin conducted a study titled 'Reforms in Local Government: Experiences from Bangladesh' published in 2013. She stated in her paper that various political regimes since independence have tried to manipulate the local government institutions to create local political power base in the name of local government reforms but practically, little has been achieved to what was expected. The recommendations from the study were to follow devolution rather than de-concentration, to empower the local government institutions of Bangladesh. Nasrin (2013) argued that there is no need or any new laws or Acts for making the local governance better, rather she has urged to make a comprehensive policy that will help to avoid the ambiguity in case of functional assignments of the LGIs(Local Government Institutions).

Khan (2009) have conducted a study titled "Functioning of the Local Government (Union Parishad): Legal and Practical constraints", where he used both the qualitative as well as the quantitative tools for conducting the research. The final recommendations were to make UP (Union Parishad) more empowered both in terms of politically and financially so that it can improve its quality of public service delivery to ensure good governance at the UP levels.

According to a study titled 'Challenges and Trends in Decentralized Local Governance in Bangladesh' conducted by Ahmed in 2016, the main challenges and

trends that Bangladesh face in the decentralized local governance are- lack of political will and support for local governance reforms, lack of capacity of local government institutions; centralized dominance, lack of continuity in policy and practices; bureaucratic domination; mal- coordination; the gap between policy rhetoric and real life application ; improper resource mobilization; and less participation of the general mass at the grass root level.

Similar local governance problems were identified by another study but the comprehensive solution which they came up with was not to make the local government bodies a puppet in the hands of the central government, rather the existing Acts need to be properly implemented to ensure good governance at the local government institutions (Haque, Islam &Sharmin, 2011).

Regarding the question of to what extent the local government in Bangladesh has been decentralized, the study conducted by Panday (2011) titled ‘Local government system in Bangladesh: How far is it decentralized?’ opined that albeit there is constitutional recognition regarding the formation of a strong and independent local government system, cosmetic reforms has been taken by the political leadership of Bangladesh for bringing bring changes to the structure of the Local Government Institutions (LGIs) in the name of decentralization. The study also found that the main intentions behind most of the reforms have been to strengthen their political base in the particular area. Hence, these institutions could not be established as a focal point of development where people would have the monitoring power for controlling their constituencies.

All these studies concentrated on specific areas of local government in Bangladesh. Albeit most of the studies did touch upon the historical evolution of the LGIs in Bangladesh, they could not make any comprehensive discussion of those legislative developments since British era till date. The legislative developments of RLGIs have evolved in different socio-economic and political contexts which need to be taken into consideration to understand why such reforms were made. Without using a holistic approach, such structural reforms and there impacts on local governance cannot be understood. This particular study will help to fill this void in the field of research.

4.0 Findings

This part of the article rigorously focuses on how the legislative development of the RLGIs has taken place in different regimes-British Colonial period, Pakistan Period and after liberation.

4.1 Legislative Development regarding LGIs (Rural) during British Period

Some of landmark legislative developments of RLGIs which took place during the British colonial period are the Village Chaukidari Act of 1870, Bengal Local Self

Government Act of 1885 and The Bengal Village Self-Government Act of 1919. These have been discussed here.

I. The Village Chaukidari Act of 1870:

Though originally this Act intended to maintain village peace and order by local initiative, is considered to be the first legislation in the evolution of the rural local government during the British Rule (Jabes, 2005). It authorized the District Magistrate to appoint a Panchayet consisting of five members at the village level (Section 3). In addition to the task of appointing 'Chaukidar' for the maintenance of law and order, the Panchayet could also assess and collect taxes from the villagers to pay the salaries of the 'Chaukidars' (Sections 42-47). The Famine Commission of 1880 noted the lack of local bodies in true sense and urged the extension of local self-government as a means to facilitate relief for the distressed (Siddiqui, 2005). Accordingly, Lord Ripon adopted the famous resolution on local self-government in 1882, which has been regarded as the Magna Carta of local self-government in the Indian sub-continent (Gupta, 2004). In order to give effect to the resolution, the Bengal Council passed the Bengal Local Self Government Act of 1885 (Siddiqui, 2005).

II. The Bengal Local Self Government Act of 1885

According to Khan (2008) a three-tier system came into operation under this Act namely- District Board for District, Local Board for Sub-division, and Union Committee for several villages spreading over an area of 10-12 square miles. Siddiqui (2005) has described the three tier system in details. At the District level, the District Board was to consist of not less than nine members, which was to be determined according to the size and the population of the District. Half of the members of the District Board were to be elected by the Local Board for five years and the remaining half were salaried government servants including District Magistrate as the Chairman. District Boards were entrusted with extensive powers and responsibilities with regard to schools, roads and communication, vaccination, hospitals, famine relief, census, holding of fairs and exhibitions, construction and maintenance of railways, tramways and waterways, repair and construction of public buildings, etc. The main sources of income of the Board were cess, fees, fines and grants from the government.

Local Board was to consist of not less than six members, of whom two-thirds were to be elected and the rest one-third were to be nominated by the government. It could elect its own Chairman from among its members, but appointment would require the approval of the Lieutenant Governor. This Board had no specific function except to receive reports from the Union Committee. It had no independent existence or income, rather it used to act as an agent of the District Board and could exercise only those powers delegated to it by the District Board.

Union Committee, on the other hand, consisted of not less than five or more than nine members, who were to be elected from among the residents of the Union. Originally there was no provision for the Chairman of the Committee, but an amendment to the Act in 1914 provided for a chairman to be elected by the Committee from among its members. These Committees were responsible for the local municipal functions, such as construction of short stretches of un-metalled roads, primary education, and sanitation, upkeep of ponds and tanks and registration of vital statistics. The supervising Local Board could delegate other duties to the Committee. It also had the power to raise funds from villagers owning or occupying houses or property.

Thus the Act of 1885 for the first time established local self-government system in the territory now comprising Bangladesh. However, the Act of 1885 was not free from colonial attitude of the alien administration and therefore, the bodies created under this Act failed to serve any useful purpose. Levinge Report emphasized the need for further reorganization of the local government system. However, a Royal Commission on decentralization was appointed in 1907 and it submitted its report in 1909 with an argument in favour of village Panchayet (Siddique, 2005). Accordingly, Morely-Minto reforms were introduced. However, these measures did never become effective and well accepted by the people. In 1918, Montague-Chelmsford Report suggested for extending local self-government and accordingly, a Bill for further reforms was introduced in the Bengal Legislative Assembly. The Bill resulted in the Act V of 1919 which initiated the second major attempt to create a network of self-government bodies in rural Bengal (Siddiqui, 2005).

III. The Bengal Village Self-Government Act of 1919

This Act replaced existing Chaukidari Panchayets and Union Committees by a new body called Union Board (Section 6). Union Boards were formed in every district of Bengal except Sylhet and Chittagong Hill Tracts (Siddiqui, 2005). The Union Board was composed of not less than six but not more than nine members of whom two-thirds were elected and one-third nominated by the District Magistrate (Section 6). Members were to elect a President and a Vice-President from among themselves (Sections 8-9). Primary functions of the Union Board were (a) supervision of Chaukidars, (b) maintenance of sanitation and public health, (c) maintenance of roads, bridges and waterways, (d) establishment and upkeep of schools and dispensaries at its discretion and (e) supply of information as and when needed by the District Board (Sections 26-36). In addition to receiving grants from higher bodies, the Union Boards was authorized to levy a yearly union rate (Siddiqui, 2005). The tax was to be imposed on owners or occupiers of buildings (Section 37). At its discretion, the Provincial Government also could select two or more members of the Union Board to constitute a Union Bench to try minor criminal

offences and also, in a similar way, a Union Court for settlement of certain civil suits the suit value of which do not exceed two hundred rupees (Sections 65 and 74). Thus, Union Board, apart from their administrative functions, had important judicial functions also.

The Levinge Report had recommended the abolition of the Local Board (Siddique, 2005), but the Act of 1919 did not even correct the defects of the Local Board. Subject to the control of the District Board, Section 50 of the Act empowered the Local Board to superintend the administration of the Union Board. Membership of the Local Boards was based on open elections and members chose their own Chairman.

The District Board also remained as it is except that instead of nominating half of the members, the provision was made for electing two-thirds of the total members of the District Board. From 1885 to 1920, the District Magistrate acted as the Chairman of the Board, which was the most vital position in the local government (Siddiqui, 2005). Since 1921, though the Board was given the privilege of electing its own Chairman from among its members, such election was subject to the approval of the provincial government (section ...). Not only that, the government had the authority to remove the Chairman on certain grounds (Siddiqui, 2005). Therefore, the Board was not at all a democratic body (CRS, 2011). The Board was not even free to adopt any policies. Thus, the system of local self-government was badly weakened by bureaucratic and political interferences during the British colonial period.

4.2 Legislative Development of RLGIs during Pakistan Period

The Government of Pakistan retained the system of District and Union Boards as well as the Acts and Statutes which governed them even after the partition in 1947 and they continued until 1959, when the Basic Democracies Order (BDO) was promulgated, the system that covered both rural and urban areas (Siddiqui, 2005). In rural areas, it introduced a four tier local government set up: Union Council, Thana Council, District Council and Divisional Council (Khan, 2008). Siddiqui (2005) has nicely sketched the different tiers of both urban and rural LGIs under the BDO.

Until 1962, there was provision for one-third nominated members in the Union Council, but later on, it became a fully elective body and the Council elected from amongst its members one Chairman and the Vice-Chairman. However, Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) was the controlling authority of the Council and the government could remove any member including the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman on certain grounds, such as, abuse of power or misconduct. Among other functions, the Union Council used to maintain village police known as Chaukidars and Dafadars and could punish them if they were guilty of misconduct, corruption or negligence of duty. However, the appointment of the village police was subject to the approval of the Thana Council.

Thana Council was the second tier in the hierarchy of the local government institutions. The SDO was the ex-officio chairman of the Council and the Circle Officer (Development) was its Vice-Chairman. Thus Thana Council was actually under the direct control of the government, though at least half of the members were elected representative. The only function of the Thana Council was to coordinate the activities of the Union Councils under its jurisdiction. Thus, Thana Council, without having any revenue raising authority, was mainly a controlling mechanism to regulate the activities of the Union Council.

District Council, unlike Thana Council, had authority to levy tax but in practice, that was highly inadequate for their performance. Besides, Deputy Commissioner being the Chairman of the Council has all the executive powers of the Council, though apart from official members, half of the members were to be elected by the Chairmen of the Union Councils and also of the Town Committees (tiers of the urban LGIs). Unlike Thana Council, the District Council could elect its Vice-Chairman with the votes of both official and representative members, but any representative member including the Vice-Chairman was removable from the office exactly on the same grounds as were applicable to elected Union Council. Therefore, just like Thana Council, the District Council was also very undemocratic and authoritarian organization.

Divisional Council was the highest among the rural local bodies, headed by the Divisional Commissioner as its Chairman. It was composed of both official and non-official members. Members of the District Councils within a particular Division used to elect the non-official members of the Council. The Official members, the total number of which was not to be less than the number of the non-official members, included the Chairmen of the District Councils, that is, all the Deputy Commissioners in that Division and many other important government officials. Just like Thana Council, the Divisional Council also had the only function of coordinating the activities of District Councils. Therefore, its role was mainly advisory. It had no power to levy any tax. However, it used to distribute the government funds to District Councils and other LGIs as grants.

