

**Study Circle Discussion Guide**  
**UNION PARISHAD**



Study Circle  
স্টাডি সার্কেল

বাংলাদেশ  
Bangladesh

One more step towards democracy

# **Study Circle Discussion Guide**

Union Parishad

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## **Union Parishad**

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## **Preface**

The history of local government in our country dates back to 1870. Since then, it has gone through various stages and experimentation. At present, we are still looking for the right structure of the local government system in Bangladesh.

Much discussion and debate is going on about the structure and activities of the local government, about their accountability and transparency and about the politicization and bureaucracy in the local government system. Civil societies, researchers and academics as well as donor agencies are very much concerned about the overall activities and performances of local government. Some organizations are trying to lobby in the policy level while others are creating awareness through traditional methods like seminars, symposiums and workshops. There have been discussions on decentralization and vesting proper authority to the local government to carry out their functions, but it seems that little change is taking place.

At present, we have a four tier local government institution headed by a ministry. These tiers are interconnected and dependant on each other, and their powers and functions frequently overlap. Among the four tiers, Union Parishad is considered the most important tier. This is why the Union Parishad is selected for this study circle discussion.

## **Objectives**

- Develop awareness about the activities of the Union Parishad
- Help people understand the roles and responsibilities of the elected representatives and other officials of the Union Parishad
- Identify the problems that impede proper functioning of the Union Parishad
- Identify possible ways to solve those problems for improving the performances of the union parishad.

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## Session One

### Questions for discussion:

- What do you mean by local government?
- Can you identify the differences between local government and central government?
- What are the major setbacks in the development process of the local government?
- A gram Sarkar has been formed in the local government structure. What might be the impacts of the Gram Sarkar?
- What could be done to make union parishad more relevant and important to the local people?
- Should there be any role of the MPs in the Union Parishad?
- What kind of relationship should there be between the Gram Sarkar and the Union Parishad?
- What are the people's expectations of the Union Parishad?

*At the end of this session, the facilitator will briefly give an outline about the discussion of the next session. The next session will cover the election process, function and management of the union parishad, role and responsibilities of the chairman and members.*

## **What is Local Government?**

Local government is defined as a mechanism through which democratic processes and practices can be established and participatory development ensured at the grass root level. To be more precise, local government can be called an agency that consists of locally elected representatives who deal with local tasks.

## **History of Local Government**

The evolution of the local government in rural Bangladesh can be traced back as early as 1870. At the beginning, it was autonomous, independent, and self-reliant. Since 1870 it has passed through several phases, gone through various experimentation, ups and down, and has finally emerged as a constitutional guarantee. Many ordinances have been introduced to it yet we are still looking for the right structure of a local government system. For more information see appendix page.

## **Structure of Local Government System**

All activities of local government are directed at the welfare of the citizens of the state. As a result, citizen's participation in the activities of the government is a necessity. Moreover, a linkage is necessary to reach to the doorsteps of the people for the overall development. Local government is that essential medium by which citizens incorporate themselves into the activities of the government to further their development. Union parishad is an important tier of the local government system and is intimately connected and dependent on various other factors within the system. Before going on to an in-depth discussion about it, it is important to have a look at the structure of the local government. See appendix page.

## **What is Union Parishad?**

Among the four strata, the union parishad is the second lowest political chamber of rural local government structure and the fundamental unit of local government.

Generally, a union encompasses 10-15 villages and comprises about 10-12 square miles with a population of about 15,000 to 20,000 people. A union parishad, headed by a chairman, is divided into nine wards, which consist of 12 members, one male member from each ward and 3 women members for every 3 wards. The inhabitants of the respective union directly elect chairman and members for five-year terms. Besides them, the union also includes some officials like secretary and village police. See appendix page.

## **Importance of Union Parishad**

Local government is working all over the world in various forms. In Bangladesh, the constitution has provided a right and legal framework to the local government and its composition and power. Therefore, the importance of the local government as well as union parishad can easily be understood. See appendix page.

## Session Two

### Questions for discussion:

- Do you think there needs to be any reform in the rules and regulations for the election of the election commission?
- Do you think political parties should nominate candidates in the union parishad election?
- Do you feel that more power should be given to the UP for overall development of the UP? What might be the areas of giving powers?
- In your opinion, what functions should be given priority in the union parishad?
- What are the major barriers that the chairman faces in the union parishad?
- What are the major barriers that the members face in the union parishad?
- What roles and responsibilities should be given to the male and female members of UP?

