

Problems of Coordination in Local Administration in Bangladesh

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Philosophy (M. Phil) in Public Administration**

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Dedicated.....

**To my parents and only beloved nephew,
Who are the sources of all my inspiration.**

Md. Abdul Wahed Miah

Mst. Anjumanara Begum

A. K. M. Zahid Bin Azad (Kathak)

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The views expressed in this thesis are mine and do not necessarily reflect those of UiB.

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List of Acronyms

AC Land	Assistant Commissioner, Land
ACR	Annual Confidential Report
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADC	Additional Deputy Commissioner
ADM	Additional District Magistrate
ADP	Annual Development Programme
ASRC	Administration and Services Reorganization Committee
BADC	Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation
BD	Basic Democracy
BRDB	Bangladesh Rural Development Board
BUET	Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology
CARR	Committee for Administrative Reform/Reorganization
CO	Circle Officer
DC	Deputy Commissioner
DDC	District Development Coordinator
DG	District Governor
DPHE	Department of Public Health and Engineering
GoB	The Government of Bangladesh
JS	Jatio Sangshad
LGED	Local Government Engineering Department
LGED&C	Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives
LGSP	Local Government Support Program
NICARR	National Implementation Committee for Administrative Reorganization/Reform
NIPA	National Institute of Public Administration
PIC	Project Implementation Committee
PIO	Project Implementation Officer
SDO	Sub-divisional Officer
SP	Superintendent of Police
TC	Thana Council
TNO	Thana Nirbahi Officer
TTDC	Thana Training and Development Centre

UAO	Upazila Agriculture Officer
UDCC	Upazila Development and Coordination Committee
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
UPZ	Upazila Parishad
UZPC	Upazila Project Committee
UZPEC	Upazila Planning and Evaluation Committee

Abstract

This study analyses inter-organisational coordination among various departments at the local level administration in Bangladesh. Unlike solo dance, efficient coordination is not achieved through individual action. Rather, it must be orchestrated through collective efforts towards a common goal. In this context, the objectives of this study are: to explore and identify the factors affecting coordination among various departments involved in policy implementation in an *upazila*; to determine the factors that cause coordination problems; and to identify and examine the determinants that can make a difference in the extent to which coordination is achieved in an *upazila*. This study reveals that the issue of inter-departmental coordination has neither been an ends of public administration, nor a means of policy implementation at the local level administration in Bangladesh. This is because although ensuring inter-departmental coordination is a sine qua non when policy is implemented by several departments, inter-departmental coordination suffers from the lack of clear division of labour, resources (financial and manpower), and regular communication, which takes place informally among departments involved in policy implementation in an *upazila*. Moreover, the persistence of a colonial legacy in the civil service has led to different organisational cultures among different cadres of civil service, particularly between the generalists and the specialists. This issue is also contributory to coordination problems. Thus, the author concludes that coordination has not been a philosopher's stone of public administration in Bangladesh; what has become important to civil servants is the completion of assigned functions perfunctorily. Thus, the issue of inter-departmental coordination can be exemplified by the highly individualistic approach of civil servants in carrying out their respective tasks. As a result, policy implementation is delayed, time and resources are wasted, and quality is compromised.

Chapter One Introductory Discussion

1.1. Introduction

‘Good coordination is nearly invisible, and we sometimes notice coordination most clearly when it is lacking’.
Malone and Crowston (1994)

The purpose of this study is to analyse inter-organisational coordination among departments at the local level in Bangladesh¹. Several departments, such as political² organisations and field agencies³ of the central government, exist at the local level. There is a striving need for coordination among these departments for nation building purposes. Thus, the following relevant questions arise: (1) what is the state of inter-departmental coordination among these departments? and (2) if the lack of inter-departmental coordination is the problem, what factors explain this paucity? In order to answer these questions, the implementation process of the ‘rural infrastructure development policy’⁴ of the government in Bangladesh is examined by focusing on the aspects of policy implementation, which will be discussed subsequently. Does coordination matter while various departments are involved in policy implementation? What kinds of problems occur during policy implementation when inter-departmental coordination does not take place properly and what factors affect such implementation? These are some of the questions that will be discussed in this paper.

Field agencies of the central government found at the local level do not belong to a single chain of command; rather they have different individual identities and operate under different chains of command. Despite performing more or less self-contained tasks, no agency or department found at the local level can always work in isolation from others (Zafarullah, 1998: 96). Rather, they must interact with others outside their scope of operations. Given that issues such as technical knowledge and expertise, funds required for the efficient implementation of policies are held in possession of and controlled by various departments, there is an indispensable need for cooperation from each other while the policy is implemented by multiple departments. Moreover, there must exist coordination in order to improve the ways with which policy implementation takes place successfully.

¹ Bangladesh, a South Asian Country, gained its independence in 1971 after a war against Pakistan which lasted for nine months. More than 150 million people live in its total land area of 1,44,000 sq. km.

² It refers to local government institutions.

³ Field agencies are the extension offices of different ministries, divisions, and some autonomous and semi-autonomous bodies.

⁴ Such a policy is made for the development of rural infrastructure, including concrete roads, bridge, and so on.

In the case of policy implementation involving multiple organisations, this specific task is assigned to the organisations involved. To achieve policy objectives, the implementation functions independently performed by different organisations and agencies must be coordinated. Here, policy implementation refers to the task of promulgating and applying the rural infrastructure development objectives of the government. Rural infrastructure development policy is one under which different types of infrastructure development activities, including construction of culverts, bridges, roads, and union parishad⁵ complex in rural areas in Bangladesh are carried out. The implementation of this policy takes place through the office of the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED)⁶ located at upazilas⁷ consisting of one engineer, one assistant engineer, two sub-assistant engineers, and some other officials (http://www.lged.gov.bd/about_lged/lged_org.htm).

The importance of coordination came up during the ‘field administration’⁸ in Bangladesh, during which the government established several local-level field agencies with delegated power and authority, which is aimed at providing services to the local people more effectively. However, ensuring coordination among organisations is a difficult task. According to Pressman and Wildavsky ‘Much more has been said about coordination than actually has been done about it, and coordination remains a principal “philosophers’ stone” in the analysis of good public administration?’ (Jennings and Crane, 1994, cited in Peters, 2006: 115). When coordination is considered in this sense, questions such as ‘What happens to the issue of coordination?’ and ‘How does coordination take place among field level agencies in Bangladesh?’ can be raised.

1.2. Statement of the problem

‘Everyone is for coordination, but no one wishes to be coordinated,
at least not just now’.

Jon Bennett (2000)

Six bridges in the Joypurhat District became unfit for transportation. In 2006, around Tk 2 Crore (US \$ 285714) were allocated from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for the reconstruction of one bridge. Due to problems associated with the process of land acquisition, the Roads and Highways Department did not start the reconstruction right away despite a specific deadline that had been set. As a result, the ADB withdrew the total amount of money it had allocated (The Daily Prothom Alo, 26.02.2008).

⁵ Union parishad is the lowest tier of local government in Bangladesh, and is the only segment directly elected by the people.

⁶ LGED is a department with a pivotal role in rural infrastructure development; it works under the control and guidance of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives.

⁷ Upazila refers to a sub-district, one of the units of field administration in Bangladesh.

⁸ Sub-national administration stationed away from the center and comprised of four tiers scattered throughout the country, with numerous departments or agencies of the central government to carry on the business of the government within the easy reach of the people.

Such functional gap in policy implementation is a symptom of problems associated with authenticating lines of responsibility, conflicts among departments involved, standardization of work packages, and perhaps the most critical, the quality of relationships among the departments. Together, these problems in policy implementation are taken into account for the lack of inter-departmental coordination. Coordination is a multidimensional activity which takes place among a number of actors across a range of activities (Sommers, 2000: 4). Coordination has become a complex and crucial issue required both for daily operations as well as for policy implementation (Panday, 2006: 2). However, the most critical problem in policy implementation in field administration in Bangladesh is coordination, as the above account reveals.

1.2.1. Coordination at the upazila level

In the case of upazilas, there are a plethora of departments that must interact in order to implement a policy. Thus, there is a need for coordination in their activities. Accordingly, the government has established an elaborate administrative set-up to facilitate coordination in the implementation phases of the policy, but the policy is implemented without ensuring necessary coordination among the departments supposedly involved. What is the extent to which coordination is achieved? If there is poor coordination, to what can we attribute this phenomenon?

Recent evidence shows that the government has expressed serious concern over the problem of coordination in the implementation of development policies or projects at both the national and local levels. Poor coordination among the departments has caused the delays of policy implementation and thereby the non-utility of allocated funds. Therefore, the government has taken initiatives to ensure the timely implementation of its development projects under the Annual Development Programme (ADP⁹) (The Bangladesh Today, 29.09.2009). The state Minister-in-Charge of the Local Government, Rural Development, and Cooperatives (LGRD&C)¹⁰ has recently pointed out that the LGRD&C is implementing different projects across the country to address the suffering of about two million poor people; several ministries and their field level offices are involved in the implementation of those projects. However, no significant breakthrough to alleviate the conditions of the poor people has been achieved to date due to inadequate coordination among different ministries and their offices at the field level. The state minister has also added that in the absence of coordination, the performance of other ministries and their field offices is not satisfactory at all (The Bangladesh Today, 11. 11. 2009). In addition, there is a lack of clear rules,

⁹ ADP is the public sector development budget through which funds are allocated for various projects.

¹⁰ LGRD&C refers to a ministry in Bangladesh, which elaborately is known as Local Government, Rural Development, and Cooperatives.

circulars, and instructions specifying the relationship among departments at the upazila level. Unclear and unspecified circulars and instructions regarding inter-relationships of departments impede coordination. The following example is a clear evidence of the lack of coordination. In this given situation, the question is to what extent coordination should take place.

In the case of agriculture, Upazila Agriculture Officer (UAO) is the functional head at the upazila level and is responsible for coordinating the functions with regard to agriculture. In reality, officer in charge of Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) as an agricultural input distribution wing is reluctant to work under UAO due to lack of clear-cut instructions concerning their relations. This kind of lack of instructions has led to a serious dispute between the UAO and his counterparts in the BADC over the distribution of inputs which has affected the carrying out of their functions (Obaidullah, 1999: 118).

Furthermore, the shortage of required officers has created problems in ensuring coordination among departments in upazilas. The issue of coordination comes up when the policy is implemented by multiple departments as there is dependency among departments involved. In inter-departmental activities, one department is dependent on another, and coordination is achieved when each department performs its respective function properly. Some of the relevant questions include: (1) how is the respective functions assigned to department involved in inter-departmental activities accomplished, if post of the officer in charge of department involved is empty? (2) how is the respective function assigned to department involved in inter-departmental activities accomplished properly, when an officer beside own takes over the responsibilities of more than one office or department because of a shortage of officers? Evidence shows that upazila administration is bothered by the lack of coordination in inter-departmental activities as many key posts are vacant. In this respect, the example below is an obvious sign of the lack of coordination in upazilas. In the given situation, the question ‘To what extent should coordination take place’ can further be raised.

In the case of the implementation of rural infrastructure development policy or project, the office of the Assistant Commissioner, Land (AC Land)¹¹ is one of the offices involved. The issue of coordination has become problematic due to the shortage of AC Land in upazilas. There is AC Land in each upazila, and the total number of AC Lands in Bangladesh is 476, among which, only 73 posts are currently occupied while the rest have long been vacant. Moreover, the AC Land of an upazila is also working in up to four other upazilas. In some cases, Upazila Nirbahi (executive) Officers (UNO)¹² work as AC Land, despite being higher in rank. At times, the functions assigned to the office of AC Land are accomplished without prior consultation with AC Land. Consequently,

¹¹ An AC Land is a junior level civil servant who belongs to the administration cadre in the civil service of Bangladesh.

¹² The Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) is the chief executive officer in upazila, and is also a member of the administration cadre of civil service in Bangladesh. UNO is a senior assistant secretary (mid-ranking officer) in status.

problems arise in the midst of the accomplishment of functions as a result of the lack of coordination (The Prothom Alo, 24.07.2009). Evidence shows that despite being posted in an upazila, one sub-registrar¹³ is working in other four upazilas at a time due to not being posted sub-registrar in other four upazilas (The Prothom Alo, 22.10.2009).

1.3. Significance of the study

Over the years, studies on coordination have been conducted both on international and national levels. Among others, Mintzberg (1979) analysed coordination from the intra-organisational perspective, while Christensen and Læg Reid (2008) analysed coordination from both intra- and inter-organisational perspectives. In the context of Bangladesh, Panday (2004) analysed coordination and its impact on the policy implementation and urban governance. Shahnaz Khan (1995) analysed coordination in terms of credit management and linkage among agencies involved. Despite some good studies on coordination in Bangladesh, research on how and why coordination has become problematic in field administration and how the lack of coordination affects policy implementation is hardly available. This research aims to shed light on these issues.

In addition, research on coordination problem is not only involved with successful policy implementation, but may also help seek answers to some unresolved questions with regard to the causes of problems pertaining to coordination. In turn, this study may not only be remedy for ensuring sound coordination, but can also resolve other issues in public administration. For example, conflict among the civil servants may be a problem of coordination and an unhealthy situation may prevail in civil service because of such conflict. The lack of healthy atmosphere, in turn, may lead to a failure of the initiatives taken by the government in nation building. In this light, the present study may help identify those factors causing such conflicts.

Given that the present research is concerned with the mapping of coordination problems in field administration in Bangladesh, the main objective of this research is to explore and identify those factors that affect coordination. The lack of coordination among departments causes delays in policy implementation, and the situation becomes worse when the implementation depends on foreign funds. In the case of foreign or donor funding policies, policy implementation may stop half-way when it exceeds the deadline. The release of funds at different phases requires timely execution of the previous phase, thereby causing the stoppage. In this regard, Bangladesh is faced with acute problems because of its extreme dependency on foreign funds. However, timely policy implementation is assured when coordination among departments exists.

¹³ Sub-registrar is the officer in charge of the sub-registrar's office at the upazila level. He is responsible for the registration of documents related to the land.

Furthermore, the government's success is rooted in accurate policy implementation that, in turn, fully depends on sound coordination among the government agencies involved. Nonetheless, despite the availability and adequacy of required components, the implementation cannot be successful unless coordination among those involved takes place.

1.4. Research objectives

Successful policy implementation largely depends on the degree to which coordination in implementation activities is achieved. Coordination can be compared to an orchestra, in which a collective effort is indispensable in achieving a common goal. The lack of coordination leads to delays in policy implementation, causing wastage of resources and time. Thus, the present study intends to address the following objectives:

1. To explore and identify the factors affecting coordination among various departments in upazila involved in executing policies or projects of the government;
2. To make an inquiry as to why problems of coordination take place among various departments in upazila; and
3. To identify and examine those factors that can make difference in the extent to which coordination is achieved in upazila.

1.5. Research questions

The main objective of this study is to explore and identify those factors that affect coordination and identify the causes of the problems of coordination among various departments at the local level in Bangladesh. In order to explore information in this regard, the following research questions are addressed:

1. How and to what extent is coordination taking place among various departments to facilitate policy implementation?
2. What happens to coordination when there is lack of formal division of labour?
3. How does informal communication among departments involved in policy implementation facilitate coordination?

4. How do resources contribute to coordination?

5. Does colonial legacy in public administration lead to different organisational cultures in civil service, such as those between generalist¹⁴ and specialist¹⁵ cadres, given that cultural incompatibility may impede coordination between the generalist and the specialist?

1.6. Scope of the study

In upazilas, various departments are somehow interrelated in facilitating policy implementation. Interrelationship is developed on the necessity of having dependency on each other to get things done. The success of the efforts of departments depends on the extent to which coordination in their activities is achieved. In this connection, it is important to ascertain whether coordination exists in various departments involved in policy implementation. To do so, one upazila, namely Shadullapur¹⁶ as an area of study, is selected, after which the Rural Infrastructure Development Policy of the Government, as implemented by the office of the LGED in Upazila, is chosen as an area of policy for this study. In order to examine the effects of the lack of inter-departmental coordination on policy implementation, some respondents with direct involvement in the implementation process of rural infrastructure development policy were interviewed while others (e.g., chairman¹⁷ of the upazila parishad¹⁸ (UPZ), chairman¹⁹ of the union parishad, and the general public) were interviewed with the aim of exploring information in getting overall picture on the issue of the problems of coordination in upazila.

1.7. Unit of analysis

The present study is based on qualitative research and the unit of analysis is an upazila. Bangladesh is administratively divided into two levels: national²⁰ or central administration and local or field administration. Field administration consists of 6 divisions²¹, 64 districts²², and 482 upazilas. Various government departments or agencies have their own offices in field administration through

¹⁴ Officers who are mainly educated in liberal arts and social sciences and are members of the administration cadre of Bangladesh civil service have the secretarial status.

¹⁵ Those who are basically known as technical officers, such as doctors, engineers, and those whose professional expertise is developed based on a particular field of knowledge like medicine, engineering, agriculture

¹⁶ A town in Bangladesh.

¹⁷ Representative of upazila elected by the adult population of the upazila

¹⁸ Another tier of local government in Bangladesh

¹⁹ Representative of the union elected by the adult franchise of the union.

²⁰ The secretariat consisting of all ministries; all policy decisions are made in this level.

²¹ Division is the highest tier in field administration in Bangladesh and is headed by a commissioner with the status of a joint secretary of the government.

²² One of the tiers of field administration lying in between the division and the upazila level; a mid-ranking generalist bureaucrat (deputy secretary in status) who is also the chief executive of a district.

which government policies or projects are implemented.

Districts in Bangladesh are divided into sub-districts or upazilas, with the latter being the lowest level of administrative government. By average, each upazila consists of 9 unions, a population of around 300,000, and an area of around 320 square kilometers. Upazila is headed by a junior-level civil servant of the administration cadre, assisted by a large number of officials appointed by the central government (Islam, 2006). There are 18 departments of the central government in an upazila (Ahmed, 1991: 31), 12 departments of which are regarded as nation building departments, including the departments of agriculture, fisheries, education, health and family planning, and so forth. Nonetheless, despite an upazila's legal and administrative framework for ensuring coordination, there has been lack of coordination in the activities of various departments within it (Ahmed, 1991: 26).

In terms of its geographical area, Shadullapur upazila is a bit smaller than the average ones. With eleven unions to its credit, this upazila is even larger than the average ones in terms of the number of unions. According to the 1991 Census, the total population of this upazila is 243,012 among which males and females constitute 54.4 % and 49.6 %, respectively, and its total area is 227.97 square kilometres (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sadullapur_Upazila). Each upazila is run by a council called the Upazila Parishad, headed by a chairman elected by the adult franchise of the entire upazila. Basically, this unit consists of representative members including the chairman and vice-chairman, the chairman of the Union Parishad, as well as the mayor of the pourashava (if any exists) and government officials posted at the upazila. Since Bangladesh is a unitary state, an upazila bears more importance in the system of local governance as an outcome of political and administrative decentralization. Therefore, the upazilas have become a focal point of all development activities. Basically, there are two types of functions in the upazila: one is retained or regulatory, and the other is transferred functions. The former is controlled by the UNO as a representative of central government and the latter is placed at the disposal of the local government at the upazila level. Discussion with regard to local governance is further made in details in Chapter Four. Existing structures of local government and field administration in Bangladesh are illustrated in Figures 1 and 2, respectively.

Figure 1

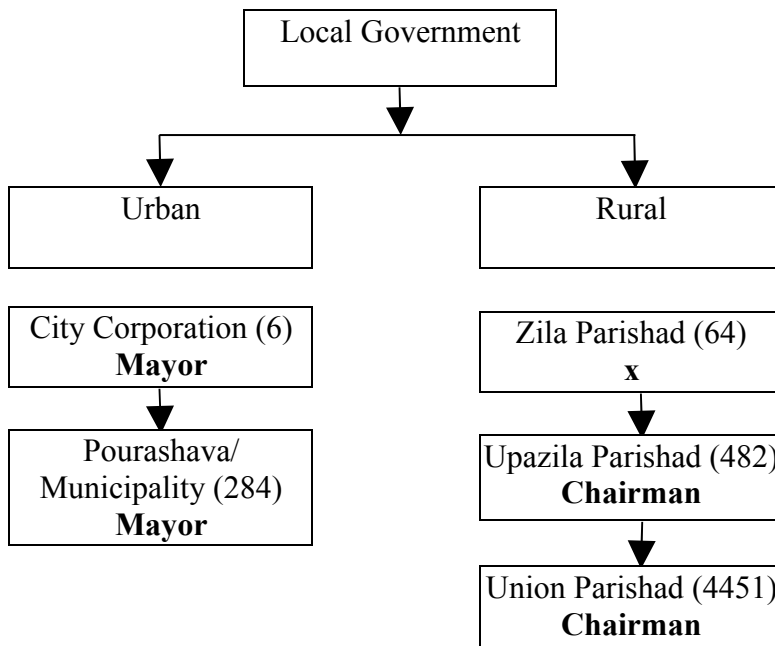
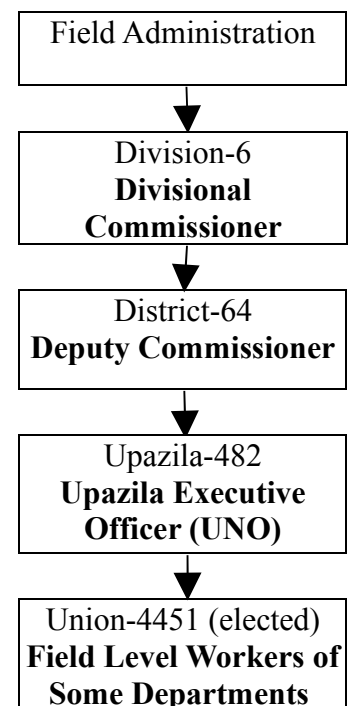


Figure 2



Source: Author.

1.8. Structure of the thesis

This thesis is composed of seven chapters, each of which contains short discussions here.

Chapter One: Introductory Discussion- an overview of the discussion that deals with research problem, significance of the study, research objectives, research questions, scope of the study, unit of analysis, and structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework- discusses dependent and independent variables and their relationship. A theoretical framework for this study through a brief overview of literature for conceptualizing the relationship between dependent and independent variables is also presented in this chapter.

Chapter Three: Methodology- an attempt to employ various methodological approaches used in this study. Why various methodological approaches used were appropriate for this study, how such usages were justified over others, and how these were incorporated in this study are also discussed

in this chapter.

Chapter Four: Development of Field Administration in Bangladesh: Pendulous or Static?- provides a brief historical background and the present status of field administration as well as a short discussion about the system of local governance in Bangladesh.

Chapter Five: Factors Affecting Inter-departmental Coordination- presents the analysis of primary as well as secondary data on three independent variables (i.e., formal division of labour, resources, and informal communication). Discussions on why inter-departmental coordination matters when multiple departments are involved in policy implementation and how and to what extent formal division of labour, resources, and informal communication affect coordination are dealt with in this chapter as well.

Chapter Six: Inter-departmental Coordination: The Role of Organisational Culture- the analysis of primary as well as secondary data on another independent variable, such as organisational culture. In this chapter, attempts are made to analyse the process and the extent to which organisational culture influences coordination among the departments involved in policy implementation. Moreover, this chapter also discusses the impacts of the lack of inter-departmental coordination on policy implementation.

Chapter Seven: Discussion and Conclusion- discussions of findings and thereafter the conclusion. In this connection, the issues on the objectives of this study, what theories and methodology were used, what was found and which theories were most useful, how and to what extent can findings be generalized, what conclusion can be made on the basis of such findings, and how this study can be implicated for further research are highlighted in this chapter.

Chapter Two

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

2.1. Introduction

Since the purpose of this study mentioned in the first chapter is to analyse inter-organisational coordination among departments at the local level in Bangladesh, the main purpose of this chapter is to develop a theoretical framework for exploring and analysing the issue of coordination in field administration in Bangladesh. To this end, this chapter presents a brief discussion or overview of literature on coordination in order to conceptualise the interplay of various factors that have an important role in ensuring coordination.