4.3 Legislative Development of RLGIs after the Emergence of Bangladesh

Gaining independence in 1971, Bangladesh have seen series of governments-elected, military government, quasi-military governments who have taken initiatives to strengthen RLGIs through enactments of new Acts, Laws and amendments of the older ones. How those legislative developments of RLGIs have taken place during different regimes has been discussed here.

i. Reform initiatives taken by Bangabandhu's government (1972-1975)

Immediately after the emergence of Bangladesh, dramatic changes were brought in the structure of the local government in accordance with the changes made in the

governance system to match the ideological shift of the ruling regime (Khan, 2008). The Presidential Order No. 7 of 1972 dissolved all existing LGIs except the Divisional Council and administrators were appointed to take over their functions (Siddiqui, 2005). The Union Council and the District Council were renamed as the Union Panchayet (later Union Parishad) and the District Board (later ZilaParishad) respectively (Khan, 2008). The Divisional Council was also replaced by the Divisional Development Board and the Thana Council by the Thana Development Committee (Siddiqui, 2005). The Union Panchayet was placed under the control of the Circle Officer, while the Thana Development Committee and the Zila Board were placed under the control of the SDO and the DC respectively (Sharmin et. al., 2012). The Presidential Order No. 22 specified that each union composed of several villages would be divided in three wards; three UP members would be elected from each ward (Khan, 2008). Besides, provisions were made for the Chairman and Vice Chairman to be directly elected by all eligible voters living within a UP (Khan, 2008). Under the Order, Thana Parishad and the ZilaParishad continued to function with the same mandate as they had under the BDO, 1959, with the SDO and the DC respectively as ex-officio Chairmen (Siddiqui, 2005). Soon after that, the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh was promulgated in the same year and it contained specific provision as to the basic structure and functions of the LGIs in Articles 9,11,59,60. The beginning of 1975 witnessed major changes in the political scenario including the replacement of the parliamentary system with the Presidential system of government. At the same time, Articles 59 and 60 of the Constitution were also repealed. Certain programmes were announced on the part of the government to make the new system a success which had some bearing on the local government institutions (Siddiqui, 2005). But those programmes stood nullified due to the unfortunate assassination of the then President and the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 15 August, 1975.

ii. Reform initiatives taken the tenure of Ziaur Rahman (1975-1981)

In 1976, the Local Government Ordinance was promulgated by the government headed by President Ziaur Rahman that introduced a three-tier local government system: Union Parishad (UP), Thana Parishad (TP), and ZilaParishad (ZP) hierarchically arranged in ascending order (Khan, 2008). Under the Ordinance, changes occurred in the composition of UP. The Ordinance conferred significant control of the central government over the UPs. For example, the government could remove the Chairman or any of its members from his/her office on certain grounds including misconduct, corruption or misuse of powers (Siddiqui, 2005). Moreover, the SDO was given the veto power against any decision of UPs (Khan, 2008). Therefore, even after being an elective body, UP lost its characteristics of an autonomous local self-government. In the matter of functions, the 1976 Ordinance

made no fundamental departure from the BDO of 1959. However, in addition to those functions, the UP also performed judicial functions under the Village Court Ordinance of 1976. The Village Court consisted of the UP Chairman, two UP members and two other members representing two parties to the dispute. The Court had the power to try petty cases, both civil and criminal.

Just like the Thana Council under the BDO, the Ordinance of 1976 also created a coordinating body in the name of Thana Parishad. TP consisted of both official and representative members under the Chairmanship and Vice-Chairmanship of SDO and CO respectively (Siddiqui, 2005). The Chairmen of the UPs were the representative members and the concerned Thana level officers were the official members. This provision was in conflict with Article 9 of the Constitution, which envisioned local governments consisting of elected members. Similar to the Thana Council under the BDO, this TP also did not have any fund raising powers. Rather, it had to depend on government grants. Therefore, TP was not a local self-government in real sense. However, apart from coordinating the activities of the UPs, TP was entrusted by the government with some development projects and its functions also included family planning, care of the environment and training of the UP functionaries

The Ordinance of 1976 provided for ZP also in each District composed of both elected and nominated official members including women. This composition was also in conflict with the spirit of Article 9 of the Constitution. The ZP was entrusted with almost 97 functional responsibilities under two categories –compulsory and optional (Siddiqui, 2005). It also had the responsibility to coordinate the activities of UP and TP and also Municipalities (urban tier of the local government). Unlike TP, ZP had the authority to impose taxes, in addition to government grants.

In an attempt to decentralize the local government down to village level, government introduced the Swanirvar Gram Sarkar(SGS) by an amendment in 1980 to the Ordinance of 1976 (Siddiqui, 2005). It consisted of one ‘Gram Prodhan’ and eleven other members including at least two women chosen through consensus of the villagers present at a meeting (Section...). The SGS was assigned the responsibility of increasing food production, eradicating illiteracy, reducing population growth and maintaining law and order in the village (Section...). However, it was soon abolished by a Martial Law Order in 1982 (Siddiqui, 2005).

iii. Reform initiatives taken during Ershad’s tenure (1982-1990)

On 24 March, 1982, Martial Law was proclaimed by the then Chief of Army Staff Hussein Muhammed Ershad. On 28 April, 1982, a Committee for administrative reform was constituted a ten-member committee with Rear Admiral M.A. Khan as the Chairman. Based on the Committee’s recommendation, the government adopted a Resolution on 23 October, 1982 to reorganize the administration at the Thana

level (Siddiqui, 2005). Thus Thana became the central institution of the local government (Buchmann, 2013). Responsibility for all development activities at the local level was transferred to Thana level (Ahmed, 2012). To give effect to the Resolution, on December 23, 1982, the Local Government (Thana Parishad and Thana Administration Reorganisation) Ordinance was promulgated introducing major changes with respect to local government at the Thana level (Siddiqui, 2005). Later on, by an amendment, Thanas were renamed as Upazilas (Ahmed, 2012). The Upazila Parishad (UZP) was entrusted with the power to impose tax, rates, fees and tolls (Khan, 2008). Under the reorganized system, Upazilas actually replaced the old Districts as the pivot of administration. Apart from the annual grant from the government, the UZP was empowered to levy taxes, rates and fees on eight specific items, such as lease money on Jalmahals, haats and bazaars, tax on professions, trades and callings, tax on dramatic and theatrical shows, street lighting tax, fees for fairs, exhibitions, licenses and permits and tolls on services and facilities maintained (Siddiqui, 2005).

In 1983, the Local Government (Union Parishads) Ordinance was promulgated which retained the structure of the UP almost as it was under the Ordinance of 1976. However, the women members were now to be nominated by the UZP (later on, by the DC). The UP lost its authority again in this process to accommodate transfer of responsibilities and authority to the UZP (Khan, 2008). In 1988, the Local Government (Zila Parishad) Act was passed to form ZP consisting of both nominated and representative members. The Act of 1988 assigned 12 compulsory and 69 optional functions of the ZP (Siddiqui, 2005). The most important functions were planning, promotion and execution of development and welfare programmes of the District (Siddiqui, 2005). These functions, in many cases, overlapped the functions of the UZP and Paurashava/City Corporation. Apart from the government grants, ZP was also empowered to receive taxes, rates, tolls and fees on eight items.

iv. Reforms initiatives taken by 1st BNP regime (1991-1996)

After the changeover to the parliamentary system of government in 1991, the first Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) government headed by Begum Khaleda Zia (1991-1996) came to power. A Local Government Structure Review Commission, headed by the then Information Minister Nazmul Huda was constituted on 24 November 1991 to review the effectiveness of the contemporary structure of the local government and recommend on possible reorganization in accordance with the 12th Amendment made to the Constitution (Khan, 2008). The Huda commission recommended abolishing of the Upazila system. Siddiqui (2005) observes that there were several reasons for abolishing the most important local government tier as of then. The most important among these were their failure to mobilize resources at the local level to achieve self-reliance and ensure people's

participation in planning and implementation of development activities, increased dependency on national government grants, glaring deviation from laws, rules and guidelines and huge expenditure in the non-productive sector. There were also allegations of widespread corruption by UZP Chairman.

The Commission also proposed a two tier system for the rural area: Union Parishad (UP) at union level and ZilaParishad (ZP) at district level, along with a recommendation for the formation of a Thana Development and Coordination Committee (TDCC) to act as a link between the Ups and ZP. Besides, considering the village as the basic constituent of the UP, the Commission recommended the formation of a Gram Shabha, consisting of ten members to be directly elected by the villagers. UP Chairman would also be the Chairman of the Shabha.

Following the suggestions of Huda Commission, UZP was abolished by promulgating the Local Government (UpazilaParishad and Upazila Administration Reorganisation) (Repeal) Ordinance, 1991 (Khan, 2008). The government also promulgated the Local Government (Union Parishad) (Amendment) Act of 1993 to accommodate the changes in the structure of the UPs as per the recommendation of the Committee. On the other hand, ZP continued to be functioning under the Act of 1988. Under a special executive order, Thana Development Coordination Committee (TDCC) was constituted at the thana level, which was actually a 'coordinating unit' among the UP, the ZP and the relevant national government agencies.

v. Reforms initiatives taken during Awami League (AL) regime (1996-2001)

The next government headed by Sheikh Hasina again constituted a high-powered 'Local Government Commission' in September, 1996, headed by Advocate Rahmat Ali, who was a member of the Parliament. The Commission took into consideration the past experience, the Constitutional provisions, the commitment of all political parties and the determination of the present government to strengthen the local government system (Siddiqui, 2005). The Commission recommended a four-tier system of local government: Gram Parishad at the village level, Union Parishad at the union level, UpazilaParishad at the upazila level and ZilaParishad at the district level. The Commission also recommended that a Finance Committee should be constituted to review the existing system and recommend financial powers to LGIs at all levels.

The Commission found the Upazila as an important administrative unit. Especially after the abolition of the Subdivision as an administrative unit, the importance of thana/upazila had increased further. Owing to the Constitutional provision and in the interest of the public service, the Commission found a strong justification in establishing an effective local government body at the Upazila level (Siddiqui, 2005). However, the report of this Rahmat Ali Commission never came into effect in true sense. However, the Parliament passed the Local Government (Village Parishad) Act in 1997, the UpazilaParishad Act in 1998 and ZilaParishad Act in 2000. The last two Acts, with major subsequent amendments, are still in force.

vi. Reforms initiatives taken during 2nd BNP regime (2001-2006)

During the second tenure of the BNP government, only Union Parishad was functioning in the rural areas. Apart from that, Village Government was established under the Village Government Act of 2003, but this Act was challenged in the Supreme Court in the case BLAST vs. Bangladesh and Others, 60 DLR (2008) 234, and the High Court Division of the Supreme Court declared the Act void. No appeal was preferred before the Appellate Division on the part of the government. Apart from this, the second BNP government (2001-2006) did not take any noticeable step for strengthening local government system (Khan, 2008).

vii. Reform Initiatives taken by Caretaker Government (CTG) (2007-2008)

In October 2006, the government, led by the Bangladesh National Party (BNP), failed to reach agreement with the opposition over the formation of the caretaker government. From November 2006 to January 2007, political violence continued in Bangladesh. On 11 January 2007, a new caretaker government headed by Fakhruddin Ahmed was formed in a state of emergency. This Caretaker government (CTG), who continued for almost two years, took some major steps to reform the existing organs of the government. The reform of the local government system was not also ignored. CTG formed a seven member committee, namely, the Committee on Strengthening Local Government, headed by Dr. A.M.M. Shawkat Ali on 3 June 2007 to accelerate and strengthen local government. The Committee submitted its report on 13 November 2007. The report attempted to draw opinions of concerned sections of the population. Its recommendations include increase of manpower, conferring of authority to write ACRs of the officials, increase of local income sources, provision for women representation in 40% of the total elected seats by rotation, issuance of citizenship certificate, abolition of the Gram Sarkar (village government), and abolition of the system of making members of the parliament advisers to the local bodies. Importantly, the Committee recommended establishing a permanent independent Commission to accelerate development of local government institutions and make them accountable to this Commission.

viii. Reform initiatives taken by taken by present Awami League (AL) Government till date

Though the recommendations were not fully accepted by the next democratic government headed by Sheikh Hasina, a new Act namely the Local Government (Union Parishad) Act was promulgated in 2009. Even UpazilaParishad Act was amended in 2009 and also in 2011 and major reforms were introduced. It will not be out of the place to mention here that, the Ordinance No. 23 of 2008 promulgated by the CTG repealed the Village Government Act of 2003 as per the instruction of the Supreme Court. This step was confirmed by the Village Government (Repeal)

Act of 2009. Under this Act of 2009, all the responsibilities of the Village Government were shifted to the Union. Currently, Rural Local government Institutions are comprised of Union parishads (UPs), UpazillaParishads (UZPs) and the Zillaparishad (ZPs). Tabular representation of these RLGs in Bangladesh have been given below, which articulates their election method, assigned duties, revenue authority and who heads those bodies; including the laws by which they are currently operated.

