

DECENTRALIZATION STRATEGIES FOR ENSURING PEOPLES' PARTICIPATION AT LOCAL LEVEL DEVELOPMENT IN BANGLADESH: THEORY AND PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

Administrative decentralization is an important term for strengthening the local administration. It is the transfer of planning, decision making and authority from the higher level of central government to the lower level of local government administration. This study attempts to explore the importance of administrative decentralization strategies for strengthening the Upazila administration as a local government body, and ensuring people's participation as a development approach. The Upazila Parishad is the second tier of the local government system in Bangladesh. The main objective of the study is to find out how much decentralization strategies are indispensable to ensure people's participation in the development process as well as to explore the discrepancy between the form and reality of the existing decentralization strategies in Bangladesh. It is an exploratory-descriptive research where survey method has been used for collecting data and information from Sylhet Sadar Upazila. The elected representatives and the members of civil society of this region have been interviewed face to face on the basis of a semi-structured questionnaire. Data have been collected from eighty respondents and purposive sampling method has been employed for selecting the sample. It is an important study for the development of Upazila Parishad as people's participation is closely related with local level development. The study findings reveal that decentralization is the key to promote people's participation and involve them in local development process.

Keywords: *Decentralization, Peoples' Participation, Local Government, Development, Democracy, Governance*

INTRODUCTION

In this modern age, the size of population and functions of a state have been on the verge of expansion. Due to such sufficiency of state functions, the state itself provides some functions to

local bodies. Besides, the central government cannot handle every function of the state smoothly due to distance and other bottlenecks. In democratic society, such devolution is vitally important, commonly known as decentralization. Decentralization is an avowed objective of all countries in the world. Local government is a decentralized government. It is a part of central government which is essential for the socio economic development of our country. It is a political process and the administration of people. The main focus of this paper is administrative decentralization of local government for ensuring peoples' participation in Bangladesh. Administrative decentralization is the transfer of planning, decision making or administrative authority from the central government to its field organizations, local administrative units, semi-autonomous organizations, local governments or non-governmental organizations. It is very important for ensuring people's participation and for the development of third world developing countries. Administrative decentralization seeks to redistribute authority, responsibility and financial resources for providing public services among different levels of government. Administrative decentralization may help to promote a new political outlook and participatory economic development. So, the precondition of modern development administration is people's participation in the process of development. Upazila Parishad is an important and second tier of local government of Bangladesh. For strengthening Upazila administration it is needed to ensure administrative decentralization. Administrative decentralization is absolutely necessary for democratic development, political consciousness and popular participation.

Decentralization is the fume in the matters of governance and development in all around the world. Like many developing countries, Bangladesh has been experimenting with decentralization for a long period. Decentralization has been at the center stage of policy experiments in the last two decades in a large number of developing and transition economies in Latin America, Africa and Asia (Bardhan, 2002: 185). Although an earlier wave of experiments with decentralization in Africa and Asia in the 1950s and 1960s is considered to have largely failed (Crook and Manor, 1998:1), these themes have received widespread attention in recent years, particularly since they form part of the discourse on 'good governance' promoted by many donor agencies and development institutions.

Decentralization is closely related with democracy, development, public administration and good governance. The concept of decentralization is not new in Bangladesh. Its existence in varied forms is deep-rooted in history. In 1971, after the independence of Bangladesh, the constitution of Bangladesh was created which make a desire for establishing local government system. In rural level the units are: Gram Sarker (now abolished), Union Parishad (lower tier), Upazila Parishad or sub-districts and Zila Parishad or District level. These bodies are responsible for the management and function of the local affairs. Through the definition of local government it is said to be a democratic self-governance and directly accountable to the local people or mass

people. Upazila Parishad is the second tier of the local government system in our country. In Bangladesh the term decentralization was introduced in 1982 by establishing a Committee for Administrative Reorganization/Reform (CARR) on the regime of General Hossain Mohammad Ershad. He evolved the administrative system that will be people oriented and capable to remove the gap between people and administration. CARR gave some recommendations to solve the hindrance of local government system which was implemented by introducing a national implementation committee called National Implementation Committee for Administrative reorganization/ Reform (NICAR). Through the creation of Upazila, the decentralization of administration at local level was established and this created an opportunity for the mass people participation in the administrative affairs. Frequent attempts to reform local government based on the devolution of power have been undertaken over the years. But effective, powerful and decentralized local government has not been yet evolved in Bangladesh. Decentralization was mainly introduced for the local development of the grassroots of Bangladesh. But the concept is now mainly an illusion rather than a reality. Because in many research studies, it was seen that the devolution of power is not done in real sense, the authority and decisions are centralized again rather than decentralized where local development is a remarkable question. Since 1971 as an independent state, Bangladesh has established her own administrative system. The results of such development efforts have not been very encouraging, in spite of some evidence of growth at certain brief stages, the curative effect has been rather depressing, overall economic condition has deteriorated, particularly distressing it's the fact that gaps between groups of people have widened.

STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Local Government in modern day life is responsible for delivering basic goods and services to its local communities in faster, easier and more efficient manner (Pradeep, 2011). Central government cannot look after the whole area in our country. In this case local government can be able to look after the local development issues if they are properly decentralized. Without the development of local area central government cannot run smoothly. So, in order to strengthen the central government we cannot ignore the importance of local government. Local government is a decentralized government, and the main theme of local government is to develop the local area. For a developing country like Bangladesh, local government institutions can play a vital role for ensuring development and good governance of the country. But if we consider the present situation of our country, we can notice that the inter condition of local government is not as strong as it should be. After the liberation of Bangladesh, still now many governments come to power and take different actions to make local government bodies effective and efficient. But all these steps are not been implemented yet. Decentralization is the key issue to make local government effective in Bangladesh. Decentralization is the latest fashion of development and

acts actually as a mechanism. It is a means to establish and empower local government to ensure good governance. Without decentralization, development activities both local and national level would be hampered, as development is a multi-dimensional concept. Decentralization is a mechanism to make a balance between central and local government. But in Bangladesh, there remains huge gap between the design and implementation strategy for building decentralized local government. The decentralization process is highly politicized from the very early period in this country. The political elite make some reforms for decentralization of local government system for gaining their own political interest not for the mass people concern. The three branches of government: the executive, the legislative and the judiciary are free to act and also the non-bureaucratic structure like political parties are free to express their voice through the basic law, but in reality the picture is quite opposite. So, the decentralization process is now a complex and difficult issue; and in reality, the spirit of people's participation in local bodies has not always been adequately maintained. The administrative structure of Bangladesh is basically a hierarchical in nature, and in a hierarchical system, roles and duties in relation to others are defined in details. If these are not followed, chaos and conflict are expected to result. So, actual decentralization practice is absent in our country.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In this paper we have discussed about the effective and efficient institutional form of Upazila Parishad in Bangladesh. Local level development is the precondition of ensuring the overall development of the country. But in our country, local government system is not much effective, and there remain various problems from the central to the local offices. Most of the people of Bangladesh are not aware about it, as half of the total population is illiterate and live under absolute poverty. At present local government is a burning issue in our country. Because with the origin of welfare state, the functions of the government also become widespread, this is not possible for the central government to handle properly. So, decentralization has become one of the most important issues of local government in Bangladesh. Our endeavor is to find out the existing pattern of decentralization in Upazila Parishad to ensure peoples' participation and sustainable local development. Most people consider public representatives as local guardians. The local representatives work for the local people, and deal with local problems to the higher authority for attracting the urgent attention in this regard. With the increase in power and volume of activities of the government, the responsibility and duty of the local government has also been increased in several times. Around the world most challenges people face are local. So, the best way to solve these problems is through local initiatives and local leadership by awakening and mobilizing people. Authorities closer to the citizen or rather citizens themselves by getting directly involved in local issues can greatly contribute in solving local problems. This is how the local government takes its shape. Local government attempts to involve people from planning to

implementation of development programs at local level. A strong local government system can ensure good governance through transparency, accountability, effective participation and equal opportunities for all. Most importantly, this system can ensure development at the grass root level. Strong local government institutions strengthen democracy, ensure good governance, and at the same time foster the pace of political and socio-economic development of the country. The local stakeholders, their representatives, government officials, civil society, mass media, development partners, non-government organizations (NGOs), coordination committees, local leadership, the mass people and policy makers will be benefited from this study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The broad objective of the study is to find out how administrative decentralization strengthens peoples' participation in local level development in Bangladesh. To obtain the broad objective the study makes an attempt to address the following research questions:

- a) How much the local people have their participation in the decision making process at Upazila level for resulting local development?
- b) What types of challenges are faced by the local body to ensure peoples' participation in local development?
- c) What are the constructive measures for strengthening the local administration through ensuring peoples' participation?