2.2. Literature review

The success of organisations in terms of the functions they perform are inseparably associated with coordination, thus, the issue of coordination has captured the attention of the scholars on public administration as well as organisation studies to a large extent. Therefore, coordination, in terms of inter-organisation and intra-organisation is not new at all, but is as old as organisation studies. Scholars such as Luther Gulick (1937), Chester I. Bernard (1938), Frederick W. Taylor (1911), and Henri Fayol (1916) all emphasised the issue of coordination. Moreover, various studies on coordination have been conducted in both the international and the local levels over the years. Among others, Mintzberg (1979) and Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) are prominent scholars who analysed coordination from intra- and inter-organisational perspectives, respectively. Recently, Christensen and Lægreid (2008) analysed coordination in the Central Government of Norway from both intra- and inter-organisational perspectives.

In the context of Bangladesh, there are some interesting studies on the issue of coordination. Panday (2004) basically emphasises policy implementation and shows what happens to policy implementation when there is lack of coordination in terms of institutionalised rules and regulations, financial management, central local relationship, and accountability: democratic vs. bureaucratic. The issue of coordination is underscored and analysed in order to assess the effects of the above mentioned independent variables on the dependent variable (i.e., policy implementation). Thus, the problem of coordination is indicated as a very relevant and important research issue in the context of Bangladesh.

In order to provide a strong foundation for coordination, a theoretical lens is necessary, which shall offer insights into how coordination is performed. Thus, before understanding how coordination is achieved, gaining knowledge of the factors or the ways through which it can be achieved and what factors facilitate coordination is important. Coordination mechanism may either be chosen based on the capacities, legitimacy, and expertise of those whose functions are subject to coordinate or are pre-designed and imposed (Robinson et al, 2000: 215). Among others, Mintzberg describes a set of coordination mechanisms including mutual adjustment and direct supervision, as well as four kinds of standardization: work processes, outputs, norms, and skills (Mintzberg, 1988: 278-80). Drawing on Gulick, McCurdy identifies some mechanisms for coordination, such as structure of organisation, written rules, system of authority, defining duties and responsibilities, and purposes (McCurdy, 1983: 114-121). By quoting organisation and cultural theories Panday and Jamil state three types of coordination mechanisms: formal rules and standard operating procedures, common organisational cultural norms and values, and leadership (Panday and Jamil, forthcoming). Views on coordination mechanism may differ since coordination is based on the perception of parties involved. Therefore, Thompson (1967) notes that the mechanisms for coordination should be decided based on situations in which organisations are found rather than by reviewing the merits of theories (cited in McCurdy, 1983: 131).

There is a growing body of literature in public administration and organisation studies that critically addresses the study of coordination, and it is likely that debates surrounding the proper use of coordination within organisational studies or analysis may continue for some more time. Thus, Harold Siedman (1998) rightly notes that coordination is indeed the philosopher's stone of public administration (cited in Kettl, 2003: 254). As scholars define coordination from their own points of view, coordination has become associated with numerous meanings and definitions. Malone and Crowston (1994: 90) state that 'Coordination is managing dependencies between activities'. Seidman and Gilmour (1986) define coordination as 'both a process- the act of coordinating- and a goal- the bringing together of diverse elements into a harmonious relationship in support of common objectives'(cited in Jennings, 1994: 53). In the view of Newman, 'Coordination is the orderly synchronization of efforts to provide the proper amount, time, and directing of execution resulting in harmonious and unified actions to a stated objective' (cited in Raj, 1989: 69). For Van de Ven et al. (1976), organisational coordination refers to 'integrating or linking together different parts of an organisation' (cited in Tsai, 2002: 180).

Theoretical approaches to the analysis of coordination irrespective of discrete attempts to define coordination can be grouped into two: first is the classical hierarchical view or the formal hierarchical structure deduced from the work of Gulick (1937), Taylor (1911), Dahl (1947), and Simon (1947) (cited in Morris et al., 2007: 95). In the traditional view of coordination, ensuring coordination is subject to the use of hierarchical positions, legal-rational authority, specialization of tasks, and merit among members of the organisation (cited in Morris et al, 2007: 95). Second is the network-based approach or informal lateral relation. Agranoff (2006), Kettl (2003), O'Toole (1997), O'Toole and Meier (1999), and Wise (2006) mention that coordination, in this approach, is achieved through the interaction of actors outside the traditional hierarchical structure (cited in Morris et al., 2007: 95). Both of these approaches in studying coordination have specific advantages and disadvantages, and none of the two approaches is exclusively suitable for each kind of situation. In order to fill this gap, Kettl (2003), writing about the challenges of the Department of Homeland Security, explored and suggested another approach to coordination known as contingent coordination (cited in Morris et al., 2007: 95-96). Contingent coordination is 'a hybrid approach to coordination in which separate and distinct actors at the different levels of government, each with its own formal hierarchical structure, work collaboratively when the situation demands cooperation'. Based on this approach, coordination can take place in both traditional hierarchical and network-based approaches as the situation requires (Morris et al., 2007: 96). This study employs both approaches of coordination since it is assumed that the issue of coordination in Bangladesh, particularly in upazila is not documented; it is nearly impossible to analyse coordination properly by using a particular approach. Moreover, the purposes of this study, which include identification of the factors affecting coordination and factors making difference in the extent of coordination, have necessitated the use of both approaches on coordination. The independent variables of this study discussed below represent both approaches on coordination.

2.3. Theoretical point of departure

In order to develop a theoretical framework for describing and analysing issues on coordination at the local level in Bangladesh, attempts have been made to establish a relationship between dependent variable (e.g., coordination) and independent variables (e.g., formal division of labour, informal communication, resources, and organisational culture) in the following section.

2.4. Dependent variable

2.4.1. Coordination

‘The synergism produced in human body is basically the result of coordinated efforts of different organs. Any system, whether organizational, management or others having interrelated parts or subparts must coordinate with each other in order to produce synergism’ (Islam, 1994: 1).

One of the ways through which structure and functioning of organisations can be described and analysed is coordination (Christensen and Laegreid, 2008: 97). Coordination is indispensable when multiple actors are involved in the pursuit of common goals. However, the obvious end of coordination is to have a harmonious relationship among actors by synchronising their actions to avoid conflicts inevitably arising in their activities, and wastage of resources including time and energies. As to the implementation of a multi-actor policy, the process of achieving coordination and how it leads to successful policy implementation can be seen in Figure 3. The lack of coordination leads to discord, friction, chaos and confusion, ultimately causing inefficiency and ineffectiveness in the activities of organisations involved (Khan, 1980: 29).

Coordination is based on the common notion of rule-regulation and hierarchical organisation, associated with the state as a legitimate controller and coercer (Robinson et al., 2000: 7). This notion of coordination is strongly resonated in the traditional view of management in which the role of manager is to plan, organise, command, coordinate, and control (Fayol, 1916, cited in Robinson et al., 2000: 7). Coordination is ‘an end-state in which the policies and programmes of government are characterized by minimal redundancy, incoherence and lacunae’ (Peters, 1998: 296). To Mooney and Reiley, coordination is the first principle of organisation and ‘is the orderly arrangement of group effort to provide unity of action in the pursuit of a common purpose’ (cited in Islam, 1994: 2). Here, coordination refers to a suitable working relationship based on the mapping of perceptions of those involved in policy implementation towards coordination.

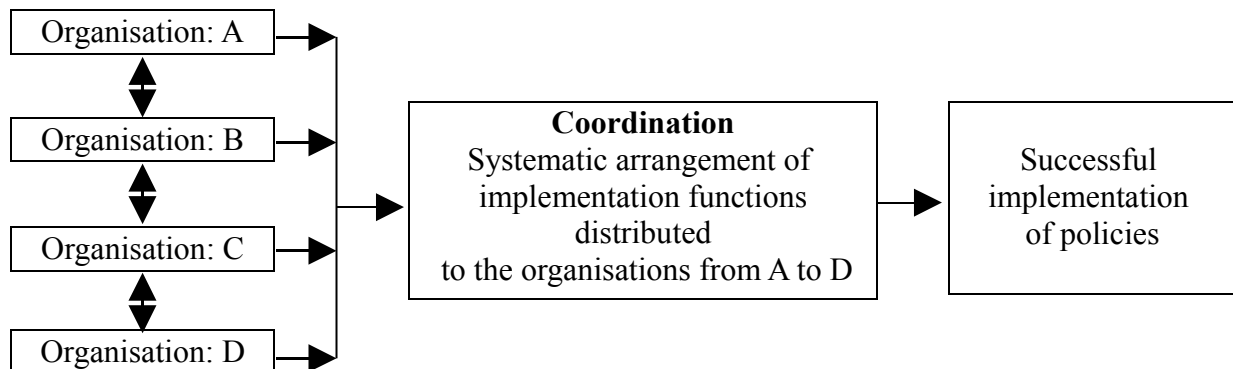


Figure 3: Relationship between coordination and multi-organisational involvement in policy implementation
Source: Author.

2.4.2. Inter-organisational coordination

‘Tell me, and I forget; show me, and I remember; involve me, and I understand’.
Chinese Proverb (cited in Badiru, 2008: 29)

Coordination can take place either horizontally or vertically. Horizontal or inter-organisational coordination can be between organizations on the same status or line, while vertical or intra-organisational coordination takes place within the organization. In other words, coordination concerned with managing the activities of different organisations and coordination concerned with managing the activities of individuals or subunits of an organization are considered as inter- and intra-organisational coordination, respectively. Verhoest and Bouckaert (2005) state that inter-organisational coordination is more network-based, while intra-organisational coordination is more hierarchy-based (cited in Christensen and Læg Reid, 2008: 102). As problems of coordination among various departments in an upazila is highlighted and analyzed, this study focuses on inter-organisational coordination or the horizontal dimension of coordination.

Inter-organisational coordination must be considered when a policy is implemented by multiple organisations. Organisations are considered as homogeneous entities, and large organisations have other organisations nested within them. Inter-organisational coordination may take place at any level: between ministries, between divisions within the same ministries or in different ministries, or between departments or offices within the same or different divisions (Moore, 2000: 90). In the present study, organisations refer to the departments or offices of different divisions or ministries located at an upazila. Inter-organisational coordination takes place in the context where organisations are dependent on each other and need cooperation from each other to achieve common goals. Coordination as a conceptual framework, in terms of accomplishing a particular policy in upazila in which several departments are involved, is shown in Figure 4.

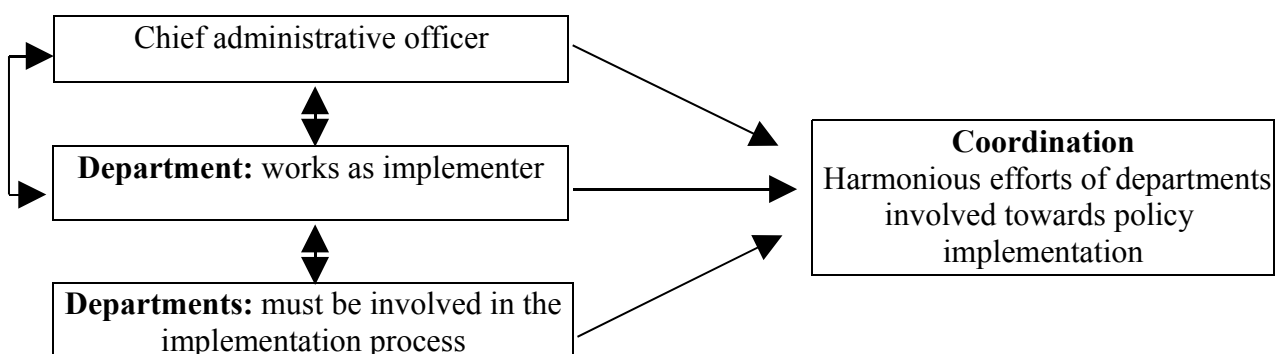


Figure 4: Conceptual framework of coordination in Upazila.
Source: Author.

For Malone & Crowston (1994), ‘The need for coordination arises from the existence of dependencies. If there is no interdependence, there is nothing to coordinate’ (cited in Weigand et al., 2003: 118). Thus, coordination, in fact, is a function of organisational interdependence. The intensity of coordination is a subject to the determination of types of interdependence (Islam, 1994: 1). Thompson identifies three types of interdependencies: pooled, sequential, and reciprocal (cited in Mintzberg, 1979: 22). In pooled interdependence, each otherwise independent entity contributes to the whole. Sequential interdependence occurs when the output of one’s action is the input of another; in case of reciprocal interdependence, each stands in between the first two (i.e., the input and output of each action is sent and received by each other (Mintzberg, 1979: 22). Figure 5 indicates that the intensity of coordination is highest when there is reciprocal interdependence among organisations, whereas the intensity of coordination is lowest in the case of pooled interdependence. This means that the level of intensity associated with interdependence enhances the extent of coordination to be achieved among interdependent entities. Thus, the greater the complexity of interdependence, the greater will be the possibility of coordination.

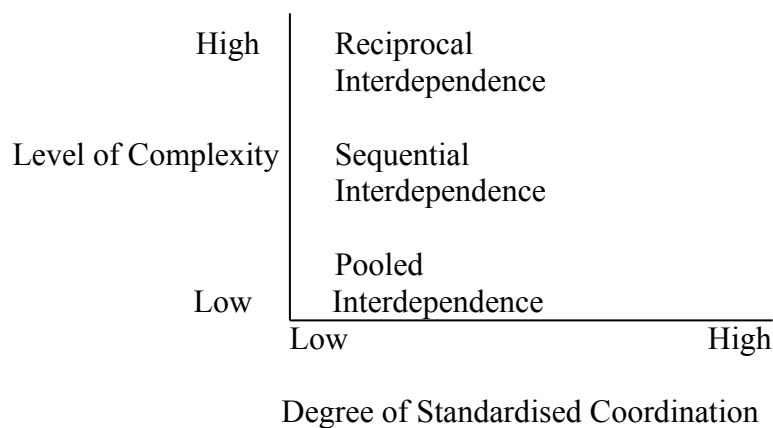


Figure 5: Determinants of Coordination Modes
Source: Islam: 1994: 3

In the case of the implementation of a rural infrastructure development policy or project by the LGED in an upazila, there are some offices and departments within it that must be dealt with while the LGED takes the initiative to implement a rural infrastructure development project or policy. This is because the offices or departments involved have some degree of shared responsibilities towards the successful implementation of a project. The determination of departments or offices involved in the implementation process depends on the types of project or policy. Lowi (1979) and Grindle and Thomas (1991) state that policy implementation varies depending on the requirements of technical expertise, specified framework of time, array of interests affected, and the consequences of their distributeness (cited in Brinkerhoff and Crosby, 2002: 104). These features of

the policies bring organisations together to work and determine the roles and responsibilities of each organisation involved (Brinkerhoff and Crosby, 2002: 104). As mentioned in the first chapter, the rural infrastructure development policy implemented by the LGED is chosen as an area of policy (e.g., case) in this study in order to analyse inter-organisational coordination among various departments in an upazila. The following offices and departments are involved in the implementation of the rural infrastructure development policy through an upazila. These include: the Offices of the UNO, the Assistant Commissioner of Land (AC Land), the LGED, the Upazila Education Officer (in the case of construction of primary²³ school complexes), and the local police station. The underlying issue here is whether or not the need for coordination depending on the nature of cases varies; if it does, what kind of coordination (either bureaucratic or network-based) is needed for what type of cases?

Inter-organisational coordination may suffer from several reasons such as lack of formal division of labour, absence of frequent and proper communication, lack of adequate and timely resources, and so forth. The question is why these happen to inter-organisational coordination. Whatever the reason behind this, the implementation process suffers when coordination does not properly take place among the organisations involved. The following example proves the lack of inter-organisational coordination and its impact on policy implementation.

People have experienced unimaginable sufferings associated with the delayed construction of a road in Saghata²⁴ Upazila as a result of severe lack of coordination among the departments or offices involved. The LGED was supposed to construct a 3 km-long road, but construction was suspended half-way for five months upon realizing that the land on which road was under construction fell short of the required size. The office of the AC Land was responsible for resolving any land dispute in upazila. Moreover, it was the collective responsibility both of the LGED and the office of the AC Land to make sure that there is ample size of land for the construction of the said road before issuing construction permit (The Daily Modhukor, 12.03.2008).

The above example demonstrates that coordination among departments is of great importance toward policy implementation as the action of the LGED depends on the action of the AC Land, and the discrete contribution of each entity leads to successful policy implementation.

a. How can inter-organisational coordination be studied?

Does agreement on goals and means matter in coordination? If it does, what are the factors that may explain the state of coordination, or in other words, what are the factors that may facilitate

²³ The primary level is officially the entry level of schooling in Bangladesh.

²⁴ Saghata is a place in the Gaibandha District of Bangladesh.

coordination? When the organisations involved agree with the goals to be achieved as well as the means that have already been developed, this may lead to better coordination in their activities, as existing mechanisms inform everybody about what will be done by whom, when and how. Cremer (1993) and Hermalin (2001) state that ‘Goal alignment also facilitates coordination, as there is less room for debate between different parties about the firm’s best interest’ (cited in Sørensen, 2002: 73).

		Development Issues	
		High	Low
Agreement on Means	High	<p>Better coordination The use of rules, routine, and standard operating procedures already developed are important.</p>	
	Low		<p>Poor coordination Leadership and network building are important</p>

Figure 6: Relationship between coordination and agreement on goals and means established based on the contribution of Scott (1992), Thompson (1967), Christensen and Lægheid (2008), and Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002).
Source: Author.

When agreement on both goals and means is low, the degree to which coordination is achieved in their activities will be poor. The issue here is how coordination (though poor) is achieved despite less agreement on goals and means. In such a situation, a leader plays an important role in putting discrete efforts of the organisations involved into effect in a systematic and organised way by virtue of leadership qualities. Apart from leadership, linkages or networks among organisations are also important. In this regard, Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002: 118) note that there are linkages among various organisations involved in policy implementation, with particular function and linkage itself pooling organisations to work together in order to fulfil their respective functions and achieve policy objectives.

2.5. Independent variables

2.5.1. *Formal division of labour*

‘Firemen can not stop each time they arrive at a new fire to figure out who will attach the hose to the hydrant and who will go up the ladder; similarly, airline pilots must be very sure about their landing procedures well in advance of descent’. (Mintzberg, 1979: 83).

Coordination takes place effectively when it is governed by an accepted set of rules (Brinkerhoff and Crosby, 2002: 124). This is because a proper division of functions and responsibilities in an organisation decides who will do what, when and how. Therefore, the existence of formal division

of labour fosters the process of coordination as it guides the behaviour of organisations with respect to inter-organisational coordination. Rule is one of the ways through which behaviour is formalised; rules specify who ‘can or cannot do what, when, where, to whom, and with whose permission’ (Mintzberg, 1979: 82). Now the question is how formalisation of behaviour facilitates coordination. When behaviour is formalised, no confusion exists and everyone knows exactly what they need to do in every event (Mintzberg, 1979: 83). Likewise, it is easy to design reward-and-sanction mechanisms for neglecting and/or performing duties and responsibilities facilitating coordination. Bjork (1975) mentions that it reduces the variability of behaviour and helps to predict and control the behaviour (cited in Mintzberg, 1979: 83). For Mintzberg, the main objective of the formalisation of behaviour is to coordinate activities. In addition, he posits that precise and careful predetermined coordination of tasks requires formalisation of behaviour (Mintzberg, 1979: 83). When a rule is made, it masters the circumstance for which it has been written until and unless a situation which requires new rules arises (McCurdy, 1983: 119).

Formal division of labour makes a clear demarcation among organisations by drawing a boundary regarding their duties and responsibilities. Written rules let the individuals in an organisation know about what should be done by whom, when, and how. They also add that rules do not only form the basis of coordination, but also structure coordination (Panday and Jamil, forthcoming). Rules prescribe the standard, and are binding, compulsory, and instructive. How formal division of labour is important in securing coordination is the underlying issue. In this regard, Gulick’s argument (1937) on division of labour and coordination is used. Gulick firmly states that a dynamic relationship between division of work and coordination in organisations exists. The existence of the division of work is an indication of stronger coordination within organisations and vice-versa (cited in Christensen and Lægried, 2008: 101).

Clarity of objectives, formal division of labour and coordination

There is a compelling need to have a clear understanding of the objectives that organisations together intend to achieve when division of labour is considered as a mechanism of coordination. The success of coordination through formal division of labour largely depends on the degree to which objectives are clear to those who work for its attainment. Thus, objectives must be very clear. Otherwise, coordination suffers as ineffectiveness appears in the operations of organisations. Badiru firmly notes that ‘Project objectives must be specific, explicit, and unambiguous, as objectives that are not specific are subject to misinterpretations and misuse’ (Badiru, 2008: 51). Gulick (1937) states that those who are part of an organisation are expected to understand the objectives that have

been defined before individuals begin to operate in the organisation (cited in McCurdy, 1983: 123). Van Meter and Van Horn argue that the clarity of standards and objectives are required for effective policy implementation (Van Meter and Van Horn, 1975: 465-66). When there is lack of clarity of objectives, conflicting interpretation arises, leading to ambiguous or unclear division of labour and non-coordination. Thus, the clearer the policy objectives, the greater will be the possibility of easy and unambiguous division of labour. In turn, clearer division of labour results in better coordination.

Specification of division of labour and coordination

A question now arises: how is division of labour specified? Should there be written rules specifying the duties and responsibilities of each player? In the case of policy implementation, the effective enforcement of duties and responsibilities distributed to various organisations depends on a set of rules accepted by all (Brinkerhoff and Crosby, 2002). They likewise clearly state that rules should be specified in such a way which includes the ‘determination of who is eligible to make which decisions in which areas; what actions are allowed, required, or prescribed: what procedures must be followed; what information must be provided, to whom, and when; what benefits and costs are to be assigned to organisations (groups) as a result of their actions; and how monitoring enforcement will be undertaken’ (Brinkerhoff and Crosby, 2002: 124-25). Moreover, duties and responsibilities are supposed to be defined not in isolation but in relation to the job of each organisation involved. Hence, the functional definition of all jobs bears an immense importance in improving coordination among the activities of organisations.

Coordination suffers when there is lack of division of labour. In the case of upazilas, the lack of division of labour causes insufficient awareness of the duties and responsibilities among departments. In turn, duplication in performance and role ambiguity occur. Duplication in operations does not only waste valuable time and scarce resources, but also causes failure in meeting the deadline of policy implementation, ultimately increasing the volume of expenditure. Role ambiguity leads to conflict among departments about who will do what. As a result, coordination is hampered. In this regard, Panday and Jamil argue that policy implementation suffers because of the lack of sense of direction and misunderstanding about who will do what and when, along with the lack of proper division of labour (Panday and Jamil, forthcoming). An interplay between the factors (e.g., how lack of division of labour may lead to lack of coordination) is shown in Figure 7.

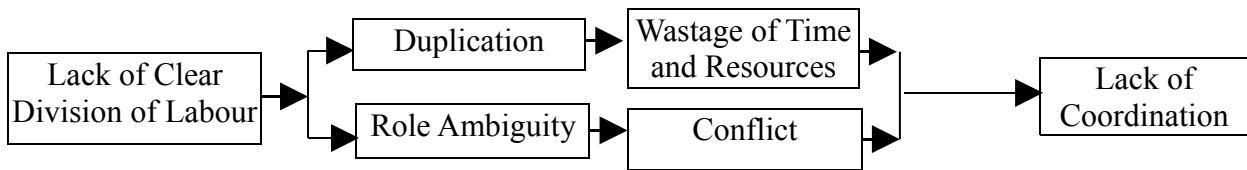


Figure 7: An interplay between division of labour and coordination.

Source: Author.

Based on the above discussion and figure, the following hypothesis can be drawn.

Hypothesis 1: lack of formal division of labour impedes coordination among departments.

