



University of Bergen  
*Department of Administration and Organization Theory*

**Master's Thesis in Public Administration**

**Implementation of Right to Information Act, 2009 in Bangladesh:**  
*A Study on Union Parishad*

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## Acronyms

ATI.....	Access to Information
BDT.....	Bangladeshi Taka
BRTA.....	Bangladesh Road Transport Authority
CBOs.....	Community Based Organizations
CHT.....	Chittagong Hill Tracks
DMP.....	Dhaka Metropolitan Police
DO.....	Designated Officer
FFW.....	Food For Work
FGD.....	Focus Group Discussion
FOI.....	Freedom of Information
GDP.....	Gross Development Product
<i>GNP</i> .....	<i>Gross National Product</i>
GLA.....	Government Line Agency
IC.....	Information Commission
ICCPR.....	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
IO.....	Information Officer
IV.....	Independent Variable
LGSP.....	Local Government Support Programme
MKSS.....	Mazdoor Kisan Shakthi Sanghatana
NGOs.....	Non-Government Organizations
PCJSS.....	Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti
PESP.....	Primary Education Stipend Programme
RTI.....	Right to Information
SCA.....	Senior Citizen Allowance
SSNPs.....	Social Safety Net Programs
UDCC.....	Union Development and Coordination Committee
UPC.....	Union Parishad Chairman
UP.....	Union Parishad
UZP.....	Upazila Parishad
UZC.....	Upazila Chairman
VGD.....	Vulnerable Group Development
VGF.....	Vulnerable Group Feeding
UDHR.....	United Nation Declaration of Human Rights
UISC.....	Union Service and Information Center
UPDF.....	United People's Democratic Front
UNDP.....	United Nations Development Program
UNO.....	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
USAID.....	United States Agency for International Development



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## ***Abstract***

*'The Right to Information Act, 2009' is considered as, one of the most significant policies in recent times, since it came at a time, when there have been lots of debates on country's willingness to ensure transparency and accountability in the governing process. The state of governance is deteriorating and corruption has become institutionalized in Bangladesh. One of the main reasons, behind that, is lack of openness and people's access to information. The main objective of enactment of the Right to Information Act, 2009 (RTI, 2009) was to ensure people's accessibility to information. The Union Parishad, being the lowest tier in the local government structure in Bangladesh, has authority to perform directly at community level. A policy can be well written on paper, but the success of a policy lies on the effectiveness of its implementation. Bangladesh, in the past, has experienced both success and failure of implementation of policies to meet policy goals.*

*The study intended to assess the process of implementation of the RTI Act at UP level. More specifically, the study intended to look into my research question **'To what extent the implementation of RTI act led to achievement of the policy objectives set under this act'**. A case oriented qualitative research approach was used in this study, where both primary and secondary data were collected. However, quantitative approach has also been used to supplement qualitative approach. Horogram UP, of Paba Upazila and Maria UP of Durgapur Upazila of Rajshahi district were selected as cases, where the unit of analysis was Union Parishad. A combination of three models which include, Meter and Horn's Model of policy Implementation (1975), Winter's Integrated Model of Implementation (2003) and Grindle and Thomas's Interactive Model (1980) guided the study and provide the framework for analysis. Implementation performance of RTI Act was measured through indicators like provision to preservation and disclosure of information, access to various kinds of information and regular services at UISCs and under SSNPs. The application procedure for seeking information was not familiar within common people. However, there were cases where, people successfully submitted queries and got benefited from that. The study came out with the findings that better understanding of policy objectives and standards, appropriate implementation structure in terms of cooperation and high level of commitment among policy implementers and also from different stakeholders, adequate and appropriate resources, favorable economic, social and political conditions, and most importantly positive behavior of target group had profound influence on implementation success of RTI Act. On the other hand, lack of understanding about policy*

*objectives and standards, inappropriate implementation structure, inadequacy and unavailability of resources, unfavorable economic, social and political conditions and adverse behavior of target people led to policy failure.*

*The study also found that there was lack of initiatives to make RTI Act popular among common people. It is important that, contributions are made from different parts of the society to accelerate the pace of its implementation. The study revealed that, implementation in a country like Bangladesh, is not only influenced by these factors, but also by administrative culture and existing practices. However, one of the most important things for RTI Act to achieve its goal is, to create mass awareness among common people about the policy and involve various stakeholders in the implementation process, something UP should keep into consideration, while they implement a policy as important as RTI, in future.*

# 1. CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

## 1.1. Introduction

No matter how well a policy is written on paper, the success of a policy depends largely on how well it is implemented (Calland, 2010). In the past, there were number of policies, for example Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord<sup>1</sup> and Upazilla Parishad Act<sup>2</sup>, could not succeed to achieve policy goals due to implementation failure (Chowdhury, 2009 , Mannan, 2003, Panday and Jamil, 2009, Panday, 2007). On the other hand, there were policies like Operation Clean Heart<sup>3</sup> or Ban on Two Stoke Engines<sup>4</sup>, for instance, were successful as they performed very well at implementation stage (Chowdhury, 2005, Panday, 2004 ).

The Right to Information Act (RTI), 2009 was introduced with an objective to ensure free flow of information and people's right to access to information. The introduction of the RTI Act was a path breaking initiative of the government as it came in a time when there have been heaps of discussions about transparency and accountability in various seminars and different other

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<sup>1</sup> Chittagong Hill Accord, 1997 was one of the most significant policies to in the history of Bangladesh to end a long lasting conflict in the region. Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT), located in the Southeast part of Bangladesh is home to 13 different ethnic groups. The region had a special status of autonomously administered district in British rule by CHT Regulation and later declared as "Totally Excluded Area" under The Government of India Act, 1935. After partition it was still enjoying autonomous status till the amendment in the Constitution of Pakistan in 1963 which allowed large scale Bengali to migrate into CHT. The Kaptai Hydro-Electric Dam was built in 1962 which resulted in a forceful reallocation of over 100000 ethnic people mostly Chakma (an ethnic group). The migration of non-ethnic people found an increasing trend in the 80s and 90s and the number of Bengali people which was 12% in 1961 to 39% in 1991. After independence when the constitution is written there was no distinction between people living in this region and Bengalis made in terms of culture, language and identity rather determined as united Bengali Nationalism. The Chittagong Accord was passed in the parliament in 1997 which included protection of the land rights, rehabilitation of internally displaced people, cultural uniqueness and withdrawal of army and a regional self government

<sup>2</sup> The Upazila Parishad Act was passed in 2008 during the time of Care taker Government led by Fakhruddin Ahmed from 2007-2009. The Act was held in all of 482 Upazila Parishad on January 22, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> In October 2002, Begum Khaleda Zia, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh ordered a country wide indefinite joint operation against terrorism consisting of the police, paramilitary and military forces, including at least seven infantry divisions with more than 18,000 soldiers. The main objective of the operation was to control the escalating crime rate and recover illegal arms, which had proliferated to an alarming extent in the society. The joint operation appears impartial and neutral with political leaders and activists from both the BNP and the opposition parties being targeted. Until end November 2002, 5,500 persons have been arrested, including politicians, criminals and others involved in terrorist activities. See: <http://www.ipcs.org/article/terrorism/operation-clean-heart-bangladeshs-national-war-against-terror-931.html>

<sup>4</sup> The Policy 'Ban on Two Stoke Engines' was introduced in response to Public Interest Litigation filed to high court for citizen's right to breathe fresh air on March 27, 2002. The Court issued eight directives and Ban on Two Stoke Engines was one of them.

platforms. Bangladesh, being rated among the most corrupted countries in the world<sup>5</sup> for consecutive years from 2001 to 2005, there was a big question mark on country's willingness to combat corruption and bring transparency in governance (Sobhan, 1998, Iftekhazzaman, 2011)

My study was on implementation of RTI Act at Union Parishad (UP) level. One of the contributing reasons to focus on UP was the fact that a UP was the lower tier in the local government system<sup>6</sup> and it also worked directly with the people in rural areas. Also, there was a policy called 'The Local Government Ordinance (Union Parishad)'<sup>7</sup> which was introduced in 2009 and it had a clear guideline on information disclosure and right to access to information.

The RTI Act ensures transparency and accountability of local government institutions, government agencies, statutory bodies and NGOs run by foreign or government funds. Union Parishads had an important role to play to make information accessible and available to people who were living in rural setting. In this particular study, I tried to understand how the RTI Act was implemented at UP level.

### **1.1.1. Origin, Location, Population & Economy**

Bangladesh was a part of British India from 16<sup>th</sup> century till 1947 when both West Pakistan and Bangladesh (East Bengal that time) were separated from India. East Bengal was named as East Pakistan in 1955. However, the reason why the people of East Pakistan got dissatisfied<sup>8</sup> was because East Pakistan was located 1600 km away from West Pakistan and it had different language and its own culture. Also the people of East Pakistan started to realize that their political and economic participation was neglected and they were being marginalized. East Pakistan was separated from West Pakistan and named as Bangladesh followed by the Language Movement<sup>9</sup> in 1952 and the liberation war<sup>10</sup> in 1971. Since independence, there have been military rules from 1975 to 1990 and from January 2007 to late December 2008 when a military

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<sup>5</sup> <http://bangladeshiasdirtylittlesecret.blogspot.no/>

<sup>6</sup> The Local Government in Bangladesh is divided into two parts Rural Local Government and Urban Local Government. The Rural Local Government has three tiers; Zila Parishad at district level, Upazila Parishad (UZP) at sub-district level and Union Parishad at Union level.

<sup>7</sup> See [http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/print\\_sections\\_all.php?id=1027](http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/print_sections_all.php?id=1027)

<sup>8</sup> See <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bg.html>

<sup>9</sup> The Bengali Language Movement, also known as the Language Movement was a political movement in former East Bengal (today Bangladesh) advocating for a recognition of Bengali language as an official language of the Dominion of Pakistan in order to allow its use in government affairs, the continuation of its use as a medium of education, its use in media, currency and stamps, and to maintain its writing in the Bengali script.

<sup>10</sup> The liberation war between East and West Pakistan took place in 1971. West Pakistan was defeated by East Pakistan. East Pakistan got a victory and formed an independence state. See <http://www.independent-bangladesh.com/history/liberation-war-of-bangladesh.html>

backed Care Taker Government was in power. An elected government took over the power headed by Sheikh Hasina in December, 2008.

Bangladesh is located in Southern Asia, bordering the Bay of Bengal, between Burma and India. The total land of the country is 143,998 sq km and the total population of the country is over 160 million that makes Bangladesh world's most densely populated country.

Despite of over population, political instability, corruption, natural disasters and poor infrastructural facilities, Bangladesh maintains an economic growth of 5-6% per year since 1996. The Ready Made Garments and Knitwear Industry in Bangladesh (\$12.3 billion in FY09) is one of the largest in the world. Remittances from Bangladeshis, who live in abroad, are nearly \$11 billion in FY10 which was around 12% of GDP. In spite of these achievements, approximately 30% of the total population still remains under poverty line and 5% of the population is unemployed.

## **1.2. Political System and the State of Governance in Bangladesh**

From a general perspective, Bangladesh has all symptoms of underdeveloped polity where democracy is yet to be institutionalized (Khan, 2003). Money dominated political system, lack of values and ethics, poor administrative practices are some of the characteristics that explain the state of governance in Bangladesh (ibid).

Political institutions, surrounded by muscle men and influential people, have been transformed as weak factional units to serve their narrow interests (Jamil, 2002). Politics is mainly dominated by those who have money to spend during election and people who hardly have any knowledge of politics (Khan, 2003). Political parties are dominated by heredity and kinship to carry family legacy and tradition where supreme leadership is permanent in nature (Zafarullah, 1990 cited in Khan, 2003). Party matters are highly influenced and managed by top level politicians and bureaucrats close to the leader who have major influences in policy making and policy implementation process (ibid). A common man doesn't have any role to play rather finding themselves as passive voters.

People having contrasting values and conflicting ethics often find themselves in corruption (Shoban, 1998: 27). Nobody talks about ethics anymore. No matter whether it is political parties or civil society or international donor communities, everyone tries to influence the political system in Bangladesh (ibid). Highly centralized power and authority structure is undermining local elected authority (Khan, 2003). The central government is often blamed for

not being transparent in their operation (Iftekharruzaman, 2011:1). People are not aware of what is happening around them (ibid). State apparatuses have been used for individual, family, group and party benefits (Zafarullah & Khan, 2001 cited in Khan, 2003).

Accountability among government officials, either to their superior or the community they serve is missing in Bangladesh (Shoban, 1998: 35). The public officials are inefficient, poorly paid, ill disciplined and unaccountable (Jamil, 2002: 93). Their role is more likely to pursue personal grievance rather performing it for the stakeholders (ibid). Decision making in the public sector is non-transparent where

*‘secrecy in both political and administrative sphere are jealously guarded by acts and rules like the Official Secrets Act, 1923 and Government Service Conduct Rules, 1979 denying citizens access to relevant files and documents’* (Khan 1998 cited in Khan, 2003).

Parliamentarians depend heavily on the executive for almost everything (Shoban, 1998: 27). MPs mostly use parliament as platform to sanction resources for infrastructure project in their constituency (ibid). The parliament failed to perform as controller and overseer of executive actions (Khan, 2001 cited in Khan, 2003: 396).

The Donor Community on whom Bangladesh still depends heavily on for aid and grants have also openly expressed their dissatisfaction with how the governance system works in Bangladesh (Shoban, 1998: 30). What is to be noticed here that, their role is limited within occasional criticisms on various issues or giving public lectures and prescription on certain policy or reform (World Bank, 1996 cited in Khan 2003: 397). However, they often fail to realize the impact of such recommendations on the poor, virtually ignoring a large population of the country (ibid).

A Civil Society which is mainly dominated by NGOs and some professional organizations and the way they perform is sometimes questionable (Khan, 2003: 403). Rather working for the rights of the poor and disadvantaged, they continue to seek benefit from government and donor agencies (Shoban, 1998: 31).

In totality, the state of governance in Bangladesh can be characterized as an immature polity which is highly influenced by those who have money and power. Besides an unskilled and less performing civil administration, non-transparent and unaccountable political and administrative system and an underperforming civil society which is biased and self-centered

from many perspectives are the main reasons behind poor governance in Bangladesh (Shoban, 1998; Khan, 2003).

### **1.3. Background to the Study**

As a human right, the right to Access To Information (ATI) has come a long way. Many countries over the years have enacted ATI laws since 90s (Calland, 2003). Now-a-days information is considered as a public good like clean air and drinking water (CHRI, 2008). Information is generated with public money which cannot be kept away unreasonably from citizens and it should benefit the people of the country (Halim, 2011). Bangladesh has been in the discussion for over a decade for not being pro-active about information disclosure. That is the reason why Bangladesh is placed among the most corrupted countries of the world (ibid). Inequality of access to information is a form of poverty, and without knowledge and capacity to exercise rights, it is difficult to improve their standards of living (Calland, 2002).

The RTI Act is an outcome of continuous efforts of civil society organizations like Press Council in the early 80's and then Mannusher Jonno Foundation, D-Net, InterCooperation, Nagorik Uddog, Nijera Kori etc, academics and different other stakeholders in the society. Their collaborated efforts brought draft legislation in 2002. Later it transformed into a complete law in 2008. It came into effect in 2009. There is a more detailed discussion on the journey of RTI in Bangladesh in Chapter Three.

The RTI Act of 2009 is a milestone for Bangladesh towards a transparent information disclosure system and making information available to people (Iftekhharuzzaman, 2011:2-3). It also shows the willingness of the government to introduce an open and transparent system where people can have access to information (ibid). My study here is trying to see how effectively it has been implemented particularly at UP level.

### **1.4. Statement of Problem**

A country, where every day starts with new challenges, and people live in continuous threats of climate change<sup>11</sup>, natural disasters and most importantly poverty, people — especially the poor and the disadvantaged — expect their government to come to their rescue to overcome these challenges. Lack of education, large and ever increasing population, limited resources, unskilled

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<sup>11</sup> According to British Global Risk Analysis Company Maplecroft, Bangladesh is the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Bangladesh having in high risk of drought and the highest risk of flooding. In the year 2010 alone, nearly 500,000 people were driven from their homes by floods and cyclones. See:<http://chimalaya.org/2011/04/29/bangladesh-india-most-threatened-by-climate-change-risk-study-finds/>



manpower, insufficient employment opportunities — the list is too long to describe how and why Bangladesh, after 40 years of independence is still considered a Least Developed Country.

Corruption is deeply rooted in almost everywhere starting from politician, businessmen to civil servants and various other professional groups. The most interesting part is everyone talks against corruption in public gatherings but when it comes to practice nobody follows that (Khan, 2003:403). As a result, an elite and extremely rich class secures their position and wealth by manipulating political and policy decisions at the cost of increasing misery of the people-at-large (ibid). It weakens the rule of law, and restricts citizens from accessing the decisions taken by their representatives. Corruption is, to a large extent, responsible for unequal access to public services and justice, poverty and many of the societal problems (Iftekharuzzaman, 2011; Shoban, 2002). The Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) Program under the Social Safety Net Programme<sup>12</sup> and USAID funded Public Works Programs (Food for Work, Food for Education) have been in discussion for being highly controlled by influential people and manipulative towards certain groups, whereas the real beneficiaries have been left out from the program (Shoban, 2002: 29).

‘The Right to information Act, 2009’ was introduced during a phase when there were criticisms burdening on the shoulder of the country’s image. The policy was aiming at holding state and non-state actors accountable by making provision of free flow of Information and people’s right to information (The Right to Information Act, 2009). Passing the access to information law alone can be considered as a piece of paper where it is printed upon, but the real challenge is how the laws are to be implemented and enforced (Neuman & Calland, 2010:18). Implementation of such law is complex task as it requires strong vision of the government and political commitment (Shoban 1998). It should not be influenced by any special interest groups within and outside the administration to pursue private or sectional gain (ibid).

As mentioned earlier that, in the past there have been policies which were successful and also many of them were unsuccessful. One of the main reasons behind successes or failures of these policies were how they were implemented. In my study, I also tried to find out how

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<sup>12</sup> Bangladesh has around 30 social safety net programme. Various ministries or agencies are directly or indirectly are working towards poverty alleviation and for the wellbeing and empowerment of the poor are broadly termed as social safety net initiatives. Programmes rely on cash transfer or food aid. These include cash support programme, food aid programme, special programme for poverty reduction, self-employment through micro credit etc. See more detail on UNDP Report 2009 available at <http://www.undp.org.bd/library/reports/2009-02-09%20SSNPs%20in%20Bangladesh%20Upload.pdf>

effectively RTI Act was implemented specially at UP level, where the study was conducted. More specifically, my study has been focusing on implementation performance of RTI Act and tried to figure out to what extent implementation of RTI Act has managed to achieve objectives set out in the policy.

### **1.5. Rationale of the Study**

The Journey of Access to Information in Bangladesh is not too long. It is only in the last decade that the idea of Access to Information came to existence when the state of governance was deteriorating and there have been lots of pressure on the government to bring about transparency in the system. Access to information is not only an essential element in democratic governance but also regarded as a fundamental right (Arko-Cobbah, 2008 ). Article 39 of ‘The Constitution of Bangladesh’ ensures freedom of thought, conscience and speech where all powers of the Republic belong to the people.

Implementation is perhaps the most important phase of policy cycle. No matter how carefully the policy is formulated, the success of a policy depends largely on how the policy is implemented (Winter, 2003). Scholars who have contributed in the field of implementation in Bangladesh are not too many in numbers. Of course, I do appreciate the recent academic studies in Bangladesh on implementation (Chowdhury, 2005; Chowdhury, 2009; Panday, 2004; Panday, 2008; Panday & Jamil, 2009; Mannan 2003). What encouraged me to take implementation as research field was that most of these studies highlighted a segment of implementation on board i.e. Policy Standard and Objectives (Chowdhury, 2009; Panday, 2010), Implementation Structure ( Chowdhury, 2005; Mannan 2003) , Resources (Panday, 2010) , Target Group Behavior ( Chowdhury, 2005; Chowdhury, 2009). However my intention was to bring all these factors together on board and understand how various factors contributed or hindered the implementation of RTI Act in Bangladesh, mainly at UP level.

RTI is a new concept and also contrary to existing political and administrative system in Bangladesh which is characterized by closed non-transparent and unaccountable practices (Iftteruzaman, 2011; Khan, 2003; Shoban, 1998; Jamil, 2002). There have been strong campaign and advocacy initiatives from Civil Society, NGOs and academics for a policy on RTI. Now, when it was already at the implementation stage, it encouraged me to take up the study. In the study, I tried to understand how successfully it was implemented. Another encouraging thing for me was the fact that there was no significant study on implementation of RTI. Also, there were not adequate literatures on RTI that could help understanding the aftermath of this policy.

My study was an attempt to bring insights to policy implementation in Bangladesh. I believed that researchers on RTI would also be benefited from my study and they could bring new dimension to the field in Bangladesh.

### **1.6. Purpose and Objectives of the Study**

The study intended to examine implementation performance of RTI in Horogram and Maria Union Parishad. More specifically, the study aimed at reaching the following objectives:-

- To look at the extent to which policy standards and objectives are understood by implementers and the target population.
- To examine the extent to which implementation structure in terms of cooperation and commitment facilitates successful implementation of RTI Act.
- To examine the resources in terms of human capacities and financial resources are available to implement RTI initiative at UP level.
- To examine to what extent the economic, social and political conditions influence the implementation of RTI act at Union level.
- To assess the behavior of target group towards UP to take RTI initiatives ahead.

### **1.7. Research Questions**

Raising questions are important as they guide a researcher to the next step and “constitute the ‘real’ reasons for engaging in a particular research project” (King et al., 1994). Defining the research questions is probably the most important and difficult steps in a research. A researcher might have many questions in mind, but formulating them meaningfully is the most difficult and important part (Powers et al., 1985, Kumar, 2008).

As discussed earlier that the objective of the RTI Act, 2009 was to make provision for free flow of Information and people’s right to information. Similarly, The Local Government (Union Parishad) Act, 2009 has also given a clear guideline regarding information disclosure, UP planning and budget procedure. Coming to the objective of this study, that was to see how successfully RTI was implemented I went with one main question and a set of operational questions.

### **1.7.1. Main Research Questions**

The main research question of my study was-*'To what extent the implementation of RTI act led to achievement of the policy objectives set under this act?'*

The focus of my questions was to understand how successfully the RTI Act was implemented. More precisely, the main research questions were to answer the following operational questions.

### **1.7.2. Operational Research Questions**

- i) Do implementers and the target people have clear understanding about the goals/objectives of the RTI Act? Are there any measures taken to make people aware of the Act?
- ii) Do UPs have the appropriate implementation structure to implement RTI Act?
- iii) Do the economic, social and political conditions contribute in successful implementation of RTI Act?
- iv) Do the UPs have the resources in place to implement the program as planned?
- v) Does the behaviour of target population have anything to do with the successful implementation of RTI Act?

### **1.8. Theoretical Framework**

The study basically focused on implementation performance of RTI Act in Bangladesh. The main research question that was asked in the study tried to address the process of implementation and how successfully policy was implemented. The variables that have been used to measure implementation performance of RTI Act were inspired from Meter and Horn's Implementation Model, Winter's Integrated Implementation Model, and Tomas and Griddle's Integrated Model of Policy Implementation. The detail discussion on theories has been made in Chapter-2.

### **1.9. Research Methods**

The study employed a case oriented qualitative research approach. However, I used quantitative approach in some places to get clearer picture of the context and also to supplement qualitative approach. The research questions that have been set for this study were mainly to explore implementation process of RTI Act. It also tried to explain relationships between variables. Therefore, I preferred using Focus Group Discussions, Face to Face Interview, Direct Observation and Document review to understand how successfully RTI was implemented in a

‘real life setting’ explaining implementation realities. A further and detailed discussion on Research Methodology has been made in Chapter-4.

#### **1.10. Organization of the Thesis**

My thesis has been divided into seven chapters. *The first Chapter* had an introduction to the key elements of the study (Background to the study, Problem Statement, Research Objectives and Research Questions). The Chapter also followed discussions on the Rationale, Limitations and Scope of the study. *The Second Chapter* introduced the thesis to the general discussion of policy implementation and literature on policy implementation in the context of Bangladesh which ended up with my framework of analysis to guide the study forward. *The Third Chapter* gave an overview of RTI and its journey in South Asia and a brief comparative analysis of RTI Act in these countries. *The Fourth Chapter* introduced to the discussion on Methodology with discussion specifically on research approach, strategy, selection of study sample, data collection tools and analyzing techniques and ethical considerations. *The Fifth Chapter* introduced to the discussion on the present status of RTI implementation in selected UPs (Horogram UP and Maria UP) which in fact was a discussion on the dependent variable of my study. *The Six Chapter* tried to identify the factor influencing the implementation RTI in my study area, which was basically a discussion on my independent variables. *The seventh and final Chapter* of my thesis was to give a summary of my study findings, theoretical implication and some recommendations followed by concluding remarks on the study.

## **2. CHAPTER TWO: Theoretical Discussion**

### **2.1. Introduction**

Theory can be defined as a general and more or less comprehensive set of statements or propositions that describes different aspects of social phenomena (Babbie, 1989). My focus in this chapter was to elucidate what policy implementation entailed. In the course of doing that, I started with an introduction to Policy Implementation in general, followed by a discussion of various perspectives of policy implementation. As discussion progresses, I tried to focus more on policy implementation in Bangladesh. The idea here was to have a general discussion on policy implementation to start with and narrow it down to policy implementation in the context of Bangladesh. The discussion ended up with a framework of analysis which guided my study through.

### **2.2. General Discussion on Policy Implementation**

Before the discussion starts on policy implementation, it is really important to have a general understanding of what public policy is all about.

#### **2.2.1. Public Policy**

Defining public policy is a complex thing to do. According to Thomas Dye (1972) ‘Public policy is whatever governments chose to do or not to do’ (Dye, 1972 cited (Howlett et al., 2009) However the definition failed to differentiate what the government decides to do and what it actually does (ibid). Jenkin (1978) later came with a more precise definition. He defined *Public Policy* as ‘a set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors regarding selection of goals and means of achieving them in a particular situation where those decisions should, on principle, be within the power of those actors to achieve’ (Jenkins, 1978 cited in Ramesh & Howlett 2009: 6). In simple words, Public Policy can be defined as the mandate to translate a set of interconnected decisions into goal oriented action.

#### **2.2.2. Policy Implementation**

In the last three decades, Policy Implementation as a Research Field has come a long way. Many perspectives consisting of thoughts, ideas, strategies, methodologies have been introduced and practiced to bring a wide range of literatures in the field of policy implementation (Winter, 2006).

One of the early definitions on policy implementation came from Pressman and Wildavsky viewed '*policy implementation as a process of interaction between the setting of goals and actions geared to achieving them*' (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973: xiii-xv). Implementation is also the ability to create subsequent links in the casual chain to achieve the desired results (ibid). Followed by (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973), scholars like (Meter and Horn, 1975), (Bardach, 1977), (Rein and Robinovitz, 1978), (Nakaruma & Smallwood,1980), (Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1983)and other scholars also came with similar kind of definition on policy implementation (Hill and Hupe, 2009). Meter and Horn (1975) considered *Policy Implementation* as set of actions by public and private individuals to achieve policy objectives (Meter & Horn, 1975:447-448). According McLaughlin, *Policy Implementation* is a process to carry out programs or policies into practice (Hill and Hupe, 2009). Mazmanian & Sabatier (1983) introduced a more specific definition. According to them *Policy Implementation* encompasses events and activities that identify problem(s) to be addressed, anticipate objective(s) to be achieved and means of achieving those policy directives to be issued in the form of executive orders or court decisions (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983: 20-21). In simple words, policy implementation can be seen as a set of actions to accomplish policy objectives.

### **2.2.3. Evolution of implementation research and different schools of thought**

Until the end of 1960's there was a tendency to accept that political mandates could make administrator act in a way their political bosses wanted them to. Pressman & Wildavsky's classic book titled "*Implementation*" expressed concern about the program: "How Great Expectation in Washington are Dashed in Oakland" was an eye opener for policy researcher when America's Great Society Program fall heavily, a kind of frustration which later turned into an area of interest. (Hill & Hupe, 2010:42-43). Pressman & Wildavsky emphasized on the complexity of joint actions (Winter, 2006:152). They found that diverse perspective, priorities, different interest of multiple actors could cause delay, distortion and even failure in policy implementation. Sometimes weak policy instruments are responsible for such circumstance (ibid). Another first generation pioneer Eugene Bardach (1977) used the metaphor "*Games*" to explain policy implementation. Erwin Hargrove (1975), Walter Williams and Richard Elmore (1976) have seen some of these early works as 'the missing link' in the study of policy process ( Hill & Hupe, 2009).

The second generation studies/models basically started in the mid 70's and early 80's. There have been famous and everlasting controversies between Top-down and Bottom-up two

different schools of thoughts in this phase. Scholars like Meter and Horn (1975), Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983) and many others advocated for Top-Down perspectives that emphasized authoritative policy decision at the top level of the government. They considered policy implementation as actions against set objectives and how far they are achieved. On the other hand, scholars like Michael Lipsky (1980), Winter (1986), Hull and Hjern (1987) and others advocated for bottom up perspectives that highlighted that there should be discretion of power at lower levels (The Street Level Bureaucrats as Lipsky named in his study) and it is necessary for policies to be reinvented, so that they fit local need (Hill and Hupe, 2009).

Two main approaches i.e. the top -down approach and the bottom-up approach in the study of implementation have been dominated the field of implementation research. There was also a third perspective which tried to synthesize both the approach by highlighting the weaknesses and incorporating their strengths also known as Mixed Approach to implementation. Scholars like Elmore (1985), Matland (1995), Goggin et al (1990) and Winter (2003) tried to come up with a synthesized approach to implementation (Hill and Hupe, 2009). The following discussion is to reflect on these approaches briefly and reaching towards a framework of analysis for my study.

#### **2.2.4. The Top-down Perspective**

From a general perspective, the top-down approaches emphasized more on policy goals and objectives and means of achieving those and the focus was on how policy objectives could be achieved in the best possible way.

The *top-down approaches* have two basic propositions. *First*, policies are made by top level politicians and senior bureaucrats. *Second*, policies are carried out by officials at lower level. The *Top-down Approach* focuses on policy decisions and examines how policy objectives are attained by administrators minimizing the chances of disagreement in the implementation process (Winter, 2006; Howlett et al, 2009; (Sabatier, 1986). Mazmanian & Sabatier (1980) came with three observations. *First*, policy making is an integrated part of formulation, implementation and reformulation and there should have some distinction between three; *Second*, primary focus of implementation should be to attain policy objectives; *Finally*, implementation should be seen from three perspectives - the policy maker, top bureaucrats and implementers and the target group (Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1983). They used 18 variables in three main groups; *first*, tractability of the problems addressed by the legislation; *second*, social and political context; *third*, ability of the legislation to structure the implementation process



(Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1980) Later they presented a synthesized set of variables like objectives, casual theory, legal structure, commitment & skill of officials, interest group support and socio- economic conditions (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983: 41-42).

American Political Scientists Van Meter and Van Horn introduced a theory on policy implementation which later became a popular choice for implementation researchers. They agreed on Kaufman's causes of non implementation "*subordinates don't know what their supervisors want; they can't do what their supervisors want or refuse to do what their supervisors want*" (Kaufman, 1973:2 cited in Meter And Horn, 1975) and identified three areas of concern for implementation failure; communication, capacity and implementation disposition (Hill & Hupe, 2010). Bringing Theodore Lowis's (1964) proposition 'policy itself is critical to success, if not it is implementation (Lowis, 1964)' into consideration, Meter & Horn (1975), rather giving prescription for policy makers, introduced a straight forward model for the study of implementation (Hill & Hupe, 2009: 47). They introduced a hypothesis based on amount of change required and level of consensus which says 'implementation is successful when it requires marginal change and consensus on goals are high' (Meter & Horn, 1975 cited in Hill & Hupe, 2009: 46). They identified a set of factors that include policy standards and objectives, resources, inter-organizational communication and enforcement activities, characteristics of the implementing agencies, the economic social and political condition and disposition of implementers for policy implementation success (Meter & Horn, 1975:465).