*At the end of this session, the facilitator will briefly give an outline about the discussion of the next session. The next session will cover role of secretary, village police, standing committees, village court, sources of income and budget of the union parishad.*



### **Election Process of Union Parishad**

All elections of chairmen and members of the union parishad are organized, held and conducted by the election commission every five years. The election commission declares the date of submission of the nomination paper, the date of election and appoints the returning officer. The candidates submit their nomination paper along with a prescribed deposit to the returning officer of the election commission.

The election commission fixes the date, time and place for the poll and other matters related to the conducting of elections and the manner in which votes are to be given. The results of the elections are informally declared as early as possible on the same day and are published in the official gazette by the election commission.

### **Functions of the Union Parishad**

Under the local government ordinance (UP), 1983, functions of the union parishad are divided into two categories: statutory functions and optional functions/ there are about 10 statutory functions and 38 optional functions. There are states in the appendix page.

### **Management of the Union Parishad**

As stated earlier, the residents of a union directly elect chairmen and members of that union parishad. Chairman works as chief administrator and performs his/her duties with the help of the members and secretary. The chairman forms different committees to perform the tasks effectively with full support of the Union Parishad secretary. In addition, the secretary maintains files and registers and also helps in preparing the budget. Chairmen, with the help of the village police control the law and order situation of the Union.

### **Role and Responsibilities of Chairman**

Chairman of the union parishad plays the central role and focal point of all activities of the union parishad. At the same time, he/she is the administrative head and gives decision in all activities. The union parishad needs his/ her approval and consent in all activities. Under the ordinance of the local government (union parishad) 1983, the responsibilities of chairman have been specified. See appendix page.

### **Role and Responsibilities of Members**

Under the Ordinance of the Local Government (Union Parishad) 1983, the duties and functions have not been specified for the members of the Union Parishad. See Appendix page.

### **Role and Responsibilities of Women Members**

Women members preside over those functions as men. In addition, they are expected to take care of women's issues in their respective area. See appendix page.

## Session Three

### Questions for discussion

- Do you think the secretary is liable to the union parishad members? Of not, in what ways can the secretary be made more liable?
- Do you think that the chairman should be given the authority for the employment of the secretary and the maintenance of his her salary?
- Do you think that the village police perform their duties properly?
- Do you think that the standing committees are performing their jobs properly? If not, what are the ways they can be made more accountable?
- Do you think it should be compulsory that women be made members or heads of different standing committees?
- How can the village court be made stronger and more effective?
- How do you feel about Shalish being an alternative process to the village court?
- Do you think that there is any relevance between the financial conditions and functions of the union parishad?
- What may be a potential source of income for the union parishad?
- Should the union parishad be given more authority to make their own budget?
- Should taxes be collected from the people in the union parishad?

*In the next session we will discuss the role of women in union parishad, relationships with other agencies, transparency and accountability of the union parishad, roles and responsibilities of people to the union parishad and recommendations for an effective and efficient union parishad*

### **Role of the Secretary**

The secretary plays a very important role in the office management of the Union Parishad. He/ she must do multifarious tasks in the union parishad. For more information see appendix page.

### **Role of the Village Police**

Though not well equipped like the central police force, the village police are the sole responsible agents for maintaining law and order of the union parishad. Many ups and downs have been experienced in the local government structure and many changes have been made but nothing has been done that can make any change in their lives and in their job. See appendix page.

### **Standing Committees**

Under the ordinance of local government (UP) 1983 by-laws 38 (2) amended in 1998, union parishad may constitute 12 standing committees in each year of their first meeting or as early as possible to perform the functions as may be prescribed by regulations. For more information see appendix page.

### **Village Court**

The village court consists of 5 members headed by the UP chairman. Each conflicting party nominates two representatives of the two representatives; one must be a UP member. If the chairman is unable to perform his/her duty or any question arises about his neutrality, then the TNO nominates another UP member as chairman of the village court.

Under the village court act of 1976, the village court can try disputes over property value not exceeding Tk 5000. The village court also has the power to summon a person to stand as witness and can impose a fine up to Tk 500 for contempt.