Table 1: Rural Local Government in Bangladesh

Name	Headed by	Election method	Functional Observations	Revenue Authority	Acts in Operation
Union Parishad	Elected Chairma n	Direct election	Participatory planning and implementation, and small investment and service monitoring powers, but limited staffing capacity.	Limited revenue authority and scope, but does not have sub-national borrowing authority.	The Local Government (Union Parishad) Act, 2009
Upazilaparishad	Elected Chairma n	Direct Election	Devolutionary integrated planning and thus implementation, small investment and service monitoring powers	Widespread revenue authority and scope, but does not have sub-national borrowing authority	The Local Government (UpazillaParishad) Act,2011
ZilaParishad	Elected Chairma n	Indirect election ¹	Planning, coordination and oversight	Yes but does not have the sub-national borrowing authority.	The Local Government (Zillaparishad) Act,2000

5.0 Discussion & Analysis

From the discussion made so far, it becomes obvious that the existing RLGIs has not been created overnight, rather they have followed an evolutionary process. However, the descriptive discussion of the evolution of the local government laws from colonial era till date has unravelled certain facts and issues.

Firstly, no Act or Law is once for all, rather every Act has certain limitation that undergoes subsequent modifications, amendments as per demand of the given context and local needs. It was seen that several Commissions like Morley Minto Commissions, Huda Commission, Rahmat Ali Commission, AMM Shawkat Ali Commission etc. were formed for identifying the short-comings of the then RLG Acts. Almost all the Commissions could properly identify the problems associated with the laws and made subsequent recommendations for strengthening the local government institutions. However, in most of the cases, it was seen that those recommendations were not taken into consideration and in few cases, those were partially implemented.

Secondly, the gradual development of the current RLG legislations has taken place in various regimes and political context. As it has already been said that since post-independence, Bangladesh have been ruled by different government who have made different attempts to strengthen the RLGIs and have made several reform initiatives. However, the culture of disowning the reforms made by one regime with the shift of

1. Indirect election refers to an election that is to be held through an Electoral College.

government has been a very common phenomenon. For example- during Ershad regime, Upazilla was the center of local development. BNP government coming to power after restoration of democracy in 1991 abolished UZP following Huda Commissions recommendation. Such instances of disowning reforms of one government by new government have been institutionalized in the political culture and hence, there is still no concrete and comprehensive local government policy in Bangladesh.

Thirdly, the way the current legislations of RLGs have developed, the pathway has not been a smooth one rather it appears the governments be it in colonial era, Pakistan era or in the post- independence lacked any commitment to create local self-governments in real sense. The subsequent regimes have taken ad hoc reform initiatives, piece-meal efforts rather than taking a holistic approach.

Fourthly, local governments are created with rationality that these bodies know the local needs better than the central government because of its closeness to its stakeholders. However, substantial evidences say that RLGs have been created as mere agents of the central government for delivering public service delivery. It is true that current Legal framework has facilitated more participation by the local people in the form of ‘Ward Shavas’, ‘Ward Committee’, ‘Standing Committees’, ‘Public hearing’, ‘Open Budgeting’ etc. however, central government still retains much power in those RLGs in case of budgetary allocations, dismissing the Chairman of Union Parishad or Upazila Parishad on certain grounds. All these provisions make RLGs very much fragile and feeble.

Fifthly, from the colonial period till the present time, too many rural local government tiers are seen which creates ambiguity in case of functional allocations. Moreover, rarely governments have emphasized on how these tiers would interact and deal. Having functional overlapping and lack of inter-organizational communication framework, the common scenario has been poor coordination which resulted to mal-governance.

Lastly, it can be said that the way the growth of these RLGs have taken place, it depicts the fact the despite being independent, the governments still have the colonial mind set. The present legal framework clarifies the fact of colonial legacy.

6.0 Concluding Remarks

It is a common saying in history that, ‘It is a lesson of history that people do not learn from history’. The historical ontology of the legislative development of the territory now comprising Bangladesh has also proved the worth of the statement. The issues and challenges of rural local governance is not something new rather the problem is deeply rooted. For solutions, it is imperative to go back to the roots from where it started. Unless the government in the post-independence era changes its colonial attitude and mind set and take lessons from its historical evolution; it will not come up with pragmatic and comprehensive solutions rather end up with mere cosmetic reforms that will perpetuate the colonial legacy.

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Impact of Human Resources on Productivity and Financial Performance for Organizational Growth: A Comparative Study on Selected Public and Private Organizations in Bangladesh

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Abstract

This research uncovers the impact of human resources on productivity and financial performances towards organizational growth. It allows comparative analyses and findings on Bangladeshi public and private organizations employees' contribution towards respective organizations. Basically, 180 employees have been selected randomly as sample to conduct this research. Arbitrarily three public and three private organizations (namely; Petrobangla, Titas Gas & DESCO and ACI, BEXIMCO & SQUARE) have been selected to collect both primary and secondary data. Primary data have been collected through a structured questionnaire. Conversely, secondary data (last five consecutive years' financial statements) have been collected from the selected organizations. Mainly, descriptive statistics, regression analysis, time series analysis have been run to analyze and interpret data. The results show that organizational growth certainly depends on employees' productivity and financial performance for both public and private sector organizations. In addition, time series analyses have been undertaken using SPSS to know the current situation and forecast financial condition of public and private organizations for next five years. Results show that public organizations financial condition should be improved since there are huge ups and downs in the financial performances over the years. Next five years financial forecasting also suggests that consistent ups and downs may be there and government may have to subsidize consistently those organizations over the years. Finally, this research can be an evidence for the policymakers, researchers and private and public sector organizations toward realizing the significant impact of employees' contributions, involvement, and improvement of skills and financial growth of the organizations.

Keywords: Human Resources, Public Organizations, Private Organizations, Productivity, Financial Performance, Organizational Growth, Bangladesh.

1.0 Introduction

A rapidly changing economic environment, characterized by such phenomena as the globalization and deregulation of markets, changing customer and investor demands,

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and ever-increasing product-market competition, has become the norm for most private and public organizations. To compete, they must continually improve their performance by reducing costs, innovating products and processes, and improving quality, productivity, and speed to market. With this Special Research on human resources and organizational performance, we hope to contribute to a better understanding of the role of human resources on productivity and financial performance for organizational growth. The conceptual and empirical work relevant to this question has progressed far enough to suggest that the role of human resources can be crucial. However, given the importance and complexities of the issue, this body of work is relatively small, and most of the key questions are sorely in need of further attention. We hope that the publication of this special research will encourage and reinforce interest in this area, as well as help researchers in their decisions regarding what to study and how to study it. We also hope that it will demonstrate to senior human resources (HR) and line managers that their HR systems represent a largely untapped opportunity to improve performance of employees both public and private services in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh human resources usually have merely been seen to be trained and cared properly both in public and private sector organizations though private organizations sometimes try to improve skills and efficiency of the employees. The organizational structures, cultures, norms, values, working environment, monitoring, responsibility, authority and so on vary between public and private organizations. Besides, many public organizations do not have to show interest on profit making rather trying to welfare of the people as per policy of the state. Conversely, private organizations prime concern is to make maximum profit through increasing amount of production and sales. According to their aims and operations employees' efficiency, skills, affordability employees have been treated differently. Therefore, productivity and financial performances of public and private organizations vary which also affect organizational growth.

2.0 Review of Literature

Since there is limited sources of data available in this field of study especially in Bangladesh this is why a number of scholars' published articles, research papers, thesis paper, project reports and a number of different countries related websites will be studied and cited in this study. According to Markovits, Y. et al. (2007) examined that the affective organizational commitment was found to be most influential with respect to levels of intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction. This concurs with other studies of the behavioral outcomes of commitment. Adamchik, V A., and Arjun S. B. (2000) claimed that there were wage differentials between workers in the public and the private sectors. After standardizing for worker characteristics and sector selection effects, they found that a private sector wage advantage. The wage premium was particularly pronounced for university educated workers. Markovits, Y. et al. (2010) examined that the satisfaction-commitment link with respect to differences between private and public sector employees. Their results confirmed

the hypothesized relationship differences: Extrinsic satisfaction and intrinsic satisfaction were more strongly related to affective commitment and normative commitment for public sector employees than for private sector ones. Lyons, S. T. et al. (2006) revealed that private employees value work that contributes to society more than public servants, who value it more than private sector employees; private employees value opportunities for advancement less than both public and private sector employees; public servants value intellectually stimulating and challenging work more than private organizations employees; and private sector employees value prestigious work more than public servants. Buelens, M. and Herman V. d. B. (2007) described that differences in hierarchical level were more important determinants of work motivation than sectoral differences. In addition, most observed differences could be wholly or partially explained by differences in job content, not by the sector itself. Bellante, D. and Albert N. L. (1981) found that stability of employment is greater in the public sector than in the private sector. Tsigilis, N. et al. (2006) showed that early educators experienced moderate levels of emotional exhaustion. Public sector early educators were more satisfied from the job itself and their immediate supervisor than their counterparts in the private sector. Regression analysis showed that job satisfaction facets which contributed to early educators' burnout varied as a function of their workplace. Manzoor, Q. A. (2012) built three hypotheses based on the literature and the model and were tested in perspective of the previous studies and literature. Empowerment and recognition have positive effect on employee motivation. Singh, J. (2000) analyzed to understand mechanisms that govern the productivity and quality of frontline employees (FLEs). Huselid, M. A. (1995) evaluated the links between systems of High Performance Work Practices and firm performance. Results based on a national sample of nearly one thousand firms indicate that these practices have an economically and statistically significant impact on both intermediate employee outcomes (turnover and productivity) and short- and long-term measures of corporate financial performance. Support for predictions that the impact of High Performance. Bartel, A. P. (1994) uncovered that training plays a crucial role to increase employees' performance and organizational productivity. He found that higher rate of productivity one of the key factors of employees' consistent training other than administrative policies. Gruman, J. A. and Alan M. S. (2011) suggest that producing performance increments may be best achieved by orienting the performance management system to promote employee engagement. Leblebici, D. (2012) established agreed the workplace environment plays a crucial role for the employees. Nowadays employees may have a large number working alternatives, and then the environment in workplace becomes a critical factor for accepting and/or keeping the jobs. Konrad, A. M., and Robert M. (2000) examined the adoption of work-life programs and the impact of work-life programs on firm productivity. Productivity data were obtained from CD Disclosure for 195 public, for-profit firms. Significant interaction effects indicated that in these 195 firms

work-life programs had a stronger positive impact on productivity when women comprised a larger percentage of the workforce and when a higher percentage of professionals were employed. Samnani, A. k. and P. S. (2014) suggested that performance-enhancing compensation practices are designed to increase employee productivity through greater accountability, while highlighting performance differentials across employees. While productivity increases may occur, these practices can also stimulate an unintended consequence: workplace bullying. Obisi, C. (2011) expounded that organizational performance and its resultant efficiency and effectiveness can only be achieved when individuals are continuously appraised and evaluated. The inability of organization to install an effective performance appraisal strategy has hindered them from achieving competitive advantage which they require more now than ever before. Elnaga, A. and Amen I. (2013) found that an employee is a blood stream of any business. The accomplishment or disaster of the firm depends on its employee performance. Paper aimed at studying the effect of training on employee performance and to provide suggestion as to how firm can improve its employee performance through effective training programs. Bandura, A. and Robert W. (1989) examined that the results show that it is possible for goal setting alone to enhance performance without a formal-knowledge-of-results program, and thus yield external validity for Locke's theory of goal setting. Bommer, W. H. et al. (2006) suggested that objective and subjective measures of the same construct at the same level may be used interchangeably. The analysis, however, was based on a very limited sample. Future research should address the appropriate dimensionality of employee performance.