2.5.2. Informal communication

‘If individuals act without first establishing arrangements with those whom their actions affect and who affects them, each is likely to be sorry when he sees the price all will pay’.-

Philip B. Heymann (cited in Chisholm, 1989: 64)

Generally, communication is a way through which people stay close and share their feelings. It is a process of transmitting cues that modify human behaviour (Pffner and Presthus, 1953: 111). Communication is transformation of meaning from one to another, in which transmitted information and ideas are conveyed (Robbins, 1995: 114). It can also take place both formally and informally. Informal communication refers to ‘The spontaneous and flexible ties among members, guided by feelings and personal interests indispensable for the operation of formal, but too fluid to be entirely contained by it’ (Dalton, 1959 cited in Mintzberg, 1979: 46). Thus, whereas the first independent variable of this study focuses on the existence of formal division of labour, this one focuses on the informal form of communication as a coordination mechanism. In this respect, Verhoest and Bouckaert (2005) argue that inter-departmental coordination is more network-based²⁵ (cited in Christensen and Lægheid, 2008: 102) A network, in fact, is developed on the basis of informal relationship or communication that helps organisations to coordinate their operations. With regard to coordination, Mintzberg introduces a concept of mutual adjustment known as informal communication. He notes that coordination in activities can be achieved through the simple process of informal communication (Mintzberg, 1979: 3). Here, it is important to note that informal communication takes place even if there is formal communication. Formal means obligatory and is

²⁵ Conceived as a platform of organisations based on common goals, motivation and interests, organisations within the network stay closely together to achieve certain objectives. In this study, a network describes departments or offices at the upazila level in Bangladesh involved in policy implementation, with specific function to communicate with each other informally in order to implement policy successfully.

held in accordance with the rules. Formal communication among organisations for achieving objectives understood is not an end; rather it necessitates and facilitates the process of informal communication. This is because informal communication, in some cases, is needed for the sake of formal communication, meaning, informal communication can supplement formal communication. In this respect, Mintzberg argues that ‘the two systems seem to be rather interdependent: at the very least, the formal appears to shape the informal, while the informal greatly influences what works in the formal, and sometimes even reflects its shape to come’ (Mintzberg, 1979: 53).

Organisations that communicate with one another whenever they need and encourage such activities are likely to be more successful at coordination than those that do not. Pfiffner and Presthus note that ‘Communication is inseparably linked with coordination which is a process by which the multiplicity of skills, attitudes, and interests in an agency or a major program are bound together’ (Pfiffner and Presthus, 1953: 129). Here informal communication refers to an interactive process through which information is shared among departments involved in policy implementation in an upazila. Thus, informal communication across the organisations having exchange of information is assumed as one of the important factors that make inter-departmental coordination possible.

Why informal communication?

What are the ingredients of informal forms of communication that necessitate coordination? According to Chisholm, ‘The development of informal mechanisms is associated with inadequacies and failures of key aspects of [a] formal organisation’ (Chisholm, 1989: 65). Furthermore, he identifies a couple of factors that make informal communication important, most noteworthy of which are: (a) informal communication works more quickly than formal one; (b) there are times when formal communication is blocked because of organisational politics; and (c) even formal channels may not exist (Chisholm, 1989: 65-67). There are no time-consuming official procedures to follow in informal communication which only make communication slower; rather interaction takes place instantly upon the need to communicate (Gortner, Mahler, and Nicholson, 1987: 155). Given that information is exchanged through communication and coordination takes place based on communication when communication is an independent variable, the most important argument concerning the informal channel lies in the statement of both Devons (1950) and Sapolsky (1972). For these authors, ‘Formal channels often tend to be ineffective when information is sensitive or politically charged: formal counterparts do not trust each other; there are sanctions against the transmission of such information; or there are no formal channels between the person who wants the information and the person who has it. Informal channels are not so constrained’ (cited in

Chisholm, 1989: 68). Informal communication is also argued to take place when issues are novel, new or innovative, and there is no precedence which may allow an organisation to develop routine to handle this issue.

Moreover, how coordination is achieved may not be documented, since bureau is permanent but bureaucrats are not. Alam et al (1994: 33) points out that the purpose of rotating public officials is to make sure that they acquire a wide range of knowledge and experience (Alam et al., 1994: 33). In the case of transferring public officials, experiences gathered are taken away. Expertise is developed through experiences, and experiences can be formalised and translated into rules. That is why informal communication is important in coordination. Alexander identifies turnover of the personnel as an impediment in coordination and can also be symptomatic of other problems in coordination (Alexander, 1995: 18).

Function of informal communication in achieving coordination

In the present study, objectives are designed to trace the problems of coordination in upazilas, specifically in the activities of various departments involved in policy implementation. The issue now is the process by which informal communication facilitates coordination among departments. When informal communication takes place among departments, information is exchanged. The exchange of information is subject to interaction which leads to coordination. The exchange of information works in two ways that lead to coordination: it enhances the appreciation of the actors of their mutual problems and interdependencies and influences their decisions and actions (Alexander, 1995: 43), thereby facilitating mutual learning.

From the perspective of informal communication, a network is seen as a steering of organisational functions because interaction through communication takes place among organisations, and accordingly, information is shared leading to coordination. This means that informal communication is crisscrossing hierarchical needs of functional units. In this regard, Johnson and Mattsson (1987) argue that ‘There is a division of work in a network that means that firms are dependent on each other. Therefore, their activities need to be coordinated. Coordination is not achieved through a central plan or an organizational hierarchy, nor does it take place through the price mechanism, as in the traditional market model. Instead, coordination takes place through interaction among firms in the network’ (cited in Harriss, 2000: 229). The interaction among organisations is a vehicle of informal communication (Peters, 2006: 124), and coordination through interaction among such organisations involved in policy implementation can be achieved (Figure 8).

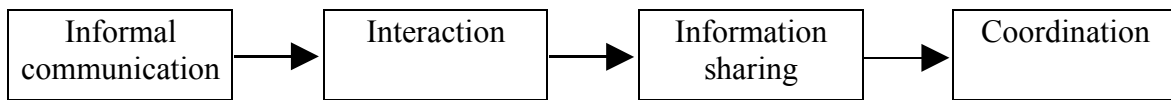


Figure 8: A model of the relationship between informal communication and coordination is based on literature in communication and coordination, discussed by Mintzberg (1979), Johnson and Mattsson (1987), Peters (2006), and Bennett (2000).

Source: Author.

Figure 8 indicates that informal communication leads to coordination among organisations involved in policy implementation. When organisations share information through interaction, coordination takes place; this is because interaction among organisations creates opportunities for acquiring and sharing information on many issues on policy implementation (i.e., who is doing what, who is having what problem, who needs what). In turn, the issues on mutual concern that ensures coordination among organisations assigned to perform specific functions concerning the policies to be implemented are resolved. Furthermore, information is power, and people who possess and use it are considered key factor to the success of policy implementation, (Badiru, 2008: 47). Due to the lack of informal communication among departments, duplication in their operations may occur. Now the question is what is the use of rules in the light of duplication? Here, apathy in obeying rules specifying who will do what, when, and how is the main restraint; however, this can be avoided by engaging in informal communication. When duplication occurs, scarce resources are wasted and implementation process takes more time than required, increasing the volume of unnecessary expenditure. Considering the importance of communication in achieving coordination, Bennett notes that the primary objective in the case of inter-organisational coordination is to ensure the minimisation of duplication and wastage by sharing information and/or resources (Bennett, 2000: 189). There are several factors embedded in informal communication which may constrain coordination. In Box 1, a sequence of arguments illustrates the significance of informal communication in coordination.

Box 1

Significance of informal communication in coordination.

For the lack of informal communication, frequent interaction is lost;
 For the lack of frequent interaction, information is lost;
 For the lack of information, coordination is lost;
 All for the lack of informal communication.

Source: Author (Idea is taken from Badiru, Adedeji B., Triple C Model of Project Management: Communication, Cooperation, and Coordination).

The above discussion leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: informal communication among departments facilitates coordination.

2.5.3. Resources

Resources—both financial and human—are important for achieving coordination in the activities of various departments during policy implementation; financial resource accelerates the process of policy implementation contributing to the timely completion of implementation activities, while human resource puts the policy into effect efficiently and cost effectively. When a policy is implemented by several departments, there is a dependency among departments as one's action depends on another's. Considering resources as an independent variable, dependency, in this study, refers to the amount of resources exchanged, the frequency of transactions, and the value of the resources to the recipient for policy implementation.

a. Financial resource and coordination

How do resources facilitate coordination? Resources are considered only as instruments contributing in keeping continued functioning of all involved in a joint course of actions. Quoting the exchange theory, Benson (1975) mentions that resource is the main factor which expounds organisational relations and behaviour (cited in Alexander, 1995: 7). Grandori (1987) thus states, 'Since organisations usually exist in an environment where resources are limited, they are dependent in varying degrees on other organisations for resources which are critical for their continued functioning' (cited in Alexander, 1995: 7). In the case of inter-organisational activities such as policy implementation, resource is controlled by a single organisation. An organisation whose functions are dependent on resource cannot start functioning unless and until resource is disbursed, and hardly be able to continue unless the disbursed resource is adequate. On the other hand, timely disbursement of resources leads to timely completion of functions that, in turn, lays the foundation upon which others can begin to start performing their tasks and functions in a timely manner. The continuation of this process is subject to synchronisation of the functions accomplished by interdependent organisations that ensure coordination in the activities of various organisations. Thus, the extent to which coordination is achieved in the activities of organisations involved in policy implementation depends on the degree to which funding for such a task is adequate and available.

The lack of funds leads to the poor quality of implementation activities, while the occurrence of untimely funding causes failures to meet the deadlines of policy implementation; this ultimately increases the total cost of policy implementation. Therefore, funds are important for policy implementation which influences coordination. This view is prevalent both in literature on coordination and policy implementation. For others, funds are indispensable for successful policy implementation such that, ‘Funding must be allocated, personnel assigned, and rules of procedures developed, among other matters’ (Howlett and Ramesh, 2003:185). For policy implementation, resources such as funds and other incentives are crucial (Van Meter and Van Horn, 1975: 465). If more financial control is imposed on local or urban bodies, problems occur in coordination among departments, creating negative impact on policy implementation (Panday, 2006: 3). Thus, in order to ensure coordination among organisations involved in policy implementation, timeliness is as important as adequate funding.

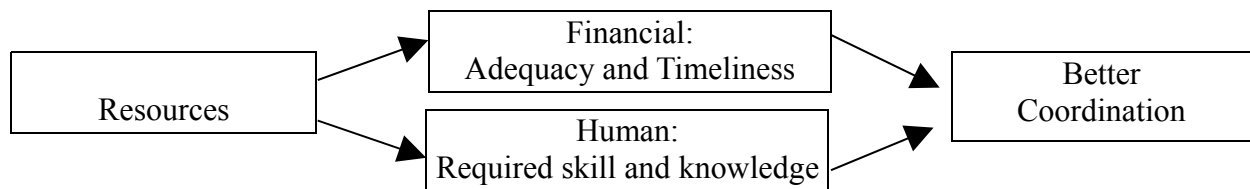


Figure 9: Model of relationship between resources and coordination deduced on literature on resources and coordination in policy implementation (Van Meter and Van Horn, 1975; Mintzberg, 1979; Howlett and Ramesh, 2003; and Panday, 2006).

Source: Author.

b. Human resource and coordination

Coordination is achieved automatically in a given situation when organisations entrusted with duties and responsibilities possess the required skills and knowledge. Thus, prior to ensuring coordination in the activities of organisations, the skills and knowledge of those who are responsible for carrying out these activities must be standardised. In this regard, theoretical assumption has been taken from Mintzberg, who claims that standardisation of skill and knowledge is important for achieving coordination (Mintzberg, 1979: 6). This is because when skill and knowledge of individuals to get things done are standardised, coordination takes place automatically because they know exactly what is expected from each other and how to act, as in the case of theatre operation. How are skills and knowledge standardised? Can standardised skills and knowledge facilitate actual coordination? This way of thinking is reflected in Mintzberg’s argument that when organisations or individuals within these are trained to acquire some skills and knowledge for achieving their tasks, coordination is achieved by virtue of their respective training. Their standardised skills and knowledge ensure coordination within the group (Mintzberg, 1979: 7).

Hypothesis 3: the more resources organisations can pool, the better the degree of coordination.

2.5.4. Organisational culture

The term ‘culture’ has become an important instrument in the discussions and study of organisations (Jamil, 2007: 58). Culture is a way of life, and it has been viewed by different scholars depending on their belongingness to the society they observed. According to Hofstede (1991), culture can be seen as ‘The collective programming of mind which distinguishes one group of people from others’ (cited in Jamil, 2007: 58). In the view of Jamil, culture is ‘an independent variable which influences interpersonal relationship, and teaches what to prefer and what to abhor’ (Jamil, 2007: 65). In the present study, culture refers to the mind set-up of civil servants influencing their working relationships governing coordination. The underlying issue is the nature of organisational culture and how it facilitates coordination. For Schwartz and Davis (1981), organisational culture is ‘a pattern of beliefs and expectations shared by the organisation’s members’ that create ‘norms that powerfully shape the behaviour of individuals and groups in the organisation’ (cited in Meek, 1994: 268). O’Reilly and Chatman (1996) define organisational culture as ‘a system of shared values (that define what is important) and norms that define appropriate attitudes and behaviours for organisational members (how to feel and behave)’ (cited in Sørensen, 2002: 72). From these definitions, it is obvious that there is a common set of values and norms embedded into an organisational culture that shape the behaviour of its members, who are more likely to take the actions in a given situation and follow the way of actions that others perceive as proper. In this respect, it can be viewed that norms, values, and beliefs of organisational members are key factors creating consensus, predicting behaviour, and creating unity (Meek, 1994: 268). This leads to the assumption that common organisational culture enhances the behavioural consistency of organisational members and thereby facilitates coordination. Thus, it is argued that ‘Organisational culture has a tremendous impact on the ability of one organisation to coordinate successfully with others. Organisations that routinely collaborate with others and encourage and foster activities (for which joint actions are required) are likely to be more successful at coordination than those that do not’ (Morris et al, 2007: 103).

Every organisation has its own culture embedded in its goals, perspective, and approaches to problem solving (McCurdy, 1983: 132). Thus, there is a need to have a community of interests when multi-organisations are involved in achieving common objectives. Seidman (1980) states that ‘If agencies are to work together harmoniously, they must share at least some community of

interests about basic goals. Without such a community of interests and compatible objectives, problems cannot be solved by coordination' (cited in McCurdy, 1983: 132). Mooney (1947) also mentions that coordination cannot be achieved unless it is based on a community of interests in the persuasion of desired objectives (cited in McCurdy, 1983: 121). Harmalin (2001) firmly notes that organisational culture enhances goal alignment, and conversely, goal alignment facilitates coordination, since there is less chance to argue over the firm's best interest (cited in Sørensen, 2002: 73).

Cultural institutional perspective and coordination

Another dimension employed in this study is cultural institutional perspective described by Selznick (1957) (cited in Christensen and Lægried, 2008: 103). From this perspective, coordination is a product of an institution and greater interaction is produced while members of an institution share common values derived from the culture of the same institution (cited in Peters, 1998: 297-298). Meanwhile, for Krasner (1998) and March (1994), public organisation is developed on the basis of three principles: historical tradition, path dependency, and informal norms and values (cited in Christensen and Lægried, 2008: 103). This means that the development of an organisation is associated with a process which 'happens to the organisations over time' (Selznick, 1957; cited in Scott, 2001: 24). Such process causes failure to produce rational men who can think and act in a given situation according to logic of consequence. Rather, they act in the given course of action on the basis of logic of appropriateness. As for Mintzberg, coordination can be achieved based on a common set of beliefs shared by members of the organisation (Mintzberg, 1988: 280). Coordination takes place by virtue of organisational culture, when a common set of norms and values are widely shared and intensely held across the organisations. Others argue that 'common norms foster common identity and preferences that make coordination of different activities across organisations easier' (Panday and Jamil, forthcoming). In contrast, cultural differences among organisations may cause lack of coordination.

When coordination is conceptualised in this theoretical lens, logic of appropriateness forms the basis of cultural perspective among organisations. The logic of appropriateness determined by the institution decides what is expected from the members and also guides the behaviours of the institution itself. Logic of appropriateness is relevant for inter-organisational coordination in two ways (Peters, 1998: 298): coordination is achieved without using authority when a common logic exists among organisations (Gupta, Dirsmith, and Fogarty, 1994; cited in Peters, 1998: 298-99), and coordination is also achieved with less disruption of organisational routines when common policy

values are shared by organisations (Peters, 1998: 299). In this respect, March and Olsen (1989) state that ‘What is appropriate for a civil servant to do is defined by the institution to which he belongs and transmitted through socialisation’ (cited in Christensen and Lægreid, 2008: 103).

Social capital, organisational culture, and coordination

There appears a relationship between social capital (e.g., trust) and organisational culture. Coordination suffers while there is mistrust in the relationship of organisations, as coordination is likely to be more based on confidence that organisations will perform their respective duties and responsibilities properly. Confidence is a by-product of trust. Irma Bogenrieder and Bart Nooteboom (2004) explain that trust creates an ‘expectation that others will not behave opportunistically even if they have both the opportunities and incentives for doing so’ (cited in Parker, 2007: 119). Putnam (1993 and 2000) identifies trust as the glue among the members of a group and also as one of the features of social capital which facilitates coordination among the organisations for achieving common objectives (cited in Parker, 2007: 119 and Harriss, 2000: 236). Now the question is how does trust facilitate a common organisational culture? There are some ingredients of trust which include common preferences, values, norms, mutual liking, and so forth, and all these factors can foster common organisational culture leading to coordination. More discussions in this respect are made in the following section. There is interplay between organisational culture and coordination in which trust acts as an intervening factor (Figure 9). Therefore, the extent to which coordination is achieved varies depending on the existence of trust in the relationship of interdependent organisations (Harriss, 2000: 229).

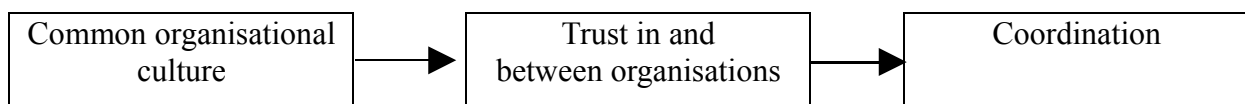


Figure 10: Trust is an intervening variable in the case of relationship between common organizational culture and coordination.

Source: Author.

Cultural compatibility and coordination

How is cultural appropriateness relevant in coordination among organisations? Cultural appropriateness varies depending on the culture of each organisation. In inter-organisational perspective, cultural appropriateness refers to cultural compatibility among organisations, with cultural compatibility referring to the sharing of common norms, beliefs, and values system guiding organisations to act in a synchronised manner. When members of an organisation or a number of such groups share common norms, beliefs and values systems, coordination takes place in their operations since sharing similar norms and values represent a collective will or consciousness of

organisations. Does cultural compatibility among organisations contribute to coordination? In this regard, it must be noted that coordination is required to standardise the performance of organisations; but variations in performance may occur due to cultural differences among such groups (Jamil, 2007: 66-67). Thus, the extent to which coordination is achieved depends on either the extent to which cultural compatibility is in existence among organisations or the extent to which cultural differences have been overcome. Generally, literature on culture and coordination posits a multidimensional relationship between cultural compatibility and coordination (Figure 11).

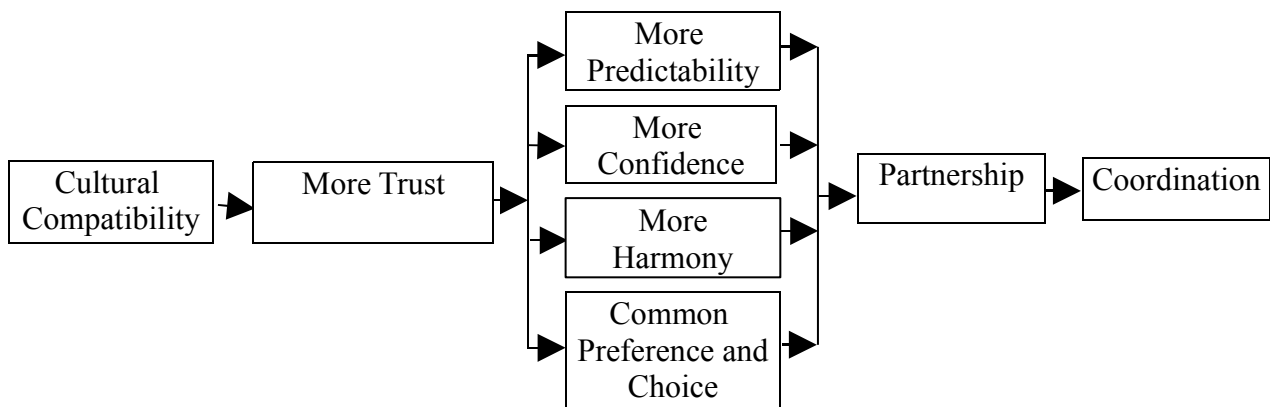


Figure 11: Model of multidimensional relationship between cultural compatibility and coordination.
Source: Author.

Figure 11 depicts that cultural compatibility among organisations generates a high level of trust on each other. Those with high levels of trust can predict the actions or behaviours of others based on the belief that the trustee will do what is appropriate in a given situation, which helps to develop partnership easily among organisations. Christensen and Læg Reid note a ‘high level of mutual trust tends to enhance appropriate behaviour and vice versa’ (Christensen and Læg Reid, 2008: 103). Trust, in a sense, refers to some presumption of knowledge about someone. Similarly, organisations have more confidence on another group when there is high level of trust. Higher confidence on each other facilitates the delegation of duties and responsibilities to other organisations in the case of inter-organisational involvement in achieving common objectives. Building of trust creates confidence and more confidence enhances the level of expectation toward each other in that no one fostering partnership among organisations will be opportunistic in a relationship, a result which leads to effective coordination; thus, in this respect, formal rules specifying who will do what become highly ineffective. Jamil argues that rules and procedures are replaced by trust and confidence in organisations with high levels of trust (Jamil, 2007: 67).

A harmonious relationship must appear in the workplace when high level of trust exists among organisations, as organisations with high level of trust consider each other as trustworthy partners in

their relationship. This relationship facilitates in building up partnership that produces high level of cooperation which leads to more coordination. The existence of high level of trust among organisations vests the responsibility of functioning on behalf of all involved in an organisation because of similarity in terms of their preferences and choices. For example, in the visa processing for Scandinavian countries in Bangladesh, the Embassy of Sweden on behalf of all Scandinavian countries does the representation. Such singular representation has become possible as their preferences and choices in providing visas are similar and they have high level of mutual trust which has developed partnership among them, leading to increased coordination. According to Narus and Anderson (1987), partnership is marked by coordinated actions directed at common objectives consistent across organisations (cited in Mohr and Spekman, 1994:138). However, the above discussion leads us to assume that coordination depends on partnership. The fundamental basis of partnership is trust; it was rightly noted that high level of trust among organisations is the foundation of coordination (Pires et al., 2001: 287). Thus, it is imperative that common norms, belief, and value system (e. g., culture) of organisations can foster coordination.

Factors governing organisational culture

The issue at hand is whether organisational culture varies from one organisation to another. If it does, how does it vary or what are the factors that can explain cultural differences? There is an exert influence of the history of organisational development on organisational culture reproduced throughout the period of its existence. Christensen et al. note that organisation is developed at a specific point of history; accordingly, particular cultural contexts or norms and values that have a lifelong impact are produced (Christensen et al., 2007: 45). A second possible factor is the pattern of recruitment. Given the fact that organisations are heterogeneous entities in terms of functions they perform, it is logical that their requirements for assimilating personnel differ. Accordingly, the patterns of recruitment matching with personnel required vary from one another, and the choice of specific patterns of recruitment is embedded into the organisational culture.

Organisational culture decides what kind of personnel is needed and what pattern is suitable to recruit such kind of personnel. For example, multinational companies hire competent and skilled personnel by offering higher monetary incentives, whereas personnel in public organisations are recruited through competitive examinations. Even among public organisations, the pattern of recruitment varies depending on how organisational culture has developed and what their norms and values they practice. A third factor may be prestige or status, which is basically cultural. The development of organisational culture in terms of prestige is subject to the culture embedded in the

society. Working in government organisations is seen as more prestigious than being in private organisations as people who work with government organisations have more access to power. Moreover, among the government organisations, people working with administrative or police organisations which are closely linked to power are considered highly prestigious in the view of society, which is likewise attributed to direct access to power. Moreover, power is one of the determinant factors in the Bangladeshi culture. Thus, prestige or status variation leads to cultural differences among organisations. All these factors mentioned above are responsible for developing different set of norms, values, and beliefs which make differences in the organisation's way of thinking as reflected in their logic of appropriate behaviour. Thus, differences in logic of appropriateness may lead to lack of coordination. The above discussion leads to the formulation of the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: organisational cultural compatibility among departments may facilitate more coordination in their activities.

a. How can organisational culture and coordination be studied in Bangladesh?