REFLECTION FROM RELEVANT LITERATURE

Decentralization can be an effective mechanism to ensure accountability of civil services and a culture of accountability is promoted when direct interaction takes place between local citizens and locally elected leaders. When decentralization exist the capacity of local governments and civil society is enhanced and dependence on central government can be removed. As a result, a new equilibrium emerges in which checks and balances between the central government and local governments are promoted and possibility of people-centered development emerges. (Khan, 2009). Administrative decentralization strategies show the relationship among people's participation, administrative decentralization and development. Decentralization of administrative and financial powers becomes necessary to disperse the benefit of independence and economic development. It helps to promote a new political outlook and participatory economic development. The goals can be achieved more quickly and effectively by ensuring participation of the people through further decentralization of administration. The strategies of administrative decentralization such as-resource mobilization, local level planning, local level financing, people's participation etc. are necessary for the development of Upazila (Quazi Azhar Ali, 1995).

As a strategy of decentralization, local-level participation is a more efficient way of meeting local needs. It is further argued that decentralization can cut red tape and make government and administration more flexible, accountable and responsive by bringing government closer to the people.

It improves the link between demand and supply of public goods and activates local resource mobilizations. As a decentralization model the UpazilaParishadis the best characterized as a limited form of devolution, where the decision making authority was transferred to legally incorporate local governments. (Alam, H. Westergaard, 1990).The decentralization strategies that promised to promote grass-roots participation did not enable the vast majority of the population to involve themselves in the local development process due to the involvement of the central authority (Siddique, 1997).The idea of administrative decentralization is very specific form of governmental arrangement. It emphasizes the creation of the local bodies own treasury, power to employ its own staff and a popularly elected local council as the essential for decentralized the administration. For strengthening the local administration it should be removed the central control and ensure the participation of people in the process of decision making (Mawhood, 1983).

Decentralization gives attention to meet the need of the poor people. Through the appropriate decentralization policies the local government system can reduce the gap between rural and urban people's income and wealth. The stated objectives of the decentralization program in getting people directly involved in the decision making process relating to miscellaneous development works, and improving their overall socio-economic conditions were not achieved yet (Alam, 1984).Developing power to the grass root level and strengthening local government would be two efficient way and mechanisms by which the state can practice this objective. Devolution of political power to the local level is incomplete in present system of decentralization in Bangladesh and is more de-concentrated in nature. The political power and range of functioning of the local governments are decided by the central government. In addition, the financial power of different tiers of local government is also limited (Paul and Goel, 2010). The local government in Bangladesh is traditionally on the control of central government. Within the existing framework of UpazilaParishad, central government provided services uniformly to all localities irrespective of geographical, cultural, ethnic and historic conditions. This not satisfies always the public needs. With decentralized authority, local government is the key to improving the accountability of public service delivery at the local levels (Fujita, 2008).At present no absolute democratic decentralization is found in Bangladesh; rather there is administrative decentralization instead (Hossain, 2009).

CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK

It is a figure which represents the research paper at a glance. By this figure, the relationship between dependent and independent variable is shown. So it is essential to know about dependent and independent variable. The variable that is assumed to depend on or be caused by other is called dependent variable. An independent variable is a variable which effect upon the dependent variable. It causes change in the dependent variable. This is also known as explanatory variable.

The conceptual frame work of the study is shown in the following figure by identifying the relationship between dependent and independent variables:

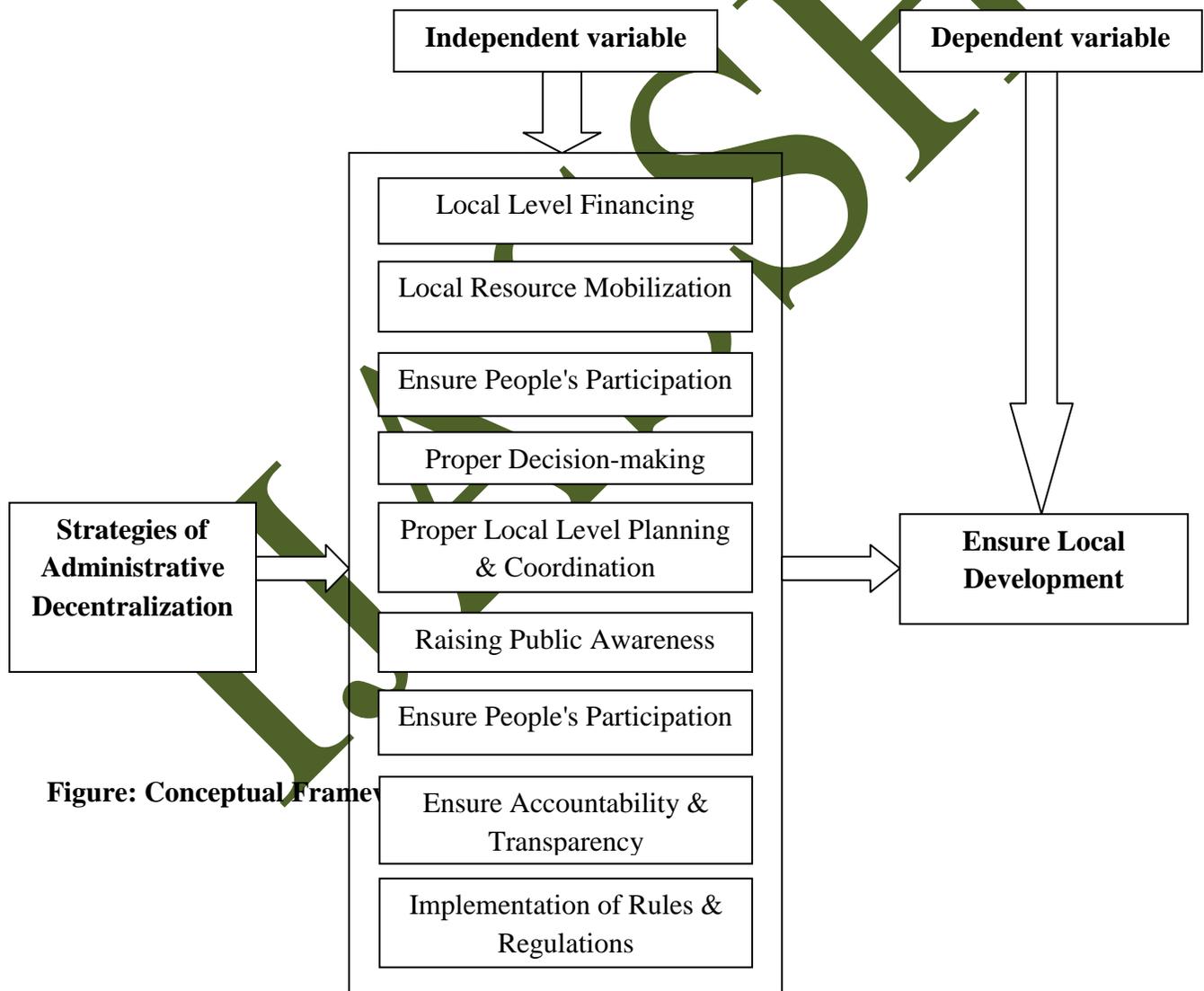


Figure: Conceptual Framework

Decentralization can be an effective mechanism to ensure accountability of civil servants and thereby improve access of local people in government activities. Also a culture of accountability is promoted when direct interaction takes place between local citizens and locally elected leaders. So, through the strategies of administrative decentralization development can be ensured with the participation of people.

THEORY BUILDING

Decentralization is a complex multifaceted concept. Role of decentralization in development has been an important topic of debate in the few years (Conyers, 1986: 88). Decentralization is itself a theory. Different types or forms of decentralization should be distinguished because they have different characteristics, policy implications, and conditions for success. Different forms or types of decentralization can be differentiated essentially by the extent to which authority to plan, decide and manage is transferred from the national or central government to other organizations. Decentralization has four forms which are identified for measuring the degree of decentralization.

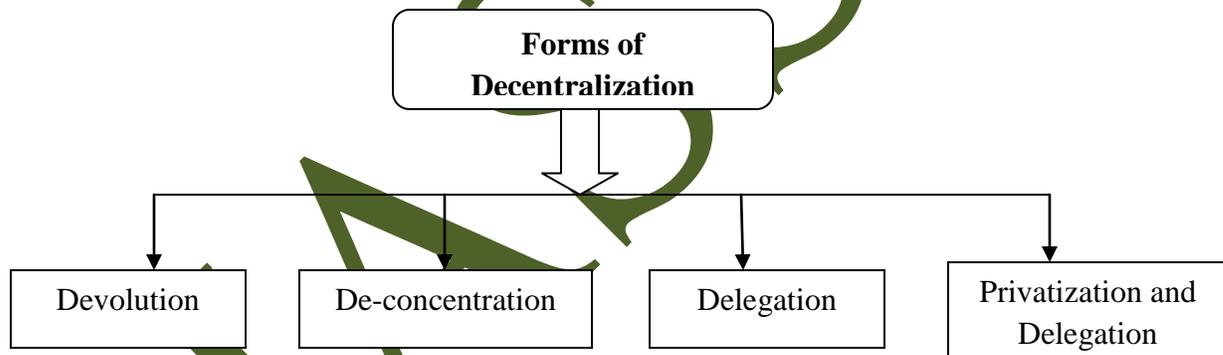


Figure: Forms of Decentralization

Among the four forms of decentralization devolution and deregulation or privatization are considered in this study.