In the 70's, another American scholar Eugene Bardach (1977), wrote an influential book on implementation named '*The Implementation Game*' emphasizing more on how politics could influence the process of implementation (Hill & Hupe, 2009: 48). According to Eugene Bardach, the game starts in the adoption stage and different actors, who are the key players of the game, apply different games to articulate interests (ibid).

According to Hogwood & Gunn (1984) those who make policies are 'democratically elected' and policy implementers can carry out the real objective of policy makers because policy makers' make known policy goals and objectives to the implementers and they follow the rules and directives that coming from top (Kipo, 2011).

One of the major criticisms for top-down perspective has been its exaggerated focus on top politicians and senior officials, neglecting lower level bureaucrats, local and private actors and target population (Lipsky, 1977; Elmore, 1978; Berman, 1979 cited in Sabatier, 1986). As a matter of fact the the top-down approaches also failed to recognize the role of those officials and

people's representative in day to day implementation at the lower level (Hjern and Porter, 1993; Hjern, 1982; Barret and Fudge, 1981 cited in Howlett et al. 2009: 164).

### **2.2.5. Bottom up perspective**

Focusing on the front line workers and their contribution towards successful policy implementation, a group of scholars came up with an alternative school of thought (Berman and McLaughlin 1976; Hanf and Scharpf, 1978; Elmore, 1979; Browning et al. 1981; Barrett and Fudge, 1981; Hjern and Hull, 1982; Hanf, 1982 cited in Sabatier, 1986) known as the '*bottom-up approach of implementation*'.

Michael Lipsky (1978) was the first to bring the thought into discussion and is considered to many as the founding father of implementation study (Hill & Hupe 2009: 51). He questioned about the kind of influence people at top of the hierarchy usually have over policy than those who carry it, the '*Street Level Bureaucrats*' as Lipsky's preferred to call them (Lipsky, 1980:3 cited in Hill & Hupe, 2010). According to Lipsky's (1980) theory on 'Street -Level Bureaucracy' the discretionary decisions that people at lower level of bureaucracy make, are essential actors in the implementation process and considered them as the real policy makers (Lipsky, 1980 cited in Winter, 2006:153). He further added that

*'the decision of street -level bureaucrats, the routines they establish, and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work under pressures, effectively become public policies they carry out'* (Lipsky, 1980).

Lipsky found that the street level bureaucrats work under high workload with limited resources and unpredictability of clients. To cope with such pressure they develop strategies to work in some routine and stereotyped manner which makes their services least acceptable to the clients and themselves (Lipsky, 1980 cited in Winter 2006:153). The idea was basically to bring the street-level worker's imposition of working in enormous pressure of discretions imposed through hierarchical control into reality and how they make choices to work under such pressure and develop cynical perceptions of clients and modify policy objectives (ibid).

In the early 80s, British scholars Susan Barrett and Colin Fudge proposed that implementation should be seen as political rather than a managerial process where negotiation and compromises within different parts of organizations would determine the success and failure of policy implementation (Barrett & Fudge, 1981 cited in Hill and Hupe, 2009). In the mid 80's, Danish scholars Beny Hjern & Chris Hull conducted network analysis using snow ball method

with different actors both public and private at the field level to map the relationship between them. They found that informal implementation structures are far less hierarchical than formal implementation structures suggested in the top-down approaches and they often form collaborative networks crossing organizational boundaries at operational level (Hejern & Hull, 1987 cited in Winter 2006:154). Basically the bottom-up perspective emphasizes that, for a policy to succeed, it is very important that people who are into implementation at lower level should understand the policy and act accordingly on a specific problem.

One of the major criticisms of the bottom -up perspective is that it over emphasized the importance of staff members at the periphery (Implementers at lower level) and frustrates the policy makers at the top ignoring that participation could be affected by policy itself (Sabatier, 1986). Besides, the bottom-up perspective also emphasized on interaction and response strategies to the policy rather implementation itself (ibid). Linder and Peter strongly opposed the descriptive generalization on implementation by the bottom-up Scholars claiming that implementation success or failure is determined by lower level bureaucrats only, which challenged the idea of policy control in democratic political system and showed the inability of policy making hierarchies in government to perform effectively (Linder and Peter, 1987 cited in (May, 1991).

The above discussion on policy implementation from both the perspectives, it came to the proposition that “it is not the question of choosing ‘top’ or ‘bottom’ as though these were mutually exclusive alternatives” (Hanf, 1982: 171). Actually, both the perspectives came with insights on policy implementation. Both have strengths and weaknesses. However, the relevance of either approach depends on cases and the decision to take ‘top down’ or ‘bottom up’ should be based on a specific problem to be addressed in the study (Elmore, 1985; Sabatier and Hanf, 1985; Sabatier, 1986; Goggin, et al., 1990 Cited in Hill & Hupe, 2009). It is also felt that there is a need to develop new models of implementation that represents the strengths of both the perspectives (ibid).

### **2.2.6. Syntheses: Looking for a mixed/integrated approach**

Taking both the top down and the bottom up perspectives on board, a wave of thought emerged with the suggestion to introduce a synthesized model by incorporating important aspects of both the approaches that neither be separated out nor be ignored ( Knoepfel & Weider, 1982; Elmore & Hanf, 1985; Elmore,1986; Goggin et al. 1990 cited in Hill & Hupe, 2009). Elmore (1995) was among the first who came with the concept of synthesizing both the school of thoughts. He

recommended both forward mapping (considering policy instruments and resources as a part of top down analysis) and incentive structure as backward mapping to make sure the street level bureaucrats did not feel the pressure and a policy had successful implementation (Elmore, 1985 cited in Winter, 2003:154). Sabatier (1986) suggested that areas having one specific legislation and limited research funds suit the top down approach and those where different policies address a specific problem the bottom up approach of implementation is most appropriate (Sabatier,1986 cited in Winter, 2003). Scholars like Knoepfel & Weider (1982); Elmore & Hanf (1985); Elmore (1986), Goggin et al (1990), Winter (2003) are in favor of combining both school of thoughts for better implementation performance. It depends on the context which suits the most in a given context.

Unlike previous attempts to synthesis between top down and bottom up approach to implementation, Soren C. Winter a Danish scholar introduced a useful model by integrating both the perspectives. Winter found that both the bottom up and a top down ignored significant portion of 'implementation reality' which in the later stage could leave out important parts in the process. He came up with an idea of combining elements from both the approaches to make it into an integrated model (Winter, 1990, Winter, 1994 cited in Winter 2003). Winter's '*Integrated Implementation Model*' is basically a casual model that sees evaluation of implementation in terms of both performance and outcomes. It introduces a set of factors and mechanisms that affect implementation outputs and outcomes (Winter, 2003). What makes Winter's integrating model separate from 'top down' approach is that, it focuses on the evaluation of implementation outcome. Whereas, 'top-down' approach, sees implementation outcomes/impacts against stated program objectives and policy goals. Winter in his *model* introduced four set of socio-political processes or conditions that affect implementation outcomes; *first* policy formation process prior to the law; *second* organizational and inter-organizational implementation behaviours; *third* behaviour of street-level bureaucrats; *fourth* target groups response and lastly socio-economic context(ibid). Grindle and Thomas (1990), in their Interactive Model, introduced four different kinds of resources like political, financial, managerial and technical resources as an integral part of implementation especially in developing counties.

My study was inspired by Meter and Horn's Model and Thomas and Grindle's Interactive Model and finally, Winter's Integrated Implementation Model. In the following section I tried to justify my point of selecting these Models in the study context.

## **2.3. Theoretical Discussion on Policy Implementation in Bangladesh**

Public policy is a complex phenomenon. It consists of numerous decisions where individual actors, institutions, interest groups have major influence in making various decisions may or may not be interlinked. Public policy can be shaped by previous policies but a public policy is certainly purposive or goal oriented. However, how a particular policy is being able to fulfill its goals depends largely on how policy is implemented. The success of policy implementation depends on various factors and actors involved in the process. Scholars have identified different set of factors that contribute to the success or failure of policy implementation. To make this discussion more specific I came with a combined set of elements derived from different school of thoughts. These include Policy Standards and Objectives (Meter & Horn, 1975), Implementation Structure (Winter, 2003; Meter & Horn, 1975), Resources (Thomas and Grindle, 1980; Cheema and Rondinelli, 1983: 299, Pressman and Wildavsky, 1979: 45; Meter and Horn, 1975: 460-46), Target Group Behaviour (Winter, 2003; Meter and Horn, 1975), Political, Social and Economic Condition (Winter, 2003; Meter and Horn 1975; Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1980: 542). As discussion progresses, attempts are made to relate these factors with policy implementation context in Bangladesh.

### **2.3.1. Policy Standards and Objectives**

The first set of factors that influence implementation performance is policy standards and objectives. Policy Standards and objectives refer to the overall objective of the policy and to what extent it is realized (Meter and Horn, 1975). The study of implementation needs that policy goals and objectives are recognized and measured as ‘implementation cannot succeed or fail without goal against which to judge it’ (Pressman and Wildvsky, 1973: xiv cited in Meter & Horn, 1975).

Panday (2004), conducted a study on Operation Clean Heart<sup>13</sup>, a successful policy which was implemented in the year 2003 in Bangladesh. In the study, he found that one of the major

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<sup>13</sup> In October 2002, Begum Khaleda Zia, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh ordered a country wide indefinite joint operation against terrorism consisting of the police, paramilitary and military forces, including at least seven infantry divisions with more than 18,000 soldiers. The main objective of the operation was to control the escalating crime rate and recover illegal arms, which had proliferated to an alarming extent in the society. The joint operation appears impartial and neutral with political leaders and activists from both the BNP and the opposition parties being targeted. Until end November 2002, 5,500 persons have been arrested, including politicians, criminals and others involved in terrorist activities. See: <http://www.ipcs.org/article/terrorism/operation-clean-heart-bangladeshs-national-war-against-terror-931.html>

reasons behind its success was due to clarity in the understanding of policy goals which was to arrest corrupted people and bring back the law and order situation. The policy was taken during a time when the police and civil administration was failed to function and there was pressure on the government from opposition and international communities to bring law and order situation under control (Panday, 2004: 97). Army, who had been given the responsibility to take whatever actions needed to bring those into their custody and they successfully did that and law and order situation started to come back in its normal position. It was hugely successful since both the Army as an implementing agency and common people had clear understanding about the policy goal (ibid).

Similarly, in 2002, the government issued an order to ban Two-Stroke engine Vehicles in Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh. This was a rare case when the policy was found very successful (Chowdhury, 2005). One of the main reasons of the policy to become successful was that the policy goal was clear which showed zero tolerance to environment pollution due to Two-Stroke Engine Vehicles (ibid). The Policy was supported by different actors including opposition party, donor community, media, policy implementers and common people (ibid).

On the other hand, if, the policy goal has any unclear elements in it, there is every possibility of a policy to fail. ‘The Upazila Parishad (UZP)<sup>14</sup> Act, 2009’ was published with an objective to decentralize power at local level in Bangladesh. A study that was conducted by Panday (2010) revealed that policy objective of the UZP Act was, to some extent confusing and unclear to various stakeholders associated with it. Because of the policy was contradictory with the concept of decentralization. One of such provisions was the introduction of mandatory advisory role of local MPs in UZPs. The Social Safety Net Programs (SSNP) at UZP level also needed his/ her approval. That left Upazila representatives and Government Line Agencies (GLAs) in confusion to understand policy objectives. It also introduced a whole new controversy between Chairman, Vice-Chairman and MPs. UP Chairman and Vice-Chairman ran out of responsibilities as MP, being the approving authority, was single handedly started dealing with different allocations coming from the central government. Rather benefiting the UZP the policy brought new confusion and failed completely.

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<sup>14</sup> The Local Government System in Bangladesh has a tiers which include Zila Parshid at the top of the tier at district level, Upazila Parishad at the sub-district level is the middle tier and Union Parishad at union or community level.

Chowdhury (2009), in her study on ‘Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord<sup>15</sup>, 1997’ revealed that according to CHT, the Regional Council would enjoy certain degree of power and autonomy to administer and ensure the political, economical and cultural rights of tribal people in CHT (Chowdhury, 2009: 19). However, when the Regional Council Bill was introduced in 1998, there was a new provision included which gave the authority to the government to dissolve the council. Under the same bill the power of the RC to make by laws and necessary arrangements in the existing laws for CHT was limited. The accord was definitely lacking clarity in policy standards and objectives and it failed to implement.

### **2.3.2. Implementation Structure**

The second set of factors that influence implementation performance of a policy is implementation structure. Scholars like Winter (2003), Meter and Horn (1975), Pressman and Wildavsky (1973), Lipsky (1980) have discussed about implementation structure in the form of commitment, intra and inter-organizational relationships, level of coordination and cooperation within implementation agency or from various others actors and institutions that work directly or indirectly with implementing agency. According to Rothstein ‘*Using an inappropriate organizational structure often leads to failure in the stage of implementation- forms of organization are like tools- they are only suitable for the performance of certain definite tasks*’(Rothstein, 1998). How individual actors, organizations, institutions engage themselves with the policy and their level of commitment, cooperation and coordination during implementation of any particular policy can be a key factor in implementation performance (Winter, 2003; Wildavsky, 1973).

Panday (2010), in his study on Upazila Parishad, found that lack of coordination and cooperation among various transferred departments, UZP, Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) and

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<sup>15</sup> Chittagong Hill Accord, 1997 was one of the most significant policies to in the history of Bangladesh to end a long lasting conflict in the region. Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT), located in the Southeast part of Bangladesh is home to 13 different ethnic groups. The region had a special status of autonomously administered district in British rule by CHT Regulation and later declared as “Totally Excluded Area” under The Government of India Act, 1935. After partition it was still enjoying autonomous status till the amendment in the Constitution of Pakistan in 1963 which allowed large scale Bengali to migrate into CHT. The Kaptai Hydro-Electric Dam was built in 1962 which resulted in a forceful reallocation of over 100000 ethnic people mostly Chakma (an ethnic group). The migration of non-ethnic people found an increasing trend in the 80s and 90s and the number of Bengali people which was 12% in 1961 to 39% in 1991. After independence when the constitution is written there was no distinction between people living in this region and Bengalis made in terms of culture, language and identity rather determined as united Bengali Nationalism. The Chittagong Accord was passed in the parliament in 1997 which included protection of the land rights, rehabilitation of internally displaced people, cultural uniqueness and withdrawal of army and a regional self government.

local MPs have been the main reason behind poor performance of UZP (Panday, 2010: 25-27). As a result of which, 'the UZP Act, 2009' could not perform well and failed heavily to achieve policy objective. Apart from that, being the direct representative of central government, the UNO found him/her superior and isolated to other government officials of transferred departments in Upazila Administration (Panday, 2010). There was no commitment and cooperation among themselves and the clash of interest and ego resulted in an implementation failure of the policy (ibid). *According to Wildavsky 'successful implementation is likely to be negatively related to the number of actors and decision and veto points' (Pressman and Wildavsky 1973 cited in Winter 2006, 156).*

Similarly, the implementation of CHT Accord was always difficult due to personal and institutional interests of elites (local political leaders, army and bureaucrats), ideological conflict between different tribal organizations, intra-tribal rivalry and relation of distrust between Bengali-Tribal people (Chowdhury, 2009; Panday & Jamil, 2009).

David L Pelletier (2011), in a study on Nutrition Policy in Bangladesh, found that the commitment of the managers and implementers were important for sound implementation. However, prioritizing a specific policy over other issues, depended on sustained and meaningful signals and incentives from higher levels in their organizations (Pelletier et al., 2011). Mannan (2003), in similar kind of study on National Food and Nutrition Policy in Bangladesh, identified non-cooperation from government officials and lack of strong coordination, tension among technocrat and bureaucrats, conflicts and competition among health professionals (agriculturists, laboratory scientist) as major reasons behind unsuccessful implementation of the policy (Mannan, 2003: 189-91).

'Bangladesh has a fair number of environmental laws but the level of observance and enforcement capacity is very low' (Huq & Khan, 1994: 2 cited in Chowdhury, 2005: 4). Chowdhury (2005) in his study found that both Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) and Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), as implementing agencies were strict and committed to implement the policy from the first day in operation. BRTA, being accused of taking bribes from the owners of old vehicles, also acted very sincerely (Chowdhury, 2005). Different other actors also extended their support to the policy which made it easy to implement and thus it was very successful (ibid).

'Operation Clean Heart' was operated by the Army with the objective to fight against the crime and the deteriorating law and order situation in Bangladesh (Panday, 2004). In 'Operation



Clean Heart', the defense forces were given open access to any person or place irrespective of party affiliation to arrest criminals and recover arms (Hossain, 2002 cited in Panday, 2004). It also got support from common people who found the Army doing great job in uprooting corruption from the society (ibid).

### **2.3.3. Resources**

The next set of factors is policy resources. Policy resources are considered fundamental inputs and essential factors in the effectiveness of policy implementation (Meter and Horn, 1975: 460-461; (Cheema and Rondinelli, 1983), Pressman and Wildavsky (1979: 45). Allocations of resources are very important especially in developing countries for improving and sustaining implementation of public policy initiatives (Grindle and Thomas, 1990). Derthick's "new towns" study shows how inadequate supply of federal incentive cost them the failure of the program (Derthick, 1972: 87 cited in Meter and Horn, 1975).

Panday (2010), in his study found that Upazila Parishad had limited sources of income and had to depend on central government. Programs that were coming from central government had nominal function to perform, which made it a body without authority and role (Panday, 2010). The allocation they receive from Central Government was also determined by the relationship between two parallel representatives operating in the same regions. Lack of funds and dependency on central government was identified as one of the main reasons behind poor performance of UZP in fulfilling the objective the Upazila Parishad Act, 2009.

Apart from financial resources, human resources (Grindle and Thomas 1980; Winter, 2006) play an important role in policy performance. According to Mannan (2003), one of the main reasons behind implementation failure of on 'National Food and Nutrition Policy, 1997' was lack of trained and suitable personnel (Nutritionists & Manager), who could coordinate and supervise field level workers (health assistants, family welfare visitors, family welfare assistants, and block supervisors) and frequent transfer of good managers from one sector to another (Mannan, 2003). A similar kind of observation was made by Mohammed et al. (2008) in their study on Forest Policy and Sustainable Forest Management in Bangladesh (Muhammed et al., 2008). The study found that those who were responsible for implementing the policy did not have the skills to take up the policy and implement it properly. Another study, conducted by Islam & Rahman (2008), found that the Primary Education Policy in Bangladesh was not implemented effectively due to lack of human resources (skilled manpower), technical (infrastructure) and financial resources (Islam and Rahman, 2008)

*“With an allocation of under \$20 per year per child in the government primary schools, primary education is definitely under-resourced in Bangladesh. Public expenditure in education as the share of GNP is one of the lowest in the world here. Improvement of pupil achievement will require the commitment of substantially larger public resources and better use of these resources”* (Chowdhury, 2001:51 cited in Islam, 2008).

#### **2.3.4. Economic, Social and Political Conditions**

The fourth set of factors is economic, social and political conditions. Socio-economic conditions have a major influence on policy implementation (Meter & Horn 1975). Changes in socio-economic conditions can have specific impact on a programme (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1980: 542). Political and social pressure might contribute either positively or negatively to the performance of policy implementation (ibid).

Economic, social and political conditions play an important role in the success of policy implementation. One of the main reasons of CHT Accord, being an implementation failure, was the social setting and a long lasting conflict between two tribal organizations (Chowdhury, 2009). UPDF never accepted the Accord, believing that it was only benefiting the government not the people of tracks. Also, the provisions in the Accord were inconsistent with their demand of autonomy, failed to recognize their identity and rights over land (ibid). The ideological difference between PCJSS and UPDF over the years turned into a violent armed clash which deteriorated the law and order situation in CHT (Chowdhury, 2009). An unstable socio-political condition has negatively affected the implementation of the Accord. There were 13 tribes in the CHT. Due to the dominance of Chakma tribe in Regional Council and Hill District Council, people from other tribes felt isolated and neglected which also went against the accord (ibid).

#### **2.3.5. Target Group Behaviour**

The last set of factors is target-group behaviour. It is very important that policies and programs take the target groups into account, since implementation strategies might differ depending on the nature of target population, their educational background and socio-economic conditions (Winter 2006:156). People can associate with the policy when they find something within their norms and behavioural practices. The behaviour of the target group can influence the performance of implementers. Thus, target group behaviour is a major factor behind policy implementation effectiveness, especially where target groups set policy agenda or become veto players in making or implementing policies (Skodvin, 2010) . Ryan (1996), also pointed out the

fact that target group cooperate with the policy when it is made consistent with their behaviours and norms (Ryan, 1996).

The Target Group Behaviour can also influence the performance of street level bureaucrats (Hill & Hupe, 2002:134-136 cited in Winter, 2006: 156). *'It is a different Dhaka. There is no black smoke, no disturbing noise.... We can tolerate commuting inconveniences but we want to free from the horrible environmental pollution caused by the two-stroke engine vehicles'* (Prothom Alo, 2.01.03 cited in Chowdhury, 2005). The response was taken in the second day after the ban on Two Stock Engine Vehicle when the respondent was waiting to get an alternative vehicle. The policy was widely accepted by common people, especially the users of the vehicles who were ready to suffer inconveniences was very successful (ibid).

Panday (2004), found that common people welcomed the 'Operation Clean Heart' not because they liked the military's presence in civil affairs, but they were desperately in need of security' (Panday, 2004: 95). However, a policy which is not supported by target people may lead to policy failure. One of the reasons why CHT Accord failed to perform was that a large section of the people was unhappy with the policy and they never accepted it (Chowdhury, 2009).

#### **2.4. Summary of discussion & choice of theory for the study**

'The Right to Information Act, 2009' is considered as a landmark policy in Bangladesh (Ifftekauzzaman, 2010). It shows the willingness of the government to ensure transparency and accountability, responding to issues like corruption and poor governance which have been in the debate for many years.

In the past, there has been policy like the CHT Accord<sup>16</sup> in Bangladesh, which received recognition from different stakeholders in the society but failed to perform because of the way they have been implemented. As discussed, there were several factors that contribute to success or failure of policy implementation. It was not easy for me to come up with any particular theory in mind for my study, as I felt each has its own strengths which could contribute to my study objective. I therefore, decided to go with a combination of theories that suit to the context of the study. I used Winter's *Integrated Model of Implementation*, Meter and Horn's *Policy Implementation Model* and Thomas & Grindle's *Integrated Model of Policy Implementation*.

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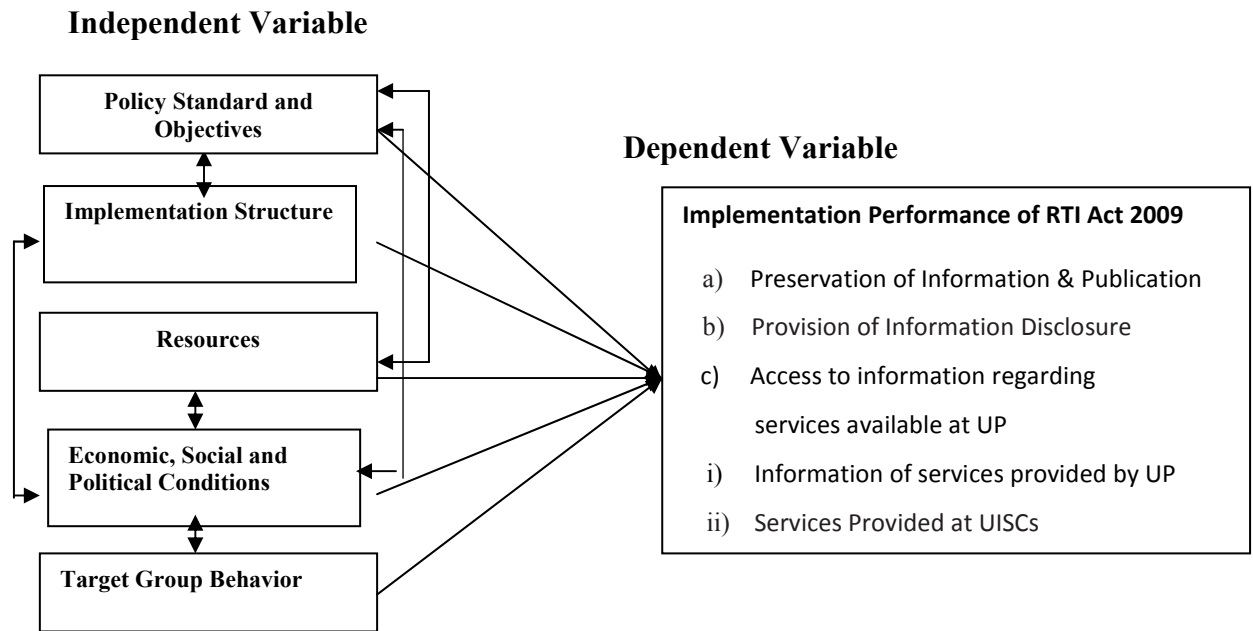
<sup>16</sup> See earlier discussion on policy implementation in Bangladesh

My decision to combine elements from these three models together, was a rational stand as I felt that all these factors that include policy standards and objectives, behavior of target population, resources, implementation structure and social political and economic condition were equally important and none of these elements should be excluded from context of the study. My explanatory variables in the study were Standards and Objectives (Clarity of Objectives), Implementation Structure (Cooperation, Commitment), Resources (Financial, Managerial), Target Group Behavior and Economic, Social and Political Conditions. I strongly believe that, the kind of theories & explanatory variables I decided to use were rational and completely justified with my study context.

## **2.5. Analytical framework of the study: the variable and their operationalisation**

In the light of reviewed literature on implementation performance, five variables were identified as key determinants of implementation performance of RTI Act at local level. They were Policy Standards and Objectives, implementation structure, resources, socio-economic and political condition and finally the target group behavior. By using these variables as my point of departure, the framework I used based on the assumption that “*implementation performance of RTI Act depends on how clear the policy goals are understood by those who are into implementation and target population, economic, social and political conditions, around which the policy is implemented and the implementation structure and resources needed for implementation*”. The Analytical Framework I used gave an overview of variables I used in my study. Here in the Framework, I also tried to point out infer casual links between these variables.

**Figure A: Analytical Framework of the Study**



This Analytical Framework gives an overview of variables I used in my study. Here in the Framework, I also tried to point out infer casual links between these variables. First of all, the performance of RTI Act depends to a great extent on how both target group and policy implementers understand Policy Standards and Objectives of RTI. Policy Standards and Objectives have strong connection with Target Group Behaviour and Implementation Structure. When UP, as an implementing agency, has that level of commitment towards RTI and target population also shows, their interest to learn about the policy, it will have an impact on implementation of the policy. Social and Economic conditions are also connected with how or whether people understand policy objectives. When people live in poor economic condition they lack interest to learn about the policy and same thing with Social Condition. When people live in a closed environment, especially with females where they are not allowed to go outside or to attend public events, it is difficult to expect them to have a clear understanding about the policy. Financial and Managerial resources are strongly connected to implementation structure. If UP representatives have the capacity to involve other actors in the implementation process, higher level of cooperation from various other actors like NGOs, Civil Society and UZP etc should be ensured. Financial resources on the other hand, are strongly related to political condition, since allocation of funds and different schemes sometimes are decided on the basis of political affiliation. Economic and Social Conditions have relationships with the behaviour of target population. How people react, depends to a large extent on what kind of environment they are in.

If it gives people the opportunity to participate in the process and a sense of ownership is built, it definitely will contribute to better implementation. Also with the economic condition, when people have better economic condition, they can afford to think about other things happening around him. It is quite clear in this point of discussion that, these variables are interrelated and played an important part in fulfilling my study objectives. In the next section, I discussed my dependent and independent variables and how I operationalised these variables in the study.

### **2.5.1. Dependent Variable**

As mentioned earlier, that the purpose of my study was to examine the implementation performance of RTI in Bangladesh. The Dependent variable for the study was defined as '*Implementation Performance*'.

Here in the study, implementation Performance of the RTI Act was measured firstly *as provision to preservation and disclosure of information* and how updated they were in keeping records and making them accessible to people. By disclosure of information, it was meant to address mainly *pro-active disclosure of information and also disclosure on demand* where I tried to measure the application procedure for information on demand.

*Secondly as access to various kinds of information and services from UP* by which I tried to measure *various kinds of services offered at UP, especially services at UISCs, SSNPs and regular services available at UP*. In the next section, I have discussed my dependent variable more elaborately and tried to make it clear how implementation performance was measured in my study.

#### **2.5.1.1. Preservation of Information & Publication**

According to the Section 5(1) and Section 5(2) of the RTI Act 2009, '*every authority shall prepare catalogue and index of all information and preserve it in an appropriate manner within reasonable time-limit*<sup>17</sup>. According to Section 7 of the Act, *information disclosures in most of the cases are mandatory and pro-active. If not, then on demand, except few areas those are concerned with national security and have been exempted from such provision* (The RTI Act 2009, section 7).

*Also, each authority shall publish all the information regarding decisions taken, proceeding or activity executed or proposed, by indexing them in a manner which is easily*

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<sup>17</sup> See RTI Act 2009, Section 5(1)

*accessible to citizens (Section 6(1), 6(2), RTI Act 2009). Each authority should also publish a report every year containing organizational structure, activities, responsibilities of officers and employees, description and process of decision making, lists of all laws, Acts, Ordinances, rules, regulations, notifications, directives, manuals, description of terms and conditions under which a citizen get services like permit, license, grant etc (Section 6(3.a), 6 (3.b)) and list of facilities and particulars of assigned officers (Section 6 (3.d), RTI Act 2009).*

### **2.5.1.2. Provision of Information Disclosure**

#### **2.5.1.2.1. Pro-active disclosure**

*Pro-active disclosure* that is considered as mandatory at Union Parishad level include:-

- Structure of UP
- Role and responsibilities of UP representatives, Government transferred departments and Line Agencies
- Government Decisions in the forms of circulars, rules, guidelines and manuals
- UP planning and decisions and records, grants, allocations and other incentives
- Contact details of responsible officers and other important information like license procedure, budget of the UP, project design and specification.<sup>18</sup>

In the study, pro-active disclosure has been measured by looking at whether and to what extent UPs were disseminating information regarding:-

- the structure of the UP and the standing committees;
- display government decision on Notice Board;
- hang UP plan and Grants related information on display board or on the wall at UP premises;
- put on view the list of services and contact detail of responsible persons at UP premise;
- present the budget of the UP on budget board at the entrance of Union Parishad.

#### **2.5.1.2.2. Information disclosure on-demand/Request for Information and Appeal**

According to Section 7 of 2009, no authority shall be bound to provide any of the following information that may, if disclosed, cause threat to national security:-

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<sup>18</sup> See-Section 6, RTI Act 2009 cited in InterCorporation, 2012; The Local Government Act -Union Parishad, 2009

- information relating to foreign policy which may affect external relationship with any foreign country/ international organization/regional alliance/regional organization;
- any secret information received from foreign government; business related or intellectual information that may affect intellectual property right of a third party and information ( income, law on duty, budget or change in tax rate, customs, VAT, exchange or interest rate, advance information about management and supervision of financial institution, information that may endanger public security or due judicial process of a case, may offend individual life, personal safety, matter pending before court of law, hamper investigation or prosecution and other legal issues) that may, if disclosed, be gainful or damage any individual or organization or state<sup>19</sup>.

Apart from the list of exemption, more specifically, information related to budget of health department, UP register, salary of Government Officials, a citizen if not disclosed, a citizen has the right to seek for any information from UP and submit a formal request to assigned person requesting for that information<sup>20</sup>.

According to Section 8, of RTI Act, a citizen can apply to the Officer- in-charge requesting for information either in written form or electronic means or through email<sup>21</sup>. The applicant has to fill up a form prescribed by the authority or if the form is not available on a piece of white paper with all the relevant information like name, address of the person requesting information for, e-mail/fax number (if any), correct description of information (including other relevant information) sought for<sup>22</sup>. The person applying for specific information should pay a reasonable fee as prescribed by the officer-in-charge<sup>23</sup>. Apart from them, every authority shall prepare and publicize a list of information to be supplied free of cost upon instruction of Information Commission<sup>24</sup>.

In the study, information disclosure on demand was measured by looking at the numbers of application filed, kinds of information asked for and the feedback procedure followed by UP and also to examine whether or to what extent people are aware of the procedure to seek information on demand.

