

GOVERNANCE IN UNION PARISHAD: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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The term 'Governance' has multidimensional approaches. It is the means of achieving the aims and objectives of any institution. Union Parishad is a century old rural institution closer to the rural people. It is an established popular center for service delivery with popular image. But with the passage of time it has lost its time-honored position due to poor governance. At present the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) and other political institutions express positive notions to build up the Union Parishad as a Local Government Unit.

Governance has two types of mode, centralized and decentralized. Decentralized mode of governance is favorable and very effective in the developed countries. Theoretically and practically it is an effective means of good governance in the context of developing country like Bangladesh. But it cannot occur in the vacuum, it is a costly device. There are many socio-economic and political factors to influence decentralization.

Bangladesh has constitutional provisions to increase capacity and build up local government institutions in every administrative unit. Union Parishad is a local government body, which is assigned with many important and emergency duties. But due to the lack of expected level of governance, it has poor achievement in many sectors. Centralized Planning System is the main obstacle to the way of flourishing the decentralized governance in Bangladesh. Now we are passing a transitional stage of administration. However the government of Bangladesh is craving for strong local government.

Governance means interaction and relation between service provider and service receiver. Although UP is a popular elected body, election is the main root of relation between UP and the rural people. People expect pro-active and responsive administration to serve their purposes in right time and in right manner. It has been cited above; governance is a multidimensional and costly device. Good governance is impossible without strong financial support and capacity. Development-planning, social awareness building, participation in central government's program, cooperation with NGOs as development partner, sound disaster management, and judicial and extra-judicial performances reflect the position and status of governance, good or bad.

Members of the civil society have to play a vital role in keeping every popular institution on the right track. Every institution has to maintain close relation with the civil society to evaluate its own activities. Political commitment and integrity is one of the most important influencing factors for good governance in UP.

In the context of Bangladesh there are many prospects for institution building and ensuring good governance in the local government like UP. On the other hand, many problems stand as strong obstacles to the way of good governance. It is hoped that prospects will be sustaining and problems will be removed from the path of decentralized mode of governance for ensuring better service to the people.