### **Sources of Income**

Generally, funds of the union parishad come from the following three major sources:

#### ***1. Government Grants***

- Salaries of the employees
- Development grants
- Deficit budget grants
- Project assistance grants
- Rural works program grants
- Lump sum grants

## **2. Local Sources**

Union Parishad is empowered to collect revenue by imposing taxes, rates and fees on the following categories:

- I. Holding taxes or the rate imposed by the Union Parishad;
- II. Tax on profession, business and calling
- III. Entertainment taxes on cinema, theater and other entertainment programs;
- IV. Fees obtained from issuing license and permit;
- V. Lease of hat-bazaar, ferry within the jurisdiction of the Union Parishad
- VI. Lease of Jal Mahal within the jurisdiction of the Union Parishad
- VII. Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs has decided to give 1% tax on the transfer of immovable property within the jurisdiction of the Union Parishad.

## **3. Others Sources**

- I. Subscriptions from any individual or agency;
- II. Profit or rent from property
- III. Profit from investment
- IV. Money from trust

Receipt from other sources determined by government.

## **Union Parishad Budget**

Budget is an estimated account of annual income and expenditure. Union parishad prepares budget for every fiscal year according to the systematic procedure. The description of income and expenditure of a union parishad is called the budget of union parishad. The development of a union parishad is largely dependent on the budget of that union parishad. The deputy commissioner is empowered to approve the budget. If the UP fails to prepare its budget then the DC himself/herself prepares budget for that UP and this is considered as the approved budget for that UP.

## Session Four

### Questions for discussion

- Why is women's involvement important in the union parishad?
- Are the roles and responsibilities given to women members in the union parishad sufficient?
- What initiatives can be taken to involve more and more in the union parishad sufficient?
- How can we bring more accountability in the union parishad?
- Is there any need for the general people's involvement in the participation of the union parishad budget?
- What are the barriers or restrictions for people's involvement in the union parishad?
- What are the areas where people can actively participate willingly and voluntarily?
- Do you think that your involvement can increase the effective functioning of the union parishad?

## **Women in the Union Parishad**

The constitution of Bangladesh guarantees the opportunity for all citizens, irrespective of gender to cast votes and to stand for election. Although the constitution of Bangladesh and international charters have given women equal rights in public activities, the reality is that most women are not capable of winning in the competitive common seats with male candidates in our society.

Realizing these problems, the government brought some reform in the local government system, which made provision for direct election of women to the reserved seats in the UP level. The union parishad election in 1997 was a major revolution. Because of this election, 20 women were elected to the post of chairperson, 110 women won the post of general member and 12828 women members became real representatives at the rural level. See appendix page-20

## **Relationship with other Agencies**

The union parishad is the second lowest tier in the local government structure. So in many respects, it has to depend on others, and has to maintain close friendly relations with other governmental and non governmental officials and agencies, this is done either directly or indirectly depending on the nature of the work.

## **Transparency and Accountability of the Union Parishad**

The elected representatives are accountable to the people for their day to day and overall activities of the union parishad. People of the area usually observe the activities of the elected representatives. If local people are involved in local planning and the implementation process, it enhances the involvement of the people. Discussion involving different groups of people about government grant, relief, allocation of wheat, food for work etc. will ensure its transparency and accountability. In the present traditional system there is little chance for people to know the activities of the union parishad. Besides this, many believe that only elected representatives have the responsibility and authority to work with the union parishad

## **Roles of the people in the Union Parishad**

The union parishad is the tier of the local government that directly and closely deals with the grass root people for their development. So, consciously or unconsciously, local people are associated with it, and responsibilities also go to them to build a healthy, responsive and effective union parishad.

# **Appendix**

## **Importance of local government**

Below are some importance aspects of the Union Parishad:

- The local government system can effectively intervene and deal with the local problems and issues of the rural areas.
- The Union Parishad, within the short span of time, with less expenditure and comparatively less effort, can play an important role in solving the local problems according to the needs of the local community.
- It helps increasing the civil and political consciousness of the citizens.
- The practices of democracy and first lesson of democracy start with the Union Parishad.
- Through the Union Parishad, skills of the local people can be employed properly.
- The Union Parishad works as a facilitating agency for implementing national and local strategic plans.
- The Union Parishad can provide necessary information, data and conduct surveys to prepare national plans for implementation.
- Small-scale projects for local development can be implemented through Union Parishad effectively.
- It can motivate and involve the local people in the developmental activities of government.
- As the representatives of the local people, they remain accountable to the local people and remain conscious to perform their tasks.
- Self-reliance can be possible through local level decision.