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<sup>19</sup> See The RTI Act 2009, Chapter 2, Section 7(a) to 7(t)

<sup>20</sup> See The Local Government (Union Parishad) Act, 2009

<sup>21</sup> See The Right to Information Act 2009, Section 8 (1)

<sup>22</sup> See The Right to Information Act 2009, Section 8 (2,3)

<sup>23</sup> See The Right to Information Act 2009, Section 8 (4,5)

<sup>24</sup> See See The Right to Information Act 2009, Section 8 (6)



### **2.5.1.3. Access to information regarding services available at Union Parishad**

#### **2.5.1.3.1. Information of services provided by UP**

According to section 2 of RTI Act 2009, any agency constituted as per the obligation of constitution of Bangladesh (e.g. UP, UZP etc.) are the subjects to disclose and provide information (Section 6, RTI Act 2009 cited in InterCooperation, 2011). Similarly, The Local Government (Union Parishad) Act, 2009 clearly indicates that any citizen of Bangladesh has the right to get any information from the UP<sup>25</sup>. Also in each UP, there should have a Citizen's Charter which publicly announces all the services and relevant information about the services including quality, cost, responsible persons and contact details<sup>26</sup>. UP should held ward level meeting and discuss local issues and tentative projects which should be incorporated in the budget during Open Budget Session to be held in each financial year. The approved budget should be displayed at the UP premise<sup>27</sup>.

One of the main projects implemented through Union Parishad by the Government, is the Social Safety Net Programme (SSNP). *Government runs around 30 SSNPs*, which include 100-day employment guarantee scheme in the lean season, 'Cash for Work', Food For Work (FFW), Vulnerable Group Development (VGD), Allowances for the widowed, deserted, and destitute, 'Fund for Rehabilitation of Acid Burnt Women and the Physically Handicapped', Disability allowance, 'Honorarium for Insolvent Freedom Fighters' scheme, Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF), Community Nutrition Programme, 'Maternity Allowance Programme for Poor Lactating Mothers', Housing Support, Housing Loan for Homeless, Maternal health Voucher Scheme, Primary Education Stipend Programme (PESP), Female Secondary School Assistance Programme, Educational stipend for students with disabilities' and 'Food for Education' (UNDP, 2009).

However, not all the Programmes are known to either local representatives or common people. Among all these programmes most popular ones are VGD, VGF, 100 Days' Programme, and Senior Citizen Allowance, Widow and Disable People. UP should pro-actively disclose the list of beneficiaries including timeline and the criteria of selection of these programmes.

In the study, People's Access to Information was assessed by:-

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<sup>25</sup> (Section 78[1], Local Government (Union Parishad) Act, 2009)

<sup>26</sup> See UNDP Citizen Charter Manual

<http://www.undp.org.bd/info/pub/Citizen%27s%20Charter%20a%20Manual.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> section 57[2]) (Section 6[1]) of Local Government Ordinance

- looking at the availability of Citizen Charter at Union Parishad;
- examining the fact whether they followed the criteria for selecting beneficiaries for various social safety net program and how far people were aware of that;
- looking at the fact whether they had open budget sessions each year and how did they make people's participation in such event and to what extent people were aware of Open Budget session and Union Ward Meeting;
- exploring how frequent people come to UP to seek information.

#### **2.5.1.3.2. Access to Service provided at UISC**

According to section 2 of RTI Act 2009, *any agency run on government funding or assistance of government funding (UISC funded by UNDP) should disclose kind of services they provide and procedures to avail those services.* The Union Information and Service Centre (UISCs), a local knowledge centre, funded by UNDP and operated in all the 4051 UPs in Bangladesh, aiming at making different kinds of information and services at free or nominal charges. UISCs now became an integral part of Union Parishad and the outlook of service delivery system of the UPs in Bangladesh. The list of services at UISC includes -Birth Registration, Different kind of Forms, Government circulars and notices, Online Admission and Result of Public Examinations, Population census data entry, Citizenship certificate etc. Information related to agriculture, health, education, law & human rights, tourism, environment & disaster management, science & technology, commerce and employment, e-Banking, life insurance, training on computer and English, printing, scanning, compose, photocopy, laminating, data entry, photography, passport & visa processing, soil testing, arsenic testing etc (ibid).

The Study also tried to find out how UISCs at both the Union Parishads were working in terms of reaching people with all the relevant information regarding different kind of services they provide at Union Parishad.

#### **2.5.2. Independent Variable**

Keeping the assumption *'implementation performance of RTI Act depends how clear the policy goals are understood by those, who are into implementation and target population, socio-economic and political condition around which the policy is implemented and the implementation structure and resources needed for implementation'* in mind I discussed my explanatory variables in the following section.

### **2.5.2.1. Policy Standards and Objectives**

Referring back to Meter and Horn's (1975) interpretation which refers Policy Standards and Objectives as the overall objective of the policy and to what extent it is realized, I have operationalized Policy Standard and Objectives as clarity on understanding of overall goals and objectives of RTI Act. I focused on how clearly UP representatives who were responsible for implementing the RTI Act, understood the goals and objectives of RTI. Also to what extent common people of both the Unions understood what the RTI Act was aiming at. More specifically, whether both UP representatives and target population were aware of the fact that RTI Act was aiming to ensure free flow of information and their right to access to information. So that transparency and accountability in UPs was ensured. Based on that, the following hypothesis was drawn:-

*“Performance of implementation of RTI Act depends on how clearly people both at implementation and recipient's end understand policy goals, objectives and the more clear they are, better the possibility of successful implementation”*

### **2.5.2.2. Implementation Structure**

Going back to Rothstein's (1998) point, that an inappropriate organizational structure influences implementation success and certain kinds of organization structure suit certain kinds of tasks. In the study it was important for me to understand how individual actors, organizations, institutions were involved in implementation of a public policy. Agreeing with the point made by scholars like Winter (2006), Lipsky (1980) and Pressman & Wildavsky (1973) that *'implementation performance depends on how individual actors, organizations, institutions are engaged within the process of implementation'*, I operationalized implementation structure as the level of cooperation and commitment within UP representatives, UP officials (UP Secretary, Entrepreneurs at UISC) and also different other actors, intuitions and interest groups working directly or indirectly with UP. Based on this, my hypothesis was:-

*“The performance of implementation of RTI Act depends on how various institutions and actors work within and with UP, cooperate and their level commitment towards the policy and the better the level of cooperation and commitment, the greater the possibility of better implementation performance.”*

### **2.5.2.3. Resources**

Thomas and Grindle (1980), in their model, have pointed out that political, financial, managerial and technical resources play an important role in the implementation process. Keeping that in mind, I have operationalized resources as availability of financial and managerial resources at UP level to implement RTI Act. Financial Resources in the study was operationalized by availability of funds internally generated or received from external sources (NGOs, Government) to implement policy directives. Managerial Resources, on the other hand was operationalized as the capacity and skills of UP representatives and UP staff to implement RTI Act effectively. Based on this, I set following hypothesis:-

*“The implementation performance of RTI Act depends on availability of resources and more adequate the resources are, higher the possibility of better implementation performance”*

### **2.5.3. Economic, Social and Political Conditions**

Meter & Horn (1975), Winter (2003) and Sabatier and Mazmanian (1980) argued about economic, social and political conditions to have a profound effect on implementation performance. However, to address three broad elements together was itself a Challenge. In my study, therefore, I have narrowed my focus down to certain aspects of Social, economic and political conditions. I operationalized economic condition, as economic condition of common people; political condition, as political environment and relationship within UP and also between UP and other parallel or superior agencies in local government structure; last social condition as, scope of participation especially women in various activities such as ward meeting, open budget and standing committees. Based on this, the following hypothesis was drawn:-

*“Performance of implementation depends on how the economic, social and political conditions are. More favourable, the economic, social and political condition are, higher the chances of better implementation performance.”*

#### **2.5.3.1. Target Group Behaviour**

Referring to the point Winter (2003) made in his theory, that people relate to the policy when they find themselves connected with the policy (Winter, 2003). They can influence the performance of implementers (ibid). Also, Ryan (1996) had similar kind of point to make that, target group cooperate with the policy when it is made consistent with their behaviours and norms (Ryan, 1996). Here in my study, the target group behaviour has been operationalised as

how willingly people were participating in various activities like Open Budget and Ward meeting or in the planning process and what was their perception about UP. More specifically, by Target Group Behaviour I wanted to measure whether they have the trust on UP, as service providing unit. Based on this, I have come with following hypothesis.

“Performance of implementation depends on how target people connected to UP and the more positive people are about UP, higher the chances of better implementation of RTI Act.”

### 3. CHAPTER THREE: The RTI Act in South Asia: An Overview.

#### 3.1. Introduction

Access to information is a key element, that could empower people by engaging them in the democratic process, which contributes to good governance and also achieving development goals (Halim, 2011). Many countries from different regions of the world have, either introduced Right to Information Act or have put system in place, which could ensure free flow of information (ibid). The term ‘Right to Information’ used in different countries might vary from ‘freedom of information’ to ‘access to information’ or even ‘the right to know’. However, all these terms have similar kind of interpretation as they stand for people’s right to access various kinds of information held by the government.

Freedom of Information as a fundamental human right was, first noticed in the General Assembly of United Nations in 1946 and resolution says, ‘*Freedom of information is a fundamental human right, the touchstone of all the freedoms to which the United Nations is consecrated.*’ Article 19 of United Nation Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), also recognized right to information as right to seek, receive and impart information without interference (UDHR, 1948). Similarly, Article 19 of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) says "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression... freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice"<sup>28</sup>. There are also similar kinds of provisions in Article 10 of the ‘European Convention on Human Rights<sup>29</sup>’, Article 13 of the ‘American Convention on Human Rights<sup>30</sup>’ and Article 9 of ‘African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights<sup>31</sup>’ that ensured right to information.

The journey of Right to Information movement started way back in seventeenth century when Sweden<sup>32</sup> first introduced ‘Freedom to the Press Act’ in 1776. However, the true development of the concept Right to Information was found in the last part of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Countries like USA<sup>33</sup>, Norway<sup>34</sup>, Denmark<sup>35</sup>, Canada<sup>36</sup>, Australia<sup>37</sup>, New Zealand<sup>38</sup> were first to

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<sup>28</sup> See International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966

<sup>29</sup> European Convention on Human Rights, 1953

<sup>30</sup> American Convention on Human Rights, 1978

<sup>31</sup> African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, 1986

<sup>32</sup> ‘Freedom of the Press Act of 1766’ (Sweden)

<sup>33</sup> ‘Freedom of Information Act of 1966’(USA)

<sup>34</sup> ‘Freedom of Information Act of 1970’ (Norway)

introduce a law on Freedom of Information. Followed by them, a large number of countries agreed to enact Right to Information Act in the 80s. During this phase, international organizations like International Monetary Fund, European Council, Commonwealth and World Bank started advocating for a Law on Freedom of Information towards accountable and corruption free governing system (Halim, 2011). Now around 90 countries have made and many other countries are in the making of a law to make free flow of information (Ifftteruzzaman, 2011).

In South Asia, Pakistan was the first to enact a law on Freedom of Information in 2002. India Nepal and Bangladesh were next to Pakistan who enacted Laws on Rights to Information in 2005, 2007 and 2009 respectively. This Chapter has briefly put light on Right to Information and its journey in South Asia.

### **3.2. India**

In the process of paradigm shift from state centric to people centric approach of development, Right to Information Movement in India came into existence in 1990s. However, there was contradiction arisen between the Colonial Acts such as the Official Secrets Act, Indian Evidence Act and the Civil Service Code of Conduct Rules and provisions like Equal Protection of the Laws, the Right to Equality Before the Law (Article 14), the Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression (Article 19 (1) (a)) and the Right to Life and Personal Liberty (Article 21) in the Constitution of India. Earlier the colonial acts restricted people's access to information. During this entire journey, many Civil Society Organizations especially the Mazdoor Kisan Shakthi Sanghatana (MKSS)<sup>39</sup>, citizen, social activists started advocating for an act for the Right to Information to combat the corruption, better access to information and well informed citizens to promote Good Governance. Responding to demands of different stakeholders from different parts of the country, The Right to Information Act 2005 (RTI) of India was passed by the Parliament on 15th June 2005 and came into effect on 12th October 2005 with an objective to secure access to information of public authorities to bring about transparency and accountability in the functioning of these authorities. Except Jammu and Kashmir, who has a separate act called 'Jammu & Kashmir Right to Information Act, 2009'. 'The Right to Information Act 2005'

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<sup>35</sup> 'The 1985 Access to Public Administration Files Act' ( Denmark)

<sup>36</sup> 'The 1983 Access to Information Act' (Canada)

<sup>37</sup> 'Freedom of Information Act 1982' (Australia)

<sup>38</sup> 'The Official Information Act 1982' ( New Zealand)

<sup>39</sup> See <http://www.rti gateway.org.in/Documents/Articles/RTIMovementinIndia-DrEVENkatesuNIRD.pdf>

applies to all States and Union Territories<sup>40</sup>. Under this act, a Citizen can request for information s/he requires from a ‘body of Government’ or ‘instrumentality of State’ and expects reply immediately or within 30 days. There is also provision of records, dissemination and publication of information, which relaxes restriction imposed by the ‘Official Secrets Act, 1923’ and various other special laws.

### **3.3. Pakistan**

Pakistan is the first country in the South Asia, which introduced ‘Freedom of Information Ordinance’ in 2002 at the Federal level. The journey of Freedom of Information (FOI) was first came into discussion in 1990, when a formerly senator Professor Khurshid Ahmad and Naib Amir of Jamaat-i-Islami brought a Bill on FOI in the Senate as a private Bill. However, the bill was forcefully resisted and it was failed to be enacted. Later on Public Accounts Committee headed by Senator Malik Qasim, drafted a bill in 1994. However, it failed to be enacted. In 1997, the Federal Minister of Law in the Interim Government headed by Malik Miraj Khalid, the President of Pakistan promulgated a Freedom of Information Ordinance, which also could not last long as the successive government of Mian Nawaz Sharif allowed this Ordinance to lapse. Finally in 2002, General Pervez Musharraf, then President of Pakistan, made a draft Bill on FOI. Later in 2002, ‘The Freedom of Information Ordinance, 2002’ was promulgated later in 2002. The FOI was introduced with an objective to make public records that are held by a public body of the federal government including ministries, departments, boards, councils, courts and tribunals accessible to people. All these bodies must respond to the requests within 21 days. The right to information got the status as fundamental constitutional right after the 10<sup>th</sup> amendment in Constitution of Pakistan. However, a long list of exclusions (Section 8) and exemptions (Sections 14-18) in the Act has restricted citizens to have access to information and records. Also, there is no provision of penalty in case they fail to provide information within the stipulated time of 20 days.

### **3.4. Nepal**

Nepal, being under family autocracy for a long time had little room for RTI and seeking information from public authorities was something beyond imagination. The People’s Movement in the 90’s was a turning point in the history of Nepal, which brought changes in political system and also acknowledging human rights. Article 16 of the Constitution of Nepal recognized ‘Right

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<sup>40</sup> See -[www.humanrightsinitiative.org](http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org)



to Information’ as a fundamental right in 1990, first among all the countries in South Asia. However, comparing to other fundamental rights, freedom of information took long time to be acknowledged and to give effect to the people’s fundamental right to seek and receive information from public agencies in Nepal. In 1993, the government that time presented a draft of Right to Information Act in the parliament. The draft was neither accepted by the opposition nor the people from media and civil society, as it was seen as a law which created a formal secrecy regime rather giving effect to constitutional guarantee. Later in 1997, with an initiative taken by media organizations and journalists, draft legislation was submitted by a panel of experts, formed during that phase. However, due to political disturbance and frequent political changes, the bill remained unnoticed. Late in 2007, the Interim Constitution of Nepal guaranteed right to information as a fundamental right of the citizen for second time in the history of Nepal. It extended the right, further to individual information which allows citizen to seek information for both individual interest as well as public interest. A taskforce was soon formed on September, 2007 to draft legislation on right to information and based on that draft the RTI Act was passed on July 18, 2007. An Independent National Information Commission was also introduced in 2008, to promote, protect and practice right to information in Nepal. According to the Act, requested agency should provide information immediately and if not immediately, then within 15 days of the application.

### **3.5. Bangladesh**

The journey towards RTI started, when the Bangladesh Press Council first demanded the freedom to publish government information in 1983. However, the real development of RTI took place during the time, when there were lots of discussions and debates on the accountability and transparency of a system, which ensures people access to information in various forums — after being ranked as one of the most corrupted countries in the world for successive years (BRAC, 2006). Different organizations have been advocated for citizens’ access to information afterward till the Bangladesh Law Commission drafted a right to information act in 2002, which was never enacted. Later on, in the year 2006, a strong advocacy movement was initiated by civil society actors in Bangladesh. It demanded an act, ensuring people’s right to access government held information, which ended up in an initiative taken by the Caretaker Government in response to the popular demand. As a result, the Right to Information Ordinance was enacted in 2008 (Iftexharuzzaman, 2011). The parliament finally passed ‘The Right to Information Act’ in 2009 (ibid).

**Table No 3.6 : Key features of RTI Act in different countries in South Asia**

Feature	Bangladesh <sup>41</sup>	India <sup>42</sup>	Pakistan <sup>43</sup>	Nepal <sup>44</sup>
Title	Right to Information Act, 2009	Right to Information Act, 2005	Freedom of Information Ordinance, 2002	Right to Information Act, 2007
For Whom	All citizens	All citizens	All citizens	All citizens
Coverage	All over Bangladesh	Whole of India except Jammu and Kashmir.	It extends to whole of Pakistan.	All over Nepal
What is meant by Information?	Information means ‘any memo, book, design, map, contract, data, logbook, order, notification, document, sample, letter, report, accounts, project proposal, photograph, audio, video, drawing, painting, film, instrument s made electronically, machine readable record and documentary regardless of its physical form or characteristics in relation to the constitution, structure & official activities of any authority’.	Information means “any material in any form, including records, documents, memos, e-mails, opinions, advices, press releases, circulars, orders, log books, contracts, reports, papers, samples, models, data materials held in any electronic form and information relating to any private body which can be accessed by a public body under any law for the time being in force”.	Information/record means “record in any form, whether printed or in writing and includes any map, diagram, photography, film, microfilm, which is used for official purpose by the public body which holds the record”.	"Information" means any written document, material, or information related to the functions, proceedings thereof or decision of public importance made by the Public Bodies.
Whom information can be asked for?	Any agency constituted as per the obligation of constitution of Bangladesh, any ministry/ division of the GOB, any non government agency/organization run on government funding or assistance of government funding, any non-government agency/organization run on foreign aid/funding are subjects to	Any Public authority established, constituted, owned, controlled or substantially financed by funds provided directly or indirectly by the Central Government or a Union Territory Administration of Central Government, or the State Government.	Any public body of the Federal Government including any Ministry, Division or attached department of the Federal Government or Secretariat of Majlis-e- Shoora (Parliament) or Any office of any Board, Commission, Council, or other body established by, or under a Federal Courts or tribunals.	Any public body established by the Act or the Government of Nepal, Public service providing institutions, Political Party or organization, organized body receiving grants from the Government of Nepal, NGOs operated by directly or indirectly by government or foreign funding.

<sup>41</sup> For more detail see The Right to Information Act, 2009 (Bangladesh) [http://www.moi.gov.bd/RTI/RTI\\_English.pdf](http://www.moi.gov.bd/RTI/RTI_English.pdf)

<sup>42</sup> For more detail see The Right to Information Act, 2005 (India) <http://rti.gov.in/rti-act.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> For more detail Freedom of Information Ordinance, 2002 (Pakistan) [http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/programs/ai/rti/international/laws\\_papers/pakistan/pakistan\\_cpdi\\_compr\\_with\\_irti\\_2005.pdf](http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/programs/ai/rti/international/laws_papers/pakistan/pakistan_cpdi_compr_with_irti_2005.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> For more detail see The Right to Information Act, 2007 (Nepal) <http://www.caluniv.ac.in/Global%20mdia%20journal/WINTER%202010%20DOCUMENTS/Document%204.pdf>

	disclose & provide information.			
Preservation & Pro-active disclosure	Every authority shall prepare catalogue and index of all information and preserve it in an appropriate manner, within a reasonable time-limit in computer and also publish and publicize them to make it accessible to the people.	Each Public Authority shall maintain all its records properly. The records shall be duly catalogued and indexed in such a manner and form that it may facilitate the right to information.	Each public body shall ensure that all records are computerized and connected through a network all over the country and also rules and regulations, notifications, by-laws, manuals, orders shall be preserved, published properly and made available at a reasonable price.	Each public body shall classify & update information and make them public, publish & broadcast. It shall update at least of twenty years old information. It shall update information within three months from the date of commencement of this Act and every three months afterwards & publish thereof.
Who will be responsible to provide information?	“Designated Officer” (DO) of the government office.	Appointed Central Public Information Officers of respective authority or State Public Information Officers in all administrative units or the offices under them.	Designated officer or employee of respective authority. In his/her absence the person in charge of the public body shall be the designated official.	Information Officer of each public body. There shall be a separate Information Section for this purpose.
Application fee	Not fixed but at a reasonable price.	May be fixed or reasonable. Applicants below the poverty will not have to pay any fee.	Fixed as RS. 50 per application (up to 10 pages) & RS. 5/ page for additional pages.	Based on the actual cost of providing information
Application Appeal Time-limit to receive information	When a request is received, the Designated Officer (DO) shall provide the information immediately. If not immediately, then the DO shall respond to the request in 20 days. In case two or more agencies, DO should respond back in 30 working days. For appeals and complaints, 15 <i>calendar</i> days to consider an appeal, and the Information Commission has between 45 and 75 <i>calendar</i> days to render a decision	When a request is made, the Designated Officers (DO) shall provide the requested information immediately. If not immediately, then within 30 days of the receipt of request and within 48 hours, in case of life and liberty. If, the DO fails to provide information in 30 days, the person can apply to next appellate authority within next 30 days. If failed or unsatisfied with it, s/he applies to the State or Central information commission (IC) within next 90 days. In both the cases, the appeal shall be decided in 30 days.	When a request is made to DO, s/he shall provide the requested information within 21 days. If DO fails to provide information, the person can apply to the head of the public body within 30 days. If s/he is not satisfied or failed to receive any answer, there is a provision to apply to the Federal Ombudsman or, in the case of Revenue Division, to the Federal Tax Ombudsman.	When the Information Officer (IO) receives an application, s/he shall provide the information immediately. If not possible, DO shall provide within 15 days from the date of application. If not received within 15 days, or unsatisfied, the person shall make a complaint to Chief within 7 days. Chief shall order IO to give information as demanded. If that too is unsatisfying, s/he can appeal before IC within 35 days of the notice of decision. IC may order the concerned Chief to give information to the applicant. If the appeal is found reasonable, IC can dismiss the appeal.
Penalties against officers	If the designated Official who is responsible to provide information and will be liable for fine of Tk 50 per day up to maximum of Tk 5000.	Central or State Information Commission can impose a penalty of up to RS. 25,000 on officers who delay, deny or provide incorrect information malafidely or without any reasonable cause.	No penalty for officers who delay or deny or provide incorrect information malafidely. Instead, a complainant can be fined up RS. 10,000 if his/her complaint is “found to be malicious, frivolous or vexatious”.	If it is found, that the request is denied or partially given or provided with malafide intention or incorrect information, the Chief may, take departmental action against IO. IC may fine Chief or IO from RS. 1,000 to 25,000.

### **3.6. Conclusion**

Here in this chapter, the focus was to give an overview of the journey of Right to Information Act in various countries in South Asia, mainly in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Nepal. The discussion has one thing in common, neither of these countries had a long journey with RTI and comparing to other parts of the world, this particular region was bit late in picking up RTI, as a fundamental right and converting into a full pledged law in center. Bangladesh is among the last to take up RTI Act and see how far they have reached achieving the overall objectives of the policy is something, the study is trying to explore in next few chapters.

## 4. CHAPTER FOUR: Methodology

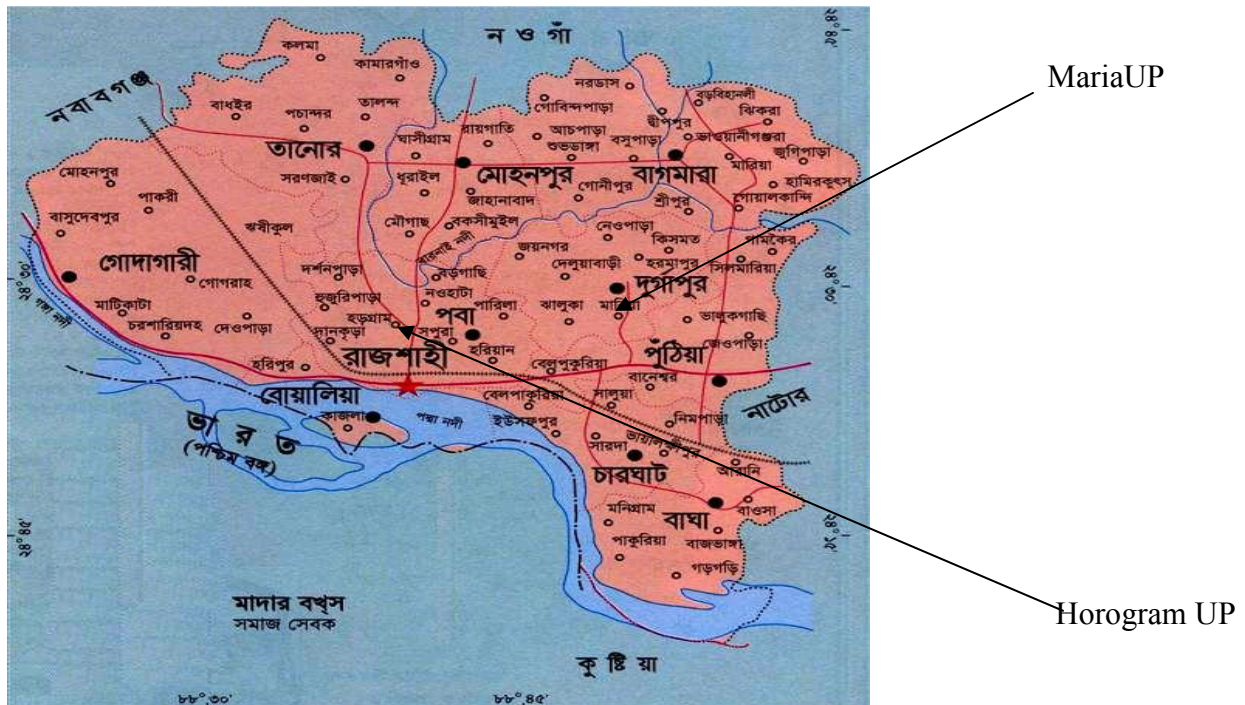
### 4.1. Introduction

The fourth Chapter of the Thesis dealt with the methodology of the study. Here in this Chapter, I tried to explain various methods and tools I used for data collection and analysis. I also discussed, how appropriate these tools and methods were in the context of my study. The Chapter followed an elaborate discussion on Methodological issues like research approach, design, sampling, data collection and analysis. Each of these issues have been presented and discussed with proper justification. The question of validity, reliability and ethical consideration were also addressed in this Chapter.

### 4.2. Study Area

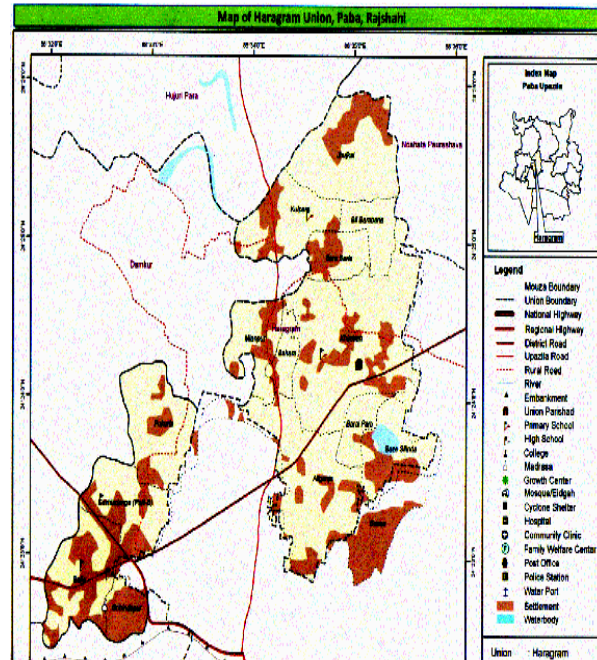
This study was carried out in Horogram UP and Maria UP. Both the UPs are located in Rajshahi district at Northern part of Bangladesh. Maria UP is located in Durgapur Upazila, which is about 30 kilometers away from Rajshahi city. Horogram UP is located in Paba Upazila and about 5 kilometers away from Rajshahi city. The reasons for selecting these two UPs were discussed elaborately in the later part of this chapter.

Figure: Map of Rajshahi District & Location of Study Area



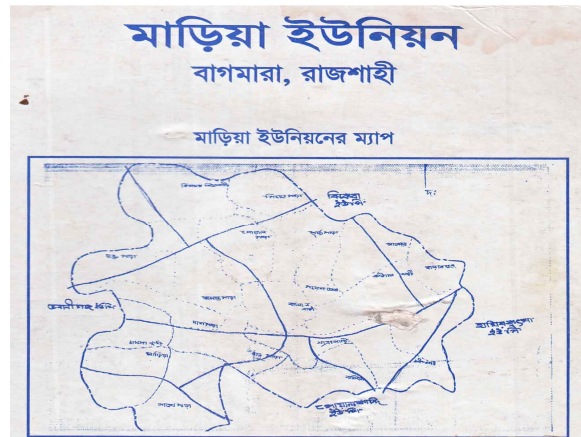
#### 4.2.1. Horogram UP

The official name of the Union Parishad, is 5 No Horogram Union Parishad. It is placed in Paba Upazila under Rajshahi district. The total Area of the UP is 17 square kilometers and the population of the union is 38204, in which 188867 are female and 19337 are male. The total numbers of villages in Horogram Union are 25 and the total number of Mouja is 16. Horogram UP is about 5 kilometers away from Rajshahi city and almost same distance from Paba Upazila. Horogram UP was one of the UPs that received financial and technical support from Sharique on Local Governance Program.



#### 4.2.2. Maria UP

Maria UP is placed in Durgapur Upazila and it is nearer to the Upazila and Municipality. The total area of Maria Union is 17.11 square km. The total population is 19827 in which 9813 are female & 10014 are male. It is about 30 kilometers away from Rajshahi city. Maria was not receiving any financial support from Sharique or any other NGOs during the time I conducted my study.



#### 4.3. Research Approach

Perhaps one of the most important parts in a research, is its design (King et al., 1994). It guides a research on, how to collect and analysis data and draw inferences (ibid). A research design is a logical sequence that connects empirical data to the research questions and guides the researcher to collect, analyze and interpret data (Yin, 2003:3). For scholars like Nichmias and Nichmias (1992), research design is a plan and procedure, which a researcher uses, to narrow down a broader assumption to a detailed method of data collection and analysis (Nichmias and Nichmias

1992:77-88 cited in Yin, 2003:21). It helps establishing casual relations among variables under an investigation. A research approach to be qualitative or quantitative or mixed depends on research questions. Usually, surveys and experimental designs apply in quantitative approach, where a study is taken place with many variables and large samples. However, qualitative research deals with in depth understanding of phenomenon. A mixed approach deals with both qualitative and quantitative approaches by minimizing their limitations and applying merits of each approach.

In this study, I used a case oriented qualitative research approach. However, I also used quantitative methods in few occasions, where I thought it could give me a better picture of implementation performance of RTI Act and supplemented my qualitative data. Basically, I used qualitative approach to get in-depth insight of how far the implementation of the RTI Act at Union level managed to achieve the main goal of the policy. The study tried to understand how various factors influenced performance of implementation of RTI Act at UP level. By adding some quantitative perspective, it supplemented the study and gave it a concrete platform to merge finding from both ends to get even a better insight into the matter as also suggested by Creswell (Creswell, 2003).

My approach of combining qualitative methods with quantitative in this study had several advantages.

*Firstly*, qualitative approach helped me to go deep into the implementation status of UPs and I came to realize, how set of factors could influence implementation performance of a particular policy.