3.0 Conceptual Framework

In this part of the study independent variables (Education, Training and Development, Physical and Psychological Strength, Compensation and Motivation, Working Environment) will be linked with dependent variables (Productivity, Financial Performance) for organizational growth.



Figure 1: Conceptual Framework (Independent variables and dependent variables)

In the above figure employee's education is considered as a vital element to be achieved organizational growth. On the other hand, consistent training and development of the employee can lead organizational financial progress. Physical fitness and psychological strength of employees can bring high level of involvement on the job and increase productivity of the organizations both in public and private organizations. Employees always feel happier when they have been financially compensated along with non-financial motivation. Working environment has been considered to key factor that can lead human resources work actively and efficiently to achieve organizational goals. Therefore, above mentioned five independent factors or variables initially are considered to impact on dependent variables of organizational growth (i.e. productivity and financial performance).

3.1 Limitations

While conducting this research main limitation has been considered insufficient secondary data since large number of researches have not been conducted yet by the researchers on comparative study on public and private sectors employees, especially in Bangladesh. Besides, it is too difficult for the researchers to collect data from different government departments as they do not have direct access for conducting research survey.

3.2 Rationale of the Study

As it has already been mentioned, there is no mentionable research works conducted yet in the area of measuring impact of public and private sector employees' contribution as comparative studies for the growth of organizational growth. We felt it as an ideal field to explore something of creative nature if an exhaustive research can be conducted in this area. In fact no entity such as university, research organizations or government agencies has taken pain in showing any interest to carry out such an economic study. So the main interest to work in this area has been emanated from the urge to do a basic work through carrying out a study to observe, analyze and find out impact, if any, of human resources both in public and private sectors. We believe this kind of study will be useful for further research work as well as making policy makers interested in taking new policies for the organizational productivity and financial growth which may be leading to sustainable economic development in the days ahead in Bangladesh.

3.3 Objectives of the Study

Every research should have some specific objectives. This section of the study will provide specific purposes to analyze and find out the impact of human resources on productivity and financial performance for organizational growth, taking into considerations a number of public and private organizations. As Bangladesh graduated from the developing country to the lower middle income country a couple

of years back and she is in the process of graduating from being the aid-dependent economy into a self-reliant economy, the main focus of this paper is to reveal the significance of human resources in boosting national economic growth. As only private sector employees are not sufficient to generate required productivity in the economy, demands for public sectors employees have become obvious. The paper will analyze the trends of both public and private sectors employees on productivity and financial performance for organizational growth in Bangladesh.

To some extent the specific objectives of the study will be as follows:

- i) To present the status of human resources in public and private sectors in Bangladesh and trend of organizational growth;
- ii) To outline the major policies attracting human resources in Bangladesh;
- iii) To analyze financial performance of employees some of government and non government organizations in Bangladesh
- iv) To identify major problems of human resources in Bangladesh; and
- v) To provide some modest suggestions to develop human resources for government and non-government organizations in Bangladesh to increase organizational growth rapidly.

3.4 Research Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant impact of education of employees on financial growth of government and private organizations in Bangladesh.

H02: There is no significant impact of training and development of employees on financial growth of government and private organizations in Bangladesh.

H03: There is no significant impact of physical and psychological Strength of employees on financial growth of government and private organizations in Bangladesh.

H04: There is no significant impact of compensation and motivation of employees on financial growth of government and private organizations in Bangladesh.

H05: There is no significant impact of working environment of employees on financial growth of government and private organizations in Bangladesh.

4.0 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods have been adapted to collect secondary data. The target population for this research has been considered for both public and private sector employees. In this study, the accessible population has been comprised of all the above mentioned stakeholders of human resources of Bangladesh. Stratified random sampling technique has been adopted. The researchers decided what needed to be known and set out to find employees who were willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience.

Therefore, accessible population was divided into different strata or batch to draw the random sample. In the sample more than five years experienced employees were given preference to be a sample for the study. In this study, there were mainly 180 employees (public sectors 90, private sectors 90) considered as sample to conduct survey questionnaire. After the pilot testing and all necessary modifications, the researchers went directly to the related departments to collect primary data. Besides different journal articles, reports, financial statement have been observed and analyzed as secondary data through the simple statistical tools i.e. discrete statistics, regression analysis, time series analysis and other necessary methods using SPSS and Microsoft Office Excel software tools.

5.0 DATA ANALYSES AND FINDINGS

In this section of the research numerous analyses have been done such as; descriptive statistics, reliability test, regression analysis, time series analysis to reach the objective of the research.

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics generally shows proper description of data set which has been previously surveyed by the researchers. In this study, total 180 (90 from public organizations and 90 from private organizations) valid samples were considered to analyze and interpret their responses through specific methods of analyses as per achieving objective of the research. Among the employees 65% was male employees. Conversely, there were 35% female employees. These results suggest that still in Bangladesh rate of women in the workforce is not up to the mark but present government trying to equalize it rapidly. On the other hand, 8.3% was below 25 years of age, 37.2% was 25 to 35 years old, 47.2% was 35 to 45 years of age and 7.2% was 45 and above years of age in observed employees. These suggest that in Bangladesh energetic, capable employees' rate is very high that can bring organizational growth and economic growth as well as their age range between 25 to 45 years respectively. Therefore, impressive opportunities may have for the economy if human resources are properly utilized. The education has been found that 7.2% was undergraduates, 37.2% was graduates, 51.7% was post graduates and 3.9% was above post graduates. Maximum 51.7% employees have done their post graduates that should be increased by country in future to get high contribute specialized human resources in accomplishment of specialized tasks. Organizations should also try to seek for educated employees in term of the higher degree as per requirement.

5.2 Data Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.985	6

Table 1: Data Reliability Test Summary

The question of reliability rises as the function of scales is stretched to encompass the realm of prediction. One of the most reliability statistics in use today is Cronbach's alpha - Santos, J. R. A. (1999). Cronbach's alpha .70 and above is the good result, .80 and above better result and .90 and above is the best. Therefore, in the Table 1, Cronbach's alpha for the thirty items is almost .99 or 99%, suggesting that the items have the best internal consistency.

5.3 Regression Analysis

Statistical data analysis programs commonly compute the p-values during the execution of hypothesis test. Adjusted R-squared, on the other hand, gives the percentage of variation explained by only those independent variables that in reality affect the dependent variable.

5.3.1 Education on organizational growth (H01)

Null hypothesis (H01) was stated that there was no significant impact of independent variable on dependent variable. In this study, $b = .93$, $t(178) = 2.92$ and $p < .05$, on the other hand, results shown by calculations in the tables 3, 4: $F(1, 178) = 1136.490$, $p < .001$, with an adjusted $R^2 = .86$. The regression equation is; $Y = a + bX$ (where, $Y =$ dependent variable, $b =$ slope, $X =$ independent variable and $a =$ constant). Therefore, the equation was found as, $Y = .35 + .93X$. The regression model states that if p value (probability value) is lesser than alpha value (standard level of significance, $\alpha = .05$) then the model is significant. In this study, developed model was highly significant with p value ($p < .001$) at the standard level of significance level ($\alpha = .05$). On the other hand, adjusted R^2 (adjusted R^2 indicates that the percentage of variation explained by only the independent variables that actually affect the dependent variable) .86 or 86% of variance in dependent variable (organizational growth) which could be explained by independent variable (education).

5.3.2 Training and development on organizational growth (H02)

Null hypothesis (H02) was stated that there was no significant impact of independent variable on dependent variable. In this study, $b = .87$, $t(178) = 4.92$ and $p < .05$, on the other hand, results shown by calculations in the tables 3, 4: $F(1, 178) = 570.589$, $p < .001$, with an adjusted $R^2 = .76$. The regression equation is; $Y = a + bX$ (where, $Y =$ dependent variable, $b =$ slope, $X =$ independent variable and $a =$ constant). Therefore, the equation was found as, $Y = .76 + .87X$. The regression model states that if p value (probability value) is lesser than alpha value (standard level of significance, $\alpha = .05$) then the model is significant. In this study, developed model was highly significant with p value ($p < .001$) at the standard level of significance level ($\alpha = .05$). On the other hand, adjusted R^2 (adjusted R^2 indicates that the percentage of variation explained by only the independent variables that actually affect the dependent variable) .76 or 76% of variance in dependent variable (organizational growth) which could be explained by independent variable (training and development).

5.3.3 Physical and psychological strength on organizational growth (H03)

Null hypothesis (H03) was stated that there was no significant impact of independent variable on dependent variable. In this study, $b = .97$, $t(178) = 2.25$ and $p < .05$, on the other hand, results shown by calculations in the tables 3, 4: $F(1, 178) = 2928.804$, $p < .001$, with an adjusted $R^2 = .94$. The regression equation is; $Y = a + bX$ (where, $Y =$ dependent variable, $b =$ slope, $X =$ independent variable and $a =$ constant). Therefore, the equation was found as, $Y = .18 + .97X$. The regression model states that if p value (probability value) is lesser than alpha value (standard level of significance, $\alpha = .05$) then the model is significant. In this study, developed model was highly significant with p value ($p < .001$) at the standard level of significance level ($\alpha = .05$). On the other hand, adjusted R^2 (adjusted R^2 indicates that the percentage of variation explained by only the independent variables that actually affect the dependent variable) .97 or 97% of variance in dependent variable (organizational growth) which could be explained by independent variable (physical and psychological strength).

5.3.4 Compensation and motivation on organizational growth (H04)

Null hypothesis (H04) was stated that there was no significant impact of independent variable on dependent variable. In this study, $b = .97$, $t(178) = 2.87$ and $p < .05$, on the other hand, results shown by calculations in the tables 3, 4: $F(1, 178) = 2984.712$, $p < .001$, with an adjusted $R^2 = .94$. The regression equation is; $Y = a + bX$ (where, $Y =$ dependent variable, $b =$ slope, $X =$ independent variable and $a =$ constant). Therefore, the equation was found as, $Y = .22 + .97X$. The regression model states that if p value (probability value) is lesser than alpha value (standard level of significance, $\alpha = .05$) then the model is significant. In this study, developed model was highly significant with p value ($p < .001$) at the standard level of significance level ($\alpha = .05$). On the other hand, adjusted R^2 (adjusted R^2 indicates that the percentage of variation explained by only the independent variables that actually affect the dependent variable) .97 or 97% of variance in dependent variable (organizational growth) which could be explained by independent variable (physical and psychological strength).