Hierarchical pattern of civil service

In the context of Bangladesh, most of the civil servants somehow have strong roots in the village. Bangladesh is a village-based country as there are 65,000 villages within an area of 56,000 square miles. Even people who live in cities consider villages as their real homes since their parents or grandparents once lived in villages (Jamil, 2007: 7). Hence, societies in Bangladesh have a strong village basis. Jamil argues that the extent to which norms and values carries over from village life is reproduced in formal bureaucratic organisations depending on the degree to which society tradition prevails (Jamil, 2007: 5). According to Hofstede (1980 and 1991), 'People who are born and brought up in a particular cultural context reproduce many of the norms which are developed in childhood, in family, in school, and in society' (cited in Jamil, 2007: 11). Thus, in a hierarchical society like Bangladesh, traditional relationship in villages between father and son, teacher and student or master and servant is reflected in the relationship of superior and subordinate or senior and junior in bureaucratic organisations. In a traditional relationship, the son respects and obeys parents and in contrast, parents take care of the son. Jamil mentions that this type of relationship maintains harmony in a group with similar norms and values (Jamil, 2007: 9).

In a civil service system with strictly hierarchical relationship such as Bangladesh, civil servants know how to obey and respect their seniors and how to take care of and protect their juniors (Jamil,

2007: 192-194). In contrast, the relationship of civil servants in inter-service suffers because of rivalry, factionalism, and lack of coordination (Siddiqui, 1996; cited in Jamil, 2007: 194). Moreover, civil servants of particular cadres prefer working with their respective cadre officials due to a community of interests representing their own departmental or organisational culture to officials of another cadre. Thus, when they work with others, there appears a problem of cultural differences or lack of cultural compatibility which may impede coordination.

Generalist-specialist conflict

One major problem associated with coordination among departments in upazilas may be the conflict between the generalist and the specialist bureaucrats. Thus, Ahmed and Tasnim rightly note that one of the maladies of the Bangladesh civil service is the generalist-specialist conflict or controversy which exists and appears in the national level administration as well as field level administration (Ahmed and Tasnim, 2003: 84). Hence, the underlying questions may include why conflicting relationships exist between generalists and specialists and what its impacts on coordination are or how it affects coordination. Meanwhile, the administration simultaneously plays both traditional and development roles. The generalists play a major role in the traditional function of the administration, whereas the specialists are the key functionaries in the latter case. Thus, both generalists and specialists bear equal importance in running the affairs of the administration (Ahmed and Tasnim, 2003: 92). However, there is discrimination between generalist and specialist bureaucrats, and perhaps this is the main reason behind the lack of harmonious relationship between the two groups is discrimination. Discrimination is about power, status, promotion, and participation in decision making (summarised in Table 1). Despite having similar backgrounds required to become eligible for entering into the civil service, the existence of discrimination between them may create conflict. This conflict could lead to the lack of cooperation and coordination.

The organisational culture embedded into the structure of Bangladesh civil service is a direct product of colonial legacy. The civil service that Bangladesh inherited after its independence from Pakistan was a transformed version of that developed by the British in the Indian sub-continent. During the period of British rule in single India (now comprising three individual countries namely Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan), generalist administrators were labelled as elite class of civil service. This is because all positions at the upper echelons of administration were occupied by the generalist administrators who had an absolute supremacy over others. This tradition of elitism prevailed in Pakistan civil service; and even after 38 years of emergence as an independent country,

the elitist structure of civil service is still a dominant feature of Bangladesh civil service despite the absence of a British ruler and the context for which the British developed such type of civil service. Moreover, in Bangladesh, there is no elite cadre as it prevailed in the British-India and Pakistan. After independence, all services have been integrated and discrimination among services was abolished, at least in theory. In reality, however, the administration cadre still dominates. Furthermore, although the recruitment pattern of both generalists and specialists is similar, there is a major gap between them in terms of promotion. Members of the administration cadre are promoted to the next higher position on a regular basis, as the Ministry of Establishment which deals with civil affairs, including the recruitment policy of the government, principles for promotion, and training of civil servants irrespective of cadre affiliation, has absolute control of the administration cadre. On the other hand, promotion among specialist civil servants is slower; in addition, higher positions in technical ministries or divisions are occupied chiefly by generalists. Thus, the existence of colonial administrative legacy and the lack of equal opportunity in terms of promotion may create a generalist-specialist tension, hindering coordination in their activities.

Generalist	Sphere	Specialist
Generalists usually have access to policy making positions.	Decision making power	Specialists seldom occupy policy making positions.
They have higher status.	Honour	Their position in authority is delimited to departmental activities regarded as less prestigious.
Getting advantage of quota they have chance for quick promotion	Promotion	Their promotion is too slow as they do not have any quota for promotion.

Table 1: Basic sphere between generalist-specialist conflicts in Bangladesh

Source: Ahmed and Tasnim (2003: 84) (modified by author)

2.6. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to develop a theoretical framework for exploring and analysing the issue of coordination in field administration in Bangladesh. In doing so, literature on coordination has been reviewed briefly and attempts have also been made to establish a relationship between coordination (dependent variable) and factors (independent variables) affecting coordination. The above discussions suggest that in a situation characterised by formal division of labour, frequent informal communication, adequate and timely funding, skilled and required number of human resource, and existence of cultural compatibility, there is likely to be better coordination in the activities of the organisations involved in policy implementation. On the basis of the above

arguments, an analytical framework has been developed in this chapter which elucidates the integrated involvement of formal division of labour, informal communication, resources, and organisational culture that cumulatively lead to coordination in this study.

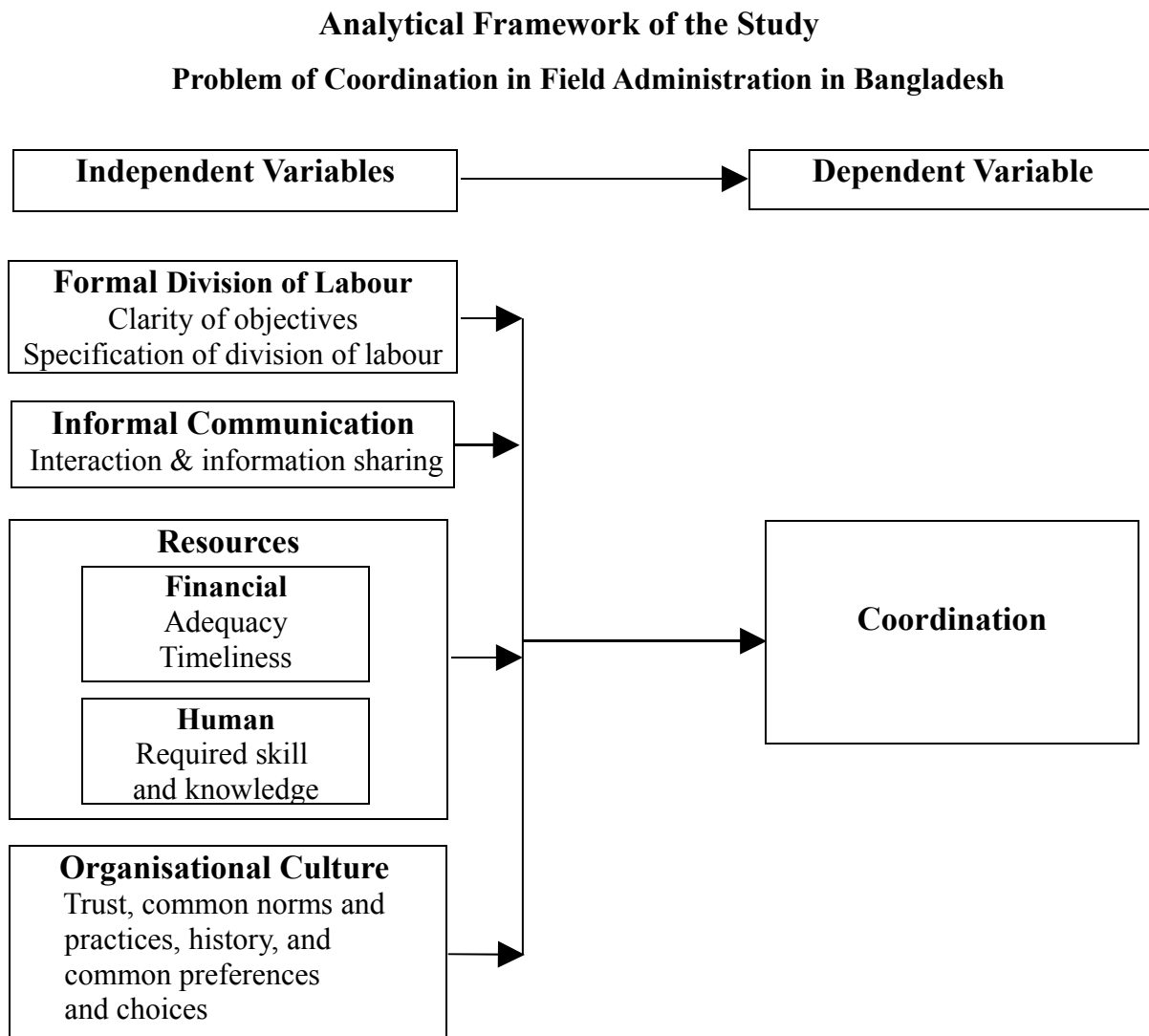


Figure 12: Analytical Framework of the Study

Source: Author

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The major purpose of this chapter is to discuss various methodological approaches in relation to the research questions of the present study. By doing this, the present study is based on qualitative research. Furthermore, discussion is made on data collection techniques and methodological implications to justify the use in the context of the present research.

3.2. Research design

‘A research design is the logic that links the data to be collected (and the conclusion to be drawn) to the initial questions of a study [and] every empirical study has an implicit, if not explicit, research design’ (Yin, 1994: 19). For doing social science research, there are three types of research designs: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed approach. Qualitative and quantitative approaches are used to explore and understand the opinions of the respondents on social problem, make generalisations about the problem, and examine the relation among the variables used in research to test the theories, respectively, while both are considered in using mixed approach (Creswell, 2009: 4). This study is a process-based qualitative research.

3.2.1. *Rationale behind using the qualitative approach*

In qualitative research, the goal of researchers is to rely as much as possible on the respondent’s views on the issue being studied (Creswell, 2009: 8). Accordingly, the goal of this research is to explore information on the research problem based on the respondent’s perception towards it, rather than being confined by the structure of predetermined questions. Such approach allowed the respondents to express their opinions outside the questions asked. In this respect, interviews with open-ended questions were used to collect information. Second, before visiting the area of study, there was no preconceived idea regarding the research problem. For example, one of the variables was organisational culture and under this variable, one of the sub-variables was working procedures and norms. Before the respondents were interviewed, no preliminary background research was done as to whether they have similar or different working procedures and norms. Third, the present study is concerned with the process rather than the outcomes; specifically, this study is designed to understand the research problem as a process by addressing the questions ‘why’ and ‘how’. For example, it can be assumed that coordination in inter-departmental activities may be problematic because of the lack of rules, when quantitative research is employed. On the other hand, how the

lack of rules is translated into activities and consequently affects coordination can only be shown through qualitative research. Moreover, this study does not intend to test theories; rather the purpose of this study is to understand existing theories and to make generalisations about the research problem.

a. Research problem

When a research problem is new or almost new, it calls for using qualitative research (Creswell, 2009: 18). The present research is an exploratory one. A number of researchers in Bangladesh have studied and written about coordination. Their areas of study have been mainly about local and urban governance. Very little research was conducted on issues like problems of coordination in field administration and its impact on policy implementation. Many facets of the problems of coordination beyond our knowledge may remain unveiled. Therefore, the present research may help explore important and interesting information on many unasked questions regarding the problems of coordination.

b. Personal experience

A qualitative research was deemed more appropriate for the type of problem being dealt with in this research, considering the advantages of delivering more discussions over fewer cases rather than fewer discussions over more cases. Accordingly, a particular policy area as the only case was selected in order to determine the extent of the interrelatedness of the corresponding variables. To achieve such objective, an in-depth analysis of variables was conducted, as opposed to the oversimplified presentation of variables and their interrelationship in a quantitative research. To study variables, questions were developed in a way that one question led to another follow-up question. For example, a question asked under the variable resources was whether or not timely disbursement of funds fosters coordination among departments. The responses to this question led this author to ask further how timely disbursement of funds fosters coordination. Such spontaneous process helped in tracing facts and in exploring and understanding the respondents' opinions about the research problem.

3.3. Research strategy

The present study is based on exploratory and descriptive research. Here, the implementation of rural infrastructure development policy was studied as a process to understand why and how coordination in the activities of various departments involved in policy implementation in upazila is

lacking. In this connection, a field study was conducted in the Shadullapur upazila of Gaibandha²⁶ District, approximately 300 km north of the capital city, Dhaka. Moreover, the scholars' views on coordination are highlighted in order to have a better understanding why coordination is absent and how this has come to be.

Research as a process deals with the 'how' and 'why' questions; but the process of crafting the 'why' and 'how' questions were suited for this study lies in the research problem. Since the present research intended to analyse inter-organisational coordination and explore and identify factors that affect coordination, it was required to identify variables and the relationships existing among them. Accordingly, variables such as formal division of labour and organisational culture were identified and studied. By doing so, the relationships between variables were established in order to understand the interplay of various factors in the process of ensuring coordination. The use of 'how' and 'why' questions made it possible for the author to establish relationship between variables. Another reason for studying this research as a process is the intention to identify and examine all probable factors that affect coordination. By examining this particular policy area, the analysis of data became easier. As such, all possible variables were identified to understand the coordination process more comprehensively and create generalisation about the research problem more accurately.

3.3.1. The logic behind selecting particular policy area

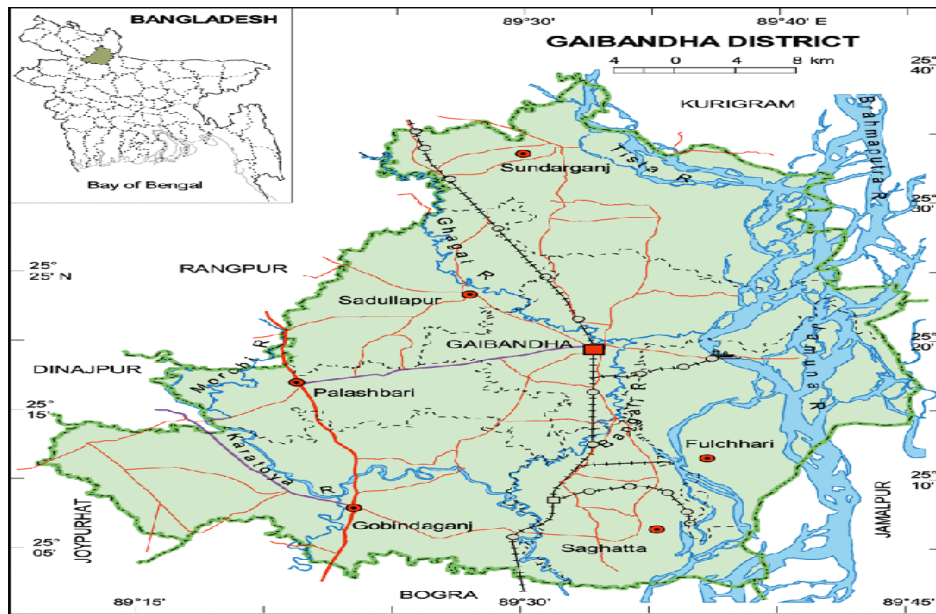
In the present study, the policy area is the rural infrastructure development policy of the government, through which various development activities such as roads, culverts, bridges, school buildings, complexes for union parishads, and embankments on river banks are carried out. The implementation responsibilities along this policy are vested on the LGED. The development of rural infrastructure is the main concern of the policy being studied in this paper, and it has been chosen to be congruent with the process-based approach employed by the present study. With nation building at its core, the government plays a vital role toward the socio-economic development of rural areas through the implementation of this policy. Bangladesh is an agriculture-based country; majority of its population live in villages and, therefore, agriculture is the main source of livelihood. Thus, rural economy is a vital area of the national economy of Bangladesh. Without accelerating the rural economy, there is no other alternative to make the country's economy stronger. On the other hand, the advancement or acceleration of rural economy depends largely on the development of rural

²⁶ Gaibandha is town in Bnagladesh and it is a district where there are seven upazilas, one of which is Shadullapur the focul area of study in this paper.

infrastructure such as roads, culverts, and bridges. Accordingly, all the government have always placed this policy at the top priority, and consequently, each government invests more money in this policy area compared to others. To achieve success, however, the coordination among those who are involved in the implementation of the policy must be strongly fostered, instead of investing huge amounts of money. Therefore, this policy area bears more importance in investigating.

3.4. Reasons behind the selection of the unit of analysis

As the area of study, Shadullapur upazila, located in Gaibandha District, was selected out of 482 upazilas in Bangladesh purposefully because of its manageability and controllability within a specified period of time. The second reason is its location; Gaibandha District is located at the northern part of Bangladesh and almost 300 km. away from Dhaka. Shadullapur upazila is nearly 20 km. more north of the Gaibandha District headquarter, which means that there is lack of urban facilities in the prospective upazila. A relation may exist between the location of my area of study and the research problem, that is, more government officials are posted in urbanised upazilas. As a result, shortage of manpower is a common feature in rural upazilas, and such peripheral location may lead me in obtaining some interesting information. Another reason is the familiarity of the author with Shadullapur upazila, which is the author's birthplace and hometown. A native understanding of this upazila is deemed significant in obtaining contextualised information. Except for the government officials, the author had an easy access to all the respondents who were residents of this upazila as well, generating spontaneous opinions. Furthermore, author's personal networks and experiences used during field visits were helpful in obtaining information on issues relevant to the research. Collecting similar information from an unknown upazila can be more complicated within the time period (ten weeks only). Below, the location of Gaibandha District is marked in the map of Bangladesh (on top from the left); the map of this District is shown elaborately, showing seven upazilas, including Shadullapur.



Map 1: Map of Gaibandha District

Source: <http://www.mygaibandha.info/districtMap.php>

3.5. Methods of data collection

The present research is basically qualitative. Some quantitative data were also collected and used to substantiate the qualitative data.

3.5.1. Interview

Primary data related to research objectives were collected through comprehensive and detailed interviews with the respondents. An important source of evidence is interview, which allows researchers to interpret the events through the views of the respondents (Yin, 1994: 84). Moreover, the perceptions of the respondents served as the major sources of information on variables collected through interview. To interview respondents, open-ended questions were asked because first, open-ended questions allowed the respondents to give opinions from their own points of view, and second, responses to one question led to another question and this process helped author to study in-depth the research issue and map the respondents' perceptions towards the research problem. In this study, the question, 'How does coordination take place while multiple departments are involved in policy implementation?' was asked. The response to this question led to another follow-up question, 'What in your opinion are the ways that may ensure coordination properly?' Such mode of questioning enabled the author to collect more data on issues to be addressed in this study. Moreover, establishing dialogues with the respondents enabled the author to utilise the comments or remarks of the respondents to substantiate the research arguments. The third reason for using open-ended questions lay on the fact that the comments or remarks of the respondents were considered

important in qualitative research because personal views of the respondents on events can only be expressed through comments or remarks.

A standard questionnaire with some variations were developed and used to fit different groups of respondents: the UNO, the administrative head of upazila; the officers in charge of various departments in upazila; the AC Land, the chief land officer of upazila; the chairman of the upazila parishad, the head of local government at the upazila level; the chairman of the union parishad, the people's representative member in the Upazila Development and Coordination Committee (UDCC²⁷); a number of contractors who physically work for the execution of rural infrastructure development policy; and the general public. The variation of questionnaire may be a point of argument; although the author categorised the respondents into four groups (i.e., governmental, people's representative, contractor, and general public), there are actually seven types of respondents according to the nature of functions they perform, indicating that they are functionally separated from each other. For example, the UNO and the AC Land are responsible for accomplishing different types of functions. Likewise, the officers in charge of various departments perform functions different from both the UNO and the AC Land. Other respondents, including the chairman of the upazila parishad, the chairman of the union parishad and the contractors, were also separated from each other in terms of the functions they perform. Lastly, the general public do not have any function or involvement with regard to research problem, but they have general views over the functions accomplished by the above mentioned respondents. There were some common questions for all types of respondents except for the general people, although they were also asked several questions addressed to the contractors and chairman of union parishad. The total number of respondents was 57 (Table 2).

Table 2: List of Respondents

Group of respondents	Type of respondent	Status of respondents	No. of respondents	Reasons for choosing the respondents
	Governmental			
	UNO	Chief Executive Officer	1	The UNO is considered an important source of information as the coordination responsibility of all functions accomplished in the upazila is vested on him. Moreover, along with the AC Land, the UNO is also a generalist officer at the upazila level; the generalist-specialist aspect of civil service is one of the concerns in this study.

²⁷ UDCC is a committee, which is an important mechanism for inter-departmental coordination in upazila because this is the only committee in which the UNO, other officers in charge of all national building departments, and people's representatives at the upazila and union levels have membership.

1)	Agriculture Officer	Head of the Dept.	1	They were selected in order to understand the research problem more comprehensively. Second, in this study, an independent variable is organizational culture, which is directly connected with the inherent conflict within the civil service between the generalist and the specialist. This group of respondents, along with upazila engineer of the LGED, comprise the group of specialist officers at the upazila level. Moreover, they have membership in different committees including the UDCC and departmental committees. Thus, they were considered relevant sources of information on research problem.
	Health and Family Planning Officer	Head of the Dept.	1	
	Fisheries Officer	Head of the Dept.	1	
	Education Officer	Head of the Dept.	1	
	Upazila Engineer	Head of the LGED	1	
	AC Land	Chief Land Officer	1	
Total			7	
2)	People's representative			
	Chairman of Upazila Parishad	Political Head	1	He is the head of local government at the upazila level. Moreover, he is considered to have a better insight into the query about what happens to the issue of coordination when there is a lack of formal division of labour. Although the upazila administration is supposed to be placed at the disposal of local government at the upazila level while in operation, his duties and responsibilities are still unclear even after being elected at this tier of local government. This is because there is no rule in this regard yet.
	Chairman of Union Parishad	Head of the Union	6	They are people's representative members of the UDCC, chosen on the basis of random sampling and not on the total number of eleven chairmen of union council.
Total			7	
3)	Contractor	Specialised Business-men	8	They have a better understanding of coordination, especially when it is associated with funds. Coordination can ensure timely disbursement of funds and accelerate policy functions executed by the contractors. They were selected randomly.
Total			8	

4)	General Public	Citizens	35	They are considered important sources of information on the results of policy implementation when there is a lack of coordination, as a policy is not implemented in isolation; rather local people are to some extent involved in its implementation. They are all male and chosen on the basis of random sampling. The respondents consisted of grade school and college teachers, local elite, businessmen, and few college students.
Total			35	
Total			57	

Source: Author.

3.5.2. Documentation

Documentation as a source of secondary data was used in this research to supplement the data collected through interview. Various internal and external documents on coordination were collected. As internal documents, information on various issues related to the present research problem (e.g., why inter-departmental coordination does not take place properly, how intra-departmental coordination affects inter-departmental coordination, what are the consequences of the lack of inter-departmental coordination in policy implementation, and so on) was collected. Internal documents on issues mentioned above have not been recorded and preserved in concerned offices, whose only documents are those about the completion of projects known as progress reports. Such progress reports only stipulate how much money was allocated and the dates of completion.

As regards external documents, attempts were made to explore data on various issues, including the lack of manpower and the untimely disbursement of funds for policy implementation. Likewise, the impact of these aspects on coordination, identification of cases or examples of poor implementation and the reasons behind these, why implementation of projects remain unfinished for long time, and so on, were determined. To do so, various published and unpublished books and journal articles relevant to the research, various field administration manuals, research reports and some national and local newspapers, were used. In addition, as an attempt to collect external documents, the Internet was used for browsing relevant websites including the LGED, the Daily Star²⁸, the Daily Prothom Alo²⁹, and other national newspapers containing secondary data.

3.6. Problems of data collection

Collecting field data was easy, although some difficulties arose. Nevertheless, there were only few

²⁸ A widely circulated daily English Newspaper in Bangladesh.

²⁹ A widely circulated daily Newspaper in Bangladesh published in Bangla.

difficulties in gathering data given that the area of study was very familiar to the author. Nonetheless, below are some of the situations the author faced in the process of data acquisition.