*Secondly*, by receiving data from different sources and stakeholders (triangulation of methods and sources), it made findings more reliable.

*Thirdly*, there was no time bound. I had six focus group sessions and also conducted face to face interviews, which were semi-structured, which allowed respondents (People, GLAs, Civil Society representatives) to open up and expressed their feelings and thoughts on the issue.

*Finally*, quantitative approach gave an idea about particular trends. This actually supplemented the data collected from qualitative approach by amalgamation of findings from both the approaches.

I believe that, the point where I started my study and with the kind of approach employed, I have managed to touch upon the issues and answered. I think my stand of using *case oriented qualitative research approach* and occasional use of quantitative approach, was a justified move and it gave me the right platform to collect rich data and scope to analyze and interpret in the way, it was expected to be.

#### **4.4. The Research Strategy: Case Study**

Every empirical research has an implicit, if not explicit, research design (Yin, 2009). Research design is basically a strategy or guide that a researcher follows in executing a research project. I employed Case study, as a strategy of inquiry. A Case Study can be defined as a systematic investigation of a study, a setting or a one single subject or a single depository of document or a specific event (Bogdan & Biklen 2003:54 and Yin 2003(b) cited in Berg, 2009: 317; Bromley 1990 cited in Berg, 2009: 317). My study dealt with ‘what’ and ‘how’ questions and agreeing with Yin’s (2003) argument ‘how stands for explanatory and what for exploratory Case study’, my investigation was kind of both exploratory and explanatory Case Study (Yin, 2003).

My research also employed Case Study as a research strategy, involving comparison between two UPs of Rajshahi district. Comparison of two different UPs, gave the study a chance to interpret cases relative to substantive and theoretical criteria (King et.al 1994). Agreeing with Bryman’s (2003) point-‘Case study gives a platform where quantitative and qualitative research can be combined approach’ (Bryman, 2003), I employed a qualitative research approach, with occasional use of quantitative approach for my study. ‘The RTI Act, 2009’ has not made a long journey yet and my decision to see, how it has been implemented was a valid study move. A case study was the most obvious choice which contributed to my study, exploring the context and explaining the relationships among various factors closely connected to implementation of RTI Act in Bangladesh.

#### **4.5. Unit of Analysis**

Usually, when we decide upon our strategy of inquiry, the very step is to agree upon the case, by defining ‘what is the case’ in the study. The Unit of Analysis defines, what the case is all about, or what the case study is focusing on - such as an individual, a group, an organization, a city and so forth (Berg, 2009). Here in the study, the unit of analysis was Union Parishad. There were particular reasons behind selecting Union Parishad as Unit of Analysis.



*Firstly*, the focus of the study was implementation effectiveness of RTI Act in Bangladesh and being the lowest administrative unit, the UP is deeply connected with the people. The majority of the people live in rural areas Bangladesh. Therefore, it was an obvious choice for me to focus on UP to get a bigger picture of the implementation reality of RTI Act in Bangladesh.

*Secondly*, ‘The Local Government Act (Union Parishad), 2009’ had given clear indication about how a Union Parishad should respond to information disclosure and information related to various kinds of services available at UP level. This in fact, excited me to see how UPs were performing in that parameter.

*Thirdly*, Sharique, a SDC funded Local Governance Program had a wide coverage in most of the UPs in Rajshahi, where they were providing technical and logistic support to these UPs so that they could function properly. That encouraged me to get deep into it and see how these factors contribute to implementation of RTI Act.

Among 72 Unions I have selected 2 Unions, namely Horgoram Union and Maria Union. The Cases have been selected on the basis of performance in terms of implementation of RTI Act in Rajshahi district. Horgoram UP has been selected as a better performing UP and Maria UP as a less performing UP. The decision was made in consultation with NGOs (who were working on RTI and Local Government like Sharique<sup>45</sup> and their partners Shachetan<sup>46</sup>, MSP<sup>47</sup> and SNKS<sup>48</sup>), Civil Society Representatives (Journalists, Academics) and Community Based Organizations.

#### **4.6. Research Methods**

Research Methods are basically tools that guide us through data collection and analysis process. The methods of data collection and analysis are very important in a research, as it determines the quality of the research. The selection of research methods gives a clear indication about, from where and how the data should be collected and which particular methods to be employed for analyzing the data in particular (Sarantakos, 1993).

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<sup>45</sup> Sharique is a SDC funded Local Governance Program implemented by InterCooperation Bangladesh in Rajshahi, Chapai Nawabgonj and Sunamgonj district in Bangladesh

<sup>46</sup> Sachetan is a Partner to InterCooperation Bangladesh working on Local Governance and other issues in Rajshahi region

<sup>47</sup> MSP is a Partner to InterCooperation Bangladesh working on Local Governance in Rajshahi region

<sup>48</sup> SNKS is a Partner to InterCooperation Bangladesh working on Local Governance in Rajshahi region

#### **4.7. Data Collection Process**

In this section, I tried to discuss about the process of data collection, which included research team formation, duration of data collection and also the kind of preparation we took while conducting FGD sessions and face to face interview.

The Data from different sources have been collected from May to August, 2012. A team headed by me, worked rigorously to collect wide range of data from the selected UPs. I had one female and two male research assistants for the study. They were basically from Rajshahi University, studying Public Administration and the reason I selected them was the fact that, they studied Local Government and Public Policy, which helped me to make them understand my study objectives. Before going to the field, they were made clear about the study and instruments of data collection.

During data collection, I acted as the main facilitator during FGDs and Face to Face interview sessions. However, the female research assistant worked as a co-facilitator in conducting session with female members. The other two research assistants kept all the conversation recorded in their note book. We made sure that we sit together as a team after we finished each day's work and agreed on what we collected by cross checking individual data. During FGD session, we worked on rapport building and made sure that they were comfortable with us. Having female member in the team helped the study in getting information from female members in the villages. Most of the NGOs we visited had an office in Rajshahi city and that made things easier for us to make contact with them and get all the necessary information.

The distance from the city to the field was between 5 to 35 kilometers. We preferred staying in Rajshahi city. We usually started early in the morning for our field visit and came back in the evening. One of the reasons to stay Rajshahi city was that there was no hotel in Durgapur Upazila, where we could have stayed during data collection. Also all team members resided in Rajshahi city which worked as advantage to move from city to the field.

#### **4.8. Type and Sources of Data**

We collected both quantitative and qualitative data from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected from people at community level, local government representatives, NGO representatives and civil society members in study area. Agreeing with Yin's recommendation to use multiple sources of data (Yin, 2009: 101), I also collected secondary data like reports, meeting minutes, circular, attendance register, posters, forms, display board, budget

board from UPs. Also various kinds of reports, training manual, and display materials were used in the study as secondary sources of data.

#### **4.9. Selection of participants**

In any particular research, to address question or hypothesis it is the researcher who decides where and whom to get information from (Creswell & Clerk, 2007: 112). While doing that the researcher puts a sampling procedure in place and determines the number of individuals that will be needed to provide data (ibid).

The participants of the study were selected from Horogram Union of Paba Upazila and Maria Union of Durgapur upazila from Rajshahi district. As it was discussed earlier, that the study was mixed in its approach, it employed a specific plan while selecting respondents for the study. There were FGDs in one hand and on the other hand there were face to face interviews. While selecting study participants, representation of different stakeholders like local government representatives (both male and female), local elite, students, journalists, teacher, housewives, social workers, religious leaders, NGO & CBO representatives were ensured.

Sampling is a process of selecting respondents in the study. This includes the nature and number of respondents to be included in the study. Agreeing with Marshall and Rossman's (1999) point, that the selection of respondents in a qualitative study should be done purposively rather on random basis, I used purposeful sampling in my study. In purposeful sampling, the researcher intentionally select participants whose experience can contribute to the central phenomenon or key concept in the study (Creswell and Clark, 2007). In the study, respondents especially UP representatives, UP Secretaries and members of NGOs and Civil Society were selected purposively. However, as the study was not completely qualitative, the respondents who were taken from the community for face to face interview were selected on a random basis. A total of 50 respondents, 25 from each union were selected for face to face interviews from Horogram and Maria Union Parishad. The table here describes number and categories of respondents that were selected in the study:

**Table No 4.1: List of Respondents**

<b>Horogram UP</b>		<b>Maria UP</b>	
<b>Categories</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Number</b>
UP Chairman (UPC)	1	UP Chairman (UPC)	1
UP Member ( Male)	3	UP Member ( Male)	3
UP Member (Female)	1	UP Member (Female)	1
UP Secretary	1	UP Secretary	1
NGOs / Civil Society	3	NGOs/Civil Society	3
UISC Entrepreneur	1	UISC Entrepreneur	1
Common People	15	Common People	15
	<b>25</b>		<b>25</b>

The table shows that the studies included both the Chairmen from two UPs, 3 male and 1 female UP members from each UPs which represented 30% of the total UP representatives. Also both the UP Secretaries were included in the study. From civil society, 3 representatives that include 1 school teacher, 1 journalist and 1 NGO representative were also selected. Besides, there were representation from common people which included 15 representatives from each Union who were selected on a random basis.

#### **4.10. Data Collection Methods**

Data collection techniques vary in terms of their content, intensity and nature for qualitative and quantitative approach (Creswell & Clerk, 2007). In a qualitative research, the popular techniques are open-ended observation (participant), open-ended interviews, focus group discussion, document review/content analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 1999:105; Creswell, 2007: 114). In a quantitative research, the approach is more like a closed ended and the focus is on factual information in the form of numbers from census data, attendance reports and progress summaries, structural interview and observational data (Creswell & Clerk 2007: 115). In this study, I have used direct observation (open-ended), Face to Face Interview (Semi-structured), Focus Group Discussion and Document Review as tools for data collection.

##### **4.10.1. Direct Observation**

According to Yin, observation helps to reveal some relevant behaviors and conditions (Yin 2003). Observation is a detailed, non-judgmental, concrete description of what has been observed and an important method in discovering complex interactions in a natural setting (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). The implementation performance of RTI Act, depends on how the target population accepted the Act, and their attitude towards UP as the main implementing agency. As a part of direct observation, we tried to attend 1 VGD distribution session, and also closely observed the opening and closing hours of UPs, arrival and departure of UP

representatives and secretaries, display boards, budget boards and UP monthly meeting. We also attended a session conducted by Sharique with female respondents in the UP.

#### **4.10.2. Interview**

An interview is a method of data collection, where a researcher tries to understand world from a respondent's point of view and their experience of life (Kvale, 1996). The objective of an in-depth interview is to explore realities about specific issues and it allows a respondent to come with their own understanding and experiences rather in a framed manner, and attempt to capture things that cannot be captured through observation. In this study, I conducted 50 face to face interview sessions with different group of people using different set of interview schedules with semi-structured questions. I used different set of questions for UP representatives, UP Secretaries, UISC representatives, Civil Society and Common people. The questions we used were mostly semi-structure open ended question as our study was mostly qualitative. However we also used some simple open ended questions where we need some basic quantitative data.

#### **4.10.3. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

A focus group is a small and homogenous group of six to twelve, participating more in an informal manner and sharing different information on a particular research topic through discussion (Bloor et al., 2001). The best part of FGD is that, it allows group members to discuss and analyze issues (Kvale, 1996). This allows a researcher to capture their feelings and crosscheck their perceptions and general comments (ibid). In this study, FGD sessions helped me to understand things like whether people are aware of their rights and information about various services available at UP or whether and how they participate in UP Planning and Ward Meeting held at ward level. I conducted 6 Focus Group Discussions, 3 from each Union. During FGDs, we mostly used unstructured and semi-structured questions. However, there were also some close ended questions we asked them, which was designed to get simple quantitative information related to the study.

<b>Table No 4.2 : Information about FGD</b>			
<b>Name of the Place</b>	<b>Name of Union</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>No of participants</b>
4 No Culpara	Horogram Union	1	7
Jhujhka	Horogram Union	1	6
Aligonj Santal Para	Horogram Union	1	6
Hoja, Anondokanti	Maria Union	1	8
Maria Ward No 1	Maria Union	1	5
6 No Mridha Para	Maria Union	1	6
		<b>6</b>	<b>38</b>

#### **4.10.4. Document review**

Document Review is an effective tool to collect data from secondary sources. In this study, document review played a very important part in understanding the context and existing practices at UP in Bangladesh. In my study, I tried to collect all the relevant documents including ordinance, circular, meeting minutes, implementation guideline of various program, registers available at UP, training manuals for UP representatives and brochures prepared by NGOs who were working on RTI like Manusher Jonno Foundation, Sharique and Civil Society Organizations (TIB, Totho Adhirak Forum) related issues were studied very carefully.

#### **4.11. Data Presentation and Analysis**

Data analysis in a qualitative inquiry, continues at the very beginning to the end of the study (Cobb and Forbes, 2002). All the data, that have been collected, were properly organized, reduced into themes, categorized and summarized for conclusion. Content analysis was used to analyze written reports/ documents and verbal information to reach to some meaningful interpretation. The study was mainly focusing on qualitative data. However, quantitative data which has been collected in my study went through a simple statistical analysis. The data presentation in the study was done through narrations and tables. The tabulation and simple statistical analysis used in the study was aimed to bring clarity in understanding variables of the study in a more precise manner.

#### **4.12. Addressing the issue of Validity and Reliability**

How accurate and correct the data is or how consistent data and findings are, are something that address the question of quality of data (Kumar, 2008). In any research, it is important that a researcher explains steps carried out to address question of validity and reliability (Creswell & Clerk, 2007: 133). Validity is epitomized by the question: are we measuring what we think we are measuring (Kerlinger, 1973:457 cited in Kumar, 2008: 153). Validity thus refers to the quality of instruments that have been used in a study and to what extent it is accurate, correct, true, meaningful and right (Guba and Lincoln, 1987). Reliability on the other hand, refers to the degree of consistency in data & findings generated in the study (Creswell & Clerk, 2007:133). Yin (2009) suggested four criteria i.e. construct validity, internal validity and external validity and reliability to measure the quality of an empirical research (Yin, 2009: 40).

#### **4.12.1. Construct validity**

Construct validity is about how operational measures are being studied in an empirical study (Yin 2009). To ensure the quality of a study it is very important that the major concepts used in the study are defined and operational measures are precisely identified and narrated (ibid). In the study, all the major concepts like Policy Implementation Performance, Policy Standards and Objectives, Implementation Structure, Target Group Behavior, Social Economic and Political Conditions, Resources and Target Group Behavior have been discussed and operationalized precisely in the context of the study.

#### **4.12.2. Internal validity**

Internal validity explains causal relationships among variables, which also brings the point of controlling spurious effects, where no other factors than independent variable affects the dependent variable (Yin, 2009). In this study, I tried to use most relevant set of variables, based on literature reviewed and reach to a point, where I believe implementation performance of RTI Act depends on these variables to a large extent. However, I am not completely denying the fact, that there were some other factors as well which affected the effectiveness of RTI Act.

Understanding the fact that people living in the villages are very religious and they usually don't go out and meet people. In the study, I had a feeling that many of them had never been to UP and have no idea about what was happening there and question of understanding RTI Act was beyond expectation. From wide perspective, it has fallen within Social Condition but in both the cases, Gender based difference was something not to be overlooked in implementation context. Besides, the administrative culture in Bangladesh has always maintained secrecy about information, due to colonial legacy in civil service of Bangladesh<sup>49</sup>. In the context of implementation of RTI Act, though mostly discussed under implementation structure, administrative culture is another extraneous factor that cannot be disregarded.

However validity in social science research is decided on, to what extent data is trustworthy and how accurate the findings are for participants, researcher and reader (Creswell, 2007). In the study, I employed multiple sources of data, through triangulation of methods of data collection like focus group discussion, semi-structured interview, observation and document to address the issue of accuracy and trustworthiness.

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<sup>49</sup> See Jamil, I. (2002). Administrative Culture in Bangladesh: Tensions between Tradition and Modernity. *International Review of Sociology*, Vol.12 (1:), 93-125. Taylor & Francis online.

#### **4.12.3. External Validity**

External Validity on the other hand, refers to the extent to which the findings of the study can be generalized to different settings and to other people (Yin, 2009). In this study, there have been two cases distinct to each other and I tried to have an in-depth analysis of both the cases. I believe that the characteristics of two different cases gave the study a right platform to explore the implementation realities of RTI Act and by using triangulation of methods in a multiple cases scenario, the study addressed the issue of external validity through its findings. Accepting the fact that, each case is different from each other, it would be over ambitious to imagine that the study findings will bring absolutely the same kind of results if applied to another setting.

What I observed in the study was that UP Chairmen were very influential and had power to take important decisions. Back of their mind, the respondents might have taken that consideration in mind. Besides, there is no denying that most of the people especially in rural Bangladesh, have their political affiliation which might bring deviation in results in cases, where people have complete opposite political ideology and loyalty to party high command, might force them to come with different interpretation.

However, we spent a lot of time talking with them and trying to build rapport, before we actually started any discussion about the issue. I am not completely ignoring a slim possibility of deviation in results in cases, where the people's political ideology might clash with information they gave. However, I think my study is a well prepared craft and the study findings should not vary to a great extent if used in different setting.

#### **4.12.4. Reliability**

Reliability, on the other hand, stands for words like dependable, consistent, predictable, stable and honest. In simple words, if a research tool is consistent and stable, and hence, predictable and accurate, it is said to be reliable. The greater the degree of consistency and stability is found in an instrument, the higher is its reliability (Kumar, 2008:156). It is basically the capacity of procedures and instruments to repeat the same results each time they are used by another researcher (Yin, 2009:45). In this study, I recorded all the necessary details, documents and records. Keeping it in mind, that if any effort of replication is made in future, my instruments will be useful for another researcher, I attached my instruments as Annexure. I am not completely denying the chance of slim deviation in results due to political affiliation of respondents, suspicion and fear to respond and religious conservativeness. The matter of fact is that, all the instruments used in the study were carefully chosen and concepts on which the study



was based on, has been tested in similar kinds of research, conducted elsewhere. Keeping these points into consideration, I think my study addressed the question of reliability precisely.

#### **4.13. Challenges encountered during the field work**

*First*, RTI as a new concept doesn't have with a long history in Bangladesh. The reading materials available for a researcher were insufficient, as there was no in-depth study conducted on RTI in Bangladesh.

*Second*, the study was conducted during harvesting season in Bangladesh. We had to spend a lot of time in the field to get respondents during face to face interview sessions.

*Third*, people who are living rural part of Bangladesh are religious. Female members normally do not go outside and also not comfortable talking to strangers especially with men. It was a challenge for all of us to participate as a team during some of the sessions. We also found that, many of the women members we interviewed have never been to UP and it was really hard to expect them to have any idea about RTI.

*Fourth*, the weather of Rajshahi is usually very warm and humid in summer. My team conducted the study in the middle of summer. It was really very hard to get transport in the village and had to walk to reach most of the places, where we conducted FGDs and interview sessions. Apart from that, due to interrupted electric supply we had to spend extra time to sit and wait whenever we needed photocopies or printouts from the computers in the unions we conducted our study.

*Finally*, we found UP representatives very busy, as they had to oversee so many things at the same time and there was no guarantee that if we set a meeting, they would be present in the meeting on time. Understanding the nature of their job and involvement with people it was expected, though it took a lot of time to just sit and conduct an interview session with them.

#### **4.14. Ethical Consideration**

In a Social Science Research there are issues that need to be taken care of. Since, a social science research deals with data from and about the people, it is very important that it follows ethical and professional code of conduct to safeguard the rights of the respondent and makes study findings trustworthy (Kumar,2008). Ethical issues may come up when a researcher seek, record and use data from respondents. Therefore, prior to data collection, a researcher should build rapport with the respondents and try to explain why s/he is here and make clear what the research is all about

(Kumar, 2009). In my study, first of all, I took permission from the University of Bergen to allow me to conduct a study on research topic, which also had signed permission of my supervisor. Prior to data collection, I, along with my team went to the UP and set an appointment with the Chairman and secretary of each UP describing the purpose of my study. Once they agreed with our idea and promised to extend their support during our stay there, we started our work. During each FGD, we talked to the group a day before each session was taken place and explained the purpose of such discussions. Same thing we did during our interview sessions. While we were keeping our records and also whatever data we collected from them, we took consent from them and also made clear that all the information they provided, would remain confidential and the purpose is purely to fulfill study objective.

#### **4.15. Conclusion**

The objective of this chapter was to introduce the readers with the study design, which I used to address my research questions. I have elaborately discussed the research strategy, sampling, data collection methods and data analysis tools which used in the study. In each section, discussion was made with appropriate logic and I have touched upon every detail of methodological aspects. I have tried to address the issue of validity and reliability in line with instruments and methods used in the study, to ensure the quality of my study. In totality, this chapter on Methodology gave a total picture of how I collected my data and my plan to analyze data. I believe that, I have used right kind of combinations, required in this particular study and my findings in the following chapters will reflect on the quality of my work.

## **5. CHAPTER FIVE: Finding and Discussion: Present Status of Implementation of the RTI Act at UP level**

### **5.1. Introduction**

The Chapter presents and discusses the finding of the study, which has been generated through Face to Face Interview, Direct Observation, Focus Group Discussion and Document review. In this chapter, the findings of the study were presented in line with the main research question i.e. *To what extent the implementation of RTI act led to achievement of the policy objectives set under this act?* . I followed a simple process to analyze my data in the study. In this Chapter, I tried to see the present situation of RTI implementation, based on the operational indicators of my dependent variable set in the analytical framework. In the next Chapter, I discussed my independent variables. As discussion progresses, I tried to understand the implementation status of RTI Act at UP level. Here, under each component, I put my discussion on Harogram UP first, followed by a discussion on Maria UP. This gave this discussion the right platform to compare both cases under each component of discussion.

### **5.2. Preservation of Information & Publication**

According to the Section 5(1), 5(2) of RTI Act, each authority should preserve all the relevant information in the most appropriate manner and within a certain period of time. All the information should be properly indexed and catalogued so that whoever is in need of information, can have access to information. Also Section 6, of RTI Act, clearly indicates which kind of information each authority should publish in a report. On the other hand, section 7 describes about information disclosure. In the following section I tried to reflect on how the selected UPs were functioning in terms of preserving information, disclosing information and publishing annual reports with all relevant information included in it.

#### **5.2.1. Preservation of Information**

##### **Horogram UP**

I had conducted face to face interview with the Chairmen and Secretaries of both the UPs. I found that in Horogram UP, all the necessary information, including meeting proceeding (UP Meeting and Ward level Meeting, UDCC, Special Meeting, Scheme Assessment Meeting, Budget meeting, Standing Committee Meeting), project details, annual budget, audit report, fund allotment, scheme implementation report, purchase record, beneficiary lists of various safety net

programmes, training report and information related to Information Education and Communication (IEC) were properly filled up and catalogued. They maintained both hard and soft copies of all necessary information discussed above.

*“The entire outlook of UP has changed over the years. It is not a building any more, it has become a functional unit now. People are aware and they never hesitate to ask for information they need. We need to be prepared all the time. Since this place is nearer to the city, what usually happens, donor agencies and international organization keep coming in our UP. Last month, a team came, where they took video and made some document on our UP. You know, what I am doing it not only because I work here, but also I feel proud when people like you or anyone from outside comes and ask me about different things. Back of my mind, I know, I have all the information with me. It feels great” Says, UP Secretary of Horogram UP.*

### **Maria UP**

On the other hand, we noticed that, apart from some basic information, there was not too much information available at Maria UP. The reason was that, the files were not managed properly. Even, some of the regular activities, for example Word Meeting, Union Development Coordination Meeting, Scheme Assessment Meeting were either were not preserved properly. It was also found that, some of the very important information like list of projects taken at UP, list of beneficiaries under various Safety Net Programmes, allotment received from LGSP etc was not recorded properly and they failed to provide such information.

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*UP Secretary of Maria UP, during an interview session said “Yes, we do keep records as much as possible. But we do have constraints of resources. For instance, the building we have for UP, is a disputing one. Pourashava (Municipality) is claiming that this building falls within their territory and half of it, is under their control. We even do not have regular electricity and water supply in our UP. Now, when you are asking me to give you particular information, we do not have option but to say no to you. It is really difficult to keep all the records in this circumstance.”*

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## 5.2.2. Publication of Information

According to RTI Act, each UP should publish periodic progress report, comprising all necessary information including meeting proceeding, project detail, allotment and grants, progress report of various schemes.

### Horogram UP

The study found that, in Horogram UP they usually prepare Report in every six months and during our interview with the Secretary and Chairman, we found that they had a 6 monthly report ready even in first week of July, which was impressive. The report comprised of information about budget meeting and the meeting for approval of budget for the year 2012. The table below shows that, a total of 850 participants which include 490 female and 360 male participants, who attended in budget session, which was held in 17/05/12. The budget approval meeting was held in 23/05/ 2012.

**Table 5.1 : Budget Approval and Open Budget Meeting**

৬. ইউপি বাজেট অনুমোদন সংক্রান্ত তথ্য :										
সভার তারিখ	সভার সোণেশের তারিখ	ইউপি সদস্য	অংশগ্রহণকারীদের ধরণ							
			এনজিও/সুশীল সমাজ	ওয়ার্ড কমিটির সদস্য	এসএসসি সদস্য	সরকারী দপ্তরের কর্মকর্তা/কর্মচারী	পেশা জীবী	পুরুষ	মহিলা	
২৩/৫/১২	২১/৫/১২	১৩							১০	৩
(টিকা :পেশাজীবী অর্থ আইনজীবী, স্কুল শিক্ষক, চিকিৎসক ইত্যাদি)										

৫. ইউপি উন্মুক্ত বাজেট সভা সংক্রান্ত তথ্য :									
উন্মুক্ত বাজেট সভার তারিখ	জনসংখ্যার কাছের বসড়া বাজেট বিকল্প বিস্তারনের তারিখ	বাজেট সভার তথ্য প্রচার (মাইকিং/আমন্ত্রণ পত্র/ঢাক পিটিয়ে/ব্যক্তিগত যোগাযোগ /লিফলেট বিতরণ)	বাজেট সভার মেয়াদ	অংশগ্রহণকারী		অংশগ্রহণকারীদের মতব্য	সভায় গৃহীত সিদ্ধান্ত		
				পুরুষ	মহিলা				
২১/৫/১২	১৭/৫/১২	মাইকিং আমন্ত্রণ পত্র ও ঢাক পিটিয়ে	১ দিন	৩৬০	৪৯০	ওয়ার্ড পরিকল্পনার চাহিদাগুলো বাজেটে অন্তর্ভুক্ত হওয়ায় জনগন সন্তোষ প্রকাশ করেন।	সংশোধিত বাজেট অনুমোদনের জন্য পরিবদ বর্গকে অনুরোধ করা হয়।		

We found it very interesting that Horogram UP even had a record of all schemes and details of each project they took in the report. The table below shows how they kept their record and put them in this report on various schemes.

**Table No 5.2 : Scheme Implementation Status**

১৩. কিম বাস্তবায়ন পরিস্থিতি							
ওয়ার্ড নং	পরিকল্পনা সভায় প্রস্তাবিত কিমের সংখ্যা	ওয়ার্ড পর্যায়ের লোকজনের মতে অগ্রাধিকার কিমের সংখ্যা	ইউপি'র অনুমোদিত কিমের নাম	কিমের ধরণ	কিমের ব্যয় (টাকায়)	ওয়ার্ড কমিটি/ঠিকাদারের মাধ্যমে বাস্তবায়িত হচ্ছে	কিমের বাস্তবায়নের অগ্রগতি কত ভাগ হয়েছে
১	৪	২	১। কাশিয়াড়াংগা আদর্শ গ্রামের রাস্তা ব্যটস দ্বার উন্নয়ন	১২	৮০,০০০	ওয়ার্ড কমিটি	১০০%
২	৪	২	১। প্রটেকশন ওয়াল ও নলকূপ, সিলিংফ্যান, বেন্চ সরবরাহ	১২+৬+৩	৭০,০০০	ওয়ার্ড কমিটি	১০০%
৩	৪	২	ব্যটসের রাস্তা	১২	৭০,০০০	ওয়ার্ড কমিটি	১০০%
৪	৪	২	প্রটেকশন ওয়াল ও তথ্যসেবা কেন্দ্রে ল্যাপটপ	৫+১২	৭০,০০০	ওয়ার্ড কমিটি	১০০%
৫	৪	২	প্রটেকশন ওয়াল	৫	১,৬৪,৯৩২	ওয়ার্ড কমিটি	১০০%
৬	৪	২	ব্যটসের রাস্তা	১২	৭০,০০০	ওয়ার্ড কমিটি	১০০%
৭	৪	২	প্রটেকশন ওয়াল ও সেলাই	৫	৭০,০০০	ওয়ার্ড কমিটি	১০০%

The Report also had information about budget, including the funds and grants received from various sources like LGSP and Sharique. The table below shows the breakdown of the budget of Horogram UP and also the information about the funds received from different sources.

**Table No 5.3: Information about Sources of Funds and Grants & Annual Budget**

১২. বিভিন্ন ধরনের থেকে বরাদ্দের অবস্থা :							
Sources of Funds and Grants	বোর্ড বরাদ্দের ধরণ	অর্থ প্রাপ্তির তারিখ	টাকার পরিমাণ	কিস্তি (১ম বা ২য়)	সম্ভাব্য বরাদ্দের সাম্যে প্রকৃত প্রাপ্তির পার্থক্য	বিগত বছরের চেয়ে বৃদ্ধির হার (%)	বায় সক্রান্ত তথ্য
		এলজিএসপি মৌলিক থেকে বরাদ্দ	২৮/৫/১২	১১,৫৪,৯৩২/=	১ম+২য় কিস্তি একত্রে প্রাপ্ত	৬,০০০/= বেশী	৫.৯৯% কম
	এলজিএসপি দক্ষতা ভিত্তিক থেকে বরাদ্দ						
	ইউপি জিপি বরাদ্দ						
	বিশেষ অনুদান						
	উপজেলা থেকে বরাদ্দ						
	স্বয়ংসহায়তা						

১৩. ইউপি'র বার্ষিক রাজস্ব বাজেট					
ক্রমিক নং	রাজস্বের উৎস	চলতি বছরের বাজেট	চলতি বছরের আয় রিপোর্ট দেয়ার তারিখে	বিগত বছরের বাজেট	বিগত বছরের প্রকৃত আয়
	নিম্নলিখিত উৎস				
১	হোল্ডিং ট্যাক্স	৯,৫০,০০০/=	১,৩১,৩৬০/=	৮,৫০,০০০/=	১,১৯,০০০/=
২	বাল্যশিক্ষা ও জীবিকার ওপর ট্যাক্স	১০,০০০/=		১০,০০০/=	
৩	বিনোদন কর				
৪	ইউপি'র ইমু ক্লাব লাইসেন্স ও পারমিটের জমাগত ফি	৩৫,০০০/=	২৪,২০০/=	৩৫,০০০/=	২৮,৭০০
৫	ইজারা বাবদ প্রাপ্তিঃ				
	ক) হাটবাজার/ফেরীঘাট	১,৫০,০০০/=	২,০৫,৮৭৫/=	১,৫০,০০০/=	
	খ) মৌজাভূ (পবাদিপত্তরছাউনি)	৫,০০০/=	১১,৪৭০/=	৪,০০০/=	১৫,৫০
৬	মটর চালিত যান ছাড়া অন্যান্য পরিবহনের ওপর আরোপিত লাইসেন্স ফি	২,০০০/=	২০০/=	১,০০০/=	
৭	সম্পত্তি থেকে আয়				
৮	অন্যান্য (জন্ম, মৃত্যু ও নাগরিকত্ব সনদের জন্য ফি)		৫,৫০০/=		৫,৪
৯	স্বাস্থ্য সম্প্রদায়ের কাছ থেকে প্রাপ্ত				

Besides, there was information related to audit, standing committee procedure, purchase information of the UP. We also found that purchases in Horogram UP were made through bidding. The person or the institution who submits the lowest price, get the order. We found 12 such cases where the Horogram UP followed this process.