5.3.5 Working Environment on organizational growth (H05)

Null hypothesis (H05) was stated that there was no significant impact of independent variable on dependent variable. In this study, $b = .88$, $t(178) = 3.90$ and $p < .05$, on the other hand, results shown by calculations in the tables 3, 4: $F(1, 178) = 639.275$, $p < .001$, with an adjusted $R^2 = .78$. The regression equation is; $Y = a + bX$ (where, $Y =$ dependent variable, $b =$ slope, $X =$ independent variable and $a =$ constant). Therefore, the equation was found as, $Y = .59 + .88X$. The regression model states that if p value (probability value) is lesser than alpha value (standard level of significance, $\alpha = .05$) then the model is significant. In this study, developed model was highly significant with p value ($p < .001$) at the standard level of significance level ($\alpha = .05$). On the other hand, adjusted R^2 (adjusted R^2 indicates that the percentage of variation

explained by only the independent variables that actually affect the dependent variable) .88 or 88% of variance in dependent variable (organizational growth) which could be explained by independent variable (working environment).

5.4 Time Series Analysis

In this part of the study time series analysis has been adopted using SPSS to find out more insight of financial performances and trends of public and private sector organizations. Five consecutive financial statements have been considered to run time series analysis.

5.4.1 Government Organizations: PETROBANGLA

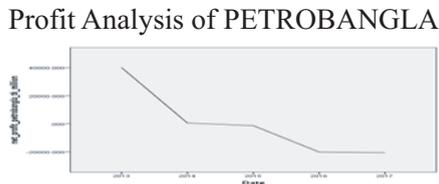


Figure 2: Net profit Trend of PETROBANGLA during FY 2013-14 to 2017-18

In the figure 2, net profit (Tk. in million) of Petrobangla has been shown for the FY 2013-14 to 2017-18. The figure shows that FY 2013-14 Petrobangla has net profit Tk. 40,000 million (forty thousand million) but gradually it lost its profitability. Consequently, from the FY 2014-15 to 2017-18 FY it has been carrying negative profitability. It seems to be very insignificant and poor financial performances over the years for its shareholders and also for the economy. Though financial statements very often shows that a big amount of profit has been utilizing for the development of organization as a result it becomes losing organization. On the other hand, government has been consistently subsidizing the organization over the periods to run it smoothly.

Profit Analysis of Titas Gas

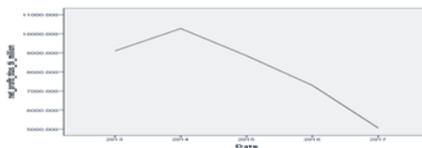


Figure 4: Net profit Trend of Titas Gas during FY 2013-14 to 2017-18

In the figure 4, net profit (Tk. in million) of Titas Gas has been shown for the FY 2013-14 to 2017-18. The figure shows that FY 2013-14 Titas Gas has net profit Tk. 9,000 million (nine thousand million) and it has become top in the FY 2014-15 at 10,500 million (ten thousand five hundred million) but slowly it lost its profitability. Consequently, it has been seen in the graph that FY 2017-18 it has become lowest profitability among the observed years by Tk. 5,000 million (five thousand million). Therefore it is also an organization that does not allow smiling of its shareholders.

Profit Analysis of DESCO

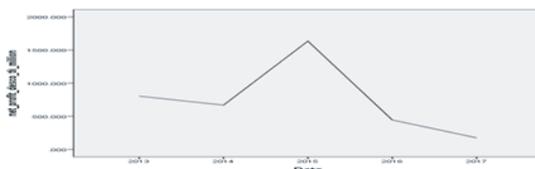


Figure 6: Net profit Trend of DESCO during FY 2013-14 to 2017-18

In the figure 6, net profit (Tk. in million) of DESCO has been shown for the FY 2013-14 to 2017-18. The figure shows that FY 2013-14 DESCO has net profit Tk. 800 million (eight hundred million) and in the FY 2014-15 it has become top position in term of profit by Tk 1,600 million (one thousand six hundred million). But in the the FY 2016-17 to FY 2017-18 it has been downward profitability. Therefore, the curve seems to be almost 'A' shape. It is suggesting that company's operations or other variables are not up to the mark to get a desired profit for the shareholders.

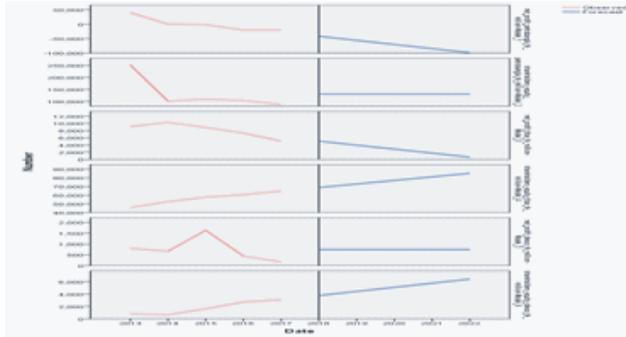
Profit and Equity Forecasting of Petrobangla, Titas and DESCO for 2018-22

		Forecast				
Model		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
net_profit_petrobangla_tk_million-Model_1	Forecast	-	-	-70018.079	-	-
	UCL	41584.293	55801.186	-21634.278	84234.972	98451.865
	LCL	2968.938	-9293.238	-	34045.338	46519.113
shareholders_equity_petrobangla_tk_million-Model_2	Forecast	-	-	-	-	-
	UCL	86137.524	102309.134	118401.880	134424.606	150384.617
	LCL	130937.161	130937.161	130937.161	130937.161	130937.161
net_profit_titas_tk_million-Model_3	Forecast	320868.269	320868.269	320868.269	320868.269	320868.269
	UCL	58993.947	58993.947	-58993.947	58993.947	58993.947
	LCL	5062.244	3958.439	2854.633	1750.828	647.023
shareholders_equity_titas_tk_million-Model_4	Forecast	8860.171	7756.373	6652.585	5548.810	4445.053
	UCL	1264.317	160.504	-943.318	-2047.154	-3151.007
	LCL	68897.018	73010.826	77124.634	81238.441	85352.249
net_profit_desco_tk_million-Model_5	Forecast	73076.556	82356.416	92762.697	104130.141	116347.687
	UCL	64717.480	63665.235	61486.570	58346.742	54356.812
	LCL	746.200	746.200	746.200	746.200	746.200
shareholders_equity_desco_tk_million-Model_6	Forecast	2276.164	2276.164	2276.164	2276.164	2276.164
	UCL	-783.764	-783.764	-783.764	-783.764	-783.764
	LCL	3770.895	4435.330	5099.765	5764.200	6428.635
	Forecast	5188.868	5915.282	6639.206	7360.919	8080.650
	UCL	2352.922	2955.378	3560.324	4167.481	4776.620
	LCL					

Table 23: Net Profit and Equity Forecasting for 2018-22 of PETROBANGLA, Titas Gas and DESCO

The table 23 represents the forecasting of net profit and equity for the FY 2018-19 to FY 2022-23 of Petrobangla, Titas Gas and DESCO. From the first two rows of the table represents Petrobangla’s forecasting of net profit and equity for next five years respectively. It does not show mentionable stability of financial performances of the organization. On the other hand, performances of Titas in terms of net profit represent also inconsistent and poor which may continue over the years though its equity shows some consistency somehow. Finally, DESCO has mixed scenarios as net profits may go down most of the periods and sometimes it may up.

Figure 8: Net Profit and Equity Forecasting for 2018-22 of PETROBANGLA, Titas Gas and DESCO



The figure 8 represents the forecasting of net profit and equity for the FY 2018-19 to FY 2022-23 of Petrobangla, Titas Gas and DESCO. The different curves like red color presents observed value and blue presents forecasting value of selected government organizations. From the first two portions of the figure represents Petrobangla’s observed and forecasting net profit and equity for last five years and next five years respectively. In the observed curve (red) does not show any stability of the organization along with forecasting curve (blue). On the other side, Titas observed curve shows also inconsistent poor performances over the years as forecasting follows the same trend of the organization. But its equity shows some consistency somehow in both observed and forecasting curves which may bring some hope for the shareholder and stakeholders. Last but not least, DESCO has mixed scenarios as net profits goes down most of the periods and sometimes it ups inconsistently in the observed periods and forecasting curve may take place similar things in the following years. Its equity has got some resistant in terms of better future trend.

5.4.2 Private Organizations (ACI, BEXIMCO and SQUARE):

Profit Analysis of ACI

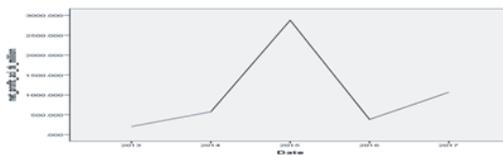


Figure 9: Net profit Trend of ACI during FY 2013-14 to 2017-18

In the figure 9, net profit (Tk. in million) of ACI has been shown for the FY 2013-14 to 2017-18. The figure shows that FY 2013-14 ACI has net profit Tk. 40,000 million (forty thousand million) but gradually it lost its profitability. Consequently, from the FY 2014-15 to 2017-18 FY it has been carrying negative profitability. It seems to be very insignificant and poor financial performances over the years for its shareholders and also for the economy. Though financial statements very often shows that a big amount of profit has been utilizing for the development of organization as a result it becomes losing organization. On the other hand, government has been consistently subsidizing the organization over the periods to run it smoothly.

Profit Analysis of BEXIMCO

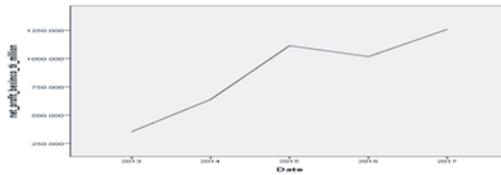


Figure 11: Net profit Trend of BEXIMCO during FY 2013-14 to 2017-18

In the figure 11, net profit (Tk. in million) of BEXIMCO has been shown for the FY 2013-14 to 2017-18. The figure shows that FY 2013-14 BEXIMCO has net profit Tk. 40,000 million (forty thousand million) but gradually it lost its profitability. Consequently, from the FY 2014-15 to 2017-18 FY it has been carrying negative profitability. It seems to be very insignificant and poor financial performances over the years for its shareholders and also for the economy. Though financial statements very often shows that a big amount of profit has been utilizing for the development of organization as a result it becomes losing organization. On the other hand, government has been consistently subsidizing the organization over the periods to run it smoothly.

Profit Analysis of SQUARE

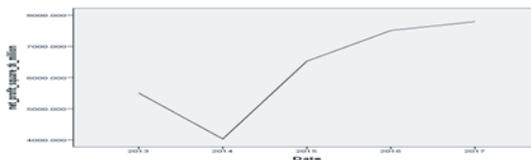


Figure 13: Net profit Trend of SQUARE during FY 2013-14 to 2017-18

In the figure 13, net profit (Tk. in million) of SQUARE has been shown for the FY 2013-14 to 2017-18. The figure shows that FY 2013-14 SQUARE has net profit Tk. 40,000 million (forty thousand million) but gradually it lost its profitability. Consequently, from the FY 2014-15 to 2017-18 FY it has been carrying negative profitability. It seems to be very insignificant and poor financial performances over

the years for its shareholders and also for the economy. Though financial statements very often shows that a big amount of profit has been utilizing for the development of organization as a result it becomes loosing organization. On the other hand, government has been consistently subsidizing the organization over the periods to run it smoothly.