First, the author assumed that all information were properly recorded and archived in government offices, even though government officials in developing countries such as Bangladesh hardly reveal public documents in the pretext of secrecy. In reality, the picture concerning the preservation and maintenance of proper information in government offices is completely different. Although the offices the author dealt with prepared and preserved information with regard to their policy implementation activities through reports or other documents, these did not show any information on whether or not policy implementation was successful, what were the factors responsible for its success or failure, and so on. Rather, their reports or documents only revealed limited information concerning the completion of activities. In the effort to collect more information, the author visited the construction of a two-storey building for a primary school to become acquainted with actual implementation. When the author inquired with the official concerned with why the quality of implementation work was poor and what were the problems associated with the implementation process, no substantial response was provided, except a template report similar in nature to that mentioned above.

Moreover, the Bangladeshi government does not usually look into this matter. For example, when a document regarding a particular inter-departmental case is required, the government official concerned prepares it perfunctorily or on an ad hoc basis and not based on a well thought-out plan. This is due to the lack of attention and motivation to inter-departmental activities. Public organisations in Bangladesh are hierarchic in nature and are more attentive to their own activities, hardly going beyond the horizon of their own spheres. This lack of awareness has caused negligence in preserving documents related to inter-departmental activities.

Second, another prominent problem was the failure of government officials to recognize the value of coordination. In the case of inter-departmental activities, the issue of coordination is not prioritised and each entity performed his respective function in a highly independent manner and, hence. Government officials were not willing to talk about the issue of coordination; thus, a major way of obtaining information was to ask respondents who are non-government officials. As a whole, they can be classified as the local people, which include the contractor, the people's representative, and the general public. They comprise a mixture of direct and indirect participants in the system of local governance and policy implementation in an upazila who experienced the issue

of coordination. However, collecting information for a variety of cases necessitated the inclusion of a large number of local people as no single person or group exclusively possesses essential information. Obtaining information through this process was not only time consuming; it was also difficult to get access to the general public as they are likely to suspect the interviewer's motive.

Third, it was difficult to obtain access to the government officials posted at the upazila level, but belong to the central bureaucracy since these officials mostly overlooked their responsibility of providing services to the citizens. In this context, all citizens are equal and have access to the public officials; however, in most cases, the officials are mostly inaccessible because they consider themselves as members of the social elite. Moreover, easy access to government officials is not encouraged based on the assumption that citizens will not pay respect to them, if they have easy access to them. Thus, only those who belong to the elite have access to these officials. This culture explains why data collection through formal approach is almost impossible. In this light, network and informal approach to data collection had become an important tool for this research. Accordingly, the author had to use his personal network in order to gain access to the government officials.

3.7. Reliability and validity of data

3.7.1. Reliability of data

Reliability refers to the consistency of data over time. It indicates that similar result is produced when similar procedures are applied in the same way (King et al., 1994: 25). The primary data for this study was collected from various types of respondents (e.g., the UNO, AC Land, officers in charge of various departments, chairman of upazila parishad, a number of union chairman, some contractors, and a large number of general public). The former six types of respondents were selected because of their direct involvement in the implementation of rural infrastructure development policy in the upazila in Shadullapur, while the last was selected in order to have a better understanding about the impact of coordination on policy implementation. In order to check the consistency of data, the similar questions were asked to various types of respondents, and even the similar questions were asked to the same respondents at different times during interview session. In addition, quite a number of respondents were interviewed in order to ensure the reliability of data.

3.7.2. Validity of data

According to Creswell and Miller (2000), one of the strengths of qualitative research is validity, determined based on whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researchers, the participants or readers of an account (cited in Creswell, 2009: 191). Validity refers to the trustworthiness of data, which is subject to the measurement of phenomena (e.g., research problem); therefore, it depends largely on the degree to which how accurately phenomena are measured. Focusing on accurate measurement of phenomena, various types of respondents were interviewed and on the other side, a good number of respondents within each type were selected and interviewed with the view to cross check the trustworthiness of data. Moreover, in order to enhance the trustworthiness of data, various documents were collected to substantiate the data collected from the respondents. For example, secondary information with regard to the shortage of officer such as AC Land were collected after learning of the shortage of officers through the respondents. Furthermore, since the area of policy chosen for this study was the rural infrastructure development policy of the government implemented at the local level by the office of the LGED, the officer in charge of the LGED of the Shadullapur upazila became a subject of this study in order to review the reports on the research problem provided by the other respondents. The choice of this official was largely due to the fact that he was well informed and experienced by virtue of his job nature. Thus, the data collected from this source helped measure the phenomena more accurately, thereby enhancing data reliability.

3.8. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss various methodological approaches in relation to the research questions. The present study is an analysis of inter-organisational coordination among departments at the local level in Bangladesh, for which a process-based qualitative research was employed. For collecting data, interviews as well as documentation were used as source of evidence. During policy area selection, the rural infrastructure development policy of the government and upazila, namely, Shadullapur, was selected as the unit of analysis.

Chapter Four

Development of Field Administration in Bangladesh: Pendulous or Static?

4.1. Introduction

The main purpose of this chapter is to give a brief account of the historical development of field administration and its current status in Bangladesh. In addition, it concisely discusses the system of local governance in Bangladesh.

4.2. Field administration

The term 'field administration' is a by-product of decentralization. Decentralization is found in almost all countries irrespective of the form of government. Smith (1967) pointed out that decentralization, in a unitary form of the government, contains two complementary and interrelated practices. One is devolution, which is also known as political decentralization, through which the authority to make certain decisions in some spheres of public policy is delegated by law to the local level government. Another is deconcentration within the bureaucracy, which is termed as administrative decentralization, wherein authority is delegated to the public servants working in wide areas scattered across the country in order to make administrative decision on behalf of central administration and responsible in varying degrees for government policy within their territories (Smith, 1967: 1). Generally, field administration refers to administration away from the capital city of a country and scattered throughout the country. Field administration is referred to a bureaucratic form of decentralization in which the authority to make administrative decisions are delegated to the civil servants working in the field (Smith. 1967: 1-3). In addition, the field services of an administrative agency refer to 'the personnel stationed away from its headquarters into the country, to carry on its work from the numerous sub-centres within the easy reach of the people' (Obaidullah, 1999: 96).

4.3. Historical development of field administration in Bangladesh

In order to have an understanding about the existing system of administration at the local level in Bangladesh, it is necessary to go into the background of the circumstances that led to the development of field administration. Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) was one of the two provinces of Pakistan before its emergence as an independent country along with the present India (ruled by the East India Company and later by the British Crown for two hundred years). Here, the discussion with regard to the historical development of field administration is made based on purely

bureaucratic in terms of the creation of administrative units at different eras.

4.3.1. The British Period (1600-1947)

With the prior approval of [Elizabeth I](#) on December 31, 1600, the ‘East India Company’³⁰, under the name ‘Governor’ and ‘Company of Merchants of London Trading in the East Indies’ (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_India_Company) came to the Indian sub-continent (presently comprised of the sovereign countries of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) for mercantile purposes. Apart from its trading purpose, the company was being connected gradually with the system of governance and in this respect, its first achievement was acquiring the right granted by the Nawab³¹ of Bengal to collect revenue in the three estates of Govindapur, Sutanati, and Kolkata in 1698 (Ali, 1982: 22). Given the right in revenue collection, the company realized the necessity of the creation of a post at the district in order to improve and accelerate the revenue collection system. Moreover, two momentous events caused changes in the charter of the company through which the company, from a mere trading body, became a body entitled to have political authority: one was victory against the Nawab of Bengal in a battle known as the Battle of Plassey (1757); another was the acquisition of the right of civil administration granted by the then Mughal Emperor over the three provinces of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa (Ali, 1982: 22). Therefore, the territories placed under its charge were governed by the company, and the company, thereafter, developed its own pattern of administration.

In order to improve the revenue collection system, the company first became involved with the revenue and land administration in 1772. Consequently, Bengal was divided into nine collectorships (districts) and collectors for each district were appointed. A local agency conducting revenue collection was decided to create and consequently, the Court of Director of the company issued a letter to the Government of Bengal with the instruction of taking necessary actions in this regard. This letter was considered as a comprehensive document in which the picture of the future of field administration in Bengal was drawn; it was laid down in the letter that ‘a moderate number of our provincial covenanted servants, distinguished for good conduct and abilities, and conversant in the country languages’ should be posted in the districts to be assisted by the native officers of revenue (Ali, 1982: 25). Later, Bengal was divided into twenty-four districts in 1787 and a collector was appointed in each district. After experiencing a vast body of debates on whether a union of judicial,

³⁰ The East India Company was a trading company founded in 1600, with headquarters in London. It was formed initially for pursuing trades with the East Indies. In the case of the Indian-subcontinent, it gradually came to rule which, in fact, effectively began in 1757 after the Battle of Plassey, its rule lasted for 200 years. The Company’s rule ended when the British Crown took over the governance of India in 1858.

³¹ This literally refers to the Governor.

executive, and revenue powers should be vested in the hand of collectors, collectors were then given a union of powers.

In 1793, during the governorship of Cornwallis³², the district was divided into police jurisdiction in order to organise a regular police administration in rural areas, and consequently, thana (which literally means police station), consisted of cluster of villages as a unit of administration was created through the Bengal Regulation of xxii of 1793 (Ali, 1982; Ali, 1993; Abedin 1973; cited in Ahmed, 2002: 332). The police administration at the district was under the charge of the Superintendent of Police (SP) who, in turn, was under the control of the district magistrate and collector. In 1829, another administrative unit above the district, namely division, consisting of four to five districts was created with a view to supervise the functions of the District Magistrate and Collector with regard to land revenue and land administration (Ali, 1986: 47). A government officer known as a commissioner was placed in charge of a division. In order to facilitate the administration of criminal justice, another tier of local administration known as sub-division which lay in between the thana and the district was also created in 1859 and it was headed by a sub-divisional magistrate known as Sub-divisional Officer (SDO). Each sub-division was composed of four or more thanas and one or more sub-divisions were grouped into a district (Ali, 1986: 47). In 1911, another unit of administration below the sub-division, namely, circle was set up based on the recommendation of the Royal Commission upon Decentralization, 1907 aimed at bridging the gap between the district officer and the village people. One or more thanas were grouped into a circle, which was placed under the charge of a junior civil servant known as Circle Officer (CO) who was responsible for supervising and providing guidance to the union panchayat³³ (Wahhab, 1996: 49-50).

4.3.2. The Pakistan Period (1947-1971)

From 1947 to 1971, the pattern of administration at the local level remained largely unchanged. The higher areas of field administration were divisions, and below the divisions were districts. Districts were divided into sub-divisions, with the lowest unit of local level administration was the thana. During the Pakistan era, an important dimension of field administration was development in terms of creating local government units with bureaucrat leadership in all layers of field administration and placing these units at the disposal of the administration at respective levels of local administration. This new arrangement of local administration was designed to make the system of

³² One of the Governors of Bengal appointed by the British Government in India

³³ One of the tiers of the then local government at the union level (now known as the union council in Bangladesh)

Basic Democracy (BD³⁴) effective. In this connection, a new pattern of administration was created at the local level particularly focusing on thana. For doing so, the 'Comilla Academy'³⁵ was assigned to do experiments with regard to the development of Thana Council (TC) and Thana Training and Development Centre (TTDC).

a. Thana Council (TC)

The TC was considered the most important contribution of BD and had been the focal point of the development administration in rural areas (Rahman and Sarker, 1997: 51). Kotwali³⁶ Thana under Comilla³⁷ district of the then East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) was taken as the experimental area for the purpose mentioned above. The TC of Kotwali Thana consisted of the Chairman of the Union Parishad of Katwali Thana and some government and non-government official members. Given the satisfactory result, the concept of TC was extended throughout East Pakistan. The SDO and CO were selected as the chairman and vice-chairman of the TC, respectively. In 1961, the thana was converted into a development circle, and the TTDC subsequently established (Wahhab, 1996: 54).

b. Thana Training and Development Centre (TTDC)

The TTDC came into effect through an experiment conducted by the Comilla Academy on the creation of specialist departments of the government at the thana level (Ali, 1982: 90). With the creation of TTDC in 1963, many nation building departments of the central government were established and officers of these departments were also posted at the thana level (Wahhab, 1996: 54). The creation of the TTDC, thereafter, enabled rural people to get access to government functionaries within their easy reach. The CO was made the head of a combined team of operation at the thana level and was responsible for the coordination of governmental services.

These experiments of the Comilla Academy led to a breakthrough in rural development through the creation of a new pattern of administration at the local level, particularly at the thana. Consequently, the thana came out from its traditional image as a mere police station and transformed into a platform of administrative government at the local level. This enabled the rural people to keep themselves overseen by the government in respect of their needs in such fields as health,

³⁴ A new version of the system of local governance in Pakistan introduced by General Mohammad Ayub Khan, a Pakistani military chief who later captured the state power through an army coup

³⁵ The Academy was established in 1959 basically as a training institute for government officials and representatives of the local government village organisations in various subjects related to rural development. Akhter Hameed Khan was the founder of this Academy. After the emancipation of Bangladesh, the Academy became known as the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD).

³⁶ Kotwali is a place in the Comilla District of Bangladesh.

³⁷ Comilla is town in Bangladesh.

agriculture, and livestock.

4.3.3. The Bangladesh Period (1971- 2009)

In order to emancipate from the old system and to develop a new pattern of field administration with the aspiration of a newly independent country, the first attempt of the government was the constitution of an administrative reform committee, namely, the Administration and Services Reorganization Committee (ASRC), also known as the Chowdhury Committee on March 15, 1972 (Wahhab, 1996: 55). As regards the reorganisation of field administration, the ASRC was of the opinion that the democratization of administration at all levels and the devolution of authority to the elected local government must be ensured. Furthermore, the ASRC suggested that a sub-division, after being necessarily adjusted with the territory should be converted into a district (Obaidullah, 1999: 107), and division, as a unit of administration should be abolished (Wahhab, 1996: 56). The ASRC also proposed that the thana would be the basic unit of administration and the responsibility of development administration at the thana will have to be entrusted to an elected local government institution-styled Thana Parishad at the thana level. However, the government took no initiative to reorganise the existing system of administration as per the guidelines suggested by the ASRC, except holding an election at the union level at the end of 1973 (Obaidullah, 1999: 107).

In 1975, a revolutionary change was brought into the local administration by introducing the presidential form of government through the historic fourth amendment to the Constitution (Rahman, 1997: 29). Accordingly, a presidential order was issued on June 21, 1975 and by doing so, a system of district governorship was introduced. The government also passed the District Administration Act of 1975 through which divisions and sub-divisions were abolished, each sub-division was converted into a district (Morshed, 1997: 125), and districts were placed under the headship of a district governor (DG) who was made the chief officer in charge of the general administration of the district (Wahhab, 1996: 57). Attempt to bring this new arrangement into effect fell into premature death after Sheikh Mujib³⁸, who was the main architect of this system was assassinated by a young group of army officials on August 15, 1975. The succeeding government after the assassination of Sheikh Mujib discontinued the efforts for restructuring the administration and instead gave order to continue the work with the inherited administrative set up. In the history of field administration, another dimension was the appointment of District Development Coordinator (DDC) in each district in 1980; DDC was assigned the rank and status of Deputy

³⁸ Bangladesh received independence under the leadership of Sheikh Mujib. He is considered as the “Father of the Nation” in Bangladesh.

Minister. However, the scheme of DDC was dropped with the political change of 1982 (Karim, 1991: 10). Figure 13 depicts the status of field administration in Bangladesh before the political change which led to the reorganisation of an administrative set up in state power in 1982.

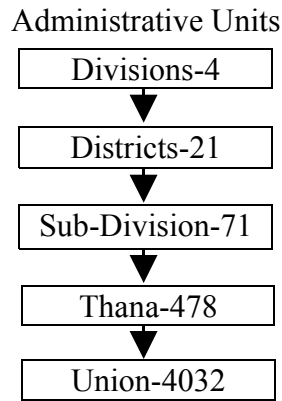


Figure 13: Status of field administration in Bangladesh before administrative reform was carried out in 1982

A systematic and organised effort in the direction of establishing the decentralised system of administration at the local level aimed at making breakthroughs in the inherited pattern of field administration appeared first when a reform committee, the Committee for Administrative Reform/Reorganization (CARR), was formed on April 28, 1982. The CARR made some important recommendations in accordance with its responsibilities and submitted its report to the government in June 1982. In principle, the government accepted the CARR's recommendations and appointed a high-powered committee, namely, the National Implementation Committee for Administrative Reorganization/Reform (NICARR) in August 1982 (Wahhab, 1996: 67) in order to suggest the guidelines of how the CARR's recommendations can be brought into effect. A major departure from colonial and post-colonial set-up of field administration was evident in 1982 when existing thanas were converted into upgraded thanas as suggested by the CARR. The 460 thanas were upgraded in ten phases (Table 3).

After completing the fifth phase of the upgradation, upgraded thanas were renamed as upazilas (Wahhab, 1996: 68). In the first eight phases, rural thanas were upgraded, and the remaining two phases were involved in the upgradation of urban thanas (Hyder, 1986: 10). After that, an election in the UPZ was held, through which the people's representative designated as Chairman was elected and made the head of the UPZ. The posts of CO (Development) and CO (Revenue) created during the era of Pakistan were merged into one known as UNO and the function assigned to the UNO was to coordinate the functions of all upazila-based departments. As a result, upazila became the focal point of the development administration at the local level in Bangladesh, with a vast body of qualified administrative and technical officers placed under the UPZ (Ahmed, 2002: 332-33).

Table 3: Phases of the upgradation of thanas

Phases of upgradation	No. of thanas upgraded	Date of upgradation
1 st	45	November 7, 1982
2 nd	55	December 15, 1982
3 rd	55	March 14, 1983
4 th	57	April 15, 1983
5 th	51	July 2, 1983
6 th	47	August 1, 1983
7 th	50	September 14, 1983
8 th	37	November 7, 1983
Sub-total	397	
9 th	18	December 1, 1983
10 th	45	February 1, 1984
Total	460	

Source: Obaidullah, 1999:113.

Although the sub-division as a unit of local administration was dropped as per the suggestion of the CARR, the government retained division with the goal of maintaining the relation between the central government and districts and upazilas. Upgradation of sub-divisions into districts was done throughout 1984, after which 42 new districts created through the upgradation of sub-divisions were added with the existing 22 districts, for a total number of 64 districts (Wahhab, 1996: 68). After the abolition of the upazila system in 1991, the UNO was renamed as the Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) and became the key functionary because of the absence of an elected body. Even after the restoration of the upazila system in 1998 through the enactment of the Upazila Parishad Act of 1998, and the election in the UPZ in 2009, the upazila administration has not yet been placed at the disposal of the local government at that point. Figure 14 depicts the current status of field administration in Bangladesh. In order to have a better understanding of field administration, all of its units are concisely discussed below.

Administrative Units

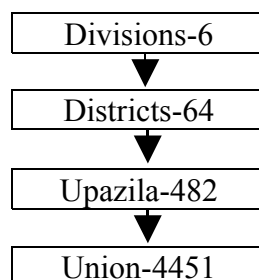


Figure 14: Present status of field administration in Bangladesh.

a. Division

The division is the apex unit of field administration in Bangladesh. A senior level generalist civil servant having a rank of joint secretary known as Divisional Commissioner is the head of a division. This official is assisted by three additional commissioners and a large number of officers and staff. His or her role is basically confined to the issue of coordinating government activities at the district level, and is responsible for hearing appeals on the decisions of district revenue officer with regard to revenue matters (Ahmed, 2002: 331). Moreover, s/he also plays a supervisory role over all the departments and agencies in the division. According to the Population Census of 2001, the average number of districts, upazilas, and unions in a division is 11, 80, and 742, respectively. The following map shows the highest unit of administrative government in Bangladesh called Division.



Map 2: Map of Bangladesh indicating the location of divisions.

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh>

b. District:

The district is the second upper tier of field administration from the top, headed by a Deputy Commissioner (popularly known as DC³⁹) who belongs to the administration cadre of Bangladesh Civil Service and is entitled to have a rank of Deputy Secretary of the government. The DC is given assistance by few Additional Deputy Commissioners (ADC), one additional district magistrate (ADM), a group of assistant commissioners, and other officers and staff. The average number of upazilas and unions based on the Population Census of 2001 in a district is 8 and 70, respectively. The primary functions of the DC are conducting revenue collection, maintaining law and order, accelerating economic development, ensuring coordination in all government activities related to

³⁹ Here deputy commissioner refers to officer having with the membership of administration cadre who is placed as the head of a district and whose main function is to coordinate the activities accomplished in his or her area of jurisdiction.

‘nation building’, and encouraging and collaborating with local self-government initiatives. The DC is the principal channel of communication between the district and higher levels of government (Ali, 1993; cited in Ahmed, 2002: 331-32).

Table 4: Territorial structure of administration in Bangladesh

Level	Number of units	Average size of population	Average area in square kilometer
Division	6	22 million	24595
District	64	2 million	2306
Upazila	482	270 thousand	306
Union	4451	29 thousand	33

Source: Author (data somewhat modified are presented in the table based on Population Census, 2001 available at: http://www.banbeis.gov.bd/bd_pro.htm).

c. Upazila

The upazila is the second lowest unit of field administration in Bangladesh. An officer having the rank of (Senior) Assistant Secretary serves as the Chief Executive Officer (UNO) of the upazila and is the key functionary of the upazila administration. Nine unions, on average, are grouped into an upazila, and several functional departments of the central government have field level representatives at upazila headquarters. Each upazila normally has officers for various offices such as those for Health and Family Planning, Education, Agriculture, Engineering (LGED), Livestock, Fishery, and Social Welfare. Each upazila also has an Officer, Assistant Commissioner, Land; Officer-in-Charge, a Police Station, and so on. These representatives are appointed and controlled directly by the higher authorities of their respective departments at the national headquarters. Although the accomplishment of function assigned to them is subject to the directives of the central level administrative authorities, they are supposed to work under the general supervision of the UNO at the upazila level.

d. Union

Below the upazila is the union. Representatives of some nation-building departments, including Agriculture, Livestock, Health and Family Planning, are working at the union level. They work under the direct control of the higher authorities of their respective departments at the upazila headquarters. The union is placed under the headship of an elected people’s representative. The Gram (village) police, known as ‘Chaukidar’, a formal force under the direct control of the local government at this level is tasked to maintain the stability of order in the village. The union consists

of nine wards⁴⁰. A number of villages are grouped into a ward. According to the Population Census of 2001, a union contains 20 villages on average. In the following map of Bangladesh, the national capital and six divisional cities are marked in bold point 'red' and other district headquarters are also shown.



Map 3: Map of Bangladesh where national capital, six divisional cities, and other district headquarters are shown.

Source: <http://www.ezilon.com/maps/asia/bangladesh-maps.html>

4.4. The system of local governance

The commencement of the existing, organised system of local governance in Bangladesh was marked by the passage of the Chaukidary Act of 1870 and the Local Self-Government Act of 1885; both are considered important milestones in the history of the local government of the country.

⁴⁰ The union is divided into nine wards and a number of villages are grouped into each ward.

However, throughout the country's history, the existing structure of local government transformed with the changes of the country's status, including those that occurred after Bangladesh became an independent country (Rahman, 1997: 27). In Bangladesh, there is a separate set of local government based on urban and rural areas. In the case of the former, local government institutions are called city corporations⁴¹ and pourashavas⁴² or municipalities. The zila (district) parishad⁴³, upazila parishad, and union parishad are the institutions of rural local government. Since the independence of Bangladesh, the major responsibilities given to the local government institutions are the maintenance of law and order, infrastructure development and maintenance, health, and education within their area.

4.4.1. Urban local governance

Six metropolitan cities which are located at six divisional towns have been given the status of the city corporation. A city corporation consists of several wards and is headed by an elected people's representative called Mayor. The corporation is run by a council composed of the elected mayor of the city corporation, mayors elected from each ward, and other government officials. The rest of the urban local bodies are known as municipalities or pourashavas that are again classified into three groups according to their financial strength. A cluster of wards is grouped into a pourashava, which is placed under the headship of an elected people's representative known as Mayor, and is also administered by a council comprised of mayors of pourashavas, mayors elected from each ward within the pourashavas, and other government officials.