## **History of local government:**

The evolution of local government in rural Bangladesh can be traced back as early as 1870. Village authorities used to undertake all such functions as defense, preservation of law and order, punishment of crime, settlement of disputes, collection of revenue etc. Village society used to make its own laws and took care of its own decisions.

During Mughal rule, the contribution to the development of urban local government was remarkable, but very little has been done for the development at the village level.

During almost two hundred years of British rule (1757-1947) over the Indian subcontinent, the age-old village management system underwent a change and a number of experiments were made with the local government system. The major change was to achieve two fold objective-(i) maximization of land revenue collection and (ii) maintenance of law and order. In 1870, the **Bengal Village Chowkidari Act** was enacted in Bengal and Panchayats were established to collect tax to maintain chowkidari. Under the Act, the rural area was divided into “**Unions**” comprising about 10 (ten) to 12 (twelve) square miles. Unions were placed under Panchayat.

The period from 1882 to 1907 witnessed the reform of the local government system in the subcontinent. Lord Ripon, a liberal Viceroy to India spearheaded this. Lord Ripon’s famous **Resolution on Local Self-government of 18 May 1882** laid down the foundation of local governmental principles, which influenced the thinking of politics and local government. The essence of these principles was to set up rural local bodies and delegate power to the non-officials of local bodies.

**The Village Self-government Act of 1919** came with the most complete rural authorities in Bengal. Under the Act, a **Union Board** was established for an area of about 4 (four) square miles with a population of about 8,000. The functions of the Union Boards included maintenance of village police –‘dafadars’ and ‘chowkidars’; upkeep of schools, roads and ponds, and the provision of elementary sanitary and medical services. The selected member of the board was given authority to try a minor criminal and civil cases.

The Union Board consisted of two-third elected members, while the rest were nominated. The members of the Union Board elected the chairman.

During the formative years of Pakistan's existence as an independent nation until 1971, the provincial government of East Pakistan initiated some important changes. General Ayub Khan who seized power through Martial Law in 1958 introduced a new system of local government known as "Basic Democracy"- a concept of four-tier system (Union, Thana, District and divisional council) local government.

Immediately after Independence in 1971, the name of the **Union Council** was changed to **Union Panchayat** and an administrator was appointed to manage the affairs of the *Panchayat*.

Again in 1973, *Union Panchayat's* name reverted to **Union Parishad**. A more significant change in the local government system was brought about in 1976 through the Local Government Ordinance. This ordinance provided a Union *Parishad* for a union, comprising of one elected chairman and nine elected members, two nominated women members and two peasant representative members.

In 1980, a significant move was initiated to revive village level local authority through the introduction of Swanirvar Gram Sarkar (Self-reliant Village Government). The Swanirvar Gram Sarkar was comprised of elected chairman, members, and special representation for women, peasants, and the landless. The Gram Sarkar was given a wide range of functions, but without due resource backup or taxation power. The Martial Law Order abolished it in July 1982.

The Martial Government introduced the Local Government (Union Parishad) Ordinance in 1983 and this was again amended in 1993.

In 1996, the government constituted a **Local Government Commission** and came up with a **Report on Local Government Institutions Strengthening in May 1997**. The commission has recommended a four-tier local government structure including Gram/Palli (Village) Parishad.