Profit and Equity Forecasting of ACI, BEXIMCO and SQUARE for 2018-22

		Forecast				
Model		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
net_profit_aci_tk_million-Model_1	Forecast	1020.400	1020.400	1020.400	1020.400	1020.400
	UCL	4038.594	4038.594	4038.594	4038.594	4038.594
	LCL	-1997.794	-1997.794	-1997.794	-1997.794	-1997.794
shareholders_equity_aci_tk_million-Model_2	Forecast	15658.816	17664.014	19669.212	21674.411	23679.609
	UCL	20922.208	23158.563	25385.579	27604.303	29815.602
	LCL	10395.423	12169.465	13952.846	15744.518	17543.616
net_profit_beximco_tk_million-Model_3	Forecast	1518.519	1737.386	1956.254	2175.121	2393.989
	UCL	2103.836	2348.355	2591.843	2834.415	3076.166
	LCL	933.202	1126.417	1320.664	1515.827	1711.811
shareholders_equity_beximco_tk_million-Model_4	Forecast	64813.031	67970.385	71127.740	74285.095	77442.450
	UCL	72575.740	76075.455	79561.285	83034.793	86497.271
	LCL	57050.321	59865.316	62694.196	65535.397	68387.629
net_profit_square_tk_million-Model_5	Forecast	8600.181	9405.627	10211.073	11016.518	11821.964
	UCL	12243.362	13120.815	13996.901	14871.695	15745.266
	LCL	4957.000	5690.439	6425.244	7161.342	7898.662
shareholders_equity_square_tk_million-Model_6	Forecast	53221.837	59413.175	65604.514	71795.852	77987.190
	UCL	55895.373	62382.720	68843.354	75283.469	81707.183
	LCL	50548.301	56443.631	62365.673	68308.235	74267.197

Table 25: Net Profit and Equity Forecasting for 2018-22 of ACI, BEXIMCO and SQUARE
 The table 25 represents the forecasting of net profit and equity for the FY 2018-19 to FY 2022-23 of ACI, BEXIMCO and SQUARE. From the first two rows of the table represents ACI’s forecasting of net profit and equity for next five years respectively. It shows mentionable stability of financial performances of the organization. On the other hand, performances of BEXIMCO in terms of net profit represent also consistent and upward which may continue over the years. To end with, SQUARE has also good scenarios as net profits may go up most of the periods.

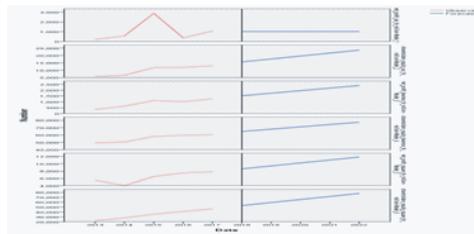


Figure 15: Net Profit and Equity Forecasting for 2018-22 of ACI, BEXIMCO and SQUARE

The figure 15 represents the forecasting of net profit and equity for the FY 2018-19 to FY 2022-23 of ACI, BEXIMCO and SQUARE. The different curves like red color presents observed value and blue presents forecasting value of selected government organizations. From the first two portions of the figure represents ACI's observed and forecasting net profit and equity for last five years and next five years respectively. In the observed curve (red) does not show somehow stability of the organization though constant scenarios in forecasting curve (blue). On the other side, BEXIMCO's observed curve shows consistent higher efficient performances over the years as forecasting follows the same trend of the organization. Last but not the least, SQUARE has high level of increasing in net profits over the observed periods and forecasting curve also takes place similar things in the following years. Its equity has got better trend in the forecasting periods.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION ON FINDINGS

Hypotheses have been tested through multiple regression method using SPSS. The results show that organizational growth certainly depends on employees' productivity and financial performance for both public and private sector organizations. In addition, time series analyses have been undertaken using SPSS to know the current situation and forecast financial condition of public and private organizations for next five years. Results show that public organizations financial condition more volatile, there are huge ups and downs in the financial performances over the years. Next five years financial forecasting also suggests that consistent ups and downs will be there and government may have to subsidize consistently those organizations during the years. On the other hand time series data analyses result show that private organizations have been doing well in terms of their financial performances. Besides financial forecasting for the following five years also suggests that consistent upward trend to be found in terms of their financial activities. While conducting this research public organizations employee were reluctant to provide their responses, dissimilarly private organizations employees were found to be interested to response properly on the questionnaire survey by the researchers.

7.0 CONCLUSION

This research uncovers the impact of human resources on productivity and financial performances towards organizational growth. It allows comparative analyses and findings on Bangladeshi public and private organizations employees' contribution towards respective organizations. By the analyses and findings it reveals that employees of private organizations more consistent, efficient performer on productivity and financial aspects though there are some issues to be addressed like working hours, leaves, promotion and rewards, job security etc. by the stockholders to minimize agency gap. On the other hand, employees of the government organizations enjoy job security, regular promotion and rewards, fixed working

hours etc. but still observed organizations employees well behind in terms of productivity and financial performances. Currently government takes inclusive training and development with full digitalization facilities especially for the government employees to enrich their skills and motivate themselves to work for the organization to contribute efficiently in productivity and profitability. Finally, this research can be evidence for the policymakers, researchers and private and public sector organizations toward realizing the significant impact of employees' contributions, involvement, and development of skills for financial growth of the organizations.

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An Empirical research on the potentials of Information & Communication Technology for developing remote rural community in Bangladesh

B. M. Masiur Rahman

Abstract:

Digital Bangladesh envisions, “connecting citizens in ways most meaningful to them” and bring services to their doorsteps. With the vision to transform the country into a frontier digital hub, the Government has committed to ensure 100% access to ICT starting from the very grassroots levels. Thus, in an effort to promoting inclusion and closing the digital divide, IOM in collaboration with KT and the governments (ICT Ministry) took the initiative to facilitate advanced network technology connecting the rural residents of Moheshkhali with the mainland making it the county’s first “Digital Island”. The objective of the intervention was to improve the overall welfare of the local community in terms of access to information and fundamental services.

This study was undertaken to find the impact of the intervention program and how it helped transform the socio-economic condition of the target population. The study found that in addition to successfully setting up the technical groundwork, there has also been significant progress in education and health sectors. The survey revealed that 96% of the people have noted a positive change thanks to the project. Whereas 97% of the people attribute improvements in the community as a result of the program. The findings also identified that the distance learning program and multimedia classroom facilities have improved the quality of primary school education. Likewise, the mobile healthcare facility established by the project also contributed to positive change in the public healthcare service. But the due to lack of digital platform, social service and other public service are not duly fulfilled the public interest.

The findings of the research are sufficed to prove the research hypothesis that Information and Communication Technology has a pivotal role to play in developing remote rural communities of Bangladesh. However, the project also had a few hindrances that were revealed from the study and needs improvement. Although the people have expressed their gratitude for the project, they have also urged to increase the number of community centers so that a broader number of users can access it. Uninterrupted electricity is still an underlying factor that needs to be addressed. As Bangladesh makes headway to becoming a digital society, the Digital Island project paves the way in realizing that goal. The success of the project can be taken as an example and replicated for other rural areas of the country.

1.0 Introduction

Bangladesh is still categorized amongst the group of least developed countries, being placed 143st in terms of GDP per capita (International Monetary Fund. April

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2019), and having a large economic and social gap between rural and urban populations. It is also extremely vulnerable to climate change, located in the Bay of Bengal on a known cyclone corridor, and only some meters above sea level. To reduce migration compelled by worsening environmental conditions, and to strengthen resilience of at-risk communities, governments should adopt policies and commit financing to social protection, livelihoods development, basic urban infrastructure development, and disaster risk management (ADB, 2012). Improving public services and enhancing the accessibility of minimum social welfare for people is one of the main goals of the Government of Bangladesh. Despite this focus, limited resource and poor infrastructure hamper the efforts and people particularly in the rural areas of the country have limited access to services. The private sector also has a potentially large role to play reducing risk. (ADB, 2012).

International Organization for Migration (IOM) together with Korea Telecom (KT) in association with ICT Ministry & Bangladesh Computer Council has been setting up a “Digital Island” project in Moheshkhali Upazila of Cox’s Bazar, in the Southeast of Bangladesh to improve the quality of public services in a hard to reach areas of the country through the utilization of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) solutions. The project was officially inaugurated by the Hon’ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh on 27th April 2017 to enable the selected community people of Moheshkhali in enhancing access to and quality of public services through Information and Communication Technology (Dhaka Tribune, 27th April 2017).

The Digital Moheshkhali Project is a tri-party Agreement between the Government of Bangladesh, Korea Telecom (KT) and International Organization for Migration (IOM). The Bangladesh Government is facilitating project implementation and coordinate with other Ministries, Divisions and Government Agencies to ensure the access to and utilization of Government Communication networks. KT has been provided high-speed internet backbone infrastructure and provided concrete and practical solutions to improve their access to necessary services through the usage of technology. These are including, but not be restricted to e-health, e-agriculture, e-education and e-learning. IOM is acting as the Project implementation entity, and in such capacity provide liaison services between GOB and KT to facilitate communication and cooperation, as well as carry out needs assessment of the residents and also analyze the needs of the residents of Moheshkhali Island, Cox’s Bazar District. The parties are collaborating in the development and implementation of relief and development projects using ICT.

The project has established 19 KM wide network infrastructure with fiber optical backbone at Moheshkhali and 25 project locations equipped with the planned network device and have been connected with the backbone network. Currently, Moheshkhali has a high-speed internet facility and 30% of the population in the island, 3 unions of out of 8 can access to speedy internet service. Public service providers have been trained to provide improved education, health, and

administrative services to the community. Economically deprived community is able to have the same quality of social services in urban areas (IOM Project Brief, 2019).

The Bangladesh government, in partnership with IOM and KT, are changing this by introducing e-learning as part of the digital island project. Selected 10 primary schools are being implemented distance learning program from class 1 – 3 in English subject covering 4000 students. Several awareness-raising workshops have been organized to aware around 2500 parents on e-learning and computer-based education for their children resulted in the students' performance and attendance rate have improved significantly. So far about 120 primary school teachers have been trained on e-learning and multimedia-based teaching to support this initiative. The project has also established an IT Training Center for the community youth groups to learn computer education. A total of 505 community youths has already received certified skilled development training on IT since its inception which is being helped them to secure jobs (IOM Project Brief, 2019).

Moheshkhali is providing general health services, family planning, and maternal health services of its 3,80000 (approx.) inhabitants through one Upazila Health Complex (UHC) and 27 Community Clinics (CC) in 8 different unions. However, UHC, CCs, and Family Welfare Centers (FWC) do not have sufficient doctors and human resources. Therefore, healthcare capacity is not enough to treat specific disease or treatment such as maternity, skin, eye and minor wound dressing for any emergency cases. The digital island project has partially overcome this problem by connecting doctors as far afield as Dhaka with patients on the island via telemedicine and portable medical devices. The island's four clinics and one health complex now have mobile healthcare and telemedicine facility where doctors as far afield as Dhaka or elsewhere can diagnose patients here via video-conferencing equipment. The digital healthcare is now providing access to the patients to digital diagnosis facility and expert doctors without having to leave the island. Digital healthcare training has been carried out for 10 doctors and 90 local health workers. Patients with complications are now getting treatment through telemedicine and mobile healthcare facility, removing the need to travel to Cox's Bazar for the treatment. Over 800 patients (70% of women) have received diagnosis facility through the new devices.