Table 5: Hierarchy of urban local governments

City corporations	6 (Dhaka, Chitagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, and Sylhet)
Pourashavas (Municipalities)	286
Category	Annual Income Level
Class I Pourashava	6 million +
Class II Pourashava	2 million
Class III Pourashava	Less than 2.5 million

Source: <http://www.unescap.org/huset/lgstudy/new-countrypaper/Bangladesh/Bangladesh.pdf>

4.4.2. Rural local governance

The rural local government plays a pivotal role in overseeing rural governance. A short description of the rural local governance in Bangladesh is presented below.

⁴¹ A city corporation is, out of two, one tier of urban local government in Bangladesh.

⁴² A pourashava or municipality is the rest of the tiers of urban local government in Bangladesh.

⁴³ Zila parishad is the apex tier of rural local government in Bangladesh.

a. Zila (district) prishad

The zila parishad, is the first layer of the existing rural local government structure in Bangladesh. However, it only exists in name; there is no elected body at the district level for its management as election in the zila parishad has never been held since 1972. Even the national government took no attempt in establishing an election process at this layer of local government.

b. Upazila parishad (UPZ)

This is the second highest tier of rural local government from the top, headed by an elected people's representative called Chairman. Upazila is run by a parishad (council) which consists of the people's representative members, including the chairman and two vice-chairmen of the UPZ, the chairman of the union parishad, the mayor of pourashava (if any exists within the territory of upazila), and other government officials posted at the upazila. The Ministry of LGRD&C recently provided a list of officers placed under the control of UPZ, including the UNO, the Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer, the Upazila Family Planning Officer, the Upazila Education Officer, the Upazila Agriculture Officer, the Upazila Engineer (LGED), the Upazila Project Officer, the Upazila Livestock Officer, the Upazila Youth Development Officer, the Upazila Social Welfare Officer, and the Upazila Women and Children Affairs Officer (The Prothom Alo, 31.12.2009).

c. Union parishad

The union parishad is the bottom tier of rural local government in Bangladesh and is headed by an elected people's representative. The union is also run by a parishad consisting of the chairman of union parishad, nine male members (elected based on an estimation of one from each ward), and three female members (elected from three reserved seats, with each of these seats composed of three wards of a union).

4.5. Conclusion

The main purpose of this chapter was to provide a brief discussion of the historical development of field administration and its current status, as well as to shed light—albeit to a lesser extent—on the issue of local governance in Bangladesh. For doing so, the genesis of various units of local level administration from tracing back to the years of British rule in the Indian sub-continent to date has been discussed. The pattern or set-up of field administration was never static; rather, it was more pendulous as every successive government tried to reorganise it in accordance with their political philosophies.

Chapter Five

Factors Affecting Inter-departmental Coordination

5.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the extent to which formal division of labour, resources, and informal communication affect inter-departmental coordination, and how such factors do so. To achieve this goal, the importance of coordination when multiple departments are involved in policy implementation is discussed. Afterwards, the roles and the ways through which the division of labour, resources, and informal communication affect inter-departmental coordination are analysed. Moreover, this chapter presents some examples of coordination problem among various agencies at the field level.

5.2. Does inter-departmental coordination matter? A study of policy implementation

As there is a framework for policy implementation in terms of time frame and certain amount of fund, the success of policy implementation depends largely on the degree to which policy functions assigned to departments involved are accomplished within the framework which, in turn, depends to a fullest extent on the degree to which coordination among departments involved is achieved. In other words, policy implementation is a process comprising a series of interdependent functions, and the accomplishment of these functions within the time frame and funds allocated depends to a greater extent on the degree to which coordination among departments involved is achieved. When coordination takes place properly, it meets the deadline in completing the projects and prevents wasteful expenditure of funds. Thus, policy is implemented successfully when coordination in the activities of all involved takes place properly. The UNO remarked as quoted below:

That policy implementation can undoubtedly be considered as successful, implemented based on the coordinated efforts of those involved. However, the question is how far does coordination take place among departments involved in policy implementation? Policy implementation is delayed or even stopped in some cases when there is lack of coordination among those involved. Moreover, projects are cancelled sometimes due to problems associated with coordination. However, in the case of lack of coordination, policy implementation leads to wastage of time and funds. Therefore, coordination is considered important in ensuring successful policy implementation.

The Agriculture officer commented as follows:

Coordination is of great importance when a policy is executed by several departments because whether the implementation of policies would be successful depends largely on the extent to which coordination among departments involved is achieved.

The above data signify the fact that the need for inter-departmental coordination is paramount when policy is implemented by several departments.

5.2.1. Existing mechanisms of coordination

In answering the question of how inter-departmental coordination takes place in an upazila, all the respondents (N =7) held similar view in favour of the UDCC, departmental committees, and informal communication as the effective mechanisms to achieve inter-departmental coordination. According to 5 respondents, as per the Upazila Parishad Ordinance of 2008, 15 standing committees in upazila are supposed to have been formed, but no initiative has yet been taken in this regard and only two respondents reported that there was a provision to constitute a sub-committee. At the same time, however, they revealed that the provision with regard to the formation of sub-committee is not practiced. The UNO remarked as stated below:

Departmental committees can constitute sub-committees depending on the nature of the activities accomplished by the departments. Moreover, the UDCC may also form sub-committees to monitor and coordinate the activities assigned to the departments in an upazila if required. However, the UDCC hardly constitutes a sub-committee as the officer in charge of the department concerned does not take into consideration the issue of the formation of sub-committee as a way of functioning well; rather it is seen as naked interference of others.

This finding supports Obaidullah's observation that some sub-committees, including the Upazila Project Committee (UZPC) and the Upazila Planning and Evaluation Committee (UZPEC), exist to ensure coordination. In conducting research, he finds out that there is no such existence of UZPEC in two out of three upazilas (Obaidullah, 1999: 118).

5.2.2. Coordination problems faced by respondents

Another question asked was whether or not the respondents felt any coordination problem in policy implementation while they worked with other officials in charge of various departments. They all (N = 7) agreed that there were problems in ensuring coordination while they worked with other officials. In addition, they identified some problems in response to the question on what major problems they faced in ensuring coordination. These are presented below.

a. Lack of clear definition with respect to the division of activities among departments

In the case of inter-departmental activities, coordination takes place when departments perform assigned functions properly. The question is what is the state of coordination when there is lack of division of functions among departments? In the case of the upazila, the departments involved in

inter-departmental activities are not aware which department is responsible for what activity, when it should be executed, and how the execution must be carried out. Thus, ensuring synchronization of the functions assigned to the departments involved has become problematic, hence the lack of coordination (more discussions on pages 68-69).

b. Lack of cooperation

Ensuring coordination depends largely on how cordially and timely officers involved cooperate with each other when involvement of multiple departments in policy implementation is the concern. In the case of the upazila, there is a pronounced lack of spontaneous cooperation among the departments involved in policy implementation. As a result, problems arise in ensuring coordination (more discussions on pages 94-95).

c. Existence of obsolete laws and regulations

As noted earlier, there is a lack of specification of functions among the departments involved in inter-departmental activities. What are then the reasons that can explain this lack of division of function among departments? Existing rules and regulations are not suited for the present context where specialization of functions has gained attention to a greater extent. Moreover, there is a lack of rules in an upazila which could guide the departments involved in inter-departmental activities. Thus, the lack of coordination has become a persistent issue (more discussions on pages 67-69).

d. Dualism in control over officers

The issue of coordination in an upazila has become intense because a system of dual authority with respect to the control over the officers exists, that is, one servant serves two masters. The question is how does this dualism affect coordination? Officers who belong to the upazila level are required to follow the instruction of respective departmental heads at the district and they also act under the guidance of the UNO whose main function is to coordinate the activities of the upazila. Problems arise in coordination when instructions are given by two authority levels for a similar function at the same time. In the given circumstance, it is difficult for the officers to decide whom to follow. Thus, Karim rightly notes that officials in an upazila become stuck in a perplexing situation (Karim, 1991: 53). Husain (1985) and Mannan (1984) also note that officers in many upazilas are reluctant to follow the charter of duties as outlined in the manual because of fear of departmental superiors who may not agree with the government's policy with regard to decentralised administration (cited in Ahmed, 1991: 30). As a result, administrative efficiency is suffocated and the subsequent delivery of services is delayed (Zafarullah and Khan, 1989: 19).

e. Lack of proper functioning of the committees

Committees as key mechanisms of coordination are considered important to ensure coordination in the activities of various departments. In the case of ensuring coordination through committees, the root of coordination lies in sharing information. Information on many issues, such as who is doing what, who is having what problem, who needs what, and so forth, are shared when discussions during meetings of the committee take place. As a result, coordination is ensured in the effort of a group of persons assigned to perform specific functions toward common goals. Thus, the extent to which coordination is achieved through committees depends largely on how frequently the meetings of a committee are held; how many members attend, bring up issues in the meetings, and participate in the discussion of such issues; and how well they interact and how cordial they are to the problems faced by others.

However, despite having committees for ensuring coordination in an upazila, coordination does not take place properly because of the ineffectiveness of the role played by the committees in ensuring coordination among departments. A committee called UDCC exists to ensure coordination among departments in an upazila: despite the meetings of the UDCC taking place regularly⁴⁴, coordination has remained an issue as members, particularly the people's representatives, are usually absent during meetings. Moreover, very few problems associated with departmental functions are hardly discussed during the meetings. Apart from the UDCC, each department has its own committee comprised of several officers of various departments in order to take care of intra- and inter-departmental functions and ensure coordination among these. In the case of departmental committees, representatives from other departments are not punctual in attending meetings. Thus, regular and systematic discussions with all members do not take place either in the meetings of the UDCC or in departmental committees; this finding corroborates the fact that the committee system in an upazila suffers from the problems of members' attendance in the meetings (Houque et al., undated, cited in Ahmed, 1991: 34). In addition, conflicting relations among various groups of officials and between officials and people's representative have prevented fruitful interactions during the meetings (Ahmed, 1991: 34). Thus, coordination has remained a major issue given that only the effective functioning of committee can lead to proper coordination.

f. Dual authority in disbursement of funds and its impact on timely disbursement

Funds are indispensable for policy implementation, because deadlines are met when funds are disbursed on time. In the case of the disbursement of funds allocated under the ADP, there is a

⁴⁴ Refers to regular monthly meetings held by the UDCC.

system of dual authority in the upazila. For example, the UNO and the LGED's engineer are jointly responsible for drawing money from the bank when rural infrastructure development policy is the concern. In most of the cases, funds are not disbursed in time as their opinions quite often vary. As a result, problems arise in coordination among departments involved in policy implementation. Now the question is why the opinion of the UNO, who is a non-technical officer and unlikely has expertise required to give judgment on the quality of technical work, should vary with that of the LGED's engineer (more discussions on pages 72-74).

g. Apathy toward the rules

Apart from the lack of rules, there is a tendency among some of the officials not to follow rules. Thus, the functions assigned to them are accomplished as per their preference rather than in the way specified by the rules. As a result, problems arise in the midst of the accomplishment of functions since their apathy toward the rules causes lack of coherence of functions, leading to poor coordination (more discussions on page 70).

h. Lack of skilled and adequate human resource

Coordination takes place automatically when there are required numbers of officers with necessary skills and knowledge, and the functions assigned to them are accomplished properly. The question is how are interdependent functions carried out in a coordinated manner when there is a lack of skilled and adequate officers? Inter-departmental functions are done without ensuring necessary coordination in an upazila as lack of skilled officer and shortage of officer have been an acute problem (more discussions on pages 75-78).

i. Discrimination among civil servants

In terms of the rank and status of the officers, they are supposed to be privileged equally. In the case of the upazila, there is discrimination between the generalist and the specialist officers in terms of privileges they get. For example, the UNO, who is a generalist officer, holds a higher rank and is more privileged compared with other specialist officers. Under these circumstances, there has been discontent among the latter group of officers that leads to the lack of cooperation between them. In turn, this leads to coordination problems (more discussions on pages 87-88).

j. Lack of loyalty to the chief coordinator at the upazila

Inter-departmental function is a teamwork in which there is a leader. Team members should obey their leader and the leader should have due respect to team members. In the case of the upazila, the

UNO is supposed to be a leader because his responsibility is to coordinate different functions of the upazila. However, the loyalty of the officers in charge of different departments to the UNO is lesser as compared with their loyalty to their respective departmental heads at the district level. This could be attributed to the fact that they seldom bother about the coordinating role of the UNO as he is neither their direct commanding authority nor is he empowered to write their Annual Confidential Report (ACR⁴⁵). Rather, the authority to write their ACR is delegated to departmental heads at the district level. Therefore, the career prospect for officers posted at the upazila depends largely on the degree to which their departmental heads at district headquarters are satisfied with them. Given that partisan politics is a determinant factor in Bangladeshi society (for example, job seekers are identified as whether they have an affiliation with the political party in power), satisfaction of one's superior depends on obedience, rather than performance. The more loyal a person is to the departmental head at the district, the greater is his chance to succeed in his service career. This kind of attitudinal expression of the officers creates dishonour to the UNO and leads to lack of cooperation. As a result, problems arise in coordination.

k. Lack of proper linkages among departments

Interaction among departments is considered important because information is exchanged when interaction takes place; consequently, such an exchange leads to coordination. However, since there is lack of proper linkages among departments in upazila, the required information is not transmitted. As such, problems of coordination occur among them (more discussions on pages 79-81).

Examples:

Two examples are illustrated here with regard to the problems respondents face in ensuring coordination during policy implementation in the upazila level.

One example of lack of proper functioning of committees⁴⁶

Under the Annual Development Fund 2007/08, I, the Officer of the Livestock Department, received an allocation of a certain amount of money for purchasing three refrigerators for three sub-centers⁴⁷. According to the rules, the issue related to purchasing is subject to the approval of the Project Implementation Committee (PIC)⁴⁸. However, PIC meetings have not been held since for a long time. Thus, I personally

⁴⁵ ACR is the evaluation of an officer by his superior and is used to facilitate promotion.

⁴⁶ This was stated in an interview of an official in charge of the Livestock Department.

⁴⁷ The sub-centre refers to the sub-office. The Livestock Department has some sub-centres across the upazila. The number of sub-centres depends on the size of the upazila.

⁴⁸ A committee exists in an upazila which consists of governmental officials and public representatives. Among others, the main function of the PIC is to make estimations for projects, including excavation of land and filling up holes on roads.

communicated with the Project Implementation Officer (PIO) and requested that he calls a PIC meeting. Conversely, he requested me to communicate with other members of PIC and to find a time convenient for all. Accordingly, I made the effort to reach everyone, but some of them informed me that they were busy and it was not possible for them to attend the meeting if one was called. Then, I discussed it with the PIO and he himself informed me of his inability to attend the meeting if it was held fifteen days later. Due to the lack of coordination among them, the purchasing of the refrigerators was delayed. Thus, the medicines that were supposed to be preserved in the refrigerators were not sent to sub-centres. Ultimately, the people were deprived of receiving government's livestock services on time.

An example of the disbursement of funds not made on time⁴⁹

Through the funds allocated under the ADP 2007/08, the construction of a two-storey building of the UNPB⁵⁰ School in the Dhaperhat⁵¹ Union was begun. However, it went half done for several months because the fund was not disbursed on time. According to Kalam (owner of Kalam Enterprise, the construction company overseeing the project), 'I withdrew an amount of taka worth around 4.80 lacs (US \$ 7018) against the total amount of expenditure in taka of around 7.5 lacs (US \$ 10965). I could not meet the deadline for the completion of the construction since money was not disbursed on time. Although the engineer of the LGED gave timely assent, the UNO was delayed in providing his consent. Consequently, the disbursement of money was also delayed'.

The above analyses reveal a variety of coordination problems occurring in policy implementation in an upazila. What are the factors responsible for such coordination problems? These will be discussed in the proceeding sections.

5.2.3. How does coordination matter?

As several departments are involved in policy implementation in an upazila and implementation functions are assigned to the departments involved. There is interdependency among the departments involved since one's action leads others to act. The lack of coordination causes failure in establishing harmony in the assigned functions, thereby causing delays in implementation that, in turn, leads to failure in meeting the deadlines. Consequently, more time is required to implement policy functions, causing wastage that ultimately amplifies implementation costs. Worse, people undergo unnecessary suffering when implementation is delayed. The LGED engineer pointed out that the lack of coordination causes problems in the activities of various departments involved, leading to poor policy implementations. In fact, problems of coordination arise around the office of the UNO. He proceeded:

A file concerning the bill of a construction work was sent to the office of the UNO for

⁴⁹ This was delineated by a contractor when interviewed.

⁵⁰ UNPB refers to Upandranath (name of a person) Prathomik (primary in English) Biddaloy (school in English); this primary school was named after the founder of this school.

⁵¹ A place in Shadullapur Upazila.

approval. He delayed signing in retaliation to the decision of the tender committee⁵² not to award the work order to his chosen contractor⁵³. The delayed signature of the UNO subsequently caused failure in ensuring timely disbursement of money; more than half of the construction works must then be accomplished within a short period of time in order to meet the implementation deadline. As a result, the quality of construction work was not ensured as specified in the LGED's manual.

5.2.4. Ways to ensure coordination as suggested by respondents

Respondents were further asked about the mechanisms that, in their opinion, can ensure sound coordination among various departments. The respondents' opinions differed because they had little experience with similar problems that impede coordination. Thus, they identified those issues they encountered as problems of coordination. The mechanisms for ensuring sound coordination as suggested by the respondents are: authentication of lines of responsibility, formation of the standing committees and ensuring the effectiveness of the committee's existence, a system of single authority in disbursement of funds, involvement of the officer concerned in the disbursement process of funds, proper emphasis toward the opinion of officers concerned in departmental function, placement of the UNO as an advisor in all committees, service-oriented attitude of the officers irrespective of cadres, empowering the UNO more by including the power to write ACR of all officers posted at the upazila, and placing the UNO as the chief of all committees.

The above data clearly reveal that the issue of inter-departmental coordination in an upazila has been problematic owing to the presence of some problems discussed above. As a result, the policy is executed without ensuring necessary coordination among the departments involved.

5.3. Does formal division of labour matter?

Formal division of labour is considered important in guiding organisations in ensuring coordination in the activities accomplished. Specialization decides who will do what, when, and how; everyone becomes aware of what must be done in a given situation when behaviour is formalised (Mintzberg, 1979: 83).

5.3.1. Why does division of labour matter?

Coordination depends on timely and properly performance of functions of those involved which, in

⁵² There is a tender committee in upazila consisting of five members. Committee's members are Upazila Engineer, LGED (convener), Senior sub-assistant engineer, LGED (member secretary), Upazila Agriculture Officer (member), Upazila Education Officer (member) and Sub-assistant engineer, Public Health and Engineering Department (member). Function of this committee is to select contractor among those who take part in tender process.

⁵³ An allegation of failure to meet the deadline of implementation of construction stood against the said contractor. Moreover, he was accused of corruption for using construction materials of lower quality.

turn, depends on the extent to which departments involved are aware of their functions. This is division of labour which specifies the function of each involved. These views were expressed by the respondents when asked to give and explain their opinions on the importance of division of labour in ensuring coordination. The Fisheries officer stated that functions are not specified when there is lack of division of labour. The lack of specification of functions causes poor coordination. Furthermore, the chairman of UPZ made the following remark:

Division of labour bears more importance because each individual can perform their assigned functions properly, thereby leading to increased coordination. The question is whether division of labour exists. I have taken an oath of office of the head of local government at the upazila level but there is still no specific duty and responsibility that I must follow. Although the Upazila Parishad (Reintroduction of the Repealed Act and Amendment) Act of 2009 has been passed in the Parliament and is now being enforced, my role has not been explicitly defined in this act. At present, my only duty and responsibility is to simply report for work.

An example of the lack of division of labour and clearly defined roles and their impact on coordination⁵⁴

With due respect to the electoral pledges, the present government initiated to bring changes in the structure and composition of the local government at the upazila level in order to strengthen the system of local governance in Bangladesh. A local election was held in January 22, 2009. In order to place the upazila administration at the disposal of the elected local government in the upazila, a circular with regard to the operation of the functions of the UPZ under the Upazila Parishad (Reintroduction of the Repealed Act and Amendment) Act of 2009 was enforced (<http://www.lgd.gov.bd/downloads>). Unfortunately, neither the duties nor responsibilities of the chairman of UPZ and the UNO have been specified, and the role of the UNO either as an executive officer of upazila or as a secretary of UPZ has not been made clear in this circular. Thus, it is still unidentified who (between the chairman of UPZ and the UNO) will play what role and whose approval is needed for what. In the given context, some secretaries⁵⁵ of the Government of Bangladesh (GoB), have expressed their worries on the issue of coordination. They mentioned that the existing situation in the upazilas is not favourable for effective coordination. Today, whether or not the chairman of UPZ or the UNO will preside over the meetings of the UDCC or the state programmes in upazila has remained unclear (The Daily Prothom Alo, 25.03.2009).

5.3.2. Do existing rules matter?

Another question asked was about their opinions regarding the role of existing rules in specifying the functions of each individual involved in inter-departmental activities. Despite having a large number of rules, there is no particular rule that can specify the functions of everyone involved in inter-departmental activities. Some are ambiguous and overlapping in nature, and others are weak in that many aspects required for effective enforcement have been overlooked. Moreover, six out of

⁵⁴ This example has been presented on the basis of secondary data.

⁵⁵ Secretaries are the top most civil servants in Bangladesh, and each ministry is headed by a secretary.

seven respondents stated that existing rules are not easy to understand, indicating ambiguousness. However, these discussions lead to the assumption that there is lack of division of labour among the departments involved in inter-departmental activities in an upazila. A question was asked as to whether or not the lack of division of labour creates problems in coordination. They all (N = 7) concurred that problems arise in coordination when division of labour is not specified.

5.3.3. How does division of labour matter?

The question asked was ‘How does the lack of division of labour affect coordination?’ Coordination takes place when departments accomplish assigned functions as specified by the division of labour. This is because the division of labour not only draws a boundary among functions, but also specifies the time and manner in which a particular function must be accomplished. Therefore, the reason behind coordination by division of labour is that the division of labour clarifies the functions of each involved. With regard to the above discussion, it is argued that the clearer the division of labour is, the greater the extent of awareness among departments; in turn, the more awareness departments gain, the greater will be the possibility of timely and proper accomplishment of functions. Finally, the more functions departments accomplish in time, the better the degree of coordination will be. Likewise, the extent of coordination will be better when there is more rationalization of individual behaviours through clear division of labour. This finding resembles Mooney’s observation that coordination depends largely on the extent to which functions assigned to organisations are clearly defined and promulgated (cited in McCurdy, 1983: 115).

One of the respondents pointed out that when there is lack of division of labour, difficulties in ascertaining who does what cannot be avoided; in such a case, duplication of activities and efforts of those involved occurs. Another respondent mentioned that due to the absence of clear division of labour, they do not know what their duties and responsibilities are in inter-departmental activities. Although they are told to cooperate with others, in reality, they can hardly cooperate as they are largely involved in intra-departmental function. This has caused coordination problems in their functions. The Agriculture officer commented as quoted below:

I once received a letter from the ministry mentioning that a program called ‘Folod o Brikkho Ropon Pokkho o Mela’⁵⁶ has to be organised. It was also instructed in the letter that a committee comprising five members from different departments must be formed. It was surprising that it did not refer to which member will take care of what duties and responsibilities in organizing that program in instruction. He further noted:

⁵⁶ A Bengali sentence referring to an arrangement of a 15-day program called ‘Yielding Fruits and Tree Plantation Exhibition’.

I do not understand coordination. I do not bother whether coordination exists or not. The only thing I understand is that I have to actualise those tasks assigned to me. Being an officer in charge of the agriculture department, I am responsible for accomplishing all the tasks related to agriculture in the upazila, and I have to do it even though no other officer cooperates with me.

The LGED engineer mentioned that the lack of division of labour has created role ambiguity among departments that has led to the lack of inter-departmental coordination. He proceeded:

After a small bridge in the Faridpur⁵⁷ Union broke down, I immediately contacted the UNO for the necessary actions to reconstruct the bridge but I was told to contact the chairman of the UPZ. The chairman referred the file to the UNO when I talked about this issue to him. This is an indication that neither the UNO nor the chairman of UPZ had any clear idea about their respective roles in this regard. Thus, there existed a role ambiguity between them, creating conflict that caused lack of cooperation and poor coordination.