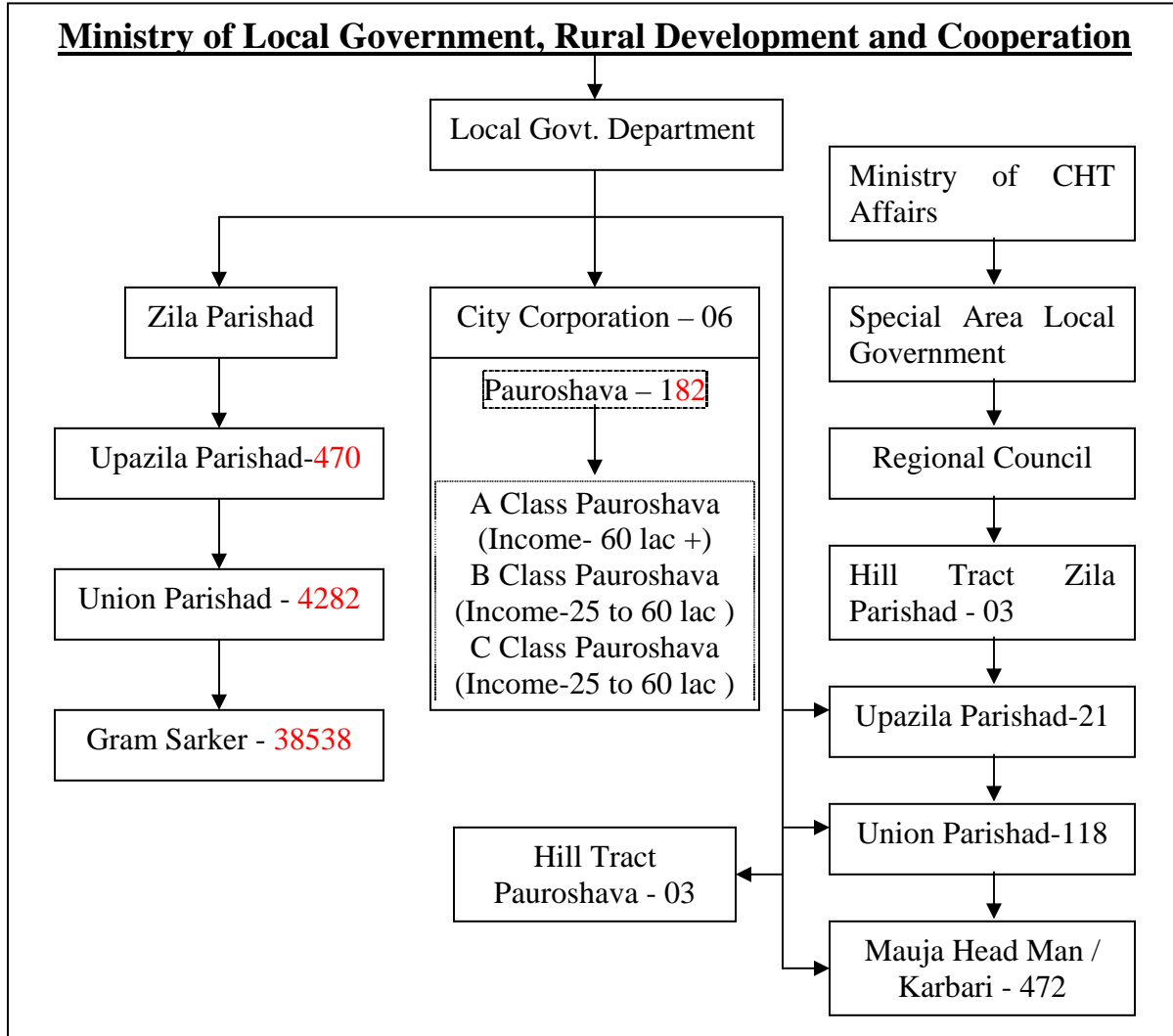
However, with the exception of Union Parishad, the commission report on other local government structure remained non-implementational.

The development program was implemented through 4451 Union Parishad, a lower tier of local government structure. Union Parishad has been assigned with a wide range of statutory and non-statutory function including the adoption and implementation of a poverty alleviation program.

Changes have been made from time to time in terms of the nomenclature of tiers of local government, but almost nothing was done to strengthen local governments. Therefore, the structure of the local government system has remained more or less unchanged.

The present government again enacted a law for the introduction of Gram Sarkar and implementation of it is under process.

## Structure of local government system



## **Structure of Union Parishad**

## **Functions of the Union Parishad**

### ***Statutory functions:***

- a) Maintenance of law and order and assistance to administration in the maintenance of law and order;
- b) Adoption of measures for preventing crime, disorder and smuggling;
- c) Adoption and implementation of development schemes in the field of agriculture, forest, fisheries, livestock, education, health, cottage industries, communication, irrigation and flood protection with a view to increase economy and social upliftment of people;
- d) Promotion of family planning;
- e) Development of local resources and their uses;
- f) Protection and maintenance of public property, such as roads, bridges, canals, embankments, telephone and electricity lines;
- g) Review of the development activities of all agencies at the union level and to make recommendations to the Thana/Upazila Nirbahi Officer in regard to their activities;
- h) Motivation and persuasion of the people to install sanitary latrines;
- i) Registration of births, deaths, blinds, beggars and destitute;
- j) Conducting of census of all kinds.