In coordination with Ministry of Social Welfare, government officials and community people has trained to improve computer skills. Community clubs has opened to make computers and hi-speed internet accessible to all. The capacity of targeted service providers and service receivers built to ensure wide adoption of ICT solutions. The main objective of the project was to improve access to social services in Moheshkhali Upazila using ICT solutions.

Improving public services and enhancing the accessibility of minimum social welfare for people is one of the main goals of the Government of Bangladesh, since

2016 with the “Digital Bangladesh’ initiative. IOM together with Korea Telecom (KT) and Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) are implementing Digital Island projects in Moheshkhali, Cox’s Bazar, in the Southeast of Bangladesh to improve the quality of public services and livelihood in an isolated region through the utilization of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) solutions. Targeted populations of Moheshkhali enjoy greater access to improved education, public health services and access to information and knowledge through hi-speed ICT solutions.

According to IOM press release on 28 April 2017, during project launch day Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, said “Today’s launch is one more step towards the Digital Bangladesh Vision 2021, when we will have a prosperous and equitable middle-income Bangladesh by our golden jubilee of independence. What has been done on the Island of Moheshkhali can be replicated in other hard-to-reach areas of the country, so that all corners of the country can benefit from the digital revolution,” On the basis of this statement, after 2 years of project launching, the author has tried to find out the impact assessment of this project and way forward.

1.1 Statement of the problem:

Schools and health clinics of Moheshkhali has been chronically understaffed while Moheshkhali has facilities under the Digital Island project. A needs assessment conducted by IOM -- the UN Migration Agency, in 2016 showed that the teachers on the island have a limited capacity to teach anything outside of the basic curriculum and are particularly weak in teaching English (IOM Press Release, Published on May 3, 2019). Enough schools and clinics have been built by the Government to cover the population’s needs, but the main issue is staffing. Teachers, doctors and many inhabitants do not want to live in the remote area due to lack of reliable power, jobs and a bridge that connects them to the mainland.

1.2 Significance of the study:

The incorporation of ICT in the field of public service delivery is positively correlated in developing remote rural communities.

1.3 Scope of the study:

This study was undertaken to find the impact of the interventions of the Digital Island Project and how it helped transform the socio-economic condition of the target population. This study was also undertaken to find the possibility of replication in other remote area.

1.4 Objective of the study:

This report involves a study to gauge the consumer-to-service match for the Digital Island Project, Moheshkhali undertaken by Korea Telecom (KT) in cooperation with

the Government of Bangladesh and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Moheshkhali, Bangladesh. This study seeks to get a clear picture on how the intended beneficiaries of the project are adapting to the technology intervention and how it's affecting their day to day activities. This will show how the project is proceeding. The study divided into 6 major specific objectives; these are:

- a) To identify the overall awareness of the project
- b) To assess the improvements in Network & Public Services
- c) To find out the improvements in Education Service
- d) To study the improvements in Healthcare Service
- e) To figure out the overall status of the public service delivery
- f) To study on the potentials of Information & Communication Technology for developing remote rural community in Bangladesh

1.5 Limitations:

The study has some limitations within which are-

- The study was limited to only project target locations, which were three unions out of the total eight unions in Moheshkhali Upazilla, to prove the hypothesis.
- The project assessed by the responded perception of the obligations. So sometimes, it may be biased by the socio-economic status of the responder.
- Last but not the least, the results of the study may not be completely generalized because the sample was restricted only Moheshkhali upaziala.

2. Methodology:

In order to understand top to bottom line perception regarding the outcome of the Digital Island Project, I have conducted a field survey of 180 residents of the island who are already aware of the project and have witnessed its development. I have conducted said survey using the mandated survey tools and questionnaire.

The survey has 39 questions and focuses on the following six discussion topics:

- a) Overall Awareness of the project
- b) Improvements in Network & Public Services
- c) Improvements in Education
- d) Improvements in Healthcare
- e) Overall status of the public service delivery
- f) Possibility to spread out in other remote rural community

The survey was conducted over a period of 5 days on the month of April 2019. Afterward the data was cross-checked for accuracy by calling 20% of the respondents randomly by phone. The survey pool involved a diverse group of people

both male and female. They were from various occupational backgrounds. In addition, they represent multiple age groups of the people who live there. This was done for the sake of a balanced projection of the opinions people have about the Digital Island Project.

3. Result & Discussion

3.1. Demographic

This researcher has conducted a field survey of 180 residents of this island and out of the 180 sample, 56% was male and 44% of female. On the other hand, 64% data was collected from 10 to 40 years age limit.

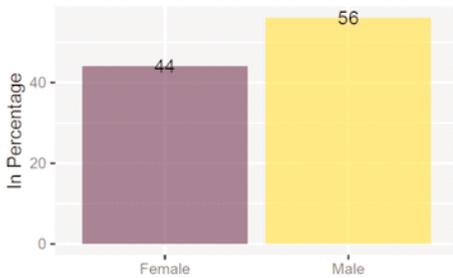


Figure 1: Proportion Bar Plot of Sex

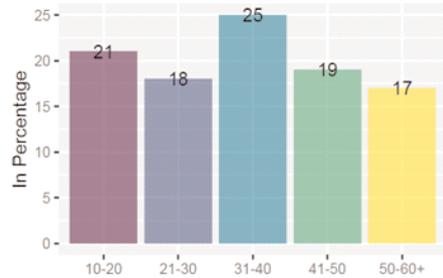


Figure 2: Proportion Bar Plot of Age

According to findings, survey has tried to cover the all stakeholders, but most of the people were from public officials (mostly teacher) and students, because they are the ultimate users.

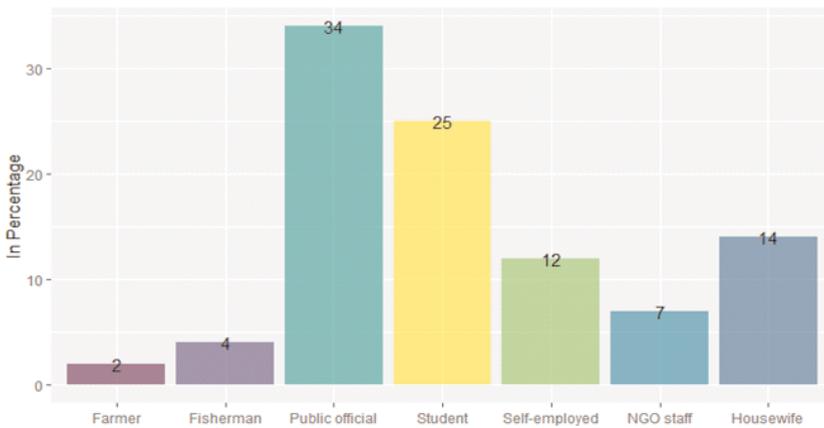


Figure 3: Proportion bar Plot of Occupation

3.2. Awareness of the residents of the Digital Island about the project

When asked about the operating organizations at least 64% of the people seemed to know them well. However, 36% and 21% responded saying they are not aware of Korea Telecom or International Organization for Migration respectively. More

than half the people said that they do not know about the infrastructure providing internet services or the IT space and Giga speed of internet. Therefore, the project has to take some initiative regarding awareness raising programme. On the other hand, at least 82% of the people know the programme being implemented well (video learning, healthcare, e-commerce.).

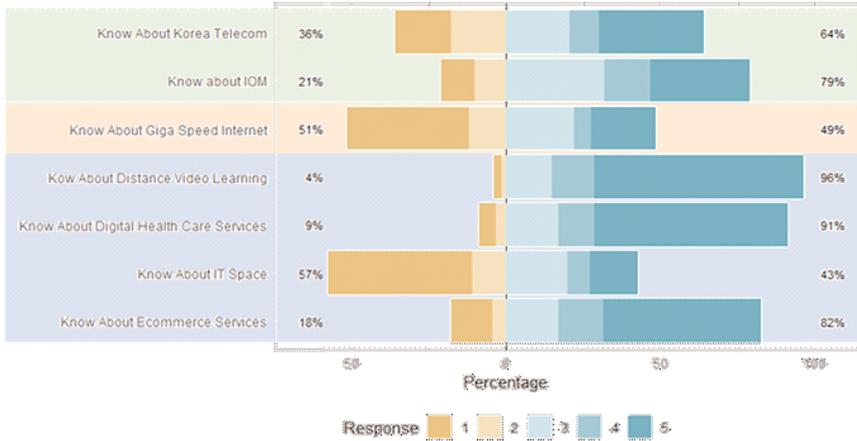


Figure 4: Stacked Bar on Awareness about the Project

3.3. Improvement in the Environments (Network/Public Service) of the Digital Island

On the question of improvements on an individual level, at least 96% of the people have noted a positive change thanks to the project. Whereas 97% of the people attribute improvements in the community because of the program and a similar number of people have remarked on improvements in network and public services thanks to this Project.

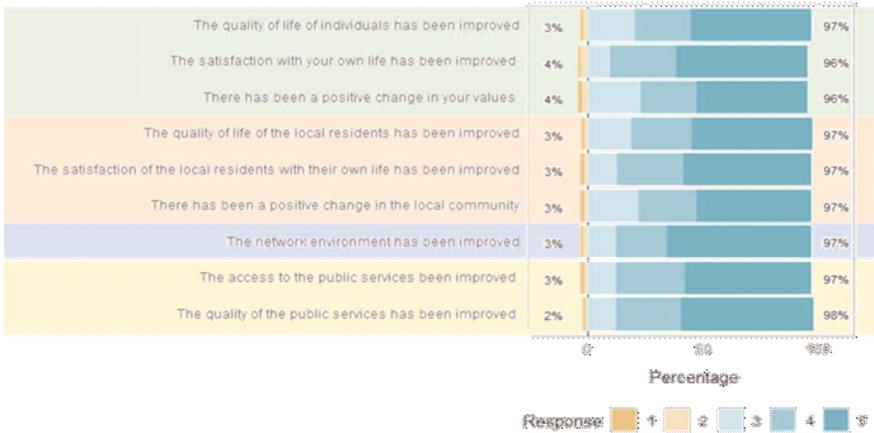


Figure 5: Stacked Bar on the Network and Public Services

3.4. Awareness of the Improvement in the Educational Environment of the Digital Island

While 85% of the people claimed to have ample knowledge of the video education facilities, only 48% seem to be attending. Furthermore, 36% seems to be satisfied with the infrastructure and at least 86% of the people have noticed positive consequences in terms of access, achievements, and atmosphere.

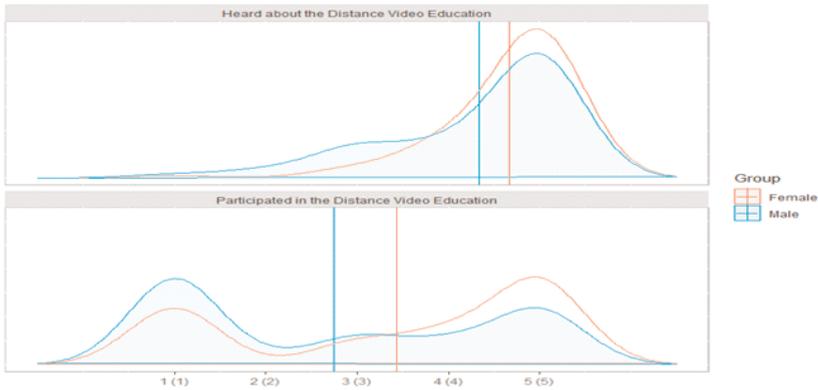


Figure 6: Stacked Bar on effects of Distant Video Education

3.5. Awareness about Distant Video Education Service and Usage of the service

The following graph is a plot showing the number of people who are aware of the Distance Video Education and the people who have participated in the Distance Video Education service. 85% of the people have heard of the service, yet only 46% of the are using the service fully. 34% of the people, however, are not availing the service even though they are fully aware of it.