**Table No 5.4 : Audit Report & Purchase Information**

১৬. ইউপি নিরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত তথ্য							১৬. ক্রয় সংক্রান্ত তথ্য								
নিরীক্ষার ধরন	নিরীক্ষার তারিখ	নিরীক্ষা মন্ত্রণাব্য (আপত্তিহীন আপত্তিহ/তথ্যের অপ্রাপ্যতা/বিরূপ)	চলতি বছর অডিট আপত্তির সংখ্যা	কয়টি অডিট আপত্তি হয়েছে	নিষ্পত্তি না হওয়া অডিট আপত্তির সংখ্যা	কয়টি নিষ্পত্তি না হওয়া অডিট আপত্তি চলতি বছর নিষ্পত্তি হয়েছে	মোট কয়টি অডিট আপত্তি নিষ্পত্তি করে হলে (বর্তমান + পূর্বের)	ক্রয়ের ধরন	ক্রয়ের সংখ্যা	শিকমের ধরন	সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজের জন্য মোট অর্থের পরিমাণ	ইউপি নোটিশ বোর্ডে কয় নোটিশ ছিল কি? (হ্যাঁ/না/প্রয়োজ্য নয়)	নোটিশ সংবাদপত্রে প্রকাশ করা হয়েছে কি? হ্যাঁ/না (জাতীয়/স্থানীয়)	মূল্যায়ন কর্মসূচি পঠিত হয়েছে কি? (হ্যাঁ/না/প্রয়োজ্য নয়)	মূল্যায়ন কর্মসূচির আওতে কয়টি (হ্যাঁ/না/প্রয়োজ্য নয়)
সিএ ফর্ম ঘারো আর্থিক নিরীক্ষা	(২৮/৬/১১ এলজিএসপি)	-	নাই	প্রয়োজ্য নাই	-	-	নাই	সরাসরি ক্রয় (শ্রমঘণ কাজ ছাড়া)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
সর্বাত্মক নিরীক্ষা	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	সরাসরি ক্রয় (কেবল শ্রমঘণ কাজের জন্য)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
সরকারী নিরীক্ষা	৭/৩/১২	খাদ্য ও খুর্খোণ ব্যবস্থাপনা মন্ত্রণালয়	নাই	প্রয়োজ্য নাই	-	-	নাই	সরাসরি ক্রয়	১২	৩+৪+৬+১২	১১,৫৪,৯৩২/	হ্যাঁ	প্রয়োজ্য নাই	হ্যাঁ	-

The Report also had information about various meeting (Ward, UDCC, Scheme Inspection and Special Meeting) held in last six months. This included information about participants, who attended the meeting. The table below shows different kinds of training that took place in the UP, which included Training on Ward Planning and Budget, Training on Women Leadership and Empowerment and Training on Self Assessment on Local Government.

**Table No 5.5: Information Meeting & Training program held in UP**

২. ইউপি/ওয়ার্ড পর্যায়ের সভা সংক্রান্ত তথ্য:					
সভার নাম	কার্যক্রম/পরিকল্পিত	অর্জিত	অংশগ্রহণকারী		দ্বিধা সূচী
			পুরুষ	নারী	
মাসিক সভা	০৬	০৬	৬০	১৮	কার্য বিবরণী সংযুক্ত
ওয়ার্ড সভা	০৯	০৯	৫৮৫	৯৭৫	কার্য বিবরণী সংযুক্ত
ইউজিসি সভা	০৩	০২	৫৭	৪৫	কার্য বিবরণী সংযুক্ত
বিশেষ সভা	প্রয়োজন অনুযায়ী	০১	১০	৩	কার্য বিবরণী সংযুক্ত
স্থানীয় সভা	০১	০১	১৮	০৮	কার্য বিবরণী সংযুক্ত

ক্রমিক নং	কার্যক্রম/পরিকল্পিত	তারিখ	সময়	স্থান	অংশগ্রহণকারী	কার্যক্রম/পরিকল্পিত	কার্যক্রম/পরিকল্পিত
১	নারীদের মাসিক সভা	০৬	১০	১০	১০	কার্য বিবরণী সংযুক্ত	কার্য বিবরণী সংযুক্ত
২	ওয়ার্ড সভা	০৯	০৯	০৯	৯৭৫	কার্য বিবরণী সংযুক্ত	কার্য বিবরণী সংযুক্ত
৩	ইউজিসি সভা	০৩	০২	০২	৫৭	কার্য বিবরণী সংযুক্ত	কার্য বিবরণী সংযুক্ত
৪	বিশেষ সভা	প্রয়োজন অনুযায়ী	০১	১০	৩	কার্য বিবরণী সংযুক্ত	কার্য বিবরণী সংযুক্ত
৫	স্থানীয় সভা	০১	০১	১৮	০৮	কার্য বিবরণী সংযুক্ত	কার্য বিবরণী সংযুক্ত

There was a summary table on information disclosure in the report, which specifically indicated place, where a kind of information would be available. The good thing about that section was, whoever sees the report can have an idea on where exactly to search for particular information.

**Table No 5.6: Information Board on Disclosure**

১৪. তথ্য প্রকাশ					
তথ্যের ধরণ	যাদের জন্য তথ্য প্রকাশ করা হয়েছে (জনসাধারণ/উর্দ্ধতন কর্তৃপক্ষ/কমিটি/সকল অংশীদার/অন্যান্য )	তথ্য পাওয়ার স্থান (ইউপি নোটিশ বোর্ড/বিভিন্ন স্থানে স্থাপিত বিলবোর্ড/প্রকল্প তথ্য বোর্ড/ওয়েবসাইট/সভা	তথ্য সভায় জানানো হয়ে থাকলে, অংশগ্রহণকারীদের সংখ্যা		তথ্য প্রকাশ না করা হয়ে থাকলে, কারণ উল্লেখ করুন
			পুরুষ	নারী	
ইউপি পরিকল্পনা	১+২	১+২+৫	২৫	১০	প্রযোজ্য
ইউপি বাজেট	১+২	১+৫+বাজেট বোর্ড	৩৬০	৪৯০	প্রযোজ্য
প্রকল্প সংক্রান্ত	১+২+৩	৩			প্রযোজ্য
অর্থায়ন সংক্রান্ত	১+২+৩	৩			প্রযোজ্য

In general, Horogram UP had a very precisely prepared report, which included all required information about the UP. One thing surely contributed in UP's performance, was the experience and efficiency of both the Chairman (UPC) and Secretary who understood their responsibilities and performed exactly the way it has been described in the UP manual with regard to RTI Act.

*“Look, what I understood in the last 12 years of my service as a Chairman that the resources we usually have at the UP level, are never enough to meet an ever increasing demand of the people. You have to live with this limitation and serve as much as you can within your capacity. But, the good thing here is, we receive financial support from LGSP. Sharique also plays a key role making us realize our responsibilities to make UP a better experience for people. Of course, they are the one who provide training to our UP members and office staff on various issues of local governance, to make us realize what specific responsibilities we have, specially now on RTI. We kept record of all the proceeding and decisions taken in each meeting and we publish them regularly.” Says, Chairman of Horogram UP.*

### **Maria UP**

Whereas, in Maria UP, there was no evidence of such report published. What I found that, though they did have some proceedings and other basic information recorded, the documents were not properly organized. Also, the practice of producing and publishing report was completely missing in Maria UP. Basically, there was no such report being published the time I conducted the study. I also found that, there was confusion about the role they should be playing and how particularly they could organize all the relevant information and make it published and accessible to people.



*The Entrepreneur during an interview session said 'People are unaware of the fact that to get access to information is a right. People, to some extent do not bother about these things, which make people who work in the UP casual about it. I am not saying that our UP is not keeping records but it should be more systematic and timely. I'm afraid to say that we are not regular in updating information and specially, publishing such reports.'*

### 5.3. Information Disclosure

#### 5.3.1. Pro-active Disclosure of Information

Referring back to Section 7 of RTI Act, information disclosure shall be mandatory with few exemptions. Every authority should disclose necessary information to the people, except those concerned with national security (ibid). If any information is not disclosed or a person fail to receive information, there is also provision to ask for that information on demand. As discussed in previous chapter that, each UP should pro-actively disclose information about UP Structure, role and responsibilities of UP representatives, GLAs, different kinds of circulars, guidelines and manuals, grants and allocations, contact details of responsible officers etc.

#### Horogram UP

In Horogram UP, a wide range of information was displayed in the UP premise. There was General Information Board, which included demographic information about the UP and all the basic information about the UP.

**Table No 5.7: General Information about Horogram UP**

ক্র.সং.	বিবরণ	সংখ্যা	ক্র.সং.	বিবরণ	সংখ্যা	ক্র.সং.	বিবরণ	সংখ্যা
১	আয়তন	৯৭.২৫ হিঃ	১৭	আইনগারি মোকু প	৫২ টি	৩১	সরকারি পরিষ্কার সংস্থা	৩ টি
২	মোট লোক সংখ্যা	৩৩০৫০জন	১৮	আইনগারি মোকু প	২৮ টি	৩২	সরকারি পরিষ্কার সংস্থা	৩ টি
(ক)	পুরুষ	১৬২৪৯ জন	১৯	আইনগারি মোকু প	৩১৯০-৫৫৫৫	৩৩	সরকারি পরিষ্কার সংস্থা	৩ টি
(খ)	মহিলা	১৬৮০১ জন	২০	আইনগারি মোকু প	১০৬৫-৩৫	৩৪	সরকারি পরিষ্কার সংস্থা	৩ টি
৩	অসহায় পরিবার সংখ্যা	৭২০০টি	(ক)	এক মাসের ভূমি পরিমাপ	১০০-৫৫৫৫	৩৫	পরিবার পরিচালনা	২২৩৫
৪	কোম্পা	২৫ টি	(খ)	এক মাসের ভূমি পরিমাপ	১০১-৫৫		প্রদান কার্যক্রম	
৫	প্রধান	২৫ জন	(গ)	ভূমি	১০১-৫৫			
৬	জোড়ার সংখ্যা	১০৫১৭	(ঘ)	উপস্থিত কর্মচারের নাম				
(ক)	সরকারি	১০৫৬৫	(গ)	ডায়েরি, ই-জি অফিস অফিস				
(খ)	আইনগারি	১০৫৬৫	(ঘ)	মাসের কার্যক্রম	২ টি			
৭	আইনগারি আইনগারি	১০ টি	(ঙ)	মাসের কার্যক্রম	২ টি			
৮	আইনগারি আইনগারি	৩ টি	২১	আইনগারি আইনগারি	১০			
৯	সরকারি আইনগারি	৩ টি	২২	আইনগারি আইনগারি	১০			
১০	সরকারি আইনগারি	৩ টি	২৩	আইনগারি আইনগারি	১০			
১১	সরকারি আইনগারি	৩ টি	২৪	আইনগারি আইনগারি	১০			
১২	সরকারি আইনগারি	৩ টি	২৫	আইনগারি আইনগারি	১০			
১৩	সরকারি আইনগারি	৩ টি	২৬	আইনগারি আইনগারি	১০			
১৪	সরকারি আইনগারি	৩ টি	২৭	আইনগারি আইনগারি	১০			
১৫	সরকারি আইনগারি	৩ টি	২৮	আইনগারি আইনগারি	১০			
১৬	সরকারি আইনগারি	৩ টি	২৯	আইনগারি আইনগারি	১০			
১৭	সরকারি আইনগারি	৩ টি	৩০	আইনগারি আইনগারি	১০			

There was also information on a display board about the income and expenditure of UP for the year 2011-12 at UP premises. The table below shows information, regarding income and

expenditure of Horogram UP for the year 2011-2012. All the information related to various ongoing projects of the UP, was also found written in the Project Implementation Monitoring board, which was displayed in UP premises.

**Table No 5.8 : Income-Expenditure & Project Implementation Monitoring Board**

Income-Expenditure		Implementation Monitoring Board																																																	
<p><b>৫ নং হড়গ্রাম ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ</b> ডাকঃ মিয়াপুর উপজেলার পবা জেলাঃ রাজশাহী। ২০১১-২০১২ ইং অর্থ বছরের আয়- ব্যয় বিবরণী</p> <p>১। ট্যাক্স = ১,৩১,৩৬০/- ২। লাইসেন্স ফি = ২৪,২০০/- ৩। খোয়াড় = ১১,৪৯০/- ৪। রিজরা ভান = ২০০/- ৫। গ্রাম আদালত = ৫৮৭/- ৬। জন্ম ও মৃত্যু নিবন্ধন = ৫৫০/- ৭। সেসারম্যান,সদস্যজাতা = ১৮১,৬৬২/- ৮। স্থানি হস্তাকর স্থানি হস্তাক্ষর কর ১% = ১০,৪২,০০০/- ৯। হাট/কেন্দ্রীয় = ২,০৩,৮৮৫/- ১০। এলকিএসপি = ১১,৫৪,৯০২/- ১১। শরিক প্রকল্প = ২,৫০,০০০/- ১২। বিবিধ = ১,১২৫/- গত বছরের আদাত জের = ৩৪,৩৫২/২১ মোট আয় = ৩০,৪১,৩২৩/-২১</p> <p>১। সেসারম্যান,সদস্য জাতা = ৩,১৮,৭৯৯/- ২। ট্যাক্স আদায় কমিশন = ৩১,২২৮/- ৩। বিদ্যুৎ = ১৭,৮৩০/- ৪। সেসারম্যানের জ্বালানী = ৪,৪০০/- ৫। সর্বোদ পন = ২,০৩৫/- ৬। শরিক সাহায্য ও তাকসীর = ৫৪,০০০/- ৭। মিটিং/আপায়ন = ৩৮,৭৪৩/- ৮। সেসেঞ্জ = ৩৮,২৭৯/- ৯। আসবাব পত্র ক্রয় = ৪,৬৯৩/- ১০। বেলায়লা = ৭৪,৯৪০/- ১১। রাজা খোয়াবোপ = ৫,৬০,০০০/- ১২। স্বাস্থ্য ও স্যানিটেশন = ৪,৭৭,৮৭৫/- ১৩। বাথ ও পোচ = ৮,০৫,৫৩২/- ১৪। শিক্ষা = ১,০০,০০০/- ১৫। ভবন সেবা কেন্দ্র = ১,৫০,০০০/- ১৬। দারিদ্র বিমোচন = ২,৪৫,০০০/- (সেপাই মেশিন বিতরণ) ১৭। সুশাসন = ১,১৪,৯১৪/- ১৮। বিবিধ = ২৭,৪৫৪/- মোট ব্যয় = ৩০,১৭,৭৮৫/-</p>		<p>গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার <b>৫ নং হড়গ্রাম ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ</b> পোস্ট : মিয়াপুর, উপজেলা : পবা, জেলা : রাজশাহী। <b>প্রকল্প বাস্তবায়ন মনিটরিং বোর্ড</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>ক্রমিক নং</th> <th>প্রকল্পের নাম</th> <th>আর্থের উৎস/ধাত</th> <th>বরাদ্দ</th> <th>সংখ্যা</th> <th>প্রকল্পের স্তর/পতি</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>১</td> <td>কৃষি বিক্রেতার মার্কা ক্রয় কর্মসূচি</td> <td>শরিক</td> <td>২,০০,০০০</td> <td></td> <td>গোয়ে মর্দিনা ফের</td> </tr> <tr> <td>২</td> <td>প্রকল্পের মার্কা ক্রয় কর্মসূচি</td> <td>শরিক</td> <td>৭,০০০</td> <td>৫৫ টন</td> <td>গোয়ে মর্দিনা ফের</td> </tr> <tr> <td>৩</td> <td>প্রকল্পের মার্কা ক্রয় কর্মসূচি</td> <td>শরিক</td> <td>৫,০০০</td> <td>৫৫ টন</td> <td>গোয়ে মর্দিনা ফের</td> </tr> <tr> <td>৪</td> <td>প্রকল্পের মার্কা ক্রয় কর্মসূচি</td> <td>কর্মী</td> <td>৪,০০০</td> <td>৫৫ টন</td> <td>গোয়ে মর্দিনা ফের</td> </tr> <tr> <td>৫</td> <td>প্রকল্পের মার্কা ক্রয় কর্মসূচি</td> <td>কর্মী</td> <td>৪,০০০</td> <td>৫৫ টন</td> <td>গোয়ে মর্দিনা ফের</td> </tr> <tr> <td>৬</td> <td>প্রকল্পের মার্কা ক্রয় কর্মসূচি</td> <td>শরিক</td> <td>১০০,০০০</td> <td></td> <td>গোয়ে মর্দিনা ফের</td> </tr> <tr> <td>৭</td> <td>প্রকল্পের মার্কা ক্রয় কর্মসূচি</td> <td>শরিক</td> <td>১৮০,০০০</td> <td></td> <td>গোয়ে মর্দিনা ফের</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		ক্রমিক নং	প্রকল্পের নাম	আর্থের উৎস/ধাত	বরাদ্দ	সংখ্যা	প্রকল্পের স্তর/পতি	১	কৃষি বিক্রেতার মার্কা ক্রয় কর্মসূচি	শরিক	২,০০,০০০		গোয়ে মর্দিনা ফের	২	প্রকল্পের মার্কা ক্রয় কর্মসূচি	শরিক	৭,০০০	৫৫ টন	গোয়ে মর্দিনা ফের	৩	প্রকল্পের মার্কা ক্রয় কর্মসূচি	শরিক	৫,০০০	৫৫ টন	গোয়ে মর্দিনা ফের	৪	প্রকল্পের মার্কা ক্রয় কর্মসূচি	কর্মী	৪,০০০	৫৫ টন	গোয়ে মর্দিনা ফের	৫	প্রকল্পের মার্কা ক্রয় কর্মসূচি	কর্মী	৪,০০০	৫৫ টন	গোয়ে মর্দিনা ফের	৬	প্রকল্পের মার্কা ক্রয় কর্মসূচি	শরিক	১০০,০০০		গোয়ে মর্দিনা ফের	৭	প্রকল্পের মার্কা ক্রয় কর্মসূচি	শরিক	১৮০,০০০		গোয়ে মর্দিনা ফের
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Besides, there was information about standing committee and UP structure, which include name of all the UP representatives displayed at UP Premise. The table below shows the information about UP structure and name of all the Standing Committees in Horogram UP.

**Table No 5.9: UP Structure and Standing Committee at Horogram UP**

UP Structure		Standing Committee	
<p><b>৫ নং হড়গ্রাম ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ কমপ্লেক্স ভবন</b> নির্মাণ কালীন সময়ে দায়িত্বে ছিলেন যারা</p> <p>১। মোঃ আবুল কালাম আজাদ চেয়ারম্যান ২। মোসাঃ রাজিয়া সুলতানা সংরক্ষিত মহিলা সদস্য ৩। মোসাঃ আতেরা খাতুন " " " ৪। মোসাঃ হাবিবা বেগম " " " ৫। মোঃ হাসানুজ্জামান ১নং ওয়ার্ড সদস্য ৬। " আব্দুল সালাম ২নং " " ৭। " শাহজাহান আলী ৩নং " " ৮। " সেরাজুল ইসলাম ৪নং " " ৯। " আক্রাম আলী ৫নং " " ১০। " জুব্বার উদ্দিন ৬নং " " ১১। " আব্দুর রউফ ৭নং " " ১২। " আলীউদ্দিন ৮নং " " ১৩। " আব্দুল হক ৯নং " " ১৪। " গোলাম সাক্বায়েন ১০নং " "</p>		<p><b>কৃষি মার্কা ক্রয় কর্মসূচির নামসমূহ</b> ৫ নং হড়গ্রাম ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ</p> <p>নং নাম</p> <p>১। জন্ম ও মংস্থাপন; ২। হিসাব নিরীক্ষা ও হিসাব রক্ষণ; ৩। কবর নিকাপন ও আদায়; ৪। শিক্ষা, স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা; ৫। কৃষি, মৎস্য ও পশু সম্পদ ও অন্যান্য বর্ধনমূলক কর্মসূচি; ৬। পল্লী অবকাঠামো উন্নয়ন, সংরক্ষণ, রক্ষাবেশ ইত্যাদি; ৭। আইন-শৃংখলা রক্ষণ; ৮। জন্ম-মৃত্যু নিবন্ধন; ৯। ম্যানিটেশন, পানি সরবরাহ ও পয়ঃনিকাশন; ১০। সমাজকল্যাণ ও দুঃস্থের ব্যবস্থাপন; ১১। পরিবেশ উন্নয়ন, পরিবেশ সংরক্ষণ ও ফুরকেশন; ১২। পারিবারিক বিরোধ নিরসন, নারী ও শিশু কল্যাণ; ১৩। সংস্কৃতি ও খেলাপুলা।</p>	

Though there was a notice board in the UP, there was not much information on that. But there was disclosure of information about all Government Line Agencies (GLAs) and different NGOs working in the Union.

**Table No 5.10: Information on NGO's & GLAs**

The table here shows names of all the NGOs, who were working in Horogram UP. Here, the table also shows the list of Government Line Agencies (GLAs), working in the UP.

*“Horogram UP can be considered as a model UP. It has all the information and we never hesitate to make them in public. You can find project information, budget board, standing committee, UP Structure, contact information of GLA representatives, UP representatives and NGO representatives written on the wall. Actually, we received few workshops and seminars from Sharique on RTI and Local Self-Assessment, which help us to understand the fact that, we should disclose certain kind of information to people. Of course, that’s not the only thing that has contributed us to take this so seriously. Look, there was time when people had a perception that, UP has lot of money and everything is going into our pocket but it was untrue. We always had limited money but now when we organize Open Budget session, people know that this is what we have and we have to plan our program accordingly. In that way, we are happy that we can now disclose whatever information we have and knowing our limitation they have very little to complain about. “Says, Secretary of Horogram UP.*

In totality, Horogram UP was impressive in disclosing various range of information and could easily be considered as Model UP whose experience can be useful to other UPs.

**Maria UP**

Maria UP is located 30 km away from Rajshahi city. In the study, I found that there was not much information displayed in the UP. There was even no such effort to make information displayed for people to understand, what was happening in UP. Also, I found that UP representatives and UP staff members, responsible for delivering services, were completely

unaware of information disclosure. Only, the information related to UP Structure and contact details were displayed in UP premises. Information about budget, various projects either run by UP's own funding or with the money they received from LGSP, standing committee, list of services were completely missing. There was a notice board with no circular or notice hanging on it. Basically, there was no pro-active disclosure of information in Maria and what we understood while interviewing with them or through observation that, they never had such practices in their UP.

*A member of Maria UP during an interview session expressed his feeling in such a way... 'Actually, you may not find anything special in terms of disclosure of various kinds of information but this is not something come out of ignorance. Yes, I do agree with the fact that to some extent we are not aware of what kind of information we should be disclosing, but we have our limitations. We neither have an office which we can claim ours completely nor the resources to back up such activities. To let people know what is happening around, is a practice which need time to be popular.'*

### **5.3.2. Information disclosure on-demand/Request for Information and Appeal**

As discussed earlier, the RTI Act has a list of exemptions, which any public authority are not entitled to disclose. In the UP context, there are information, which UP should not disclose pro-actively but if any request is made to Officer- in-charge, requesting for information either in written form or electronic means or through email<sup>50</sup> should be responding immediately. If, not possible, then within a certain period of time. The application needs to be made either in prescribed format or in white paper with proper description about information asked for.

#### **Horogram UP**

The study found that, people in general, had no idea about application process. What we understood from the study was that, there was no such initiative, especially from the UP to make people aware of application process, something even Horogram UP needs to work on in the future. However, there were some cases, where people actually applied for information and also were successful getting information.

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<sup>50</sup> See The Right to Information Act 2009, Section 8 (1)

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## Success Story (1)

### *Fatema gets a VGD Card<sup>51</sup>*

This story is about a young girl who succeeded to get VGD card for her family. Fatema Tuz Zohora, a tailor by profession, lived in Aligonj Adarsha village with her parents. Her parents, Abdur Razzak and Hasina Banu both were old and could not contribute financially to the family. Fatema, the eldest among all the sisters, was the only earning member, who worked locally and had to struggle for the basic needs of her family. One day, she came to know about VGD program and Senior Citizen Allowance (SCA). She was wondering how her family, being so poor, could not be a part of the program and what could have been the criteria, when Union Parishad made the list. A local NGO, Shachetan who worked in her village, informed her during a training session that she could actually ask UP about it and it's her right to do so. She learnt the application procedure from Shachetan and made a formal application, asking about the list and selection criteria of VGD Card & Senior Citizen Allowance. She did not have to wait long to receive the response. Few months later, she applied for a VGD Card to the Chairman of Horogram UP. Now, her family receives both VGD Card and her parents also receive SCA. She was very happy with the fact that, now, even an ordinary person like her, could ask and access to information and services available at community level. She felt that citizen should know about the RTI Act and if this could change her life, it will also bring changes in the lives of so many others, who also need to be informed.

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However such cases were rare and didn't reflect the overall situation of how people understand application process. One of the main reasons I found that there was lack of awareness among people and also no initiative from UP authority to make people known about such provision. Basically, it was Sharique who conducted training sessions at the community level. But, even for them it was difficult to reach a large number of people living in Horogram Union.

*“What is important here is making people aware of the Act and the procedure of application which needs practical orientation and training on RTI. Common people don't have time and also the expertise to read the Act and get a complete idea about the Act. It has to be the government, to make people aware of the Act. Few write ups in the national newspaper will never solve the problem. The limitation with us, as NGO professionals, is that we have limited manpower and fund to reach everyone. It's rather harsh to expect us to let everyone know about the Act, which is an impossible task. However, we are trying to make maximum people*

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<sup>51</sup> VGD stands for Vulnerable Group Development

*to involve with the process and making them aware of the Act. But I must say that the kind of expectation we had in terms of response from the people and make UP representative accountable for their work, needs time and it has to do with the mindset and environment they have been surrounded with, for so many years.” Says, Shirin Aktar, an NGO (Sharique) Worker during an interview session.*

However such cases were rare and didn't reflect on the overall situation of how people understand the application process. One of the main reasons I found that, there was lack of awareness among people and also no initiative from UP authority to make people known about such provision. There were 15 such cases reported in Horogram UP, where people submitted formal application to UP asking about information.

## Success Story (2)

### *An Informed Roksana Made the Difference*

Roksana Parvin daughter of Sadikul Islam lived in Aligonj Adarsha Gram under Horogram Union. She was a physically challenged girl. But that was never a barrier for her to continue her education. With support from her family, she continued her study to reach her dream, working for physically challenged people. She first heard about the Act few years back, when Sharique started working in her village. She came to know how RTI Act secured the right of an ordinary person, to claim their right. She noticed that, there was some projects of UP, in which Tube Wells were distributed in her village. There was a family in her village, where all the family members were physically challenged. They had to go a long way to collect water, since there was no tube-well near their house. Roksana was moved with the kind of struggle the family went through every day and was keen to help them. She consulted with Sharique about the procedure of application. She submitted a request, asking about the list of tube wells, which have been distributed in her area. She also requested to install a tube-well near that house. The UP Chairman called for a meeting and declared that, UP would install a tube-well when the next allocation comes in next phase. That's how a well informed Roksana made difference to them who needed the support. She now believes that with information, you can make changes in your and other's life.

In general the trend in Horogram was that 9 out of 10 people were found unaware of such provision where they could actually ask for information.

*A Senior Citizen in Kulpara under Horogram UP said "This is for the first time I heard something like this. I always thought that, these decisions are made on choices of UP representatives. I wonder, why people who are less deserving, receive SCA but my name was never included in the list despite the fact I am more vulnerable and aged than those. If I had this information before, I could have asked my member about it. However I even don't know how to submit an application"*

The table below shows 84% of the respondents, who have been participated in face to face interview or in FGD, have never heard about application process. Only 16% of the respondents heard about it.

**Table 5.11: Information about Application Procedure**

Information about Application Procedure	Percentage
Never heard about such provision	84%
Heard about application procedure	16%
Total	100%
Q: Do you have any idea about how to apply for information at UP?	

In general, there were some cases that were inspiring and gave the impression that, the culture of secrecy has started to change and people wanted to know what was happening around them. They were seeking for information and asking questions about things, which could bring changes in their lives. Still, the number of such cases was not anywhere near, to what was expected. Whatever successes we found in our study, was the contribution made by NGOs like Shachetan (Sharique), who worked within the community to make them aware of the Act and from such a small platform, we could not expect more than what I saw. I strongly believe, UP itself should take up responsibilities to make people aware of Act and process to seek more information, though question of availing resources will always be there.

### **Maria UP**

The situation was worse in Maria UP, comparing to Horogram. There was no single case identified, where a person filed a formal application for any kind of information. It was disappointing in a sense that, it has been almost three years, since the RTI Act was introduced. Neither the people's representatives nor common people were aware of application procedure on demand. Even there was no NGO or CBO working on the issue.

*“Actually, I heard about the Act in Chairman’s forum in Rajshahi. Though I have heard about it, I am not very clear about the kind of provisions it has, since I have not read it properly and also the copy of Act has not been sent to us from the central government yet. Since the Act was introduced, we have not received any orientation about the Act at Union level. In some Unions there are NGOs like Sharique, organizing workshop with people’s representatives and also with common people but they are not working in my Union. So, we are completely unaware about the application procedure or other provisions in the Act. However, if people have anything to know about UP, we always try to help them with whatever capacity we have in our Union.” Says, UP Chairman.*

In totality there was no sign of such practices where people were asking for information or submitting queries regarding services available in Maria UP.



#### 5.4. Access to information regarding services available at UP

As discussed earlier, under section 2 of the RTI Act 2009, any agency constituted as per the obligation of constitution of Bangladesh, is subject to disclose and provide information<sup>52</sup>. Similarly, section (78(1), 49, 57(2), 6(1), 6(7), 49, 5 and 6) has clearly pointed out, what a UP should be doing in terms of disclosing various kinds of information and organizing events, to get people involved in different kinds of services and activities in the UP<sup>53</sup>. Also, the introduction of Union Information & Service Centre (UISC), a UNDP supported programme in all the unions, brought a new dimension to service delivery at Union level. UPs also have various kind of services and support programme for the people, to offer in the form of SSNPs and Special Allocation as LGSP, ADP, TR etc. The following discussion had two broad categories to bring these issues together in connection with the analytical framework of the study. To start with, I had discussion on UISC, which would follow a separate discussion on Access to information about services.

##### 5.4.1. Union Information and Services Center (UISC)

As discussed in theoretical discussion, the UISC is a UNDP supported programme, with wide range services to offer. In this section of my discussion, I tried to look into the fact how UISCs have managed to provide range of information and services to people in these two UPs.

##### Horogram Union Information and Service Center (UISC)

As we found in the study that, the UISC in Horogram Union was located in UP Premise. There were number of services provided at UISC. The list included:



- Birth Registration Certificate
- Different kind of Forms
- Submission of online admission forms to various universities
- Government circulars and notices
- Result of public examinations
- Data entry to Population census
- Citizenship certificate

<sup>52</sup> See The Right to Information Act, 2009

<sup>53</sup> See The Local Government Ordinance (Union Parishad), 2009

- Computer Training
- Compose and Printing
- Scanning
- Photocopy
- Laminating
- Data entry
- Photography

We found that, the responses from the common people encouraging and there have been lots of people coming almost every day, during the time we conducted our study in Horogram UP. We had interview sessions with the recipients and 9 out of 10 seemed very happy with the way they have been delivering the services, which itself was remarkable.

*“This is the most happening thing in the UP today. You can see yourself and it is like any ordinary day. People usually come with heavy number. That’s because there wide range of services available at this center. But things were not like this even few years’ back, when we had to go the city to do things like photocopy, laminating, scanning and even to get admission form. Look how different it is now and we get all the services here in the UP, saves both time and money.” Says, A College Student on UISC.*

During interview sessions with different stakeholders’, one thing I found that most of the people came to UISC to get two basic services Birth Registration and Citizen’s Certificate. The good thing about these services was that they didn’t have to wait long to get either of these services.

*A village farmer on UISC said “Look son, I’m now 50. I am a farmer. This is a different place altogether. There was time, when we had to wait for a long time to get a certificate. I can remember many years back, when I needed my Citizenship Certificate I had to wait for two weeks. But today I just came and spend half an hour and I got the certificate. It has made things easier for an ordinary person like me and if you ask any other person, who is coming here today they will agree with me.”*

The UISCs in Horogram UP was run by young entrepreneurs and one of them was female. They were basically not paid from the UP but they earn from the services they were providing at UISCs. However, the level of motivation was found very high among entrepreneurs.