### ***Optional functions:***

1. Provision and maintenance of public ways and public streets;
2. Provision and maintenance of public places, public open spaces, public gardens and public play grounds;
3. Lighting of public ways and streets and places;
4. Plantation and preservation of trees in general, and plantation and preservation of trees in public ways, streets and places;
5. Management and maintenance of burning and burial grounds, common meeting places and other common property;
6. Provision and maintenance of accommodation for travelers;
7. Prevention and regulation of encroachments of public ways, streets and places;
8. Prevention and abatement of nuisances of public ways, streets and places;
9. Sanitation, conservancy and adoption of other measures for the cleanliness of the union;
10. Regulation of the collection, removal and disposal of manure and streets sweepings;
11. Regulation of offensive and dangerous trades;
12. Regulation of the disposal of carcasses of dead animals;
13. Regulation of the slaughter of animals;

14. Regulation of the erection of the buildings of the union;
15. Regulation of dangerous buildings and structures;
16. Provision and maintenance of wells, water pumps, tanks, ponds and other works for the supply of water;
17. Adoption of measures for preventing the contamination of the sources of water-supply for drinking;
18. Provision of the use of water of wells, ponds and other sources of water-supply suspected to be dangerous to public health;
19. Regulation or prohibition of the watering of cattle, bathing or washing at or near wells, ponds and other sources of water reserved for drinking purposes;
20. Regulation or prohibition of the steeping of hemp, jute or other plants in or near ponds and other sources of water-supply;
21. Regulation or prohibition of dyeing or tanning of skins within residential areas;
22. Regulation or prohibition of the excavation of earth stones or other material within residential areas;
23. Regulation or prohibition of the establishment of brick kilns, potteries and other kilns within residential areas;
24. Voluntary registration of the sale of cattle or other animals;
25. Holding of fairs and shows;
26. Celebration of public festivals;
27. Prohibition of relief measures in the event of any fire, flood, hailstorm, earthquake or other natural calamity;
28. Relief for the widows and orphans, and poor and persons in distress;
29. Promotion of public games and sports;
30. Industrial and community development; promotion and development of co-operative movement and village industries;
31. Adoption of measurement for increased food production;
32. Provision for management of environment;
33. Provision for maintenance and regulation of cattle pounds;
34. Provision of first-aid centers;
35. Provision of libraries and reading rooms;
36. Co-operation with other organization engaged in activities similar to those of the Union Parishad;
37. Aid in the promotion of education under the direction of the Deputy Commissioner;
38. Any other measure likely to promote the welfare, health, safety, comfort or convenience of the inhabitants of the union or of visitors.

## **Duties and Responsibilities of Chairman**

The entrusted duties of chairman are:

- ***Administrative activities***

- To run the administrative works properly inclusive of running the office, supervision of employees and make payment of salary.
- To prepare the agenda for meetings, convene and preside over meetings.
- To supervise and control the activities of the various committees and subcommittees.
- To prepare minutes and circulate among the members.

- ***Public relations activities***

- To disseminate developmental and welfare related activities of the Union Parishad among the people.
- To maintain close contact with Thana Parishad
- To report to the higher authorities on natural calamities, epidemic and pest attack on crops etc.
- To maintain contact with the local government officials for agricultural, fisheries, veterinary and forestry development and to help the farmers.
- To play vital role in encouraging the people for family planning and to help the family planning officers.
- To prepare progress of activities for last few years and display on the board easily accessible to the general people.
- To prevent riot, maintain peace and tranquility and control crime in the area.
- To remain acquainted with the government developmental activities, the chairman needs the arrangements of radio, television and newspaper.



- ***Revenue collection and budget related activities***

- To prepare budget, place before the members for any necessary amendments and to send it to the Deputy Commissioner.
- To fix up rates and fees for various social services activities of the Union Parishad in consultation with the members of the Parishad and other local elites
- Carefully look after the income and expenditure of the Union Parishad.

