

Resource Management for Strengthening Union Parishad: An Experimental Project

Main Objectives and brief description of the project with justification

All over the world local government is deemed as an effective institution of the modern state machinery. It is a political institution for ensuring people's participation in local development that helps to provide the basic amenities to the local people. The authority to prepare local level plans and to undertake functions is useless, unless the local government institutions have the financial capability to implement those. Having some constitutional and legal prerogatives the rural local government institutions have been facing serious constraints in mobilizing local resources in Bangladesh. These constraints might be overcome by fiscal decentralization, taking new legal measures, and optimal utilization and mobilization local resources. There should be a balance between the local resource mobilization and financial support from the central government to achieve the crucial targets of local development through local government.

In Bangladesh, decentralized local government and other political institutions have not been developed as relatively self-governing autonomous people's institutions, but rather as dependent territories (Ahmed, 1993:6). Hence, one of the explicit objectives of decentralization is to reduce the financial dependence of local governments on national government and also foster local self-sufficiency in every respect (Ahmed, 1993: 279). Mobilization of local resources for local development could be the most effective way out in this regard.

In Bangladesh one of the basic problems of the local government institutions (LGIS) is that almost all LGIs are chronically resource poor institutions. LGIs are basically dependent on the resource transfer from the central government although the LGIs are empowered to generate resource from its own jurisdiction. Likewise Union Parishads are also financially dependent on the central government. The resource base of the locally generated resource of the Union Parishad is very weak. According to union parishad (UP) tax schedule 2003, UPs have been empowered to collect local resources from various sources but the UP leaders are usually reluctant to collect tax, fees and other charges as per instruction given in the above tax schedule, therefore the main objective of this experimental project is to devise a system of resource mobilization by the Union Parishads so that these UPs should be equipped with adequate tax base and more resources.

Therefore, the specific objectives of the project are to:

- i. develop a model UP in term of resource generation and management.
- ii. devise an IT base system of resource management in the UPs with the help of Union ICT centre.

1.1 Main activities under the proposed project

The activities of the project will be on the following areas:

- i. Preparation of household list;
- ii. Preparation of shops and business enterprise at the existing hut and bazzars;
- iii. Tax assessment of the whole areas following the government tax schedule of 2003;
- iv. Developing a data base for tax management;
- v. Organization of civil society and community forums including different stake holders at the UP for improving tax management;
- vii. Motivational campaign for tax collection through different stakeholders at the UP;
- viii. Imparting training for the tax collectors;
- ix. Tax collection;
- x. Reporting and record management.

Budget : 8000.00 Lakh

Project Duration : January 2017- July 2020.

Proposed area coverage of the project : The project will be experimentally implemented in all district of the Chittagong Division of Bangladesh. There are 11 districts in Chittagong division such as i) Comilla, ii) Brahmanbaria, iii) Chandpur, iv) Feni; v) Noakhali; vi) Laksmipur, vii) Chittagong, viii) Cox's Bazar and there are 3 hill districts i.e ix) Rangamati, x) Bandarban, xii) Khagrachori. From each district one Union Parishad will be selected from each district on random basis.