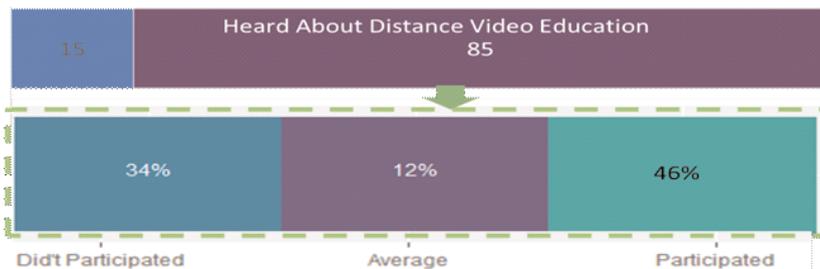


Figure 7: Awareness and Participation Distance Video Education

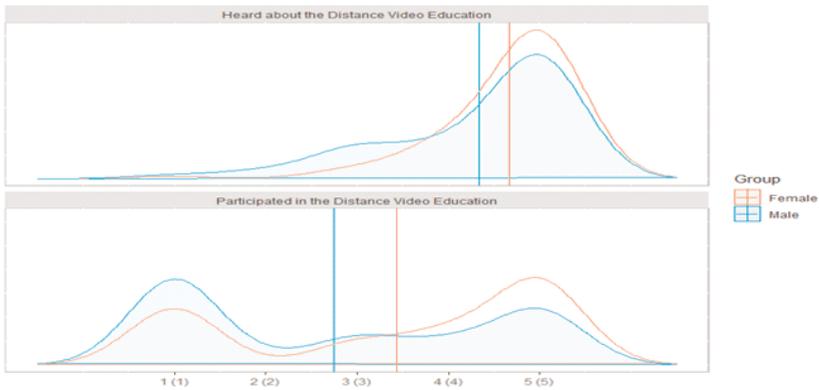


Figure 8: Awareness and Participation Distance Video Education of by Sex

Female members of the community are more aware of the Distance Video education services and participated more in the service. 96% of the women heard about the service when 80% of males are aware. Accordingly, 20% more women are participating in the service.

3.6. Awareness of the Improvement in the Medical Environment of the Digital Island

67% of the respondents have admitted to know the digital healthcare system rather well, while only 22% seem to have availed the services. At least 63% of the people feel that the healthcare system on the island has improved because of the Digital Island Project and 85% would recommend it to others.

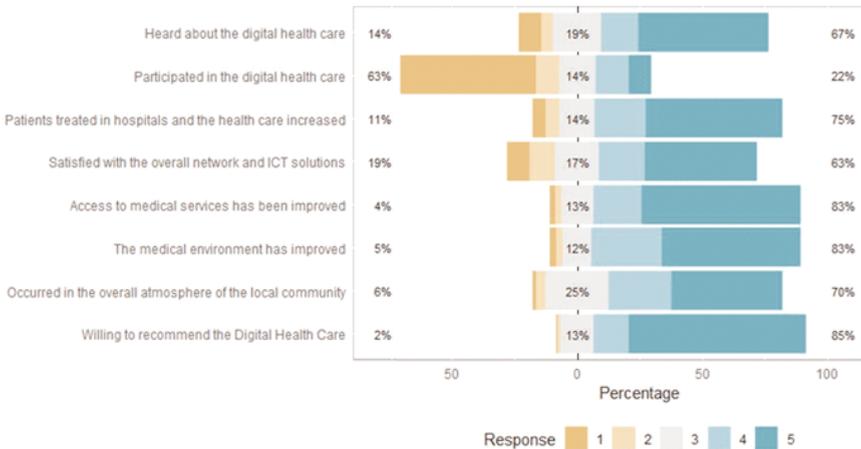


Figure 9: Stacked Bar on Digital Healthcare System

3.7. Awareness about Healthcare Service and Usage of the service

This plot is showing the number of people who are aware of the Healthcare services and the people who have participated in that service. 67% of the people from our respondents have heard about digital healthcare service and 33% have not been aware of healthcare service. Among people who heard about the Digital Healthcare Service, only 22% availed the service and two-third (63%) of the people never availed the service.

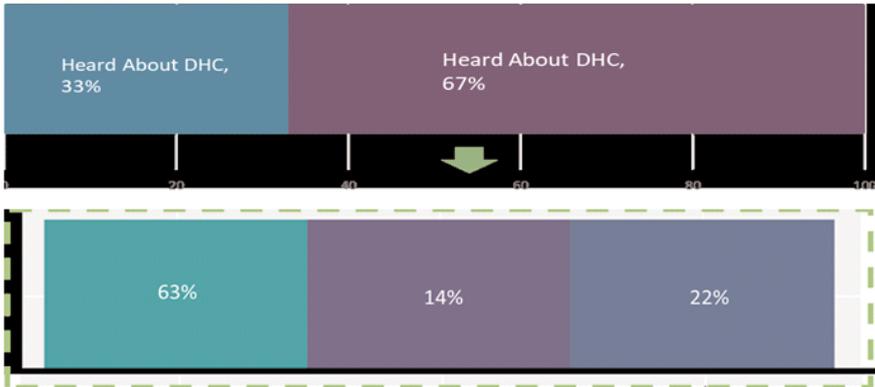


Figure 10: Awareness and Participation of Digital Health Care

3.8. Participants benefitting from the Healthcare and those willing to recommend it

22% of respondents who participated fully in the Digital Healthcare Project, 90% said that they would strongly recommend the service.

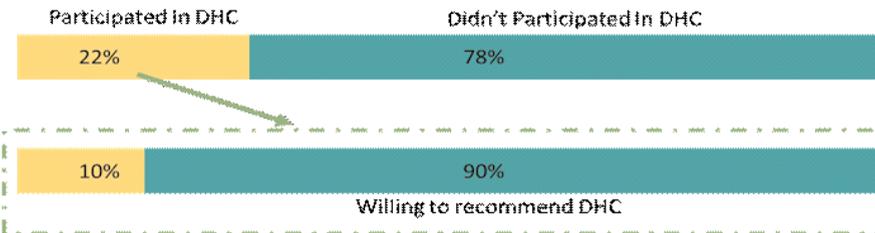


Figure 11: Participation and willingness to recommend of Digital Health Care

4. Conclusion & Recommendation

This survey sought to find out the actual impact of the digital island project intervention. The survey also captured valuable opinions, experiences, insights and feelings of those participants involved in interview. The survey revealed that 96% of the people have noted a positive change thanks to the project. Whereas 97% of the people attribute improvements in the community because of the program. The

findings also identified that distance learning program and multimedia classroom facilities have improved the quality of primary school education. Likewise, mobile healthcare facility established by the project also contributed positive change in the public healthcare service. The findings also identified among other things barriers that are working against full ICT integration into the school education and these include access to ICT resources, technical problems associated with ICT use such as poor electricity problem. However, although several recommendations were given, their successful implementation will depend on the commitment of all stakeholders involved as well as the ability of the beneficiary groups to adapt to the ever-changing ICT environment.

The following recommendations can be considered for improving education system in Moheshkhali with the integration of Information and Communication Technology:

- **Establish Multiple Multimedia Classrooms in each school**

It is highly recommended to introduce the Multimedia Classroom (MMC) approach in the primary and secondary schools as a visualization tools in classroom teaching to improve the teaching learning quality. Also, digital content should be made available in every schools from pre-school to class five level especially English and Mathematics subject.

- **Introduce various levels of IT training Courses for teachers**

- a) Basic Level Training on ICT: Basic level training or in other word ice breaking training should be arranged for those people who does not have any idea or have very little idea about computers and internet. According to the assessment, majority of teachers need this training.
- b) Intermediate Level Training on ICT: This training for those people who have attended training but do not have the opportunity to use computer frequently. It is essential for teachers to give them confidence to use laptops.
- c) Training for Trainers: It is necessary to produce some teacher trainers who can train or help other teachers to make the training programme more sustainable. Only selected teachers who are using computers on regular basis and confident enough to use computer and its peripherals can join this training. As per the assessment, it was found that only 5% teachers have the capacity to be considered for the ToT programme.

- **Continuous Professional Development Programme**

Continuous Professional Development can be ensured through project established IT Training Center operating by Social Services Offices under Ministry of Social Welfare. A customize IT training courses should be designed specifically for the school-teachers and offer on regular basis. However, the number of training center should be increased from 1 to 3 in different locations- Ghorokghata, Hoanok,

Matarbai- to cover the whole target groups in the entire Moheshkhal island to ensure sustainability of the program and at the same time the teachers can review their knowledge and skills on regular skills.

• **The dedicated computer zone for teachers**

Every school should have dedicated computer zone for the teachers to learn about the computer and computer software. A lesson on computer to be presented by the teachers once in a week. The survey of teachers found that 85% would like to use computers in the staff room for school-related activities. One or two computers in the staff room would suffice to serve the purpose.

• **Learning Management System (LMS)**

LMS can be enabler for skill development. A2i programme of the Prime Minister's Office has already successfully created a national e-learning platform where primarily e-learning content for all possible training programs within the government can be uploaded by the training service providers, and can be viewed and exercised upon by anyone-anywhere-anytime. As such it would be easier to reap the benefit from the existing e-learning system.

• **Strengthening Monitoring Mechanism**

Effective monitoring system must be developed to ensure better performance. Local level education administrators should be involved in monitoring and mentoring of the initiative.

• **Recommendation for Moheshkhali Health Sector**

- a) Establish a centralized health management system connecting CCs, UHC and Sadar Hospital in Cox's Bazar. The system will also connect digital healthcare devices such as mobile ultrasound, blood analyzer, and urine analyzer as such the live diagnosis image/video of those devices can be transmitted to Cox's Bazar Sadar hospital using the system for the interpretation of the result and revert to UHC with the final report resulting in serving more patients with less human resources which is now the burning problem in case of Moheshkhali Island.
- b) Introduce health education for students at schools; ensure the availability of health and nutrition information at union level using digital technology, telemedicine service at Family Welfare Centre and Community Clinics, community sensitization and adaptation on proposed e-health services.
- c) Mobile health tracking and monitoring system by using apps and camera would be useful.
- d) Health-related message dissemination for the community people.
- e) Telemedicine at Family Welfare Centers and Community Clinics would be very

useful to provide e-health services to community people. Community Clinics should be provided with electricity supply.

• **Recommendation for government services:**

The UNO Office needs a trained and experienced IT Engineer to provide support for all government e-initiatives. This IT Engineer also can contribute to create a good workforce for all technology-based projects in the Upazila. Union Parishad, Municipality and UNO Office to be digitized fully with eservices developed under a2i program and ICT Division.

• **Recommendation for ensure user satisfaction:**

The Study pointed out few challenges that are detrimental to ensure user satisfaction. These are low bandwidth, especially at existing Free Wi-Fi Hotspot Zones, lack of experienced workforce to ensure smooth technical service and support to existing users as well as lack of fund and interest to fix the faulty hardware after warranty period. Therefore, the project has to address it properly.

Moheshkhali is a role model of Bangladesh in terms of digitalization. It is necessary to provide high speed internet connectivity to all the educational institutes, community clinics & hospital, government organizations in this Upazila and similar model should be replicated in all the remote locations in Bangladesh.

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