- ***Development activities***

- To direct, supervise and coordinate all developmental activities of the Parishad.
- To plan and implement local road construction, digging or renovation of canals, construction of bridge, culvert etc.
- Cleaning water hyacinth, cleanliness of the area, providing light on the roadside, maintenance of government property and improvement of rural road communication etc.

- ***Trial related activities***

- To head the Village Court and resolve local disputes.
- To resolve petty local disputes through *Salish*.

- ***Other roles and responsibilities***

- To issue birth certificates, nationality certificates and other certificates.
- To issue ration cards, nominate dealers for ration, distribute relief materials.
- To control flood, epidemic, violence against women, establishment of cluster village, identify and assist in distribution of Khas lands among the landless people.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of Members**

As a representative of the Union Parishad, members perform the following jobs:

- To help the village police in maintaining law and order in his/her ward.
- To participate in the monthly meeting of the Union Parishad
- To prepare developmental plans for his/her ward to be included in the development plan of the Union Parishad.
- To take an active part in preparation of the budget.
- To supervise the developmental work in his/her ward.
- To perform duties as convener/member of the standing committees
- To help the chairman of the village court as nominated member to resolve judicial procedure.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of Women Members**

Women members normally perform the following tasks:

- Look after the violation of women and children's rights.
- Participate in the monthly meeting of the Union Parishad and raise issues related to the women and children and recommend for action.
- Take various development initiatives for women and children in her area.
- Encourage village women for cottage industries, health care, sanitation, family planning and other related developmental issues.

## **Role of Secretary**

The task of the secretary is briefly mentioned here.

### ***Maintenance of Files***

- To maintain all files of Union Parishad.
- To maintain resolution books, notify members on monthly meeting.
- To take minutes of the meeting, prepare report and disseminate the report.
- To prepare monthly, quarterly and annual report and give comment on the report.

### ***Office Management***

- Assist chairman in his/her day-to-day work.
- Keep records of all communications, provide information and communicate with others.

### ***Communication***

- To receive and send letters.
- To keep records of the receipt of letters and telegrams.
- To maintain contact with the Thana/Upazila Parishad and other related offices of Upazila.
- Maintain contact with **Deputy Commissioner** and Thana Nirbahi Officer

### ***Budget***

- Assist chairman to prepare budget.
- Prepare draft of annual income and expenditure statements
- Keep records of development expenditure; provide salaries to the Dafaders, Chowkidars, spend money for miscellaneous expenditure to run the office.

### ***Property Management***

- To maintain and supervise the properties of the Union Parishad
- To preserve the important documents, papers of agreements, and mortgage, and lease papers as permanent papers in the guard file.

### ***Development Work***

- To help the chairman and members of the Union Parishad in all development related issues.

### ***Maintenance of Books and Accounts***

- Keep records of expenditure vouchers.
- Maintains contact with banks.

- As per union council rules of 1960, he/she is responsible for maintaining cashbooks, rates, fees, cess books and other realization and license fees.

### ***Judicial activities***

- Receive fees for Shalish.
- Issue summons or notice to the accused of the case.
- Keep records of the judgment.

### ***Project Preparation***

- Assist chairman and members to identify project.
- Plays role in supervising and monitoring of project.
- Work as secretary and member secretary of Union Parishad VGD committee.

## **Power and Function of Village Police**

- Watch and keep vigil day and night in the union.
- Assist the police to the best of his/her ability in all matters connected with the prevention and detection of crime and the apprehension of offenders.
- Assist chairman in the performance of the official functions.
- Unless otherwise, report to the OC of the police station every 15 days.
- Observe the movement of suspected criminals and occasionally inform the OC of any suspicious people.
- Inform the OC of police station about all disputes, which are likely to lead to any riots or serious affrays.
- Report to the OC of police station if there is any apprehension about the following cases:
  - a) Rioting
  - b) Concealment of birth by secret disposal of dead body
  - c) Mischief by fire
  - d) Mischief of animal by poisoning
  - e) Attempt to commit culpable homicide or suicide
  - f) Attempt to commit or abet the commission of any of the above offences.
- Maintain a birth and death register.
- Inform the Union Parishad about outbreak of any kind of epidemic or infectious diseases among human beings, animals or crops or pest attacks.
- Inform to the Union Parishad of damage to any embankment or irrigation work.
- Supply any local information required for official purposes.
- Assist the revenue officers in the collection of taxes, fees, rates and other dues.
- Give information to the Union Parishad of any damage or obstruction to, or encroachment on, any property, movable or immovable, belonging to or vesting in any Union Parishad and may interpose for the prevention of any such damage, obstruction or encroachment
- Serve processes upon person residents within the union.
- Village police can arrest without a warrant or magistrate order in the following cases:
  - Any person involves in any criminal activities or a reasonable suspicion exists of his/her having been concerned.