DEVOLUTION

Smith in 1985 called the devolution as democratic form of decentralization. Rondenelli, McCullough and Johnson (1989) recognized it is an organizational form of local government which should be given autonomy and independence and be clearly perceived of as a separate level over which central government or authorities exercise little or no direct control (Quoted from: Khan, 2009: 43). It is the most acceptable forms of decentralization with the concept of democratization, development, participation. Devolutionary decentralization is also known as

democratic decentralization with the following features which are essential for local development:

- Local Governments (Upazila and Unions) are given autonomy and are clearly perceived of a separate level over which central authorities exercise little or no power and direct control.
- Upazila or sub-districts must have clear and legally recognized geographical boundaries where they exercise authority and perform public functions and development programs.
- Upazila Parishad must be given power to raise sufficient resources to perform specific functions.
- The need to develop local governments as institutions in the sense that those organizations provides services that satisfies citizen needs at local or local level for the development.
- It is an arrangement for maintaining mutual benefit and coordinate relationship between central governments and local governments for organizing and implementing local development programs.

DEREGULATION AND PRIVATIZATION

Deregulation or privatization means diversifying government responsibilities for functions and have either transformed them to voluntary organization or allowed them to be performed by private enterprises (Rondenelli, 1981 cited in Fernando, 2002: 122). Some local government administrative functions like- local market tax collection are done by private enterprise. NGOs also playing an important role to meet the local people basic needs. They run schools, health centers, microfinance providing etc. play a significant role for ensuring local development. So, deregulatory decentralization of local government also considered here. Decentralization can be seen as a means of achieving a variety of different objectives. This helps to explain the widespread interest in decentralization in recent years (Conyers, 1983 cited in Hye, 1985: 26). This study has chosen to discuss the development decentralization theory of Diana Conyers for identifying the decentralization effects on ensuring local development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problems. Exploratory - descriptive research design will be employed in this study to get in depth analysis. To validate the research data, a methodological triangulation will be applied for the collection of data. The study followed both the qualitative and the quantitative approach based on primary and secondary data. However, this study is mainly based on survey data. Quantitative data will be

essential to understand the process and phenomena of numbers under the study. The number of sample is considered as the members of Upazila Parishad, government officers and mass people of Sylhet Sadar Upazila Parishad. In this research, the total respondents were one hundred (100) which have been selected purposively from greater Sylhet division of Bangladesh. On the other hand, qualitative research is applied in the view that it has much to offer in research into holistic understanding of the research issue. Qualitative research provides information in a particular but meaningful context and this method is also suitable to policy context. Moreover, some case studies have been conducted to have the greater understanding about the respondents. The data were collected from the respondents through face to face interview applying semi-structured questionnaire. In addition, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), in-depth interview and observation were considered as the most effective and befitting data collection tools. Secondary data meaning document study collected from different published materials like books, articles, reports by academics and regular internet surfing have also been maintained to serve the purpose of this study.

FINDINGS

Maximum portion of the respondents, (62.50%) are known about administrative decentralization. Only (25%) of the respondents have little knowledge about it, and little portion of the respondents (12.50%) have no knowledge about administrative decentralization (see table-1).

68.75% respondents opined that among the forms of decentralization, devolution exists in the sub-districts levels or Upazila level; 12.50% respondents said that only delegation exists at the Upazila level, and 7.50% opined that de-concentration exists at Upazila level, but 11.25% replied that deregulation or privatization exists as forms of decentralization at Upazila level (see table-2).

In response to the question of the meaning of the local development 43.75% respondents (both the government officials as well as mass people) identified people access in decision making and development programs at local level. On the other hand, 12.50% respondents identified income generating and empowerment of people as local development; the same portion opined local development as development of consciousness among local people and other same portion mentioned it as local level democracy. But 6.25% respondents defined it as social and other basic need fulfillment and the remaining 12.50% mentioned local development as equality in service and poverty reduction at local level (see table -3).

31.25% respondents said that local level resources can be mobilized through administrative decentralization, but 62.50% respondents replied against this, and only 6.25% respondents remained silent in this regard (see table-4).