*Female Entrepreneurs of Horogram UISC said “I’m very happy with the fact that, we got an opportunity to be connected with so many people. I am also earning money with which I can*

*support my family and continue my education as well. UISC is benefiting not only the recipients of services, but also contributing to entrepreneurs both financially and skill wise.”*

In general, the UISC in Horogram UP was running successfully and all the relevant information about the services provided in the UISC was clearly explained and delivered.

### **Maria UP**

Maria UP, on the other hand, just didn't have the structure in place, to make these services accessible to people. They shared their office with the Municipality. The supply of electricity was also a point to worry. Since everything was computerized and when they did have electricity, people had to wait a long time to get the services. In spite of that, UISC was performing comparatively well than other services they provide at UP.

*UISC has gotten good responses from people, as we are giving them one stop service and the services we are providing them are quick and easily accessible.” An enthusiastic UISC entrepreneur, said.*

There were also people in place to deliver services, which were offered at UISC. The UISC provided a list of services that include:

- Birth registration certificate
- Different kind of forms
- Result of public examinations
- Data entry to population census
- Citizenship certificate
- Compose and printing
- Scanning
- Photocopy
- Laminating

During our visit, what we noticed that, most of the people came to UP for different kind of certificates and they got it very quickly and without any hassle. The UP Chairman had to come from Rajshahi, which was 35 kilometers from UP. However, he made sure that he came regularly to UP. However, while discussion with group of people and also from our own observation, we found that UISC was not always followed a fixed opening and closing hours.

A tea stall owner said “UISC is definitely doing good work in UP. However, sometimes they open the office late and we have to wait for a long time. That’s because, our Chairman, though he is from my Union, shifted to Rajshahi and he drives all the way from Rajshahi to Maria to attend the office. It’s not always possible for him to attend the office on time. That’s where people working here take the opportunity to come late and even close early, just after he leaves the office. Still this center is something, which made things easy for us to get various kinds of services within short time”.

The overall impressions from respondents were satisfactory. However, if the infrastructure was favorable in Maria Union Parishad, it would have performed even better than what they were doing at the moment.

### 5.4.2. Access to Information about Services

#### 5.4.2.1. Citizen Charter

As discussed earlier, each UP should have a Citizen Charter, including the list of services and information regarding various services and selection criteria for all the SSNPs, run by the UP.

#### Horogram UP

In Horogram UP, there was a Citizen Charter, including all kinds of information, which was easily accessible in UP. Besides, there was the list of services included name of services, target group, assigned persons for each services, time and place of delivery of services.

**Table NO 5.12: Services Provided & Responsible Persons at UP**

সেবার নাম	সেবা প্রদাতা	সেবা প্রদানকারী কর্মস্বতা	সেবা প্রদানের সময় ব্যাপ	সেবা প্রদানের জায়গা	সেবা প্রদানের স্থান
জন্ম ও মৃত্যু নিবন্ধন ও মরদ পত্র প্রদান	সকলে জনগন	ইউ.পি চেয়ারম্যান ও সচিব	সকাল ৯টা- বিকাল ৫টা	১৮ বছরের উর্ধ্ব, ৫৫টা	ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ
ডি. জি. ডি ডি. জি. এফ ন্যূনতম ডাটা নির্ধারিত/আসী পরিত্যক্তা ডাটা মাতৃকালীন কাজ জোগাড়ের ও সুবিধার্থে	দরিদ্র হত দরিদ্র ও দুর্ভিহ জনগন	ইউ.পি চেয়ারম্যান ও মেম্বর	..	নাই	ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ
নাগরিক চারিত্রিক প্রমাণপত্র সহ বিভিন্ন সনদ পত্র	সকলে জনগন	ইউ.পি চেয়ারম্যান ও মেম্বর	সকাল ৯টা- বিকাল ৫টা	নাই	ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ
গ্রাম আদালত	সকলে জনগন	ইউ.পি চেয়ারম্যান ও মেম্বর	বৃহসপতিবার	মেডানী গ্রাম জৈজাইয়া	ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ
বিচার আদালত	সকলে জনগন	ইউ.পি চেয়ারম্যান ও মেম্বর	নাই	নাই	ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ
কৃষি বিষয়ে কারিগরী পরামর্শ ও পরামর্শ প্রদান	সকলে জনগন	উপ চেয়ারম্যান/কৃষি কর্মস্বতা	বৃহসপতিবার	নাই	ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ
আসী সেবা ও পরামর্শ প্রদান	সকলে জনগন	সকলে জনগন/পরিষদ	সকাল ৯টা- বিকাল ৫টা	নাই	ইউ.পি চেয়ারম্যান ও মেম্বর
নিজস্ব গ্রীক ও খেলিও গ্রুপ পরামর্শ	০-৫ বছর বয়সের শিশু	সকলে জনগন/পরিষদ	সকাল ৯টা- বিকাল ৫টা	নাই	ইউ.পি চেয়ারম্যান ও মেম্বর
পরিষদ পরিষদে কার্যক্রমের পরিষদ/পরিষদ	সকলে জনগন	ইউ.পি চেয়ারম্যান ও মেম্বর	সকাল ৯টা- বিকাল ৫টা	নাই	ইউ.পি চেয়ারম্যান ও মেম্বর
পরিষদ পরিষদে কার্যক্রমের পরিষদ/পরিষদ	সকলে জনগন	ইউ.পি চেয়ারম্যান ও মেম্বর	সকাল ৯টা- বিকাল ৫টা	নাই	ইউ.পি চেয়ারম্যান ও মেম্বর
পরিষদ পরিষদে কার্যক্রমের পরিষদ/পরিষদ	সকলে জনগন	ইউ.পি চেয়ারম্যান ও মেম্বর	সকাল ৯টা- বিকাল ৫টা	নাই	ইউ.পি চেয়ারম্যান ও মেম্বর

The general impression in Horogram UP was that, the UP maintained transparency in disclosing the list of services and also necessary information related to those services.

*“You can see all the information, what kind of services we provide, who is responsible for what, when to arrive, we try to display almost everything here. We understand the importance of information and the person who is coming from a long way to get service from here, will not be disappointed and I believe that the kind of arrangement we have now at Union level, is capable of meeting the expectation of the people” UP Chairman of Horogram. Said.*

### **Maria UP**

There was no information displayed about kind of services available in UP. However, that didn't mean that they were not providing any services in the UP. The UP was involved in providing certificate, forms, trade license, tax collection, Salish (Dispute settlement) and other activities. However, I wonder how a person would know what kind of services the UP was providing and who s/he should ask about these services, when no information was disclosed.

*A woman during FGD session said “I have never been to UP. Actually, I have no idea what is happening there. There is a woman member in my ward and she never comes here. Normally, when we have some issues like settlement of disputes within the family or with neighbor, we went to Chairman's house which is not far away from ours and he settles the issue. I am even not sure what to expect from Union Parishad.”*

What we found in the study was that, there was no Citizen Charter prepared at Maria UP. Most of the representatives we interviewed were unaware of such provision. Basically, the main problem with UP representatives was lack of understanding about how to bring more people closer to the services they provide. They had no idea of legal provisions and laws, that gave them the guideline on how to respond to things like Citizen Charter or basic service provisions they were to provide at UP.

#### **5.4.2.2. Open Budget session and Ward level Meeting**

According to Local Ordinance (UP) Act, 2009, each Union Parishad should hold an Open Budget session in each year, to make budget accessible to people and ensure people's participation in the process. The demands, that come from ward meeting are sent to UP and then it goes through scrutiny. A list of tentative projects is finalized for public sharing. In Horogram UP, I found them very consistent about organizing Open Budget session. They have been organizing Open Budget Sessions for the last three consecutive years.

**Table 5.13 : Information on Ward Level Meeting (Horogram UP)**

ক্রমিক নং	অংশগ্রহণমূলক পরিবেশনের তারিখ	জনগোষ্ঠীকে অবহিত করা হয়েছিল ? (মাইকিং/আমন্ত্রণ পত্র/চাক পিটিয়ে/ব্যক্তিগত যোগাযোগ/সিফলেট বিতরণ)	অংশগ্রহণ মূলক পরিবেশনে নর মেয়াদ	অংশগ্রহণকারী		জনগোষ্ঠীর প্রস্তাবিত প্রকল্পের সংখ্যা	অগ্রাধিকার প্রাপ্ত প্রকল্পের সংখ্যা		সভার উপস্থি তি তথ্য (হ্যা ন)
				পুরুষ	মহিলা		পুরুষ	মহিলা	
১	২০/৪/১২ইং	মাইকিং ও আমন্ত্রণ পত্র	১ দিন	৮০	১২০	৫	০	০	হ্যা
২	২১/৪/১২ইং	মাইকিং ও আমন্ত্রণ পত্র	১ দিন	৭০	১১০	৫	০	০	হ্যা
৩	২২/৪/১২ইং	মাইকিং ও আমন্ত্রণ পত্র	১ দিন	৫০	১০০	৫	০	০	হ্যা
৪	২৩/৪/১২ইং	মাইকিং ও আমন্ত্রণ পত্র	১ দিন	৬০	১২০	৫	০	০	হ্যা
৫	২৪/৪/১২ইং	মাইকিং ও আমন্ত্রণ পত্র	১ দিন	৬০	১০৫	৫	০	০	হ্যা
৬	২৫/৪/১২ইং	মাইকিং ও আমন্ত্রণ পত্র	১ দিন	৬০	১০০	৫	০	০	হ্যা
৭	২৬/৪/১২ইং	মাইকিং ও আমন্ত্রণ পত্র	১ দিন	৫০	১২০	৫	০	০	হ্যা
৮	২৭/৪/১২ইং	মাইকিং ও আমন্ত্রণ পত্র	১ দিন	৭৫	১০০	৫	০	০	হ্যা
৯	২৮/৪/১২ইং	মাইকিং ও আমন্ত্রণ পত্র	১ দিন	৮০	১১০	৫	০	০	হ্যা

For the year 2012-2013, apart from the common people of Horogram UP, most of the government officials from Union and Upazila level, NGO workers, members from civil society, Donor's representative were present in the Open Budget meeting. They usually followed a set of procedures in the budget making process.

- The initial demands came from the people in the ward planning meeting. The dates of ward planning meeting for each ward was decided in UP meeting. Common people from each ward were sent invitation to participate in the event. Each planning meeting had participants ranging from 150 to 200. The day long discussion had various issues and demands from each ward, which they took note and all the demands from each of wards were gathered in UP for scrutiny.
- The UP formed a committee with all the members of the UP and also local elites, who sat and worked on a concise list.
- Then they called for an Open Budget meeting, where all the members in the UP were invited to see the list of projects, that have being short listed. There was scope for open discussion about any project, which was not being selected and UP had to explain each of such cases. The UP also came with inclusion of projects, which the participants thought important in a particular context. With all the necessary arrangements made in the session, the budget was approved in presence of all the members, who participated in the session.
- The revised budget was then sent to Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) for his approval. Once the approval was made, the UP hanged it on the display board known as Budget in the entrance of the UP premises, so that people could see the final outlook of the budget.

The total number of respondents for this particular question was 34, as this was asked during Face to Face Interview as well as in the FGDs we conducted. 15 of them were from Face to Face

Interview and 19 of them were from FGD. During FGD and interview sessions with different stakeholders around 41% of the respondents were found aware of the Open budget.

*“What I liked about this is, now I can discuss issues of my area and ask questions to UP representatives if, I see any inconsistency of projects that have been taken with the projects we have submitted. In the past, it was Chairman and members who decided the projects and there was no participation of a common man. But now, things have changed and people can actually ask questions whenever they find irregularities” A respondent during an interview session at UP, said.*

Among those, who were aware of Open Budget, 43% of them actually participated in the open budget session for the year 2012-2013.

<b>Table No 5.14: Information about Open Budget ( General)</b>			
<b>People’s Take on Open Budget</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Total</b>
Have you heard about Open Budget?	14 (41%)	20(53%)	34(100%)
If yes, then did you participate in the session?	6 (43%)	8 (57%)	14 (100%)

*A Rickshaw Puller, during an interview session on Open Budget said “I have attended Open Budget Session twice. Last year I was told to attend the meeting by the member of my ward. That time I didn’t know why I was asked to participate, but this year I knew why I was participating. It was quite interesting because you can actually see what is happening in your area. You can also express your opinion and the good part is, there are many people coming together and the entire event is like celebrating a festival together.” A Rickshaw Puller during an interview session,said*

The table below shows that, comparing to female respondents, male members were found more aware of Open Budget. 50% of the male respondents have heard about Open budget and 40% among them actually participated in the budget session this year.

<b>Table No 5.15: Information about Open Budget ( Male)</b>			
<b>People’s Take on Open Budget</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Total</b>
Have you heard about Open Budget?	10 (50%)	10 (50%)	20(100%)
If yes, then did you participate in the session?	4 (40%)	6 (60%)	10 (100%)

On the other hand, 28% of the female respondents were aware of open budget. 50% among them have actually attended this year’s open budget session.

<b>Table No 5.16: Information about Open Budget ( Female)</b>			
<b>People's Take on Open Budget</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Total</b>
Have you heard about Open Budget?	4 (28%)	10 (72%)	10 (100%)
If yes, then did you participate in the session?	2(50%)	2(50%)	4 (100%)

*“Both the heads of the leading political parties are females but it is such a shame for us that, we live in a society, where female members are still restricted to go out and claim their rights. I am not blaming females for that but the male members of the family have the feeling that, women should be doing the household works only. But things are changing now. Women are involving with various saving schemes with NGOs and they are also aware of lot of other things as well. Sharique is one of those programmes, which build awareness on open budget. I participated this year's Open budget meeting, when I was told about it. I felt very happy, that I went there and I could see what was happening. I shared my experiences with other members of my village and I believe, more female members will be attending next year's open budget meeting.”* A Female Participant in Horogram UP, said.

Open budget session gives an overview of the plan, that a UP is going to implement in this financial year and it is the reflection of demands, which came from people at grass root level. It gives an indication, how people perceive Open Budget as medium to access to information about the activities, UP takes in each financial year. As I found that, comparing to female members, male members are better informed, due to greater mobility and socio-cultural practices in the rural part of the country. However, the good part was that, people were not unaware of a concept, which was relatively new and when good number of people were attending in an event like this was indeed satisfactory. In totality, the study found that, people's access to information in the parameter of how they accept open budget and their participation in the entire process, was very convincing.

### **Maria UP**

In Maria UP, they have organized Open Budget session for the first time this year. However, ward level meeting at ward level, was not organized on a regular basis. This gave an indication that, the demands that were presented in Open Budget were discussed with common people. The projects were decided mostly on the basis of recommendations made by UP representatives. Most of the people were unaware of what was included in the budget or what specific projects have been approved in the budget. The total number of respondents for this particular question



was 34, as this was asked during Face to Face Interview as well as in the FGDs we conducted. 15 of them were from Face to Face Interview and 19 of them were from FGD.

<b>Table No 5.17: Information about Open Budget ( General )</b>			
<b>People's Take on Open Budget</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Total</b>
Have you heard about Open Budget?	6 (18%)	28 (82%)	34 (100%)
If yes, then did you participate in the session?	3 (50%)	3(50%)	6(100%)

The table here shows that only 18% of the total respondents in Maria UP have heard about Open budget, among which 50% of them attended the Open Budget session this year.

<b>Table No 5.18: Information about Open Budget ( Male )</b>			
<b>People's Take on Open Budget</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Total</b>
Have you heard about Open Budget?	4 (28%)	10 (72%)	14 (100%)
If yes, then did you participate in the session?	3 (75%)	1(25%)	6(100%)

The table here shows that, comparing to female respondents, male respondents were slightly in better position in terms of information about Open Budget Session. 28% of the respondent said that, they have heard about it and 75% of them actually attended this year's Open Budget session. Whereas, comparing to male respondents, I found female respondents mostly unaware of Open Budget and only 14% of them were found aware of that.

<b>Table No 5.19: Information about Open Budget ( Female )</b>			
<b>People's Take on Open Budget</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Total</b>
Have you heard about Open Budget?	2 (14%)	12 (86%)	14 (100%)
If yes, then did you participate in the session?	1 (50%)	1(50%)	2(100%)

The projects in most of cases were determined by the members themselves. Then projects were finalized on priority basis. Despite of the fact that, there was a big arrangement for this year's budget and many (UNO and other GLA representatives, businessmen etc) participated in the event, the idea of Open budget was, somehow missed out. Most of the people, who we interviewed and had discussion with either didn't attend the event or if attended, didn't understand the concept. What we understood from the study that, Open budget needed time in Maria UP to get popular among people and for that, UP needs to strengthen their activities at grass-root level. Ward meeting should be organized regularly and they should involve people in the process so that, they feel encouraged about the practices. In general, the process that was followed was faulty, since the demands were not coming from the community and approved without any real explanation and bargaining. The question of transparency in terms of making information about process of selecting projects was not addressed in Maria UP.

### 5.4.2.3. Social Safety Net Programme (SSNPs)

Referring back to my analytical framework, one of the operational measures was to see, how people have access to information regarding services and whether information regarding the criteria of selection and list of beneficiaries were disseminated among common people. The selection and distribution of cards have always been questioned in Bangladesh. Often, there were cases found of misappropriation during the distribution of Cards in the Newspapers.<sup>54</sup> In my study, I tried to look onto the status of SSNP in terms of information about these services and access of common people to information about these services.

#### Horogram UP

The initial impression about the situation in Horogram UP was encouraging. During the study, I found that, most of the people we interviewed in Horogram UP were aware of SSNP, not exactly as SSNP but as Cards and allowances given to people of different target groups. Most popular among these programmes were VGD, VGF and Allowance for widows and people with physical disabilities. However, this was not an indication that, they had a clear understanding of the process and criteria used in selecting beneficiaries. In Horogram UP, they had selection committees for SSNPs, comprising of a school teacher, UP representative and local elites from each ward. The list of beneficiaries was prepared on the basis of recommendations made by each committee and the final decision for approval was made in the UP meeting.

**Table No 5.20: Information about SSNPs**

এক নজরে সামাজিক নিরাপত্তাভোগীর সংখ্যা	
# ভিজি ডি	১০০ জন
# বয়স্ক ভাতা	৫১১ জন
# বিধবা ভাতা	২৩২ জন
# প্রতিবন্ধী ভাতা	৫১ জন
# ভি জি এফ	বরাদ্দ অনুযায়ী

In spite of the fact that, there was no information board on criteria for selection of beneficiaries, they maintained a record of how many people received support under each programme, which itself was appreciating. The Table here shows the number of beneficiaries, received support under SSNPs this year in Horogram UP.

However, there was dissatisfaction among people, not being selected as beneficiaries because of political identity or lacking information about the procedure and criteria of selection.

<sup>54</sup> See The Daily Prothom Alo Archive- for detail- April (9, 13, 18, 21), May (9), June (3), July (5, 7,8) August ( 3, 4), 2012, [www.prothom-alo.com](http://www.prothom-alo.com)

*“Frankly speaking, these lists of beneficiaries for various programmes are decided to a large extent on the basis of preferences, where members and Chairman look for people who they consider their vote bank. I am not denying completely that, there are real beneficiaries who actually need such support but a section of each list is filled up by people of their choices.”* A Rickshaw Puller who came to collect food grain (VGD) for his neighbor, expressed.

I received similar kind of response during another FGD session in Kulpara under Horogram UP.

*“There was an election candidate who competed for the post of Chairman in the last UP election. That was the reason, why our village is completely ignored from all services and facilities.”* A woman respondent from Kulpara under Horogram UP, said.

Even I attended one of the VGD distribution session and had the impression that most of the people did not actually have an idea how much food grains they should have got in each installment since, it varied time to time that’s what most of the recipients complained about.

*A VGD Card recipient in Horogram UP said “I don’t know how much food grain I will get this time as it varies. Last time I got 23kg but this time I don’t know, people are saying that they will give us 19 kg. Everything is decided by them but whatever I’m getting is good for me because I can’t work now and my children are not staying with me anymore.”*

Despite the fact that, there were contradictions on issues like list of beneficiaries, quantity of food grains, inadequate or no information about the criteria for selection of beneficiaries, the thing that was encouraging that Horogram UP managed to form committees for the different SSNPs, something exemplary, which attempted to start a transparent system on board. Being in an environment of corruption and malpractices, it needs time to transform a system into a people centric and a transparent governing system.

### **Maria UP**

In the study, I found Maria UP had a weak system on Board. There was neither information about the selection criteria nor they had a planned process to select beneficiaries. The beneficiaries were selected on the basis of recommendations from local representatives and local elites, not through a formal procedure, rather informally. As far as the record management is concerned, it was not managed properly in terms of keeping all the records of lists of beneficiaries.

*“We are struggling with the infrastructure here. We don’t have enough space in the UP. Half of our place is occupied by Pourashava and it is difficult to work in this environment, when we are in continuous pressure from outside. We have these information but I can’t give it right now because it is so disorganized” UP secretary on SSNP lists, said.*

People in general had a very limited or no information about how SSNPs were operating and who and how much they were entitled to receive.

*“Actually, most of the members whether male or female members of UP spend lot of money during election and they have their own people who they usually distribute cards to.” A woman member during a FGD in Hoja under Maria UP, said.*

The process of selection was not clear to most of the people and there was no initiative from the UP to let people aware of these kinds of services. That’s why, people who were in real need of such allowance, sometimes hesitate to ask about it.

*“My mother-in-law is an old woman and she even couldn’t walk properly. I came to know that, there is an allowance for Elderly people run by the Government through UP. But I have never been to UP. The only person I knew was the female member of our ward, who I asked to include her in the list. She got angry with me and replied harshly that, she now has to sell her land to give my mother- in-law such support. I was very disappointed and till now I never spoke her about it.” A woman respondent during a FGD session in Hoja, responded.*

In general, people were not well informed about SSNPs and there was not too much information for the people and their access to information regarding SSNPs, which were denied in Maria UP.

#### **5.4.2.4. Information about Special Fund and Donation**

Often, Union Parishad receives special allocation under TR, Annual Development Program, Local Government Support Program and thematic funding from donors. These funds usually come from central government for development projects at Union level. There is also thematic funding, for example, Sharique provides funds for Local Governance Programmes, Swiss Red Cross and DASCOH provides funds for WATSAN projects.

#### **Horogram UP**

In Horogram UP, we found display board, which had all the information about funds they received under different projects. The secondary documents we collected in the study revealed that, the Horogram UP received special allocation from LGSP, ADP, TR and also some special

Allocation from the central government. They also received funds from SDC, under Sharique programme. But what really impressed us about Horogram UP was that, they kept records of the funds they received, from each sources and also published them in their Annual Progress Report. They also displayed project information on display board. They had open budget board, where income from various sources was clearly mentioned. However, there was debate among the people on how certain kind of funds like TR and special allocation received from MP was distributed and misappropriated.

*“You can’t be fair all the time. There are allocations that come with certain guidelines. There was an incident, when MP sent some allocation and he wanted to distribute it through people nominated by him. Now, when such things happen, we can’t do anything about it and people may get wrong messages from this as well.”* Chairman of Horogram UP, said.

In general, there was enough information about the allocation, that has been coming to Horogram UP. However, did the common person really bother about such allocations or was there any real effort from UP to make people aware of such funds, I doubt.

### **Maria UP**

Maria UP, on other hand, had no such special allocation, except funds from LGSP, TR and ADP. Interesting fact about Durgapur Upazila was that, all the UP Chairmen of this Upazila were from opposition but the Chairman of Upazila, Pourashava (Municipalpty) and the MPs were from the ruling party. We found that, there was no special allocation from the MP. Though there was record of all the allocation received from different sources, there was no sign of disclosure of such information to public. As far as common people were concerned, we found that most of them were completely unaware of such funds or any other allocation coming to their UP.

### **5.5. Conclusion**

The objective of this chapter was to see, how RTI Act was implemented in terms of achieving policy objectives in both the UPs. In this chapter, I have discussed how the implementation of RTI Act was taken place in terms operational indicators, set under the analytical framework. The discussion has clearly brought the point of how RTI Act has been performed in both the UPs. Comparing to Maria UP, Horogram UP performed well in achieving the objectives of RTI Act. In totality, it can be said that, the Horogram UP has performed exactly the way it should have been, but it performed reasonably well and could be considered as a Successful Case of implementation of RTI at the UP level. Maria UP, on the other hand, didn’t manage to stand up

to the level of expectations set under the Act and it failed to achieve policy objectives. There were factors that contributed or affected the performance of RTI Act in the both the cases. The discussion in the following chapter tried to bring out those points with regard to the hypotheses set under the analytical framework.

## **6. CHAPTER SIX: Finding and Discussion: Factors influencing implementation performance of RTI Act.**

### **6.1. Introduction**

The discussion in the previous Chapter gave an overall idea on how the RTI Act has been implemented and how well implementation was taken place in both the UPs. It could be noticed that, there were various factors came during the discussion, which caused the variation in performance between two UPs. There was clear distinction between these two cases in terms of operational measures that have been set for this particular study. Here, in this part of the thesis, I tried to build up the casual relationship between implementation performance and factors that influence implementation performance, as found in my analytical framework. The discussion here followed fixed strategy where discussion was made under set variables and attempts were made to build relationship between these variables and implementation performance in the perspective of individual cases.

### **6.2. Policy Standards and Objectives**

Referring back to Theoretical Framework, Policy Standards and Objectives has been operationalized as clarity on understanding of overall goals and objectives of RTI Act. Here the focus was to address, how clearly UP representatives and also common people and various stakeholders of the both the Unions understood objectives of RTI Act, to ensure free flow of information and their right to access to information.

As mentioned in the earlier discussion, the main objective of the RTI Act was to ensure free flow and easy access to information, so that transparency and accountability was ensured. The question that I was trying to get an answer at this point of my study - did people who work in Union Parishad have the understanding of their role, to make information accessible to people and put a transparent system on board.

Now refereeing back to previous Chapter, where we found that Horogram UP maintained a fair amount of transparency, by keeping all the necessary records, timely publishing the reports, maintaining display boards with necessary information disclosed, which ensured people's open access to information.

One the other hand, Maria UP had a weak record management system. There was no regular and timely publication of reports. There was hardly any display board in the UP and people had no access to information, regarding various kinds of services and allocations. In totality, Maria UP had performed very low since it failed to make information accessible and easily available to people.

When it comes to Horogram UP, it performed exceedingly well in making information accessible to people and building relatively transparent system of operation. Whether the variation of these two cases, had to do with understanding of different stakeholders about the Act, something I tried to expose in the following discussion. This part of the discussion, I tried to reveal to what extent my hypothesis *'successful implementation depends on clarity of understanding the goals of the policy at both implementer's and recipient's end and more they are clear about it better the possibility of implementation success'* was justified in the study.

### **6.2.1. Information about the RTI Act 2009**

Here, I tried to understand in the study was that, whether people (UP representatives, and people at community level) were aware of the Act and where did they get the information from. The discussion was an attempt to find out the level of understanding of different stakeholders about the policy.

#### **6.2.1.1. Local Representatives**

A UP consists of 13 people<sup>55</sup>, which include a Chairman, 9 male members and 3 female members. I have interviewed 10 local government representatives, 5 from each UP, which include both the Chairmen, 3 male and 1 female UP member from both the UPs.

*UP Chairman of Horogram said "All the members of my UP are aware of the Act. We attended a training session, organized by Sharique, where we came to know about the Act and I think it has opened up our understanding about service delivery and we now try to make information accessible for the people as much as we can."*

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<sup>55</sup> A UP has a 13 members committee headed by a Chairman who is directly elected through election. There are 9 members from each of the 9 wards in a Union. There are three female members, one member for every 3 wards.



<b>Table No 6.1: Information about RTI Act (Local Representative)</b>		
	<b>Horogram UP</b>	<b>Maria UP</b>
<b>Chairman</b>	1	1
Male UP Member	3	0
Female UP Member	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>

Question: Have you heard about the Act?

The table shows that, all the local representatives who have been interviewed, have heard about the Act in Horogram UP. However, none of the UP representatives except UP Chairman, have heard about the Act in Maria UP.

*“I haven’t heard about such policy as we haven’t received any instruction from central government neither there was any efforts made from UZP or even NGOs to make us aware of that.”* A UP member of Maria UP, said.

#### 6.2.1.2. Community People

The study found that, a large number of people in both the UPs, were unaware of the Act. In Horogram UP, around 40% of the male respondents and 28% of the female respondents were aware of the policy.

<b>Table No 6.2: Information about RTI Act (Male)</b>		
<b>Have you heard about Act?</b>	<b>Horogram UP</b>	<b>Maria UP</b>
Yes	8 (40%)	2 (10%)
No	12 (60%)	18 (90%)
Total	20 (100%)	20 (100%)

Question: Have you heard about the RTI Act?

On the other hand, only 10% of the respondents in Maria UP were found aware of the Act. There was no female respondent, who heard about the policy.

<b>Table No 6.3: Information about RTI Act (Female)</b>		
<b>Have you heard about Act?</b>	<b>Horogram UP</b>	<b>Maria UP</b>
Yes	4 (28%)	0 (0%)
No	10 (72)	14 (100%)
Total	20 (100%)	20 (100)

Question: Have you heard about the RTI Act?

During the conversation with the common people, we found that, there was no initiative by the UP or any other platform to make people aware of the Act.

*“I am very sure that, even those, who are responsible for providing information, are not aware of such act. I think our UP is very outdated and also had structural problem which they hardly get out of from.”* A college student in Maria UP, said.

When we asked them about the sources, we found that 58% of the respondents in Horogram, who heard about RTI from NGOs (Sharique). 34% of the respondents have heard about it from either local representatives or from friends and relatives. In Maria, those who were aware of the Act, came to know about it from TV/Newspaper or from friends.

**Table 6.4: Sources of Information**

<i>Sources of Information</i>	<i>Horogram UP</i>	<i>Maria UP</i>
Local Representatives	17%	0%
Friends and Neighbours	17%	50%
TV/ Newspaper	8%	50%
NGOs	58%	0%
Total	100%	100%
<b>Question</b>	Where did you learn about RTI From?	

### **6.2.1.3. Understanding about policy objective of RTI Act**

As mentioned in the theoretical discussion, it is very important that the policy goal is understood by both UP representatives and common people. In general, Horogram UP was found better informed about the policy. As seen in the earlier chapter, the RTI act was better implemented in Horogram UP. What we understood from our observation and various sessions with the Local representatives was that, they had a clear understanding about the Act. The effort they made to involve people in practices like Open Budget Meeting, Ward Meeting, Standing committees, UDCC meeting etc., gave an indication that, the objective of the RTI Act to bring transparency through free flow and easily accessible information, was fulfilled to great extent. One of the main reasons behind that was, the way the local representatives perceived RTI, as an important element in their daily operation. The willingness to take the policy on RTI ahead and understanding of its objective did not come suddenly, it gradually developed and to make them involved in the process, Sharique played a big role. They spent years with Horogram UP to make them understand, how UP should function. They introduce them, with the goal of RTI, so that they had a clear understanding on, why they should do certain things and how they could make things pro-people and transparent.

*UP Chairman of Horogram said "It is good to be open about your work and that makes things easier for you. People know what you are doing. We don't need to explain, why certain things do not happen, the way people sometimes want it to be. We work within our limitations- with lack of financial resources and structural limitations. The more you learn how to make the best use of these resources by involving your stakeholders, better the possibility of UP to function well."*

Maria UP, on the other hand, had no idea about the Act. It clearly reflected on the kind of arrangements they had, regarding preserving and disseminating information, which was discussed in the previous chapter. The main reason, behind poor understanding about the Act, was non-existence of programme like Sharique or initiatives from the Central Government, which could build the capacity of local representatives to understand the Act. In totality, there was lacking real efforts to make local representatives aware of the Act. Also, there was no role clarity among local representatives, which influenced poor performance of implementation of the RTI Act, in Maria UP.

Now coming back to the hypothesis '*Implementation Performance depends on how clearly people both at implementation and recipient's end understand policy goals*', the study found that, it was rightly justified with both the cases. In one hand, there was successful implementation of RTI Act in Horogram UP due to due to clarity on understanding policy objectives and standards and on the other hand, lack of understanding of policy objectives and standards resulted in implementation failure of RTI Act in Maria UP.

### **6.2.2. Implementation Structure**

Going back to the theoretical discussion, we found that, implementation structure, in terms of the level of cooperation and commitment among agencies, actors, intuitions and interest groups, has an influence implementation performance of a Policy. Here in the study, we tried to understand, to what extent the level of commitment and co-operation within UP and also outside UP structure had an influence on the implementation of RTI Act.