The UNO stated that coordination is quite problematic because of some weak rules. Despite the fact that officers assigned at the upazila are required to work under the guidance of both their respective departmental heads at the district and the UNO at the upazila, they are accountable to their respective departmental heads at the district as per the rule. In this regard, the UNO raised a question on how officers working at the upazila would deal with the problem if it arises in their functions, and who would solve such a problem? Moreover, in most cases of intra-departmental function, the UNOs are not informed as nothing is specified in the rule on this respect. Worse, even the functions accomplished by the officers are hardly visited and inspected by district level officials. These findings confirm that ‘district level officials did not feel they had much contact at the upazila level. They would pass on important circulars and instructions to the upazila level officers and advice them on technical matters when they are approached for such advice’ (Alam et al, 1994: 30).

He gave an example presented below:

The office of the LGED in the Shadullapur Upazila was working for the construction of a road. All tasks related to that construction work from tender calling to the issuance of work order were done by the office of the LGED located at district level. I was neither involved with nor officially informed about such construction work. In the midst of the implementation, construction work was resisted by the local people. Upon the occurrence of that incidence, the upazila engineer of the LGED and the contractor contacted me, not the officer in charge of the office of the LGED of the district. Later, I resolved that problem with the help of the AC Land. He further added:

Basically the problem associated with that construction work was the acquisition of land. If appropriate rules existed, the problem that I had resolved would have never occurred. The AC Land mainly assigned to take care of the issues related to the land in upazila is supposed to be consulted before any project which requires land use. In fact,

⁵⁷ This is a place in the Shadullapur Upazila.

weak rules have caused such kind of coordination problem.

The LGED engineer pointed out that apart from the lack of division of labour, another important reason for the lack of awareness about duties and responsibilities is apathy. Officers hardly read rules, but on the contrary, work either on the basis of their own judgment or on the records left by their predecessors. Now the question is why does apathy toward rules exist among officers? Performance is not the main concern of the Bangladesh civil service, especially since the reward system in the civil service is more ‘network and relation-based’⁵⁸ rather than performance-based. There is a proverb on civil service in the Bangladeshi society which states: ‘It is easy to get a job in the public service, but difficult to lose it once obtained’. Thus, the duties and responsibilities entrusted to officials are poorly performed because they are done not out of a sense of responsibility, thereby constituting a perennial problem of the Bangladesh civil service system. Such tendency of the civil servants only proves another Bangladeshi proverb: ‘sorkari mal doriya may dhal’ which in English means ‘who cares about the public property’?

The reason behind this tendency is rooted in the lack of institutionalization of the fact that negligence in accomplishing functions on the basis of written documents is subject to sanction in the civil service. Moreover, civil servants are, in fact, punished when they do not serve the political parties especially the party in power. This means that partisan politics, (e.g. patron-client relationship) exists between the political parties and civil servants in Bangladesh causing apathy among civil servants with regards obedience to existing rules. Partisan politics has also led civil servants to think and act on the basis of logic of consequence rather logic of appropriateness, which means that the tradition of apathy toward the rules has been institutionalized in the civil service. Such backward culture only confirms Perrow’s note on Selznick's (1957) view that ‘organisations are not the rational creatures they pretend to be but [are] vehicle[s] for embodying sometimes surreptitious) values’ (cited in Scott, 2001: 25). The LGED engineer remarked:

You would be surprised to hear that officers in charge of various departments are not aware of the provision for constituting sub-committees; although there is a provision that a departmental committee can constitute sub-committees depending on the nature of activities accomplished by the department in order to ensure cooperation and coordination among those involved. He also stated:

A project entitled ‘Local Government Support Program’ (LGSP) is being implemented by the LGED in each upazila. Under this project, two committees are supposed to be constituted by the LGED. One is at the union level and another is at the ward. In the case of the Shadullapur Upazila, both committees exist on paper only.

⁵⁸ Network and relation refer to the relationship between intra-cadre officials and the relationship between government officials and political leaders.

The above example attests to the fact that there is extreme apathy among officers in following the rules, considering that the respondent himself is the LGED engineer of the Shadullapur Upazila. Moreover, the above discussion reveals that there is hardly any monitoring as to who is doing what and how in the civil service. Thus, apart from the lack of division of labour and apathy in following the rules, the lack of proper monitoring on whether rules are followed or applied in performing respective functions has become another problem of inter-departmental coordination in an upazila. This is because the lack of monitoring resulted in the failure to ensure the accountability of officers in discharging duties as specified. In turn, this failure has impeded the division of labour. Proper monitoring can lead to better application of division of labour; the better the application of division of labour, the better the coordination will be. This finding helps in understanding Gulick's (1937) proposal stating that 'the more specialization in a public organisation, the more pressure for increased coordination, or vice versa' (cited in Christensen and Lægveid, 2008: 101). Thus, it may be said that in ensuring coordination, the monitoring of application of division of labour is as important as the existence of division of labour.

An example of apathy toward the rules⁵⁹

Under the ADP, an amount of taka worth about 3,200,000 (US \$ 46,784) was allocated for the construction of a two-storey building for a primary school. After completing one-third of the project, construction was halted. Abdul Mannan, owner of the land on which the school was established, donated the land at least forty years back without any written documents. Even the school authority took no initiative to register the land in the name of the school. In 1990, a one-storey building was constructed on a certain part of the land. The remaining part of the land was cultivated by the local people. Problems arose when another building was constructed in 2007. The locals who cultivated the land claimed ownership of land as he had made its registration in his name possible. Even after seven months, the problem remained unresolved. Later, allocation of money for the supposed two-storey building was cancelled. As a result, both time and resources were wasted and a large number of pupils suffered as classes were held in a very limited space⁶⁰, compromising the quality of education. All these happened due to the apathy to follow the rules. There should have been a provision dictating a consultation with the AC Land to ensure that there was no problem with the location of the project before the project plan was sent to the ministry or division for final approval.

This is an example of the lack of coordination resulting from apathy toward the rules. This project was selected based on the notion of adjudication, instead of following the rules. The above analyses reveal that although formal division of labour has great influence on coordination, an acute problem in ensuring coordination in an upazila is the lack of division of labour. Apart from this, apathy and the absence of a monitoring system to ensure its proper application are also responsible for

⁵⁹ This is an example brought up by a respondent.

⁶⁰ According to government rules, the ideal ratio between the number of student and the number of classroom is 46:1.

coordination problems in an upazila. These findings corroborate the findings of Panday's study on coordination, policy implementation and urban governance in Bangladesh, which revealed that the more structured the institutional rules and regulations are in terms of who will do what and when, the less will be the coordination problems met during policy implementation (Panday, 2004: 73). Thus, it can be concluded that problems arise in coordination in an upazila mainly due to the lack of division of labour. This supports the hypothesis that the lack of division of labour impedes coordination among departments.

5.4. Resources

5.4.1. Does financial resource matter?

As previously mentioned, coordination is a function of interdependence. Thus, the extent to which coordination among departments involved is achieved depends on the degree to which funds are disbursed in time by the department empowered, as timely disbursement of funds leads other to act.

a. Why does financial resource matter?

In response to the issue of the importance of funds or financial resources in ensuring coordination when multiple departments are involved in policy implementation, the respondents pointed out that funds are of great importance in ensuring coordination among departments involved in policy implementation. Coordination depends on the timely disbursement and adequacy of funds that help achieve the successful completion of functions and lead to improved coordination. However, timeliness in disbursement of funds, apart from adequate funding, is an important factor ensuring coordination in an upazila; this is evidenced by the fact that all the respondents (N = 7) opined in favour of timely funding when asked about the importance of such factors. This is because funds are allocated in accordance with the requirements of the project approved by the authority concerned⁶¹. Hence, the untimely disbursement of funds is a major cause impeding coordination.

b. How does financial resource matter?

In answer to the question 'How does timely funding foster coordination?' the respondents stated that when funds are disbursed in due time, departments or individuals whose actions are dependent on funds can start to operate timely, further influencing others' actions. The end result of this

⁶¹ Projects can be selected by the people's representatives (member of the Parliament, Chairman of Upazila Parishad and Chairman of Union Parishad) or bureaucrats at the local level. A list of projects selected with an estimate is sent to the ministries or divisions concerned for approval. A project has never been seen approved with the fund which is less than the requirement. The required amount of fund estimated by the concerned department at the local level must be allocated, if the project is approved.

process ensures synchronization in the functions of departments involved; in turn, this ensures sound coordination in their activities. With untimely disbursement of funds, not only are time and resources wasted, but the beneficiaries of the policy or project are also deprived of their rights to receive timely services from the government. Their opinions have been summarised and shown in Figure 15. Thus, it can be argued that the extent to which coordination is achieved depends to the fullest extent on the degree to which funds are disbursed in due course. Thus, timely fund disbursement results in improved coordination.

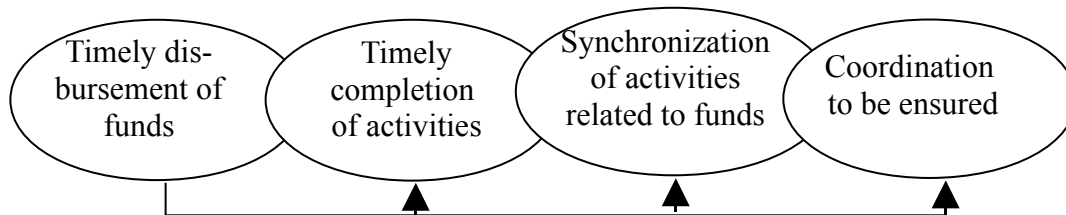


Figure 15: Relationship between timely funding and coordination based on respondents' opinions
Source: Author.

c. Does the existing pattern of fund disbursement matter?

In order to know the state of disbursement of funds in the upazila, the question asked was whether or not funds are disbursed on time. Funds were revealed as not being disbursed in time at all as opined by all the respondents (N= 15⁶²). One respondent, a contractor, remarked as quoted below:

Despite the perpetuation of the problem of untimely disbursement of funds, we work and maybe, will still work in the future as it is our profession. He proceeded:

Under the Flood Rehabilitation Project implemented by the LGED, I constructed a two-storey building for a primary school in the Rasulpur⁶³ Union. Even after completing 90 percent of the works, I did not receive any money. There was nothing I could do about it. Nonetheless, I was not disheartened to carry on another job order for the construction of a 3 km-long road in the Dhaperhat Union.

The above discussion suggests that untimely fund disbursement is a problem in an upazila that, in turn, has worsened inter-departmental coordination.

d. How is coordination impeded by the untimely disbursement of funds?

Respondents were asked to provide their opinions regarding the problems associated with the untimely disbursement of funds in an upazila. There is a provision stating that the withdrawal of funds under the ADP at the upazila level requires the joint signature of the UNO and the officer of the department concerned. For example, in the case of the implementation of rural infrastructure

⁶² Respondents include government officials and contractors who were 7 and 8 in number, respectively.

⁶³ This is a place in the Shadullapur Upazila.

development policies, the issuance of a cheque depends on the signature of the UNO and the LGED engineer at the upazila. This provision aggravates the problem of coordination, indicating that the untimely disbursement of funds is an outcome of the lack of consensus between the UNO and the officer concerned regarding the withdrawal of funds. This can be explained by some factors: one is the lack of trust between the UNO and the officer concerned. When trust exists, parties involved have confidence on each other, thereby facilitating the process of joint action (e.g., partnership as they have similar preferences and choices). In the case of joint actions such as the withdrawal of funds, the UNO quite often differs with the opinions given by the engineer on the quality of activities to be implemented as there is a lack of similar preference and choice between them because of their cadre differences, leading to the lack of consensus on the withdrawal of funds and subsequent delays in disbursement. Another is administrative culture or history of civil service; the engineer is expected to flatter the UNO for having the 'best' opinion. Moreover, the UNOs are inclined to demonstrate power when things run counter to their interest, an attitudinal expression of the UNOs rooted in the history of administration cadre ensuring the supremacy of its members over others. The engineer of the LGED gave an example as stated below:

During the construction of a complex for a Union Parishad, the UNO suddenly visited the site at which the wall of the complex was being plastered. For such work, 'chikon baluka'⁶⁴ was required, but the UNO argued that 'mota baluka'⁶⁵ should have been used instead, as is the common practice of people in Bangladesh. As an engineer with relevant academic background, however, I know what type of sand is suitable for what kind of construction work. Unfortunately, the UNO declined to sign the cheque for the supposed fund.

In addition, corruption in some case, if not all, matters since it has been institutionalised in the public sector of Bangladeshi society. A contractor stated that:

In fact, funds are not disbursed on time due to the lack of consensus between the UNO and the LGED engineer concerning their own financial benefits. He proceeded:

Once, there was an urgent need to sign a cheque concerning the bill of a certain construction within the 30th of June, as after this date the funds would automatically bounce off. Although the engineer of the LGED was convinced, the UNO delayed signing the cheque as he was not satisfied with the money the engineer offered him. Since there was no other option but to satisfy the UNO, the money he demanded was provided.

The above statement and example attests to the involvement of officers in corruption regarding the disbursement of funds.

⁶⁴ This is a type of sand in Bangladesh.

⁶⁵ This is yet another type of sand in Bangladesh.

5.4.2 Does human resource matter?

Prior to proceeding with the discussion on skilled manpower and coordination, the meaning of skill and what kinds of skills are referred to must be clarified. In general, skill refers to the ability to do something. Here, skill refers to a specific ability considered highly useful for the accomplishment of an assigned function. A skill is mainly acquired by training and, to some extent, by experience.

a. Why does skilled human resource matter?

Coordination does not take place properly unless the officers involved are skilled. This is because the required skill and knowledge automatically ensures coordination. Given that functions are assigned as per skill and knowledge, these helps to accomplish functions timely and properly, leading to improved coordination. Thus, it can be argued that coordination is achieved by virtue of the level of skill and knowledge of those involved. This idea helps shed light on Mintzberg's observation stating that coordination is primarily a result of standardised skill (Mintzberg, 1979: 201).

In response to the question on whether there is lack of skilled human resource in the upazila, they all (N = 7) converged that there is. The main issue now lies on the factors explaining the lack of skilled officers. To answer this query, a supplementary question was asked why there is lack of skilled officers in an upazila. Generally, technical and professional officers join the civil service with some degree of skills and knowledge acquired by virtue of their education in technical/professional universities and colleges such as BUET (Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology), agriculture universities or medical colleges, apart from acquiring some skills and knowledge through professional experiences. However, there is still a lack of systematic and need-based training in the civil service system (e.g., lack of in-service training). Moreover, the shortage of staff has prevented the impartation of skills to officials, as many officials are not allowed to undergo any extensive training program timely due to the shortage of required staff. The Agriculture officer even remarked:

If officers working at the upazila level are promoted to the next higher position within a 4- or 5-year interval, such as the members of the administration cadre, then fresh and younger officers would replace us, since the upazila is considered the entry level of some cadre services. In such case, upazila administration would collapse since none of the civil servants joins the civil service with requisite skill and knowledge; rather, they only acquire these required skills and knowledge through training and actual work experience. Unfortunately, there are only few training courses at different stages of service.

The Livestock officer also commented:

None of the civil servants who entered the civil service possessed the required skill and knowledge. Skill is developed through a variety of professional training across their service career. Unfortunately, many officials have not undergone any comprehensive training program within 10 years of their service except their foundation training. I have hardly seen in my service career of 13 years that government employees are provided with required training consistent with the requirements of their professions.

In answering the question of whether they experience problems in coordination due to lack of skilled human resource, all the respondents (N = 7) opined that they face problems in ensuring coordination because of the lack of skilled officers.

b. How does skilled human resource matter?

The question asked was ‘How does lack of skilled human resource affect coordination?’ Coordination takes place through the timely completion of each individual’s respective function. Only skilled officers can accomplish assigned functions more efficiently and effectively through the proper utilisation of funds and time. This is because acquiring requisite skill and knowledge is the key to developing an understanding of how effectively functions can be accomplished. This is especially true since factors such as timeliness, punctuality, discipline, and commitment—all of which enhance one’s level of understanding—are embedded in skills and knowledge. In addition, ensuring coordination depends largely on the functional requirement of skills and knowledge since beginning one’s action depends on the completion of another’s, and timely completion of action demands skill and knowledge. For example, in the case of the implementation of a rural infrastructure development policy, the AC Land and LGED engineer are hardly required to meet as they know exactly what to expect of each other by virtue of their skill and knowledge. Moreover, despite the existence of problems in the functions accomplished by skilled people, a solution is produced by virtue of such skills and knowledge developed through their experience. Thus, it can be argued that increased skill and knowledge result in greater possibility of accomplishing functions in time; in turn, on time accomplishment of tasks results in improved coordination. In the case of lack of skill and knowledge, timely completion of each function is hardly met, resulting in the inability to synchronise the functions they perform and worsened coordination problems.

c. How does shortage of human resource matter?

Workload of the officers and coordination

Shortage of officer was identified as an impediment in coordination as opined by the respondents (N=7). The underlying issue is how does this affect coordination. This has increased the workload

of existing officers. In the given situation, an acting officer cannot cooperate with other in a way that a full-time officer can. Moreover, lack of attention to inter-departmental activities is a problematic issue in civil service. As a result, many activities are done without consulting the officer concerned whose action is required to commence to the task of others. Hence, failure in maintaining harmony of their assigned functions unavoidably leads to lack of coordination. The LGED engineer who deals with infrastructure-related policy and is over-loaded with tasks stated that:

How it is possible for me to cooperate with others as they desire. My posting is in the Fulsori⁶⁶ Upazila. In addition, I am also working in the Shadullapur Upazila. I normally do office for three days in Fulsori and for two days in Shadullapur. Sometimes, I come to Shadullapur once in a week or less because of my business in Fulsori.

The Fisheries officer remarked in the following manner:

I think shortage of human resource has caused a lack of synchronization of functions that, in turn, has led to lack of coordination among departments.

The UNO stated that in addition to his duties and responsibilities, he is also acting as AC Land in the Shadullapur Upazila because of the vacancy of the post. However, not all functions that the AC Land deals with are accomplished with his counsel as he cannot give sufficient time to those functions due to having his involvement with a great deal of activities both inside and outside the upazila. Thus, problems arise in the process of accomplishing inter-departmental functions in which the AC Land is involved. This is an obvious outcome of the lack of coordination accrued from a shortage of such officer. He proceeded:

A work order for the construction of a building for a primary school at the early stage⁶⁷ of implementation was cancelled due to a problem associated with the land on which the building was supposed to be constructed. After the problem arose, the LGED engineer spoke with me since I was in charge of the AC Land as well. Unfortunately, I could not help him since I was busy assisting the government in conducting peaceful national elections which was my priority at that moment. However, if the post of the AC Land was occupied, such a problem would not occur since it was the AC Land's responsibility and he must be consulted regarding matters related to any sort of land dispute.

To supplement data concerning the shortage of officers in an upazila, the current picture of the posts of the AC Land in Bangladesh is depicted in Table 6. Table 6 clearly shows that out of 476 AC Land posts, 403 are vacant, indicating that only 73 posts are occupied. The case of the Rajshahi⁶⁸ Division

⁶⁶ It is a place in the Gaibandha District.

⁶⁷ It refers to the beginning of implementation upon the completion of some steps, including project identification, its approval, money allocation, tender calling, receiving of tender, and issuance of work order.

⁶⁸ It is the name of a palce of Bangladesh.

is the most serious where 120 posts are vacant; the Gaibandha District under Rajshahi Division has only 3 out of 7 posts occupied. The post of AC Land at Shadullapur Upazila is also vacant.

Table 6: Total number of vacant and occupied posts of AC Land in Bangladesh

	Countrywide		Division-based			Gaibandha District-Based			
	Total posts	Vacant posts	Name of division	Total posts	Vacant posts	Name of the Upazilas	Vacant ?	Occupied ?	Total
476	403	476	Dhaka	476	87	Sadar		Yes	7
			Rajshahi		120	Sundorgonj	Yes		
			Chitagong		83	Shaghata	Yes		
			Khulna		50	Shadullapur	Yes		
			Barisal		35	Palasbari		Yes	
			Syhlet		28	Fulsori	Yes		
						Gobindogonj		Yes	
Total	476	403		476	403		4	3	7

Source: The Prothom Alo (24.07.2009) and Author (The UNO of Shadullapur Upazila was informant here.)

Lack of consultation and coordination and untimely completion

The above data reveal that lack of consultation among officers impedes coordination. A question that now arises is how does it do so? When consultation does not take place, the technical issues involved are overlooked as the officer concerned is the one who knows what the technical issues are and how these can be met. Thus, problems of coordination arise in the midst of accomplishing certain functions when question with regard to meeting the requirement of technical issues involved arises. As a result, the timely completion of tasks is not achieved. The LGED engineer gave an example as follows:

The Chief Engineer of the LGED once scheduled to visit some projects in the Fulsori and Saghata Upazilas. I had a lot of things to do ahead of his visit as my official posting was in Fulsori Upazila. Previously, I was scheduled to visit the construction site of a road in Shadullapur Upazila, and after that I was supposed to sign a cheque. Owing to my business in Fulsori, I could not find time to be in the office for more than one week in Shadullapur Upazila. However, upon coming back to Shadullapur Upazila, I visited the construction site and signed the cheque. Disbursement of funds is a matter of agreement on the fulfilment of technical issues involved between the UNO and the officer concerned. The lack of coordination causes disagreement; thus, funds were not disbursed on time since my absence caused lack of consultation and timely agreement between the UNO and me. If there was a full time officer, however, he would have visited the construction site on time and checked whether or not technical requirements were met. In such case, funds would have been disbursed on time, ensuring prompt policy implementation.

The above story substantiates the fact that both financial and human resources play an important role in ensuring coordination. It was also found that there is lack of inter-departmental coordination in an upazila, as funds are not disbursed in time and the number of skilled and adequate staff is

insufficient. Thus, it can be concluded that the hypothesis ‘the more resources organisations can pool, the better the degree of coordination’ is supported in the present study.

5.5. Does informal communication matter?

Informal communication is a way through which departments involved in inter-departmental function can come to know about the position of each other without making any formal arrangement. Here, informal communication is understood to mean linkages and networks among departments involved in policy implementation in upazilas outside the formal channel of communication. The way through which information is transmitted can take place face to face, over the phone, during lunch meetings, or any other preferably convenient way. Notably, there is a difference between formal and informal communication; the former is written (e.g., rules, instructions, order), whereas the latter is self-motivated, need-based, and spontaneous.

5.5.1. Why does informal communication matter?

Informal communication is integral in ensuring coordination. Moreover, informal communication has become one of the prominent mechanisms of coordination in an upazila, where formal division of labour is lacking. In such situation, the success of coordination depends on how assigned functions are accomplished on the basis of mutual understanding among departments involved which, in turn, depends on how frequently and effectively departments communicate with each other informally. Now the question is ‘What is it in informal communication that fosters coordination?’ The answer lies in information (which is about who does what and when), which paves the way toward improved coordination. In the case of lack of informal communication, the functions assigned to departments involved are accomplished on the basis of departmental preferences, causing failure in maintaining any sequence of performance. This leads to overlapping and duplication of activities that also lead to wastage of time and resources. Thus, it can be argued that functions assigned to departments are accomplished in a highly individualistic, rather than collective manner when there is lack of informal communication. The UNO commented as follows:

Since there are no specific rules related to inter-departmental activities, the extent to which coordination is achieved depends largely on informal communication among various departments. In fact, informal communication is the backbone which ensures coordination of the activities done by various departments. He proceeded:

A state program was held in upazila a couple of months back, and there was involvement among several departments or offices in organizing that program. The functions of each department were interrelated with other departments. Thereafter, the

program had to be managed through informal communication to ascertain which department would start working when as no rules existed to specify who will do what.

5.5.2. Does status quo matter?

A total of 5 out of 7 respondents claimed to hold infrequent communication, whereas the rest said that they have frequent communication with others whenever they are involved in policy implementation; likewise, they said that communication is mostly maintained over the phone. There are times when they also meet informally and discuss matters which make them appreciate the importance of communication. The respondents pointed out that the lack of willingness among officials is one of the major reasons behind infrequent communication. Moreover, when communication is assumed to be informal in nature, there is no obligation motivating them to engage in communication, which is self-driven, and whose success depends on the willingness of parties involved. The responses substantiate the fact that officers who demonstrate better performance despite the absence of formal communication are supposed to be rewarded. The more an informal role is recognised, the more the officers would show willingness in functioning informally.