50% respondents said that the officials and representatives of Upazila Prishads are accountable and transparent in their work. On the other hand, 43.75% of the respondents expressed that they are not accountable and transparent in their work. And 6.25% of the respondents were kept silence (see table-5).

37.5% respondents opined that local people have the access to decision-making process; only 18.75% respondents replied that local people have partial access to decision-making process, and 43.75% respondents said that local people have no access to decision-making process (see table-6).

82.5% respondents replied that there exists conflict between local representatives and government officials at Upazila level. But 18.75% respondents said that there is no conflict between local representatives and government officials. Only 11.25% respondents have no comment in this regard (see table-7).

In response to the question of how much existing decentralization practice is capable making the local government effective and efficient, 68.75% of the respondents answered that existing decentralization practice makes the local government effective and efficient, but 22.5% replied negatively, and the remaining 8.75% was silent (see table-8).

37.50% respondents said that there is availability of financial resources at Upazila Parishad, and 62.50% respondents respond that there is no availability of financial resources at Upazila Parishad (see table-9).

62.50% respondents said that rules & regulations are not exercised properly at local government, but 43.75% respondents opined that rules & regulations are exercised properly, and another 6.25% have no comment in this regard (see table-10).

68.75% respondents opined that there exists political interference in the case of local level decision making, but only 18.75% respondents said against this. And the remaining 12.50% respondents have no comment about this (see table-11).

In response to the question of necessity of decentralization for local development, 37.50% respondents replied that decentralization is necessary for local development as it ensures local level participation, and 22.5% respondents said that the decentralization is necessary for making local level planning locally. On the other hand, 18.75% respondents answered that decentralization is necessary for considering the needs and demands of local people. And 7.5% opined that decentralization is necessary for ensuring grass-root level democracy and the same portion replied that decentralization is essential for encouraging local innovation. The remaining

6.25% respondents said that decentralization is indispensable for poverty reduction (see table-12).

72.50% respondents said that in the case of the functioning of local government, there is control of central government on them, and 18.75% respondents replied that there is no interference of the central government on the functions of the local government, but only 8.75% of the respondents were silent(see table-13).

93.75% respondents replied decentralization ensures people's participation, and only 12.50% respondents said against this (see table-14).

87.50% respondents said that local level decision making is indispensable for strengthening the local administration in Bangladesh, and 6.25% replied that local level decision making is not essential for strengthening the local administration, and the rest 6.25% respondents remained silent (see table-15).

DISCUSSION

Decentralization refers to the situation when powers and authorities are transferred to lower levels of administration or government from the higher level of administration. It brings the government closer to the people. It refers to the restructuring and reorganization of authority. It helps to increase the participation of people in economic, social and political decisions. The strategies of administrative decentralization can ensure peoples' participation that promotes local development. Decentralization emphasizes on local level co-ordination and co-operation, local level financing, free from central control, access of people in development projects and accountability to the local people.

Decentralization of Local Government in the Upazila level has some legal and constitutional basis. The powers and functions of the decentralized body are specified through the law and constitution. Reforms are also taken place time to time for the development of the decentralized pattern from the establishment of it. The laws and regulations specify the present level and functions of decentralization for ensuring local development. The functions of Upazila level can be understood through the generation, implementation, monitoring and evaluating, mutual understanding for the implementation of the development programs and resource availability for this. If the functions of revenue and tax collection are properly done, then the financial power will be strengthened day by day. The peoples' participation in the Upazila development activities and other areas is also considered as a variable for ensuring local development. Decentralization paves the way to promote peoples' participation in all levels of work. Local government can develop infrastructure and other employment and income generating activities through the

decentralization practice in the Upazila level. Infrastructure developments take place in the educational, social, institutional, economic level and that can make the regions develop. Equity in service delivery is also very useful for local development. Accountability and transparency of Upazila level elected and selected representatives and government officials to the people can be an effective way for local development. Proper accountability and transparency mechanisms in functioning can bring an idea that the area people are conscious about their development. Effectiveness and efficiency of the local body in functions and service delivery is also essential for local development.

Then the infrastructure of that area will be developed, people will get equal benefit from the administration, so different sectors, especially economic security would be ensured and other demands and benefits of the local people will also be fulfilled.