- Any person having in his possession, without lawful excuse, any implement of house – breaking.
  - Any person who has escaped or attempted to escape from lawful custody.
  - Any person who has been proclaimed an offender under the code of criminal procedure, 1898 or by an order of the government.
  - Any person who obstructs a public servant in the execution of his official duties.
  - Any person reasonably suspected of being a deserter from the Bangladesh Army, Navy or Air Force.
  - Possession of any kind of doubtful goods that might be stolen goods or that might be used in any criminal activities.
- Assist private persons in making such arrests as they may lawfully make, and he shall report such arrest without delay to the OC of the police station.
  - He shall carry out such other duties as are entrusted to him from time to time in accordance with the rules.

## **Standing Committees**

The names of the committees are as follows:

- Finance and establishment;
- Education;
- Health, family planning, epidemic control and sanitation;
- Audit and account;
- Agriculture and other development works;
- Social welfare and community centers;
- Cottage industries and co-operatives;
- Women and child welfare;
- Fisheries and livestock;
- Tree plantation;
- Works programs of the Union Parishad and
- Mass Literacy (Mass Education).

The Union Parishad may constitute additional standing committees and members can elect their chairman, with the previous approval of the deputy commissioner.

## **Sources of Income**

Generally, funds of the Union Parishad come from the following three major sources:

### ***a) Government Grants***

- Salaries of the employees
- Development grants
- Deficit budget grants
- Project assistance grants
- Rural works program grants
- Lump sum grants

### ***b) Local Sources***

Union Parishad is empowered to collect revenue by imposing taxes, rates and fees on the following categories:

- VIII. Holding taxes or the rate imposed by the Union Parishad;
- IX. Tax on profession, business and calling
- X. Entertainment taxes on cinema, theater and other entertainment programs;
- XI. Fees obtained from issuing license and permit;
- XII. Lease of hat-bazaar, ferry within the jurisdiction of the Union Parishad
- XIII. Lease of Jal Mahal within the jurisdiction of the Union Parishad
- XIV. Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs has decided to give 1% tax on the transfer of immovable property within the jurisdiction of the Union Parishad.

### ***c) Other Sources***

- V. Subscriptions from any individual or agency;
- VI. Profit or rent from property
- VII. Profit from investment
- VIII. Money from trust

Receipt from other sources determined by government.

## **Women in the Union Parishad**

Women gained the right to become voters and to stand for election from colonial rule. The “Government of India Act 1919” first gave limited franchise for sub-continental women and in 1935, women of the sub-continent achieved universal franchise.

The UN Convention of Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) ensures that women will enjoy the right to become voters and to stand for election and will have the opportunity to work every layer of the government offices and to make state policy and policy implementation programs.

The Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees the opportunity for all citizens, irrespective of gender to cast votes and to stand for election.

Although the Constitution of Bangladesh and international charters have given women equal rights in public activities, the reality is that most women are not capable of winning in the competitive common seats with male candidates in our society. It has been observed that few female candidates won the election in the competition by defeating their male opponents. Considering the societal reality, in 1973, the Constitution of Bangladesh made provision for reserved seats for women at the parliament level.

In 1976, the Local Government Ordinance provided opportunity for the selection of two women members for each UP to ensure female representation at the local level. Later on in 1983, the numbers of reserved female seats was raised to 03.

Through Local Government Ordinance, a new system was introduced in 1993, by which women were given same status as the elected one. But the out-put of women’s involvement in the UP was not achieved.

Realizing the problem, the government brought some reform in the local government system, which made provision for the direct election to the reserved seats in the UP level.

The Union Parishad election in 1997 was an epoch-making revolution, because, by this election, 20 women were elected to the post of chairperson, 110 women won the post of general member and 12,828 women members became real representatives of the rural level.