To measure commitment, I tried to see how regular were UP representatives, coming to UP and attending at various events and meetings; involvement of UP in the Ward level meeting or standing Committee meeting; feedback received from interview session from common people on services they received and availability of information from UP representatives.

To measure cooperation, I tried to explore, how those who were working within UP like Secretary and Entrepreneurs at UISCs, were helping each other. I also tried to see the cooperation between UP and Upazila, in terms of receiving special grants and allocation.

### **Horogram UP**

In the study, I found Harogram UP, less conflicting and there was better cohesion among UP members and officials, working within the UP (Secretary and Entrepreneurs) and also with Upazila (UNO, UZC) and other actors like NGOs, CBOs, and Civil Society.

I interviewed three male and one female UP representatives during my study. I found them very regular and well informed about, how UP functions and their roles in UP. They maintained a very good relationship with the Chairman and their political differences never came between their way of operation and working relationship among each other. The attendance register showed that, most of members were present in all the meetings organized at UP. The Standing Committees were operating well, with minutes of each meeting were recorded and preserved in UP database (Mostly hardcopies). As discussed in the earlier Chapter, the Ward Planning Meeting Budget meeting were conducted properly and participation of people in these meeting were satisfactory. However, there was lack of information about the appeal procedure and information on demand, something the UP should work in the future, to make the RTI Act more people centric. In totality, all the indicators showed strong commitment among UP representatives towards RTI Act and better functioning of UP, in a transparent manner.

On the Other hand, there was a strong involvement of NGOs like Sharique, as a facilitation partner, in Horogram UP. Sharique has been working with UP in Rajshahi region for many years. Horogram UP received financial and facilitation support from Sharique. We also found that, Sharique has not only been working on capacity building of UP representatives, but also engaged with the community, to make them understand role and responsibilities of UP. One of the main reasons, why open budget has become a popular concept in Horogram UP, was the fact that, Sharique has been working with Horogram UP for the last few years and as a facilitation partner, they have been trying hard to institutionalize open budget into their governing practices. They have managed to bring that excitement among people and also motivated both UP representatives and common people, to understand the importance of such practice. Apart from that, RTI has been one of the thematic areas, where Sharique has been working both at the national and local level. They also conducted sessions on RTI at community level to make people understand the key elements of the policy.

### ***Success Story (3)***

#### ***Sharique Made It Possible for James to Discover His Right to Information***

*James Sheikh, a young 25 year's old man, lived in Baganpara near Aligonj under Horogram UP. He was a service holder and a socially aware citizen. One day, he realized that, there was a road construction work going on in his area. But, he was not convinced with the way it was taken place. He felt that, those, who were in charge of the work, did not have the capacity to work efficiently. He went to the UP to ask about it. But he returned with no information, as the UP didn't take his query very seriously. By the meantime, he met Sharin Akter, a worker from Sharique, who introduced him with the RTI Act. He was amazed with the fact that, there was a policy, which could make big difference in the service delivery approach at UP level. He learned about, how to submit an appeal for such information to the UP. He filed an application to UP, asking about the programme. He came to know that, it was a 100 days programme. The information RTI gave him the confidence. Now, if he needs any information from UP or any other public authority, he knows that, the RTI Act has given him the authority to ask for it. He even added that, more people should be aware of the policy. This could make positive change in the lives of common people.*

I also found out that, Open Budget sessions were represented by different actors and institutions at UP level. Higher officials from UZP including UNO and also civil society representatives were present in the open budget session. Apart from Open budget session, they were also found known about the policy, as many of them participated in the training sessions, organized by Sharique on various issues on Local Governance. UDCC meeting was also well participated by people of different groups which included, GLAs, UP representatives, NGOs, Business Community and Civil Society. It was quite clear that, there was strong commitment among various actors and institutions

We also found that, UP office maintained office hour properly. It was even remained open after its regular working hours, especially during distribution of VGD/VGF Cards. All the relevant files and documents were found properly managed and had both soft and hard copy of important document like list of beneficiaries, birth registration record, meeting minutes, name and list of standing committees, proceeding of different meetings and information about budget and different kinds of allocation and project detail. This reflects a strong level of commitment

among UP Secretary and Entrepreneurs, who were working at UISC, towards UP to implement RTI Act.

*“UP Secretary is a key person if he fails to respond, the entire system collapse. He is the one, keeping all the records and important documents. Whenever we need his support, he is always there to help us. I heard about UPs, where Chairman doesn’t have good working relationship with Secretary, which makes things very difficult for them to function. But the good thing about my UP is that, I have a very good support system and a lot of credit should go to him, as he performed very efficiently and make it possible for us to try different things and do them successfully.”* UP Chairman of Horogram, said.

Even with UISCs, we found that, both the entrepreneurs were intelligent and knew their work very well. It was already mentioned earlier that, these entrepreneurs do not receive any salary from the UP and they had to earn from the income of UISC. The study found that, they were earning at least 5000 BDT per month on an average, which was a good amount of money for someone, who was working at Union level and yet to finish his/her education. This indicates that many people were coming to UISC to get services from UISCs. They were earning good money and most importantly, were found happy working in a system, which gave them the freedom to work.

However, there was an area of concern for both the UPs. The representatives of the GLAs were found irregular in coming to UPs. There was not fixed time schedule for them to come. Both UP representatives and common people were found unhappy about it. Also, there was room allocated for each of the GLAs operating in the UP, but they rarely come and sit there.

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*“They usually sit at Upazila Parishad. We have informed about this for several times, but they never maintain a schedule. Some of them come twice a week and rest of them hardly come to UP. Even, in the Coordination Meeting, we had discussed about it, but it never worked.”* UP Secretary of Horogram UP, said.

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In totality, Horogram UP had a favourable structure in place, which worked in favour RTI Act and was implemented successfully. However, the kind of cooperation expected from GLAs, was just not there, something to be considered as an error, which needs to be coordinated from centre, rather making efforts at the UP level.

## **Maria UP**

Maria UP, on the other hand, was conflicting in nature due to tension among parallel agencies and ideological differences among different entities. Maria UP, first of all, did not have the infrastructure in place, to function properly. The UP building was half owned by the UP and half of it, was used by the Paurashava (Municipality). There was no regular electricity and water supply connection in the UP. The UP had only three rooms allocated for them. One of these rooms was used as hall room, where they run Village Court and rest of the rooms were shared among UISC entrepreneurs, Chairman and Secretary.

As far as relationship between UP members and UP Chairman was concerned, it was good. However, as mentioned in previous Chapter, the record system was not properly managed. Though UP meeting were well participated by UP members, there was no information on, how standing committees were performing. There was hardly any information about ward level meeting at different wards. Even, the coordination meeting was not held regularly. The working hour of the UP was not maintained properly as they didn't maintain any fix timetable. Open Budget organized for the first time this year. It was not well participatory in a sense that, the demands did not represent the expectation of common people as the demands were decided by UP representatives or local elites. Also, there was no initiative taken from UP representatives or any other actors or institutions to make RTI Act familiar within common people. These were indication of how lack of commitment within UP representatives influenced performance of implementation of RTI Act in Maria UP.

The relationship between UP Chairman and Upazila Chairman (UZC) was not good enough to make collaborated initiatives, especially allocation of food grains under SSNPs. The level of cooperation needed from Upazila was absent. The UISCs have been performing comparatively well to provide services to the people. However, due to infrastructural problem like electricity and space they could not perform as per expectation. UP secretary was cooperative and worked in close association with the Chairman and UP members.

However, comparing Horogram with Maria in terms of implementation structure, two things that put Horogram aside of Maria. *First*, better understanding of role and highest level of commitment and cooperation among UP representatives and UP staff to perform well. This, of course, came from years of practices and orientation received, especially from Sharique. *Second*, infrastructure which was a major problem in Maria UP. In totality, it was the infrastructure and

lack of commitment from both UP representatives and cooperation from different actors at union level, which influenced the implementation of the RTI.

It can be concluded here by saying that, comparing to Maria UP, Horogram had better implementation structure, which ensured high level of commitment and cooperation from different stakeholders and understanding of role. Going back to the hypothesis '*The performance of implementation of RTI Act depends on how various institutions and actors work within and with UP, cooperate and their level commitment towards the policy and the better the level of cooperation and commitment, the greater the possibility of better implementation performance*', it completely justified with my study findings.

### **6.3. Resources**

Referring back to theoretical framework, I have operationalized resources as availability of financial and managerial resources to implement RTI Act, at UP level. The discussion here has been made on two broad categories and each case was presented under these categories, followed by a comparative analysis on both the cases.

#### **6.3.1. Financial Resources**

In the study, I tried to find out the availability of funds, internally generated or received from external sources (NGOs, Government) to implement policy directives. I also tried to explore that, whether resources available at UP was adequate to implement a policy like this. While doing that, we reviewed the budget of both the UPs. I had a close look on sources of funds and how they were used.

#### **Horogram UP**

The total budget of Horogram UP for the financial year 2012-2013, was around 10 million BDT, which include 1.2 million from own sources like Holding Tax, Fees, Tolls etc, 1.5 from LGSP and Sharique, .2 Million from Land Transfer and 7 million from Government and Hysawa Project. The money received from Sharique (BDT 400000), was to be spent on Local Governance initiatives in the UP.

During interview sessions with UP Chairman and Secretary, we understood that, the fund they received from Sharique came with conditions. They had to spend the money on events like open budget session, display board, ward level meeting, standing committee meeting, UDCC and



audit. It was basically, a part of a process, that has been followed over the years and these practices now, became an important part of their system.

*A member of Horogram UP said “It’s good that, we have funds to run these activities. Otherwise, fund generation is a real big challenge for us, as we earn little revenue from our internal sources, which was never enough to even meet the basic expenditure of UP. We have to rely upon the allocation coming from central government for this. But, with funds of Sharique, we can organize open budget and meeting at ward level and also set display board.”*

On RTI, Sharique work with both community and UP representatives as well. UPs don’t have any special budget from central government or any other sources, to organize training session on RTI. However, Sharique organized various events like training, play, and promotional works on RTI with their own budget, which contributed to make people aware of the Act.

*“Frankly speaking, we didn’t even receive the copy of the Act. How could you expect us to work on issues, which government hasn’t organized, even a basic orientation at UP level? We received a copy of the Act from one of the workshops, I attended and they gave a copy to each participant. Whatever progress we had so far, Sharique has a big contribution to that. They have given us, not only financial support, but also provided us training on RTI, which helped us to understand our roles towards the Act.” Secretary of Horogram UP, said.*

Despite of the fact that, Horogram has done well in terms of disclosing various kinds of information and making information accessible to people, they still had to reach a large number of people. To reach there, it definitely needs more attention not from the Government but also from development partners and people from parts of the society.

### **Maria UP**

Maria UP had a budget of 4.8 million BDT for the financial year 2012-13. Out of which, approximately 4.5 million BDT received from central government under various programmes like SSNPs, ADP and LGSP. Only 300,000 BDT was generated from internal sources like Holding TAX, License Fee, Toll and Land Transfer fees. There were no special funds received from any other sources, specifically for implementation of RTI Act. Neither Government nor any other Organization has conducted orientation sessions for UP representatives on RTI in Maria. Even the basic disclosure and display board was absent, as there was no additional funds for that.

Though they have arranged the Open Budget session this year for the first time, it was a challenge for them to arrange money within limited resources. Unavailability funds and skilled manpower influenced the implementation performance of RTI Act. Coming back to the hypothesis *“The implementation performance of RTI Act depends on availability of resources and more adequate the resources are, higher the possibility of better implementation performance”*, it was justified completely with the state of Maria UP, where implementation of RTI failed due to lack of resources.

### **6.3.2. Managerial Resources**

Referring back to theoretical framework, Managerial Resources was operationalized as the capacity and skills of UP representatives and UP staff to implement RTI Act effectively. In the study, we tried to see, how they understood the Act and whether they had the skill to implement it.

#### **Horogram UP**

Horogram UP, comparing to Maria UP were way forward, when it came to understanding of RTI. Most of the UP representatives were found well informed about RTI and had received training courses on this very topic. Sharique had a two day’s training course, specially designed for UP representatives, UP Staff and GLAs. Most of the UP representatives have received this training. The training course that was offered by Sharique was detailed and well prepared. It capacitated UP representatives and UP staff, who were to implement RTI in their respective UPs, to have proper understanding of the Act with relevant technical details.

*“We have a good understanding about the policy. We try to make information accessible to people. Information are made into public pro-actively and I don’t there is any barrier for people to ask for information as well.”* A member of Horogram UP, said.

The Secretary of Horogram UP had sound knowledge about the policy. This made things easier for UP representatives to use his expertise and give instructions, which were not difficult for him to understand. UP representatives were well informed and knew their responsibilities on, how to fulfill the objectives of the RTI Act. However, financial resources have been the main challenge for any UP to implement a policy like RTI Act, as it needed involvement of different actors, institutions and common people, which was never an easy thing to do within limited resources. The overall impression on the capacity of UP representatives and UP staff was very good, in a

sense, they have managed to preserve important information and disclose it properly. They have been publishing report regularly and responded to queries, coming to UP. The hypothesis set in the analytical framework that-*'the implementation performance of RTI Act depends on availability of resources and more adequate the resources are, higher the possibility of better implementation performance'* was fully justified with the findings of Horogram UP.

### **Maria UP**

Maria UP, on the hand, hasn't been equipped with managerial resources to implement RTI Act effectively. The reason was simple. *First*, they did have any knowledge about the Act, as they haven't received any formal orientation on RTI. *Second*, they had absolutely no idea about policy objectives and standards. The policy demanded things, to be done, in a most transparent manner. If someone does not have any idea about what role s/he should be playing or what s/he is expected to do, it is very difficult for that person to fulfill the objectives of RTI Act. That's what happened in Maria UP, where UP representatives or UP staff didn't have the capacity to perform accordingly, as they didn't have any idea about RTI Act and what RTI act, set out to achieve.

### **6.3.3. Economic, Social and Political Conditions**

In my study, economic, social and political conditions have been measured under very specific set of indicators. Economic, Political and Social Conditions have been discussed under three broad categories- social condition, economic condition and political condition. Social condition has been operationalized, as scope of participation, especially women in various activities such as ward meeting, open budget and standing committees, *Economic condition* was measured by economic condition of common people and *Political condition*, as political environment and relationship among parallel or superior agencies in local government structure and with UP and within UP representatives.

### **6.3.4. Social condition**

Social condition has been operationalized, as scope of people's participation and opinion. It was measured, in terms of participation in various activities at UP in general and their mobility, especially inclusiveness of females in ward meeting, open budget and standing committees.

### **Horogram UP**

To start with, people were participative in public events like open budget, ward level meeting and standing committee meeting. This was, of course, a result of a continuous process and

practices, which have been followed in the UP for some time. People were found aware of these activities and their participation was quite satisfactory in these events.

Open budget, for instance, had a specific process to follow, as the demands from the ward come from the people. What we noticed in Horogram UP that, they were regularly holding ward level meeting, where people were coming at good numbers. They could place their demands in the meeting. Women participation was also very encouraging. The open budget session has been well participated by different group of people. The most convincing thing about this, was the number of women, attending in this year's Open Budget session and it was very encouraging for UP to involve everyone in the process.

There was also evidence that, all the 13 standing committees were operating in the UP and they were quite regular in holding meeting, which could be seen from the meeting minutes available at UP office. All the standing committees had representation from the people and some of them had female representation as well.

All these indicated that, people were not detached from the process and were very involved with it. Of course, there was no denying that RTI Act, being new as a new policy, has not reached maximum number of people. But the matter of encouragement was that, the social condition was favourable which allowed participation of common people, especially females. People didn't have that fear to ask about information and from an implementer's point, they also believed in a transparent system, which made them disclose whatever information they had. Apart from that, what convinced me a lot in Horogram was that, almost 100% of the people we interviewed sent their children to school, which was a good sign for days to come. This was something, we found very encouraging in Horogram UP. In totality, if the social condition was not favourable, rather saying it as non-participatory and closed to certain groups, it would not have succeeded that much.

### **Maria UP**

Maria, on the other hand, was missing that element. There was no such room, where people could really involve in a participatory process. As there was no regular meeting at the Ward level, people especially female, rarely visit UP for any services. A popular event like open budget was also held for the first time in the UP. There was also a fear factor, working in the mind of common people to ask about information, as they usually were not frequent of coming to UP or participating in public events. Because of that, they didn't have the confidence to be involved in a participatory process. Female participation in any kind of events, were low

comparing to Horogram and that's because they have never been involved in the process of decision making at any level. To some extent, it was social condition in Maria which allowed a paternalistic attitude towards women, not allowing them to attend such events. There was also conservativeness among people, to be open about women participation in the society.

*“We wanted to organize a cultural programme, basically an ‘Educational Play’, but couldn’t end up doing it. The kind of social system existed in Maria, doesn’t allow this kind of event. Conservativeness on cultural events was also a reason behind that.”* A NGO in Maria UP, said.

In totality, social condition was closed and unfavorable in Maria. Conservativeness and lack to mobility Social condition played a major role in Maria to unsuccessful implementation of RTI as participatory practices were for various reasons were completely missing there.

### **6.3.5. Political condition**

*Political condition* was operationalized as political environment and relationship among parallel or superior agencies in local government structure and with UP and within UP representatives.

Here, my focus was to see *first*, whether there was any tension or conflicting element existed within UP representatives due to political affiliation of different individuals in UP structure and *second*, working relationship between UP and other parallel or superior agencies i.e. Upazila, Municipality, Local MP and whether political differences or similar cohesion influenced implementation of RTI Act at UP level.

### **Horogram UP**

Both the UP Chairman of Horogram and Upazila Parishad Chairman of Paba were from same political party, which made things easier for them, as there was no ideological difference between them. Though UP Chairman of Horogram didn't agree with the fact that, political difference might have an influence on the functioning of UP. However, during interview sessions with other UP representatives it came out quite clearly that, having come from same political party, they had a professional understanding which, helped them to get allocation smoothly from Upazila.

On the other hand, the local MP was from ruling party. Now, there were special allocations in the form of food grains from the MP, which he used to distribute with people, who he could rely upon, especially those from his political party. The study found that, sometimes in

a situation like this, it caused problem, while they had to select beneficiaries between people who actually were in need and people who belonged to the same political party. The real challenge was that, when people filed an application to ask for this kind of information, it became difficult to give them an explanation, which went against the basic principles of the RTI Act to make information accessible to people.

The same kind experiences also witnessed while Union Parishad prepared their the list of beneficiaries for other SSNPs. There were allegations from people, not being selected because of their political ideology. But, what we found in the study or other literatures that, the mindset of majority of the people living, especially in the rural part, was based on strong political ideologies which couldn't be ignored. This sometimes made difficult, even for one of the most successful cases of RTI in Rajshahi region, to stay absolutely neutral in treatment. However, majority of the representatives of Horogram and both the UP Chairman and UZC were also belonged to the opposition. They had better understanding among each other. This helped the working of RTI relatively easy, as UP most of the time did not have to struggle to get information and to make them in public.

### **Maria UP**

Location wise Maria UP was placed in a strategic position, as it was bordering to Maria Municipality and near to Durgapur UZP. To start with, as also seen in earlier Chapter that, the UP had issues with the Municipality on their territorial boundaries and a lot of this chaos was due to political differences between the heads these two institutions.

Maria was a complex place as both UZC and MP were from the ruling party and the Chairman was from the opposition. Therefore, when it came to allocation Maria UP had always faced challenges. Inside the UP, there were no major differences in terms of political ideology as most of them belong to the opposition and the Chairman, who came from a respectable family, nobody had an issue with him, inside the UP structure. Keeping everything in mind, Maria UP was never a classic example of implementation of RTI Act and it has strong connection with its political condition and conflict among two parallel agencies, which never allowed them to function, in a way it should be or they wanted to be. As a result, implementation of RTI Act failed in Maria UP.

### **6.3.6. Economic Condition**

Referring back to the theoretical framework, I operationalized economic condition, as economic condition of common people. Here in the study, I did not conduct a survey on, how much people were earning or what kind of asset they had, but my intention was to get an overall idea about their economic condition. Basically, I kept my focus on the kind of work they were involved in for their living and whether the earning met their basic requirements. I used very simple semi-structured questions for interview and conducted FGDs to get an overall impression about their economic conditions. The point which was important for me was to know whether their economic condition affected the implementation of RTI in both the cases.

#### **Horogram UP**

Horogram is close to Rajshahi city. A large number of people of this union went to Rajshahi City for work. Now the good part was, they could earn reasonably good money and many of them we interviewed, actually had small land or they took land from someone on contract, where they had to share 50% of total Crop with the owner. Basically, majority of the population in Horogram were farmers. However, there were many who engaged in both, they work in the city and also did cultivation. Comparing to Maria, people of Horogram had an advantage of having city near to their place and they made the best use of it. It was the male members in the family, who found work outside. But, the good thing about the female members here was that, most of them we had an opportunity to talk, had saving schemes with NGOs and they also received loans, for small investment like cattle rearing or during any emergency. Besides, Horogram UP was famous for mangoes and many of the residents had their own orchards as well. By and large, we found that the people in Horogram had reasonable economic condition. However, this was not the reason only, that should be considered as driving force, as these events were time consuming and people didn't get any personal benefit out of it. Economic condition did have an impact on the performance on implementation of the policy, but it had to do a lot with the mind set and attitude of people.

#### **Maria UP**

Maria UP, on the other hand, was first of all placed far away from Rajshahi city. There was lesser tendency of people to go to Rajshahi and work there. Most of people in Maria UP were farmers. What I understood from our conversation with them was that, most of the people did not own land, but worked as daily workers or took land from owners on contractual basis. Women members were involved in saving activities with NGOs. They had to work very hard to earn

basic needs for the family, as half of the crops they produced went to its owner. As a result, they hardly got time to think about, how UP was performing.

*“Large sections of the population in this Union are day laborers. They go out early to the field and come back from work in the evening. The issue is that, they hardly get any opportunity to think about, what is happening in the Union Parishad. I have a feeling that, UP members distribute various schemes to those, who they consider their vote bank or they think deserving. Common people have to rely on choices made by them. Common people rarely have any interest on these issues, as back of our mind, they know that if they do not go to work, their families have to suffer and they can't really afford to do that. That's the reason why, there are very few you find, interested even to talk about these issues. That's simple, because we have our priorities and that lies with my family. It is our responsibility to make sure that they eat at the end of the day.” A farmer in Hoja village, said*

To sum up my discussion on economic condition in Maria UP, I found that, people in Maria Union had to work hard for basic needs and they rarely get time to think about participating in events like Open Budget, or they don't bother about these things, which disfavored the implementation of RTI Act. However, economic condition could not be considered as, the single most important reason behind unsuccessful implementation of the RTI Act in Maria, as there were other factors which also contributed, as I already discussed in the previous sections.

#### **6.4. Target Group Behaviour**

Referring to the theoretical framework, the target group behaviour has been operationalised as, willingness of people to participate in various activities like Open Budget and Ward meeting or in the planning process and their perception about UP. It was furthered added that, target group behaviour also include how people accepted UP, as a service providing unit. While measuring target group behaviour, my focus was on whether people were willing to attend Open Budget sessions or Meeting at Ward level or any other events organized at UP level and to what extent they believe in UP as service providing unit. I also tried to understand, whether they were positive about UP to perform responsibilities regarding information disclosure, selecting its beneficiaries or making information accessible to people.

#### **Horogram UP**

As we discussed earlier that, for any policy to be successful, needs support of target population and how they react to it. It was no exception to my study as well. In the earlier discussion, we



found that Horogram UP has been following practices like Open Budget, Ward level meeting, standing committee meeting and also using different kinds of display boards for few years. This had a strong impact on people to respond pro-actively, as they got use to such things.

*UP Secretary of Horogram said “There was time, when we had very poor attendance in ward level meeting. We felt very bad about it, as nobody was coming to these events and we thought that, we are watering a dead plant. However, it started to increase and as days progressed, more people started to come. They found it useful and the sense of ownership was also building up. From their reaction, you could feel that, they have started to believe in the system. Now, you do not need to ask them to come, they know they have to come and it happens organically, which is a great development and nothing is possible without the participation of the people. It feels great, when you see so many people coming in a public event.”*

The response, I received from the people, was also very encouraging and one could feel from the reaction of the people that, they understand the process now.

*“Look, we don’t expect miracle to happen in UP and they will take every single responsibility on their shoulders. What we expect from UP is that, whatever capacity they have, they perform it without any biasness, in a transparent manner. You can not expect absolute transparency in operation, which is impossible. Keeping these aside, when you look at our UP and how it is operating, you can see lots of efforts to make it, as transparent as possible. We are reasonably happy with the way, it is performing its functions and that encourage you to attend events like Open Budget or Ward meeting and its our UP, so we have to know, what is happening around us.”* A Civil Society Representative at Horogram UP, said.

Of course, there were dissatisfaction on beneficiary list and sometimes, the quality of food grains provided to them. However, they could ask questions and UP has given them the space to place their queries before UP, which was remarkable. They have developed a system, which brought transparency in the entire outlook of service delivery, at UP level. What I understood that, efforts were appreciated by the people. People have started believing in UP. More people were coming to UPs to get services from UISCs and also from UP. Horogram has done exceedingly well to bring various kinds of information to public and also responding to requests, asking about information by the people. All these indicated that, people found Horogram UP as a trustworthy institution, which contributed to successful implementation of RTI Act in Horogram UP. This was completely justified the hypothesis- *“Performance of implementation depends on how target*

*people connected to UP and the more positive people are about UP, higher the chances of better implementation of RTI Act.” set under the theoretical framework.*

## **Maria UP**

Maria, on the other hand, has not been keen, in practicing events like Ward Meeting or Open Budget which could involve people in the process and could bring sense of ownership in activities, UP took. They only started Open Budget session this year. As I discussed earlier, the process followed here, was not very participated in a sense, it failed to involve people in the entire process. That’s where, UP lost connection with people. People started to have a discomforting feeling, coming to UP. They didn’t even very sure, what to expect from UP. As understood from the discussion with people at community level during interview and FGD sessions, local representatives hardly came to people, once the election was over.

*“Before election, I could remember, I was having my lunch that day, when the female member from ward came to me. She was holding my hand and trying to convince me to vote for her. I had to wait nearly an hour, with food in my hand, until I promised my support to her. Now it has been almost three years I haven’t seen her even once in our village. The roads are completely damaged and when we asked the male member of our ward to do something about it, she never returned back.” A women in Hoja of Maria UP, said.*

This also gave an impression that, in Maria, people were totally unaware of the act. There was no efforts from UP or any other actors to take RTI forward. UP also failed to generate that interest among people, which would make them motivated, to follow what was happening in UP. We also received extreme comments on, how UPs were performing in terms to reaching people with different kinds of services, which ended up as, a classic example of implementation failure. Lack of trust and absence of people’s participation in various public events, was one of the main reasons behind implementation failure of RTI Act in Maria UP. The Case of Maria UP, thus completely justified with the hypothesis, set in the analytical framework.

## **6.5. Conclusion**

Referring back to my main research question- *‘To what extent the implementation of RTI act led to achievement of the policy objectives set under this act?’*, I have come to the point, where I could summarize my findings, in relation with my main and operational questions, I have set at the beginning of my study. The discussion in the last two Chapters have given a clear understanding about implementation scenario of RTI at UP level. Based on the findings, it could

be rightly said that, the Right to Information Act was successfully implemented, when there were better understanding about policy objectives, among implementers and target population, and right kind of resources, appropriate implementation structure and suitable economic, social and political conditions. The last but not the least, the behavior of target population and how they accepted the act or the agency assigned for implementing the policy. On the other hand, lack of clarity on policy objectives, inappropriate implementation structure, unavailability of resource, unfavorable economic, social and political conditions and behavior of common people, led to implementation failure.

## **7. CHAPTER SEVEN: Summary, Recommendations and Conclusion**

### **7.1. Introduction**

‘The Right to Information Act 2009’ was an anticipated policy, especially for those, who have been advocating for a policy on RTI for years. The Civil Society actors, NGOs, International Community and Academicians have been working really hard to bring the issue on the table for discussion. Finally, to pass a policy on RTI was itself a great achievement. However, as said earlier, a policy is only a piece of paper, if it is not implemented properly. The main objective of the RTI Act was to bring transparency and ensure people’s right to information, through free flow of information. How accessible and easily information was made available to people, depended largely on implementation performance of RTI Act. From the earlier discussion, it was quite clear, how implementation of RTI worked out and what were those factors which contributed implementation success or failure. To get an answer to my main research question *‘To what extent the implementation of RTI act led to achievement of the policy objectives set under this act?’*, I tried theories, research methods and tools of data collection and analysis, which suited my study best. Now, in this part of the thesis, I tried to see, whether the study has achieved, what I was set out to and where the study has fallen short of that. The Chapter also tried to see the relevance of theories, used in the study and some emerging issues or future scope of study, with few recommendations to end with.

### **7.2. Summary of Study Findings**

In this section of discussion, I tried to summarize the findings of my study under each independent variable used in my analytical framework.

#### **7.2.1. Policy Standards and Objectives**

The first thing that came strongly during our study was that, a large section of the population was completely unfamiliar about the policy. In Horogram UP, all the UP representatives were found unknown with the policy. Surprisingly, no UP representatives except the Chairman have been found aware of the policy. For common people, the policy was not yet familiar in Maria and very few knew about it. In Horogram, due to Sharique, around 40% of the male respondents were found aware of the policy. However, women in both cases were less informed. Horogram was comparatively better than Maria, where we haven’t found a single respondent who had heard

about the Policy. Notably there were very few applications submitted even in Horogram UP. There were only 15 such cases in last year in Horogram UP, where in Maria UP there was no such case recorded. From this and also from interview sessions with NGOs, who were working on RTI in Horogram, I came to a point of this conclusion that, there was a need of strong campaign on making RTI Policy well-known within community and also with UP representatives. It is very important for implementation of RTI Act that, all the stakeholders understand policy objectives and contribute to its implementation. That's one of the main reasons why Horogram UP succeeded in achieving main objective of RTI Act to bring transparency by making information accessible to people.

### **7.2.2. Implementation Structure**

What we found in Horogram UP was that, people who work within the UP, for example UP Chairman, Male and Female members, UP Secretary and Entrepreneurs, despite coming from different political background, worked in cohesion UP. The level of commitment from each of the staff members and UP representative working in UP was very high. They maintained the working hour properly and attended each of the meeting organized in the UP. The UP Chairman had good relationship with the Upazila Chairman, UNO and other stakeholders in the UP. Sharique was working in Horogram UP for the last 7 years on Local Government and now, specifically on RTI. It capacitated the UP representatives to understand their responsibilities and helped them performing well. Major public events like Open Budget, Ward level, UDCC Meeting and Standing meeting were well participated by various actors and institutions like NGOs, CBOs, GLAs, organized on time. On the other hand, what was missing in Maria UP, was cooperation among different stakeholders and other local government agencies working in the region like Municipality and UZP. There were no NGOs, who were working on RTI. The UP representatives and staff members of the UP were not familiar with the policy. Even, major public events like Ward meeting, UDCC, and Standing Committee were not organized on time and not well participated by common people or other stakeholders in the UP. The office hours were not properly maintained and there was definitely lacking of commitment in terms of timely delivery of services, keeping records and making information accessible to people.

### **7.2.3. Resources**

One thing that was rather disappointing to see in Maria that, both UP representatives and UP Secretary were totally unaware of the policy. There was no training or orientation offered either from government or from any other agencies working in Maria. Basically, they were lacking the

capacity to understand the policy and unfortunately there was no information disclosure in Maria. On the other hand, the reason why Horogram was performed was the fact that, everyone associated with UP was well informed and understood their share of responsibilities, which was evident, once we saw the outcome of the efforts that was put in to maintain a transparent system.

One of major findings of my study in both the cases was that, there was no special fund allocated for the implementation of RTI. Horogram UP received funds from Sharique since 2007 on local government initiatives, especially for organizing Open Budget session, Ward level meeting and information disclosure. Now, even that money was also not adequate to reach a large number of people in Horogram. To make people who were completely unknown of the policy definitely called for support not only from government but also Civil Society actors, NGOs.