Bangladesh, a south Asian developing country, with a large number of populations is suffering from poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, and political turmoil over the tussle of power, corruption and natural calamities. Most of the people have idea about the concept, and benefits of decentralization, but they are not aware or concerned at all. Although, Upazila administration as a local government body holds the devolution form of decentralization in theory, but in practice the picture is different. Decentralization promotes local level development through creating different opportunities for the local people like participation in the decision making and development programs, income generating activities, awareness building, equality and poverty reduction. However, the existing administrative decentralization process in Bangladesh cannot meet the actual demands of the local people due to the lack of local resource mobilization. The elected representatives have no effective leadership quality to operate the required functions properly. They are getting the nominations and elected with the undue affection of the central political leaders. Money and muscle power are the prime criteria of getting the candidature. So, many qualified candidates do not get nomination to be elected locally. Both the local representatives and the government officials are corrupted, and they serve their own interest forgetting the interest of the common people. Conflict between Upazila government officials and elected representatives also hampers the way of achieving local level development. They feel in ego problems and blamed each other for the failure of acquiring development target. Decentralization requires equality of opportunity for all people living in the local area, but only party affiliated people get preference in this regard. Hence the decentralization strategies divert from its prime aim of local people's participation in the development policy and projects. Local government administration (Upazila) does not get enough budgets from the central government to meet the demands and needs of the local people. In addition to it, financial corruption is severely affected the local level development. Besides, the elected representatives never try to collect the tax and revenue, the main source of income of local government.

They think that if they forcedly collect the tax and revenue from the local people, they will lose their profitable post in the forthcoming election. Decentralization comprises with the features of making local level representatives and officials accountable to the local people. But in practice, they play the role as the bosses of the people instead of the servant of the people. They never show the accountability to the common people and make their functions transparent. They expressed attractive mandate and promised for the welfare of the local people in time of election, but, after election they forgot all. The local authority has no autonomous decision making power and local governments are influenced by the central control. Their activities and functions are influenced by the central authority rather than local people. Central government pays concentration on the Upazila level for their political interest. So actual decentralization practice is not seen in our country, and it is impossible to get local development from this way of decentralization practice. The powers are recentralized when trying to get decentralization. Administrative decentralization, development and participation are closely related and depends one another. It is found that there are bureaucratic obstacles, fund released problem, information gap etc. to perform the development activities in the local level. The respondents think that an independent local government commission has to be established for funding and monitoring the activities of local government, so that the local people can work independently. Administrative decentralization may help to promote political outlook and participatory development in Upazila.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

To conduct and complete the study we have faced a number of limitations. Such as:

- As a young researcher, it creates difficulties to conduct a research work due to lack of skill, knowledge, and experience. This was happened for personal lacking, time limitations and some other relevant causes.
- We have faced greater problems due to shortage of necessary and relevant books, journals and written documents in various libraries and educational institutions regarding the study.
- There were some restrictions to have access to the information confidential by concern authority. So the respondents were sometimes unwilling to provide necessary information. As a result, it was very much difficult to explore the real situation.
- The respondents did not want to answer the whole questions, because they were busy in their professional and routine work.
- Wider concept made it difficult to cover the whole area.
- It was a lengthy process to take permission from the authority. We had to maintain formalities to collect data from the Upazila Parishad.

CONCLUDING REMARKS WITH POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The arguments for decentralization have become so persuasive and apparently convincing that during the last two decades, most of the developing countries have adopted decentralization policies as part of their development strategy and decentralization has thus become the latest fashion in the development administration. It is impossible to realize national development goals without proper and accelerated local development. But persistent political and administrative interference in the Upazila affairs has made it ineffective. The strategies of administrative decentralization can ensure the participation of people and also ensure development. For making effective decentralization practice in our nation it is essential to change the existing structure of power within communities and to improve the opportunities for participating and engaging the voice of the disadvantaged group in our country's political system. There have various reasons for the present situation of decentralization practice in the local government system and bringing local level development. In Bangladesh the colonial system of administration structure are followed, the local level dependent to the central authority for fund and other economic subsidiaries, the local level management is not so skilled and effective, the central local relation is much rigid and people of our country are not educated and conscious about the local level development as well as their own development through the contribution in the local level elections and choose the best representative. That's why the decentralization process become so much complex.

- The Upazila Parishad has to be autonomous. It must have its own fund and rules of procedure and budget. It will undertake and carry out local development activities independently and without any outside interference.
- The co-ordination and co-operation among local level representatives, local people and government officials should be ensured for the sustainable local level development.
- The local representatives should be accountable and transparent to the local people, and central control over the local government should be decreased.
- Appropriate training for the elected representatives as well as appointed officials should be given to develop their capacity and enhance efficiency.
- It is necessary to think about minimum educational qualification for the public representatives.
- An independent local government commission has to be established for funding and monitoring of local government activities.
- A balance between central decisions and decentralized administration is necessary for the administration and development of a country.

- Political influence should be removed and government should establish monitoring cell to make the services people oriented.
- Financial and technological resources must be utilized properly with trained and honest officials to ensure sustainable services.
- The awareness of general people should be increased to participate in the decision-making process.

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APPENDIX**List of Tables**

Table -1: Idea about administrative decentralization

Opinion of respondent	Number of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Known	50	62.50
Little bit	20	25.00
Unknown	10	12.50
Total	80	100

Field data collected from SylhetSadarUpazila, 1st to 24th January 2015

Table-2: Forms of decentralization actually exists in the sub-district levels

Opinion of Respondent	Number of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Devolution	55	68.75
Delegation	10	12.50
De-concentration	06	07.50
Deregulation or privatization	09	11.25
Total	80	100

Field data collected from SylhetSadarUpazila, 1st to 24th January 2014

Table-3: Meaning of local development

Opinion of Respondent	Number of Respondent	Percentage (%)
People access in decision making and development programs	35	43.75
Income generating and empowerment of people	10	12.50
Develop consciousness of people	10	12.50
Local level democracy	10	12.50
Social and other basic need fulfillment	05	06.25
Equality in service	05	06.25
Poverty reduction	05	06.25
Total	80	100

Field data collected from SylhetSadarUpazila, 1st to 24th January 2014

Table -4: Mobilization of local level resources through administrative decentralization

Opinion of Respondent	Number of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	25	31.25
No	50	62.50
No comment	05	06.25
Total	80	100

Field data collected from SylhetSadarUpazila, 1st to 24th January 2014

Table-5: Accountability and transparency of Upazila Parishad's officials and representatives

Opinion of Respondent	Number of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	40	50.00
No	35	43.75
No comment	05	06.25
Total	80	100

Field data collected from SylhetSadarUpazila, 1st to 24th January 2014

Table-6: Local Peoples' access to Decision-Making Process

Opinion of Respondent	Number of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Have access	30	37.50
No access	35	43.75
Partially	15	18.75
Total	80	100

Field data collected from SylhetSadarUpazila, 1st to 24th January 2014

Table-7: Conflict between Local Representatives and Government Officials

Opinion of Respondent	Number of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	66	82.50
No	15	18.75
No comment	09	11.25
Total	100	100

Field data collected from SylhetSadarUpazila, 1st to 24th January 2014

Table- 8: Existing decentralization practice makes the local government effective and efficient

Opinion of Respondent	Number of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	55	68.75
No	18	22.50
No comment	07	08.75
Total	80	100

Field data collected from SylhetSadarUpazila, 1st to 24th January 2014

Table-9: Availability of financial resources at Upazila Parishad

Opinion of Respondent	Number of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	30	37.50
No	50	62.50
No comment	00	00.00
Total	80	100

Field data collected from SylhetSadarUpazila, 1st to 24th January 2014

Table-10: Exercise of rules & regulations in a proper way

Opinion of Respondent	Number of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	35	43.75
No	50	62.50
No comment	05	06.25
Total	80	100

Field data collected from SylhetSadarUpazila, 1st to 24th January 2014

Table-11: Political interference in local level decision-making

Opinion of Respondent	Number of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	55	68.75
No	15	18.75
No comment	10	12.50
Total	80	100

Field data collected from SylhetSadarUpazila, 1st to 24th January 2014

Table-12: Necessity of decentralization for local development

Opinion of Respondent	Number of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Making local level planning locally	18	22.50
Consider the needs and demands of local people	15	18.75
Ensure local level participation	30	37.50
Ensure grass-root level democracy	6	7.50
Encourage local innovation	6	7.50
Poverty reduction	5	6.25
Total	80	100

Field data collected from SylhetSadarUpazila, 1st to 24th January 2014

Table 13:- Central control over local government

Opinion of Respondent	Number of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	58	72.50
No	15	18.75
No comment	07	08.75
Total	80	100

Field data collected from SylhetSadarUpazila, 1st to 24th January 2014

Table-14: Ensuring peoples' participation through the decentralization system

Opinion of Respondent	Number of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	75	93.75
No	10	12.50
No comment	00	00.00
Total	100	100

Field data collected from SylhetSadarUpazila, 1st to 24th January 2014

Table-15: Necessity of local level decision making for strengthening local administration in Bangladesh

Opinion of Respondent	Number of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	70	87.50
No	05	06.25
No comment	05	06.25
Total	80	100

Field data collected from SylhetSadarUpazila, 1st to 24th January 2014