I want to believe here that, the success stories will keep on coming even after Sharique phases out from here. But putting this aside, what I strongly felt that, there should be adequate resources to spread awareness and making people informed about the policy. It is difficult for a local government body, which has to rely upon grants and allocation from centre, to come up with something miracle. But it is not hard to put basic practices on board and maintaining a transparent system in UP. That was something we found missing in Maria UP, whereas Horogram had managed to deliver that.

#### **7.2.4. Economic, Social and Political Conditions**

Economic condition of common people was a determinant factor in the performance of RTI Act. The study found that people of Horogram UP has better economic condition than the people of Maria. The People of Maria, hardly get time to think about what was happening around them. This is one of the reasons why, they found very casual about UP. On the other hand, people of Horogram was placed in slightly better economic condition, who could spend some time in activities held at UP. However this was definitively not, the only reason they attend such events.

Social fabric is a contributing element for any policy to succeed, especially at implementation stage. One of the main problems in Maria UP was that, one could sense a kind of conservativeness among people to allow women to participate in events like Ward meeting or Open Budget. Even we came to know that, to some extent, cultural plays were also not well accepted in Maria. Whereas, street plays were very popular in Horogram Union. Sharique used to organize such plays to make people aware of issues like RTI, tax, gender equality, open

budget etc. Women participation was also encouraging in such events. That actually contributed to the social fabric, creating the environment of openness and people got the interest to be motivated in making connection with the UP.

Political condition is very important for any policy to succeed in Bangladesh. Perhaps, one of the main reasons Bangladesh hasn't achieved that much after so many milestones being set individually and as a nation as well. What I strongly felt that, if people could put political interests aside and agreed on issues, which could bring benefit to the society, Bangladesh should achieve new milestones. Even with RTI, I strongly believe that, if people sometimes could think beyond party interests, many of those who actually deserved to have access to services, should have been benefited out of this. That was something not existed in the system. Surely, that was one of the reasons why Maria couldn't settle even to perform their regular functions properly and the answer to the question of implementation performance remained out of any discussion and it failed heavily.

#### **7.2.5. Target Group Behaviour**

The UPs have been in the discussion in the past and there have been lots of negativity among people in the 90's and early part of this century. UPs have been highly corrupted in the past and there was a perception among people that, the only agenda of people's representative to be elected as UP representative, was to earn a lot of money out of it. The concept of UPs, being a service providing agency, was also dying. But in the last few years, things have started to change. That's because there was a change in the outlook of the UPs both in terms of structure since every UP has a modern complex now with equipments like computer, printer etc and also the way participatory practices have been taken place. Apart from that, there is now a complete policy on UP named 'The Local Government (Union Parishad) Act, 2009' which had a clear guideline on how UP should be performing.

In the study what we found that, in Horogram, people were seen attending and spending time in various activities organized by the UPs. There were women participation in both Open budget and Ward level meeting. There was variation in terms of perception about UP among common people in two different Unions. In one hand, people were not found interested about UP and did not even bother about what UP was doing. On the other hand, we found people, who were open about various issues and they were asking about different aspect of UP. People's attitude towards Horogram UP was positive and that was also reflected on their participation in various events. On the other hand, in Maria, we have seen people being causal about attending

these events. Of course, it took time to build that confidence among people on UP, which came with years of practices in Horogram UP. However, it was very clear from study finding that, more the UPs, involve people in the process and are transparent about their responsibilities, better they will perform and regain trust, which was lost.

In the table below I tried to come up with a summary on, how RTI has performed in both the UPs and how appropriately the hypotheses in the study were set. It also tried to reveal, how well the operational questions were answered.

**Table No 7.1: Summary of Finding, Hypothesis & Remark**

IV	FINDINGS		HYPOTHESIS	REMARKS
	Horogram UP	Maria UP		
Policy Standards and Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information was properly recorded and preserved.</li> <li>Information is disclosed pro-actively at UP level and also application filed to UP asking about information as well.</li> <li>UP Chairman and other representatives, UP Secretary and Entrepreneurs who worked at UISCs, were well informed about the policy and were very much into the process.</li> <li>Common people in Horogram UP were better informed, comparing to Maria and most of the respondents have heard about RTI Act from Sharique and UP representatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information was not recorded or preserved properly and no evidence of pro-active disclosure and not a single case of application was found.</li> <li>Except UP and UP Secretary none of the UP representatives were found aware of the policy.</li> <li>Only 6% of the respondents interviewed during the study had heard about the policy.</li> </ul>	More clear people at implementation and recipients are about the policy better the performance of implementation.	The Hypothesis was fully justified with the findings
<b>Research Question:</b> Do implementers and the target people have clear understanding about the goals/objectives of the RTI Act? Are there any measures taken to make people aware of the Act?				Answered
	Horogram UP	Maria UP	Hypothesis	Remarks
Implementation Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better cohesion within UP i.e. with UP members, UP Officials and also with Upazila (UNO, UPC) and other actors like NGOs, CBOs, and Civil Society.</li> <li>UP representatives and UP Secretary were regular in office and office hour was strictly maintained. All the records and important information was properly managed and disclosed by them. Level of cooperation among everyone associated with UP was high and strong commitment was shown among them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better cohesion among UP representatives but was not convincing between UP &amp; other local government institutions like Municipality, Upazila or even MP.</li> <li>Other actors like NGOs, Civil Society were also casual about UP and the level of cooperation from these actors was not satisfactory.</li> <li>Office hour was not maintained properly and level of commitment among UP representatives and UP Officials was low.</li> </ul>	Higher the level of cooperation and commitment among various agencies, institutions and actors work and the better the performance of implementation.	The Hypothesis was justified with the findings
<b>Research Question:</b> Do UPs have the appropriate implementation structure to implement RTI Act?				Answered
	Horogram UP	Maria UP	Hypothesis	Remarks
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Horogram UP received conditional grants from Sharique to support initiatives in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maria UP has not received any grants to supported RTI and other issues related</li> </ul>	More adequate the resources	The Hypothesis was strongly



	<p>relation to local governance and specifically on RTI like Open Budget, Information disclosure and Planning Meeting etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UP representatives and UP officials received training on RTI from Sharique on RTI. With that they had sound understanding of policy objectives and the capacity to perform these tasks effectively to bring transparency in the system.</li> <li>Availability of funds and managerial resources contributed to successful implementation of RTI Act in Horogram UP.</li> </ul>	<p>to local governance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They have not received training or orientation courses of RTI.</li> <li>Maria UP lacked both funds to run such activities or people with knowledge and capacity to implement the Act.</li> </ul>	<p>are higher the possibility of better implementation performance</p>	<p>justified with the findings</p>
<b>Research Question: Do the UPs have the resources in place to implement the program as planned?</b>				<b>Answered</b>
	<b>Horogram UP</b>	<b>Maria UP</b>	<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
<b>Economic, Social and Political Conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Economic, Social and Political conditions were favourable for Horogram UP to implement.</li> <li>Horogram was close to Rajshahi city which gave people the opportunity to work and have a better living.</li> <li>Social condition was also favourable in a sense that people were open to participate in public event and participation of female members was significant.</li> <li>Political condition was kind of mixed as the MP was from ruling party which was a kind of challenge in some cases. However, both the UZC and UPC belong to same political party which contributed in favour of Horogram UP.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Economic, Social and Political conditions were unfavourable in Maria.</li> <li>People usually were found either working in the field as labourers or had small land and hardly got time to think about other things.</li> <li>Social condition was also found unfavourable especially the participation of women was poor in public events.</li> <li>Political condition was conflicting and there was tension among UP and other local government agencies like Municipality, Upazila and also with MP.</li> </ul>	<p>Better the economic, social and political conditions, higher the chances of better performance of implementation.</p>	<p>The Hypothesis was partially justified with the findings</p>
<b>Research Question: Do the economic, social and political conditions contribute to successful implementation of RTI Act?</b>				<b>Answered</b>
	<b>Horogram UP</b>	<b>Maria UP</b>	<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Remark</b>
<b>Target Group Behaviour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Horogram, people were found positive about the way UP was functioning which reflected on their involvement in events like Open Budget, Ward Planning Meeting, Standing Committee and UDCC Meeting.</li> <li>People were found open about asking questions to UP representatives. People had the freedom to ask anything to UP and the perception they had towards UP was high which was truly the winning factor for Horogram UP to bring transparency in operation and ensuring people's access to information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People in Maria Union were found very causal UP and hardly participate in UDCC, Ward level meeting or Standing Committee meeting. Though Open Budget was participated by a part of the population, they were found confused with the process that was taken place for Open Budget.</li> <li>The trustworthiness on UP was missing among people due to lack of open practices and transparency in making relevant information disclosed in public. People actually were not bothered about UP and there was sense a kind disconnection between UP and people.</li> </ul>	<p>More people are positive about UP, higher the chances of better implementation of RTI Act.</p>	<p>The Hypothesis was strongly justified with the findings</p>
<b>Research Question: Does the behaviour of target population have anything to do with the successful implementation of RTI Act?</b>				<b>Answered</b>

### **7.3. Implication of major findings and Limitations of the study**

#### **7.3.1. Theoretical Implication**

Going back to my theoretical discussion, I have taken multiple theories into consideration. The decision was based on earlier studies on policy implementation in Bangladesh and context of my study in particular. Combining elements from Winter's *Integrated Model of Implementation* (2003), Meter and Horn's *Policy Implementation Model* (1975) and *Integrated Model of Policy Implementation* of Thomas and Grindle (1990) in my analytical framework was something, I anticipated to justify my study objectives. My independent variables in the study were Standards and Objectives (Meter & Horn, 1975), Implementation Structure (Winter, 2003), Resources (Grindle & Thomas 1990), Target Group Behavior (Winter, 2003) and Social Economic and Political Conditions (Meter & Horn, 1975). In this section of my discussion, I tried to find theoretical relevance of my study.

Meter and Horn (1975) refers Policy Standards and Objectives as the overall objective of the policy and to what extent it is realized (Meter & Horn, 1975: 464). The study established that, more clear people from both supply and demand side were to understand policy goals, better the possibility of implementation success. The study established that, where both UP representatives and UP officials and target people had clear understanding of the goal of RTI Act, information was recorded, managed and displayed effectively. There was easy access to information and all the relevant information were disclosed pro-actively, which made implementation of the RTI Act successful in Horogram UP.

Winter (2003), Rothstein (1998), Lipsky (1980) and Pressman & Wildavasky (1973) strongly raises the point that, an inappropriate organizational structure influences implementation success and how various organizations, actors and institutions are engaged within implementation structure determines implementation success or failure. In the study, implementation structure has been measured in terms of cooperation and commitment within UP structure and also those, who were involved directly or indirectly with UP. Better the level of cooperation and commitment among them, the greater the possibility of implementation success. The study established that UP, which has high level of commitment and cooperation within UP structure i.e. among UP representatives, UP Secretary and Entrepreneurs, also with other

institutions and actors like UZP, MP, Civil Society, NGOs etc, did well in achieving goals of RTI Act by making information accessible to people.

The third variable used in my theoretical framework was financial and managerial resources. Meter and Horn (1975), Cheema & Rondinelli (1983) Pressman and Wildavsky (1979) has made their argument very clear about resources as a major influencing factor in policy implementation. Corresponding to Thomas and Grindle's (1980) argument 'an implementation agency with having political, financial, managerial and technical resources in place has a profound impact on implementation effectiveness', the study established a strong relationship between resources and implementation performance of RTI Act at UP level. Horogram UP received both financial and facilitation support from Sharique to implement RTI related activities. UP representatives, Officials received orientation courses from Sharique on RTI, which gave them, sound understanding about the policy. On the other hand, Maria UP neither has funds nor trained people, who could implement the policy effectively. As a result of that, Maria UP failed to implement the policy. The study findings were consistent with the Thomas and Grindle's (1980) proposition on implementation effectiveness and its relationship with resources, thus justifying the hypothesis that, implementation performance depends on availability of resources and more adequate the resources are, better the possibility of effective implementation.

In line with Meter & Horn's (1975:471) point, that social, political and economic condition has a profound effect on the performance of policy implementation, the study revealed that, a favourable social, political and economic environment conditions influenced the performance of RTI Act at UP level. The study established that, better social economic and political conditions lead to successful implementation, whereas poor economic condition, closed social environment and conflicting political context could lead to implementation failure.

The fifth and final variable in my Analytical Framework was Target Group Behaviour. Agreeing with Winter's (2003) argument that, Target Group Behaviour influence the performance of policy implementation, the study anticipated that, more people were positive about UP, greater the possibility of implementation success. The study finding established that, when people started to believe in UP and participating in the process of implementation, it made things easy for UP to implement a policy. Participation in various events organized by UP, has given an indication that, people did have that level of trust on UP, which contributed to the

performance of implementation of RTI Act in Horogram UP. It motivated UP representatives to disclose information and making them easily accessible to people. Thus, the study findings were consistent with the assumption of Winter (2003), which emphasized on people's attitude and behaviour towards implementing agency and as anticipated that, more they feel connected with UP, higher the possibility of implementation success fully justified with the study finding.

The study here considered these five factors to assess the implementation performance of RTI Act in these two UP. However, despite the fact that, all the hypotheses were justified with the study findings, there were some emerging issues, which the study came across and the next section in tries to put light on that.

### **7.3.2. Emerging Issues**

The study used five explanatory variables to measure performance of implementation of the RTI Act. These variables were based on literatures on implementation and studies that have been conducted in Bangladesh previously. The hypotheses were drawn on the basis of theories that have been tested in the past in similar kind of studies. However, there were issues that came across during the study, which I would like to raise in this part of my discussion. As hypothesized in the study that social, economic and political environment has a profound impact on implementation performance of RTI Act. The study also had similar kind of findings. However, it also revealed that, despite of political differences, Horogram UP representatives never allowed their political interest in front, when it came to UP's overall objective of maintaining transparency. It was willingness of implementers', which worked in favour of RTI Act by superseding political condition. Apart from that, financial resources that Horogram UP received from Sharique to take up RTI related activities, was not enough to reach a large population of the UP. But, rather depending on external funds only, they sometimes took up activities from their own funding. It also brought the issue of commitment of UP representatives over resources. Apart from these factors, one of main issues that appeared during our study was, culture and practices that existed in administrative system. It was highly characterized with secrecy and there was some kind of casualness about, how they deal with policy directives. The study took me to point to believe that, implementation of a policy in a country like Bangladesh has a strong relationship with existing culture and practices, particularly in local administration, something which is hard to ignore.

#### 7.4. Methodology

As discussed in Chapter 4, this particular study was a Case Study of two distinct UPs, which gave an opportunity to compare both the cases to substantive and theoretical criteria. The study deployed qualitative research approach with data from both primary and secondary sources. However, the decision to use quantitative approach occasionally, gave my study a strong platform to get a bigger picture to the context. Qualitative approach gave an opportunity to explore the implementation status of RTI Act and to assess, how far people got access to various kinds of information. Quantitative approach complemented the study finding. Using multiple tools of data collection for example Face to Face Interview, Direct Observation, FGDs and Document review, gave the study a strong platform to get maximum inputs for analysis. As discussed earlier that, using both the approaches, helped to merge findings through triangulation of methods and sources from both ends. Thus, it was established in the study, that the choice of study approach, methods and various tools used for data collection and analysis was fully justified and rational to study context.

#### 7.5. Limitation of the Study & Future Scope of Study

The study that I conducted, has its limitations and as I saw my study from this point, I could see some areas which I have fallen short of, something which I also considered as areas, that could be taken into consideration for future study. The *first* point that I want to make here, is that how RTI Act was implemented at community, should not be limited within UP. There were also GLAs and NGOs working with government funding or foreign donations, which couldn't be covered up in the study. This is something, which could be considered as future area of study. *Second*, the study was conducted in Rajshahi district with two cases on board. Rajshahi was a strategic place since Sharique, a pioneer in the field of local governance, has been working here since 2006. However, in places, where Sharique or other NGOs are not working on RTI, how similar or different would have been the implementation status of RTI Act, something we couldn't touch upon. However, it definitely needs broader study, which is something I would like to take forward in future, if there is an opportunity for further study on that. *Third*, RTI Act came to discussion, when NGOs and Civil Society strongly advocated for a policy. They put lots of efforts to make government to pass the law in 2009. However, whether there was the same kind of enthusiasm or efforts seen among these actors during implementation of the policy, something we haven't touch upon. *Finally*, there were public institutions in both urban and rural setting, for example Upazila, Municipality, City Corporation or government departments

working at various levels. This is something I also think could be the future areas of study, to find out how RTI has been implemented at a different platform.

## **7.6. Recommendations**

While making an attempt to understand implementation performance of RTI Act at UP level and keeping the findings of the study into consideration, I have few suggestions to make, which I am trying to bring in this part of the discussion. The recommendations are as follows:

- I strongly felt that, there was no initiative from the government to make RTI Act functioning at UP level. There were no training or orientation offered from the government to make people aware of the Act. There are some campaigns, broadcasted in TV Channels but I wonder how many people in the villages have TVs or even those who have TVs, whether they understand the message it tries to give. Therefore, I suggest that, there should be proper initiatives taken from the government to reach maximum number of people.
- NGOs and Civil Society actors should come out and make more people aware within their capacities, both at individual and organization level.
- The concept of RTI could be included in the curriculum at the secondary school level so that, each of the students understands their right to information and build a responsible society.
- The individual success stories regarding RTI should be shared among people at different platforms and all the good works should get rewarded. This will encourage people to be open about the policy and contribute towards it.
- There should be more promotional materials in terms of billboards, documentaries and special messages from celebrities to draw attention of the people.
- Religious leaders, especially Imams and also Priests should be made aware of the policy so that, they could also disseminate necessary information about the policy.
- Cross exchange programme between successful and lesser successful UPs can be a useful idea, where people can learn from each other's experience and get motivated towards better implementation of the policy.

- There should have enough media coverage both on electronic and print media to take up the issue and encourage people to read and get aware of it. Radio is extremely popular these days among youth. Government or NGOs, in partnership with them, could design campaign to spread about the message among the youth.

### **7.7. Conclusion**

Union Parishad, being the lowest tier of local government system is closely connected with the people living in rural areas and is the main agency, working at the community level to provide various kinds of services to people. The RTI Act has been a significant policy to create that platform, where people can ask for their right to information from public authorities. It gave public institution like Union Parishad, an opportunity to restore transparency in service delivery system through free flow of information and making information accessible to people. The study revealed that, lack of understanding about the policy, inappropriate implementation structure as lack of commitment and cooperation among people, who works inside the UP or various actors and institutions who work in association with UP, led to implementation failure. Also, inadequate resources both financial and managerial resources, poor economic condition, closed social environment and conflicting political condition also lead to poor implementation performance. Also, how people respond to a policy and their perception towards the implementing agency is a key element for a policy to be successful. The study reflected on how the implementation status of RTI was influenced by these factors. The RTI Act was one of the most significant policies in recent time. It was highly appreciated by Donor Communities, Civil Society, NGOs, business community, academic and others. Now the question is, whether it will be one of those policies, which have been in the discussion for some time and disappeared during the course of time, will depend on how we realized the goal of RTI act and ensure appropriate structure, resources and environment that allow it to flourish.

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**Questions for Face to Face Interview**

Set-One (For UP Representatives)

1. Have you heard about RTI Act? How do you learn about it?
2. Are you aware of what RTI is aiming at?
3. Do you receive any training or orientation on RTI? Where do you get the training from?
4. Did you take any initiative to make people aware of RTI Act?
5. How do you find RTI Act? Do you think it's useful? What do you like about RTI Act?
6. Is RTI Act a barrier to you to perform your duties independently?
7. What do you consider as barriers in UP context to implement RTI Act? If you have to make some suggestions to improve implementation performance of RTI Act what would be those?
8. Do you preserve information in UP? How do you preserve information? What kind of information do you preserve?
9. Do you prepare any progress report about activities held at UP? What kind of reports do you prepare? How often do you prepare such report?
10. What do you do with the report? Do you publish them? How often do you publish them?
11. Do you share these reports with common people? How do you make people informed about it?
12. Do you disclose information, you preserve? How do you disclosure information you have in the UP? What kind of information do you disclose in the UP?
13. Do you aware of information on Demand? Do you have any idea about how to apply for information at UP?
14. How often do you receive query/application from people? How do you make people informed about such provision?
15. What was the procedure to apply for any information? How do you respond to such query/application?
16. Do you know about Citizen Charter? Do you have Citizen Charter in your UP? What do you do with that?

17. What kind of information you have in Citizen Charter? How do you make people informed about it?
18. Do you have SSNPs in the UP? How do you decide beneficiary list for SSNPs? Do you follow any criteria for selecting beneficiaries?
19. Are people aware of such criteria? Do you take any initiative from your side to make people aware of such criteria? Do you display list of SSNPs in UP premises?
20. Do you have UISC in you UP? How do you find their performance?
21. Do you know what kind of services they provide in UISC? How do they run? How do you think it is benefiting the people?
22. Have you heard about open budget? Did you participate in any of the Budget session? What kind of process you follow in Budget meeting?
23. Who participated in the event? How do you make people informed about it?
24. Are you happy with the participation of common people? How do you think female participation in Open Budget session?
25. How was the participation of various other actors working within UP in Open Budget session?
26. Do you have Ward meeting held at ward level? What kind of activities you do in ward level meeting? How do you make people informed about it? How do you decide demands to be included in the Open Budget?
27. Are people willing to attend events like Ward meeting? How do you find their participation in Ward level?
28. Do you have standing committee in UP? How do you ensure participation of common people?
29. How often you organize UDCC meeting? Who are participating in the meeting? How is your experience about UDCC?
30. What kind of relationship do you have with UZP and MP? What kind of support do you receive from them?
31. How do you define your relationship with other UP representative? How do you think UP representatives cooperate among each other in UP's functioning?

32. How do you define social condition in your UP? Do you think there is enough space for everyone to participate in various events at UP? How do you define Women's Participation?
33. How do you see political situation in your UP? Do you think it's a barrier in your UP to function properly, especially RTI Act?
34. Do you follow any opening and closing hour for UP? How strictly you follow the office hour?
35. How do you find your staff members in the UP performing? What kind of commitment they have towards UP?
36. What do you think about GLAs working in UP? What kind of role are they playing in UP? What kind of relationship, they have with UP representatives?
37. Do you have enough financial resources to carry out activities related to RTI? How do you manage funds for such activities?
38. Do you think UP representatives and UP Secretary have the capacity to implement RTI Act? Why do you think that?
39. How do you define people's perception towards UP? Do you think people in your UP are positive about UP's performance towards RTI Act or any other activities they perform?

## Questions for Face to Face Interview

### Set-Two (For UP Secretary)

1. Have you heard about RTI Act? How do you learn about it?
2. Are you aware of what RTI is aiming at?
3. Do you receive any training or orientation on RTI? Where do you get the training from?
4. Did you take any initiative to make people aware of RTI Act?
5. How do you find RTI Act? Do you think it's useful? What do you like about RTI Act?
6. Is it a barrier to you to perform your duties independently?
7. What do you consider as barriers in UP context to implement RTI Act? If you have to make some suggestions to improve implementation performance of RTI Act what would be those?
8. Do you preserve information in UP? How do you preserve information? What kind of information do you preserve?
9. Do you prepare any progress report about activities held at UP? What kind of reports do you prepare? How often do you prepare such report?
10. What do you do with the report? Do you publish them? How often do you publish them?
11. Do you share these reports with common people? How do you make people informed about it?
12. Do you disclose information, you preserve? How do you disclose information you have in the UP? What kind of information do you disclose in the UP?
13. Do you aware of information on Demand? Do you have any idea about how to apply for information at UP?
14. How often do you receive query/application from people? How do you make people informed about such provision?
15. What was the procedure to apply for any information? How do you respond to such query/application?
16. Do you know about Citizen Charter? Do you have Citizen Charter in your UP? What do you do with that?
17. What kind of information you have in Citizen Charter? How do you make people informed about it?



18. Do you have SSNPs in the UP? How do you decide beneficiary list for SSNPs? Do you follow any criteria for selecting beneficiaries?
19. Are people aware of such criteria? Do you take any initiative from your side to make people aware of such criteria? Do you display list of SSNPs in UP premises?
20. Do you have UISC in you UP? How do you find their performance?
21. Do you know what kind of services they provide in UISC? How do they run? How do you think it is benefiting the people?
22. Have you heard about open budget? Did you participate in any of the Budget session? What kind of process you follow in Budget meeting?
23. Who participated in the event? How do you make people informed about it?
24. Do you have standing committee in UP? How do you ensure participation of common people?
25. How often you organize UDCC meeting? Who are participating in the meeting? How is your experience about UDCC?
26. What kind of relationship does UP have with UZP and MP? What kind of support do you receive from them?
27. How do you define social condition in your UP? Do you think there is enough space for everyone to participate in various events at UP? How do you define Women's Participation?
28. How do you see political situation in your UP? Do you think it's a barrier in your UP to function properly, specially RTI Act?
29. Do you follow any opening and closing hour for UP? How strictly you follow the office hour?
30. Do you have enough financial resources to carry out activities related to RTI? How do you manage funds for such activities?
31. Do you think UP representatives and UP Secretary have the capacity to implement RTI Act? Why do you think that?
32. What do you think about GLAs working in UP? What kind of role are they playing in UP? What kind of relationship, they have with UP representatives?

33. How do you define people's perception towards UP? Do you think people in your UP are positive about UP's performance towards RTI Act or any other activities they perform?

### **Questions for Face to Face Interview**

#### **Set-Three (For Entrepreneur at UISC)**

1. Have you heard about RTI Act? How do you learn about it?
2. Are you aware of what RTI is aiming at?
3. Do you receive any training or orientation on RTI? Where do you get the training from?
4. How do you find RTI Act? Do you think it's useful? What do you like about RTI Act?
5. Where do you find yourself in implementation stage of RTI Act? Do you have a clear understanding of your role in connection with RTI Act?
6. Is it a barrier to you to perform your duties independently?
7. What do you consider as barriers in UP context to implement RTI Act? If you have to make some suggestions to improve implementation performance of RTI Act what would be those?
8. What's your take on UISC? What do you like about UISC?
9. What kind of services you provide in UISC? How do you think UISC is running? How do you think it is benefiting the people?
10. Where do you get your salary from? How is UISC benefiting you?
11. Do you follow any opening and closing hour for UP? How strictly you follow the office hour?
12. Are you happy with the services you provide here? What comes to your mind, if you are asked to say something positive and also negative about UISC?
13. Do you have any suggestion to make these services more people centric and accessible?

**Questions for Face to Face Interview**  
Set-Four (For Civil Society Representatives)

1. Have you heard about RTI Act? How do you learn about it?
2. Are you aware of what RTI is aiming at?
3. Do you receive any training or orientation on RTI? Where do you get the training from?
4. Did you take any initiative to make people aware of RTI Act?
5. How do you find RTI Act? Do you think it's useful? What do you like about RTI Act?
6. Is it a barrier to you to perform your duties independently?
7. What do you consider as barriers in UP context to implement RTI Act? If you have to make some suggestions to improve implementation performance of RTI Act what would be those?
8. How often you go to UP? What's usually the purpose of your visit to UP? Are you happy with the performance of UP
9. Do you think, there is enough information available in the UP? What kind of information you see displayed in the UP?
10. Are you happy with the performance of UP in connection with RTI?
11. Do you aware of information on Demand? Do you have any idea about how to apply for information at UP?
12. How often do you receive query/application from people? How do you make people informed about such provision?
13. What was the procedure to apply for any information? How do you respond to such query/application?
14. Do you know about Citizen Charter? Do you have Citizen Charter in your UP?
15. Do you have SSNPs in the UP? Do you have any idea about how beneficiary list for SSNPs is decided? Are there any criteria for selecting beneficiaries?
16. Are people aware of such criteria? Do you take any initiative from your side to make people aware of such criteria? Is there any list of SSNPs displayed in UP premises?
17. Do you have UISC in you UP? How do you find their performance?
18. Do you know what kind of services they provide in UISC? How do they run? How do you think it is benefiting the people?

19. Have you heard about open budget? Did you participate in any of the Budget session? What kind of process you follow in Budget meeting?
20. Are you happy with the participation of common people? How do you think female participation in Open Budget session?
21. How do you find their participation in Ward level?
22. Are you a member of standing committee in UP?
23. Have you participated in UDCC meeting? Who are participating in the meeting? How is your experience about UDCC?
24. How do you define your relationship with other UP representative?
25. Do UP follow any opening and closing hour? How strictly they follow the office hour?
26. How do you find UP staff members performing? What kind of commitment they have towards UP?
27. How do you define social condition in your UP? Do you think there is enough space for everyone to participate in various events at UP? How do you define Women's Participation?
28. How do you see political situation in your UP? Do you think it's a barrier in your UP to function properly, especially RTI Act?
29. Do you think UP representatives and UP Secretary have the capacity to implement RTI Act? Why do you think that?
30. How do you define people's perception towards UP? Do you think people in your UP are positive about UP's performance towards RTI Act or any other activities they perform?

## Questions for Face to Face Interview

### Set-Five (For Common People)

1. Have you heard about RTI Act? How do you learn about it?
2. Are you aware of what RTI is aiming at?
3. Do you receive any training or orientation on RTI? Where do you get the training from?
4. Did you take any initiative to make people aware of RTI Act?
5. How do you find RTI Act? Do you think it's useful? What do you like about RTI Act?
6. What do you consider as barriers in UP context to implement RTI Act? If you have to make some suggestions to improve implementation performance of RTI Act what would be those?
7. Do you have access to information available at UP? Can you remember any incidence when you asked about information, but couldn't receive it from UP?
8. Do you think, there is enough disclosure in the UP for you to get information from it?
9. What kind of information you found disclosed in UP premises?
10. Do you know what kind of information you are entitled to receive? If not, the why?
11. Do you aware of information on Demand? Do you have any idea about how to apply for information at UP? What was the procedure to apply for any information? How was your experience with application you filed?
12. Do you know about Citizen Charter? Have you ever asked for it?
13. Do you have SSNPs in the UP? Do you have any idea about how beneficiary list for SSNPs is decided? Are there any criteria for selecting beneficiaries?
14. Are people aware of such criteria? Do you take any initiative from your side to make people aware of such criteria? Is there any list of SSNPs displayed in UP premises?
15. Do you have UISC in you UP? How do you find their performance?
16. Do you know what kind of services they provide in UISC? How do they run? How do you think it is benefiting the people?
17. Have you heard about open budget? Did you participate in any of the Budget session? What kind of process you follow in Budget meeting?
18. Who participated in the event? How do you make people informed about it?

19. Are you happy with the participation of common people? How do you think female participation in Open Budget session?
20. Do you have Ward meeting held at ward level? What kind of activities you do in ward level meeting? How are your participation ensured? How are your demands included in the Open Budget?
21. What do you think about ward meeting? Are you happy with your space in such events? How do you define social condition in your UP? Do you think, there is enough space for everyone to participate in various events at UP? How do you define Women's Participation?
22. What's your occupation? Is the only thing you do to earn money? What else you are involved with? Is it enough to meet your necessities from what you earn? Do you or anyone from your family are engaged in saving program with NGOs?
23. How do you see political situation in your UP? Do you think it's a barrier in your UP to function properly, especially RTI Act?
24. Is UP maintain any opening and closing hour for UP? How strictly UP follow the office hour?
25. What do you think about GLAs working in UP? What kind of role are they playing in UP? What kind of relationship, they have with UP representatives?
26. Do you think UP representatives and UP Secretary have the capacity to implement RTI Act? Why do you think that?
27. How do you find yourself in various public event organized at UP? Do you participate in these events pro-actively or there is any other factor that drives to attend such event?
28. Do you think UP is capable enough to carry out its function? How reliable are UP representatives to implement various projects run with government funds?



UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

*Department of Administration and Organization Theory*

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

To Whom It May Concern

This is to introduce Mr. Harold Baroi who is a student of mine.  
He is pursuing a MPhil degree in Public Administration at the Department of Administration and Organisation Theory, University of Bergen, Norway.

Mr. Harold Baroj has completed one year of course work  
and now is doing research for his thesis on the topic :  
**"Implementation of Right to Information Act in Bangladesh: A Study on Union Parishad**

He is conducting the research on this topic in his home country Bangladesh .  
As an important part of this exercise he has to interview various persons and collect relevant documents.  
I hope you may assist him in the research. The information provided to him is for academic purposes only.  
Any assistance given to him is highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Steinar Askvik