In the case of the civil service in Bangladesh, the reward system is not based on performance, but rather on network and connection. Even informal role in performance is not taken into account when ACR is made since the the quality of function does not matter. Moreover, how assigned functions are accomplished is hardly examined. What has become important is the completion of functions. This means that Bangladesh civil service has been personalised as a relationship of 'patron-client'. However, the lack of recognition for the initiatives demonstrated by civil servants has discouraged them to do anything beyond their formal and official duties. This has led to a lack of frequent informal communication.

The participants also stated that another critical problem is the non-cooperation among officers, which means that there is a relationship between the level of cooperation and the extent of informal communication. Thus, it may be said that the lack of frequent informal communication is an obvious outcome of low level of formal cooperation among the officers concerned. Informal communication takes place based on good interpersonal relationship among those involved. The fundamental logic behind harmonious relationship is rooted in mutual trust. The existence of mutual trust facilitates partnership, and cooperation appears among officers when partnership is developed. Thus, it can be argued that the more mutual trust organisations have, the more likely will there be informal communication among them. In the case of the upazila, there is lack of common

preference and choice among departments as they have different identities. This has caused failure to generate mutual trust among them; the lack of trust has impeded partnership causing failure in ensuring spontaneous cooperation. The above findings establish Putnam's observation that trust being a feature of social capital facilitates coordination (cited in Harriss, 2000: 236). The Agriculture officer commented:

Basically, the extent to which communication takes place in an informal manner depends largely on the relationship among the officers concerned. The extent to which such a relationship exists, encouraging officers to communicate must thus be examined. In such a situation, how can I communicate with others frequently?

All the respondents (N = 5) agreed that they observed problems in ensuring coordination due to the lack of frequent informal communication among departments involved in policy implementation.

5.5.3. How does informal communication matter?

The follow-up question was 'How does lack of frequent informal communication affect coordination'? Coordination is needed because actors are interdependent on each other. In the case of dependency, it is fundamental to be aware of the functions of others as one leads other to act. The extent to which departments are aware of the functions of others depends largely on how accurate, frequent, and effective information is exchanged among departments. This means that there must be conscious efforts to enhance interaction among departments; each must understand what other departments are doing, who needs what, who will start functioning when, who will complete which tasks at a certain time, whose action will lead to whom, and how problems that arise suddenly can be resolved. This causes success in synchronizing functions leading to coordination. There is no other way but informal communication through which interaction can take place. In other words, the departments can interact with one another only through informal communication whenever they need to know something or help others identify their task. The end result of interaction is improved coordination. The more communication departments maintain informally, the greater the degree of coordination. These findings help in understanding Mintzberg's contribution stating that 'Mutual adjustment achieves the coordination of work by the simple process of informal communication' (Mintzberg, 1979: 3).

An example of the of lack of informal communication⁶⁹

In the construction of a shelter house⁷⁰, several departments, including the Department of Public Health and Engineering (DPHE), Education Department (ED) and BRDB,

⁶⁹ This is an example cited by an official in an interview.

⁷⁰ Such kinds of houses constructed on government land for the landless people.

were involved and their functions were interrelated. As expected, each department performed according to its specialization. Toward the fulfilment of the project goal, nevertheless, communication remained the basis of doing everything; and with the lack of communication among the departments, coordination was also impeded. As a result, the timely completion of construction became impossible. Although the ED was supposed to start working after the DPHE completed its part, the ED could not carry on simply because it was not aware when to begin. This happened due to the lack of communication between the two departments. Consequently, ED's inaction affected the rest who were involved.

The above incident reveals that despite the fact that informal communication has great influence on coordination, there is a lack of informal communication among departments involved in inter-departmental activities in an upazila. This is because there is lack of willingness among the officers to engage in informal communication as well as an absence of cooperation among officers that has caused failure to maintain communication on a regular basis. Thus, it can be concluded that problems in coordination arise when informal communication does not take place regularly among the departments. In effect, the hypothesis 'informal communication among departments facilitates coordination' is substantiated, corroborating the finding of Trist and Bamforth (1951). Their study on a British coal mine, including both the pre- and the post-mechanization period, show that informal communication was destroyed by the new system in the post-mechanization era; likewise, productivity decreased and workers suffered from alienation problem. They eventually inferred that no coordination mechanism can replace informal communication (cited in Mintzberg, 1979: 48).

5.6. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to analyse the extent to which and how formal division of labour, resources, and informal communication affect inter-departmental coordination. The analyses of data point out that the success of inter-departmental activities, such as policy implementation can be highly attributed to coordination. The data also demonstrate that formal division of labour, resources (financial and man-power) and informal communication largely influence inter-departmental coordination. Moreover, the analyses of data indicate that ensuring inter-departmental coordination in an upazila has become a problem because of the lack of formal division of labour, timely disbursement of funds, skilled and adequate officers, and frequent informal communication among the departments involved.

Chapter Six

Inter-departmental Coordination: the Role of Organisational Culture

6.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the process and the extent to which organisational culture affects coordination when multiple departments in an upazila are involved in policy implementation. This chapter also discusses the impact of inter-departmental coordination as well as some coordination problems during policy implementation.

6.2. Does organisational culture matter?

Culture is considered as a way of securing coordination among organisations, owing to the role of cultural compatibility in establishing relationship among organisations. When cultural compatibility exists, the respective members of organisations share a common set of norms, beliefs, values, and working procedures that guide them in the manner coordination takes place in their functions.

6.2.1. What matters? Top-down versus skill and expertise

a. Does elitism matter?

The civil service system in Bangladesh can horizontally be classified into three groups: generalist-administrative, functional, and specialist (Jamil, 2007: 25). The system has retained the tradition of Pakistan⁷¹ civil service which, in turn, is a lineal descendant of the British⁷² civil service. At that time, the Pakistan civil service, generalists are labelled as elite cadres who enjoyed a lot of privileges compared to others, and who occupied almost all policy making posts at the higher level of administration. The Bangladesh government adopted a system of civil service with all these features after its independence despite the fact that the supremacy of one cadre over the other has already been abolished. In spite of this reform, elitism still prevails in the civil service system in Bangladesh, causing distinction among different cadres. These views were expressed by the respondents when they were asked regarding their evaluation of elitism in civil service. The Livestock officer remarked:

The term ‘elitism’ in civil service is not new at all. We know a particular cadre in the civil service who enjoys extraordinary privileges. They are tasked to oversee the

⁷¹ Pakistan is a sovereign country which obtained its independence from Britain in 1947.

⁷² The British government established a colonial administration in the Indian subcontinent, which now consists of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. After being ruled for 200 years by the Britain, the Indian subcontinent was divided into two distinct sovereign countries as India and Pakistan in 1947. The present Bangladesh was a part of Pakistan until 1971.

functions of other cadres. Our opinions are not important to them; rather they impose everything on us by virtue of their cadre membership. Members from our cadre can only rise up to the post of DG⁷³ and the next higher posts up to the ministry are filled by officers from the administration cadre. This is not a stray instance of elitism; rather this is a common scenario irrespective of all cadres of the Bangladesh civil service.

At present, there is discrimination and imbalance between the administration cadre and other cadres of Bangladesh civil service regarding promotion and appointment to higher administrative positions. In an estimation (Khan, 1998, cited in Zafarullah, 2007: 166), it has been revealed that despite the increase in the membership of the officers of the administration cadre to over 6000 in the mid-1990s, its contribution to the total strength of civil service only reached about 17.23 %; ironically, Hulme and O'Donovan (1995) have shown that over 75% of all positions of deputy secretaries and above are occupied by the members of the administration cadre (cited in Zafarullah, 2007: 166). This evidence corroborates the above data that all positions at the highest echelons of administration are occupied by members of the administration cadre. The UNO commented:

Subordinates do not obey their superior unless their superiors can extend influence over them. People do not respect the superior unless colleagues show due respect to him. Thus, there is an utmost need to have elitism in civil service. In order to be inducted as elite, civil servants must be highly ambitious and prominent. These qualities are only found among those belonging to the administration cadre. We, members of this cadre, successfully own these qualities. Therefore, we are promoted to the higher positions of administration at different levels. However, an elitist attitude is borne in our mind and grown up with time, especially when we notice in our initial days of service, in which officers working at the district level are subject to the orders of the DC. Moreover, we serve various departments and deal with a variety of functions at different times which make us efficient in various functions; whereas specialists only acquire knowledge and expertise in respective areas of operations.

The above discussion signifies that there has been a distinction among the officers of different cadres due to the persistence of elitism in the structure of Bangladesh civil service.

b. How does elitism matter?

Colonial legacy and history of organisation

The above discussion raises the issue on how elitism makes distinction among the officials of different cadres. There is an elitist service structure in Bangladesh; in other words, there is lack of egalitarian service structure in terms of having equal opportunities for promotion at the upper echelons of the Bangladeshi administration. This is because the way through which Bangladesh civil service was organised and structured after its independence in 1971 is akin to the structure and

⁷³ DG refers to Director General. The Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock in Bangladesh has six affiliated departments or offices. The Department of Livestock Services (DLS) is one of them, wherein the highest post is DG.

organisation of the civil service developed 200 years back by the British for colonial administrative purposes. In British colonial administration in the Indian sub-continent, the structure of the civil service was designed for ‘multifarious purposes such as maintaining law and order, collecting revenues, and sub serving the imperial interest and displaying pomp and panoply of the British imperial power in India’ (Obaidullah, 1996: 45). To this end, civil servants were trained in a manner that leads them to believe that they are rulers rather than administrators (Obaidullah, 1996: 45). Moreover, there were no operational boundaries of politics and administration since the form of government at that time was not representative in nature. Accordingly, generalist bureaucrats were given unparalleled power and authority over other segments of administration, apart from occupying all key policy positions in colonial administration.

After the British departed in 1947, Pakistan inherited the colonial legacy of the domination of generalists in the administration; Bangladesh, after becoming independent from Pakistan, adopted the same tradition. Even after 38 years of independence, the domination of generalist administrators in the civil service remains almost unchanged. This means that the colonial legacy of absolute domination of the administration cadre in terms of promotion to or occupying higher positions of administration has perpetuated in civil service that has resulted in establishing an elite cadre in the overall service structure. Consequently, this system has caused the successful indoctrination of rulership and not administration/coordination that, in turn, has led to the institutionalization of elitism in civil service. This finding supports Selznick’s (1957) view that ‘institutionalization is a process. It is something that happens to an organisation over time, reflecting the organisation’s own distinctive history, the people who have been in it, the groups it embodies, and the vested interests they have created, and the way it has adapted to its environment--’ (cited in Scott, 2001: 24). The above finding also corroborates the finding of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) team. The UNDP team (1993) identifies that the position of generalist in the civil service remains unchanged from where it had been. The team advocated the abolition of the existing and progressive cadre distinction (cited in Obaidullah, 1996: 54). Moreover, the above finding helps us understand Obaidullah’s observation that the existence of the tradition of colonial administrative legacy ‘has always been the crux of the problem in establishing an egalitarian service structure’ (Obaidullah, 1999: 67).

Elitism, cadre distinction, and coordination

A total of 5 out of 7 respondents opined that cadre distinction has created problems affecting coordination in the functions of different cadres. The rest of the respondents stated that since

officials of a particular cadre are superior over other cadre officials and subordinates simply cooperate with their superiors, there is no relation between cadre distinction and coordination. Furthermore, cadre distinction has caused discontent, jealousy and certain level of resentment among the civil servants, thereby creating conflicts, lack of cooperation, and hence, poor coordination among them. Many times, the conflict is about the supremacy of administration cadre over other cadres; hence a question arises ‘What is the state of the supremacy of administration cadre and what factors may explain it’?

c. Does supremacy matter?

Horizontally, the civil service system in Bangladesh is organised into four classes, namely, Class-I, Class-II, Class-III, and Class-IV. The total strength of Class I officers is about 40,000. Of these, 70% are recruited directly to the cadre, while the rest are non-cadre members working in functional areas (Monem and Kim, 2009: 3). The higher civil service is categorised into 29 cadres, each of which is confined to a particular ministry at the secretariat⁷⁴. Logically, higher positions of a ministry should be occupied by the members of the cadre concerned. For example, in the present administrative setup, most (if not all) higher positions of all ministries and the secretariat for the cabinet office and the prime minister, and all coordinating positions at all tiers of field administration are filled by the members of the administration cadre. Even autonomous and other constitutional bodies are administered by the deputed officers of the administration cadre (DFID, 2004 cited in Monem and Kim, 2009: 3-4). Moreover, there is a system of reservation⁷⁵ of secretariat posts for the members of the administration cadre. The Fisheries officer remarked:

The UNO is entitled to receive a vehicle from the government and is accordingly provided a four-wheel drive vehicle, aside from a duplex complex for his accommodation, which is renovated whenever a new UNO is posted. The UNO has more than two personal bearers and a guard watching over for his complex. Meanwhile, officers of other cadres working at the upazila are usually given a motorcycle and are made to share a building consisting of four to six flats for their accommodation. The building where I live in was renovated eight years ago. I was told by the official concerned that there was no money for renovation. Yet, after several weeks, the complex for the UNO was renovated for the newly posted UNO. Moreover, we do not have any other bearer except an office bearer.

The Agriculture officer remarked:

Officers of the administration cadre do not reckon us as officers; they treat us as their servants. They do not cooperate with us; rather, they merely expect obedience from us.

⁷⁴ Refers to the combination of all ministries/divisions; in other words, the offices of ministries/divisions are collectively known as the secretariat. The secretariat is considered as the nerve centre of all administrative functions.

⁷⁵ Popularly known as a quota system, established as being taken for granted.

An Upazila Health and Family Planning officer also commented:

Members of the administration cadre usually get promoted to the next higher position within four years. The UNO entered civil service at least ten years later than me. Previously, the UNO served as assistant and senior assistant secretary, but I have been serving in the same position when I joined 16 years ago. This is because higher positions of our line ministries are occupied by members of the administration cadre. They willingly prolong our promotion process in order for the senior officers of other cadres to serve the leadership of the least senior officer of their cadre. In such way, they can exhibit their supremacy over others. Therefore, how can sound relationships exist in such an unfair civil service system? Moreover, how is it possible to work with them in a coordinated manner?

The above data prove the supremacy of the administration cadre over the rest in the service structure. The following statements illustrate how supremacy is maintained and how senior officials of the administration cadre help juniors maintain their cadre supremacy over others. The Agriculture officer expressed his disappointment:

As most of secretaries belong to administration cadre, instructions are issued from the ministries or divisions to departments at the upazila in such a strategic way that it does not only involve the UNO in our departmental activities, but also gives absolute authority to the UNO in some cases over various departments.

However, the UNO stated that:

Actually, I have no supremacy over others; the problem lies with governmental rules and regulations. Basically, my job is to coordinate the activities of various departments. Aside from this role, I am sometimes tasked to supervise the activities of other departments and have full authority in some activities of some departments, creating conflict among us. He gave an example in this regard as follows:

The Department of Social Welfare is responsible for dealing with the affairs related to social welfare in an upazila. One of the functions of this department is to identify senior citizens and provide allowance for them. The government has given full authority to me to conduct such duty.

This example also signifies the supremacy of administration cadre over others as the respondent himself belongs to the administration cadre. Thus, it may be said that supremacy matters in coordination.

d. How does supremacy matter?

Inter-cadre jealousy and rivalry, and conflict of interest and preferences

The above circumstance raises the question of how supremacy of the administration cadre has caused lack of coordination. The UNOs hold higher administrative positions compared with officers

of other cadres working in an upazila. They are privileged in terms of many aspects, such as: a) they are provided four-wheel vehicles, whereas other officers only have motorcycles; b) they are responsible for coordinating the overall functions of an upazila, whereas other officers merely coordinate the tasks related to their departments; c) they can visit and inspect police stations and other institutions in an upazila, whereas other officers only take care of the tasks related to concerned matters in upazila; and d) they are promoted as UNO within a maximum of ten years in service, and can be promoted to the next higher positions within a short period after serving as UNO, whereas others spend more than half of their career life in an upazila. In fact, in most cases, few of them are promoted to a position above the district level before they retire from service.

Consequently, the UNO holds the views of being superior over the officers of other cadres and is inclined to display his power and authority under the guise of his coordinating role. Officers, particularly specialists, hardly take into account the supremacy of generalists, and they themselves never consider them as being inferior to the former. However, the existing dominant position of generalists in the civil service structure has bred inter-cadre jealousy and rivalry. For instance, a serious conflict ensued in the 90s between the generalist and Prokrichi, a professional coalition of three cadres namely engineers, agriculturists and doctors, who protested vehemently against the supremacy of the general administration cadre. Officers of other cadres at the upazila level have become extremely jealous of the position of the UNO, generating a rivalry between them. Moreover, there are conflicts of interest and preferences between them as respective histories of their cadre development are varied. The resulting lack of trust and confidence in their relationship, along with the opportunistic tendency to achieve partisan interests and preferences have impeded a smooth partnership between them, leading to the failure in ensuring harmonious collaboration. As a result, coordination in their activities has become problematic, a finding which confirms that of another study conducted by the National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA). This particular study revealed that inter-cadre rivalry is the major cause of coordination-related problems at the upazila level (Morshed, 1997: 186).

Although all cadres, in theory, are now considered equal units within the Bangladesh civil service system, the findings above indicate that inequality in power still persists in the civil service, thereby creating resentment among civil servants outside the administration cadre. At the same time, generalists are inclined to maintain their status quo with the view of being the prototype of colonial generalist administrators. Colonial legacy was hierarchic and was a vertical administrative system; in addition, colonial administration was mainly concerned with control and regulation under the

main objective of upholding stability and order. However, because of development goals including different skills and expertise, the vertical administrative system has gradually become outdated; in other words, since different skills and expertise are now required for achieving development goals, the top-down administrative system has become largely irrelevant. With network administration over multiple policy actors belonging to different organisations, different skills and expertise have become important requirements. In fact, this change is creating problems of coordination among them.

6.2.2. Do working procedures and norms matter?

Generally, working procedures refer to a pattern or way through which something is done in order to achieve intended results; here, it refers to a fixed or established way of accomplishing the tasks of an organisation. Norms refer to the expected pattern of behaviour in a given situation; here, norms refer to the behavioural patterns of an organisation's members and expectations of similar behaviours from members of other organisations.

All the respondents (N =7) opined that there is no common working procedures and norms in accomplishing inter-departmental activities. This means that they are guided more by their own working procedures and norms when they perform their respective functions. When there is a lack of similar working procedures and norms, inter-departmental functions assigned to departments involved are accomplished in different manners, given that working procedures explain how a task is supposed to be done and norms are circulated and re-circulated among individuals in the organisation over a period of time. A different working procedure is thus developed based on the nature of the subject matter; this means that differences in the nature of functions necessitate different types of working procedures, especially since the course of action varies depending on the nature of the task to be accomplished. In the case of the upazila, there are multiple departments that vary from each other in terms of functions; for these, a series of steps are taken, which vary according to the nature of the task or function. Given that different departments have varying functions, it also means that they have different working procedures. The norms of an organisation convey the expectation that everyone must behave in the same way, indicating that members of an organisation know how they should behave with others and what would be their role in a given situation. Norms differ from one organisation to another because behavioural patterns and members' respective roles vary. Table 7 clearly reveals that inter-departmental coordination is hampered as working procedures and norms vary from one department to another.

Table 7. Relationship between coordination and other variables

	Those who answered 'yes'
Differences in working procedures and norms affect coordination.	100
Officers are more loyal to their respective departmental head at the district level than the UNO.	100
More attention to the intra-departmental activities causes lack of inter-departmental coordination.	100
<u>Differences in status influence coordination.</u>	<u>100</u>

Absolute frequency in number of those who answered 'yes' (N = 7)

Note: The questions asked were: a. 'Do you think that differences in working procedures and norms affect coordination?'; b. 'What you do think about the loyalty of the officers in charge of departments to respective departmental heads at the district and the UNO at the upazila?'; c. 'Do you think that more loyalty to intra-departmental activities creates problems in ensuring coordination in inter-departmental activities?'; d. and 'Do you feel that the status of the officials influences coordination?' The answer alternatives to each question were 'Yes' and 'No'.

a. How do differences in working procedures and norms matter?

Standard working procedures, performance consistency, and coordination

Since one's performance affects another's in the case of inter-departmental activities, ensuring coordination depends largely on the consistent performance of all those involved. Performance consistency is ensured when all involved perform assigned functions by following the same procedures every time, especially since similar working procedures make consistent performances. Given that there is no standardised working procedure in inter-departmental activities in an upazila, the officials perform their respective functions by following their unique departmental working procedures developed based on departmental preferences and choices. This setup results in performance variations because differences in working procedures would mean differences in preferences and choices with regards the proper performance of their assigned tasks. It could be said that there is lack of similar culture among officers of different cadres since the existence of common preferences and choices is an indication of the existence of cultural compatibility. This supports Jamil's argument that variation in performance occurs because of cultural differences among organisations (Jamil, 2007: 66-67). Due to the fact that performance variation is a result of the lack of common preferences and choices, these result in failure to ensure synchronization of the functions accomplished, thereby leading to coordination problems. Thus, in terms of inter-departmental coordination, a higher degree of cultural compatibility among organisations leads to the use of standardised working procedures. Moreover, standardised working procedures lead to consistency in performance. In turn, a more consistent performance leads to improved coordination. In addition, the reason behind the use of standardised working procedures lies in the fact that such

standard procedures ensure that an organisation functions sequentially. In effect, time and resources are maximised, attesting to the existence of coordination among those involved.

Avoidance of behavioural contradiction and coordination

In the case of inter-departmental functions in an upazila, variations in behavioural expectations of each involved occur because of different norms. Contradiction inevitably arises in terms of how they are required to cope with each other behaviourally since they differ in terms of preferences and choices. In order to avoid such contradiction, they try to modify their behavioural patterns depending on each other's preferences and choices. This change is creating coordination-related problems among them.

6.2.3. Does loyalty matter?

As presented in Table 7, officers in charge of various departments in an upazila are more loyal to their respective departmental heads at the district level than to the UNO, meaning that officers are more concerned with their intra-departmental activities. In doing so, they try to exhibit their sincerity as a means to satisfy their departmental heads at the district headquarters. This is because of the ACR, which is regarded as the key to success in service. Positive performance evaluation in the ACR helps in the career development of an incumbent. Promotion of officers to the higher position is mostly made on the basis of their ACR. The power to write the ACR of the subordinates is vested on the head of the department, which means a good ACR is subject to the satisfaction of the departmental head concerned. Thus, loyalty to intra-departmental function results in the greater satisfaction of the departmental head. The more the departmental head is satisfied, the more the likelihood of a positive ACR. All the respondents were of the opinions that lack of inter-service loyalty causes lack of inter-departmental coordination (Table 7).

a. How does loyalty matter?

Officers consider departmental functions as their own, and they try their level best accordingly. In addition, performance in inter-departmental function is not taken into account when the ACR is made. Thus, in most cases of inter-departmental function, officers can neither perform their assigned functions properly nor meet the deadlines for accomplishing the assigned function, causing failure in synchronizing their functions, leading to coordination problems. Moreover, there is a provision involving the UNO in inter-departmental function which, in turn, has made the officers of other cadres reluctant to get involved in such functions due to inherited cadre conflict. As a result, the accomplishment of inter-departmental functions as a whole is delayed, leading to wastage of

time and limited resources. The Fisheries officer gave the following example:

Although I was involved in inter-departmental function, I had to attend meetings called by the departmental head at the district headquarters on days when I was expected to assume responsibilities associated with my post. As a result, the completion of function was deferred because my absence prevented others from performing their respective tasks.

The Livestock officer commented:

Inter-service loyalty does not mean loyalty to the service of others because none of us is superior or subordinate to each other. Rather, inter-service loyalty means loyalty to the UNO. Despite the fact that the UNO is not our commanding boss, he is the chief coordinator of the upazila administration. In reality, we are not loyal to him at all. We have a psychological conflict with the administration cadre of the civil service to which he belongs. Moreover, he does not write our ACR. Thus, we are not serious about inter-departmental activities. That is why the functions assigned to us are not accomplished on time when we are involved in inter-departmental activities, no matter if these cause grave coordination problems.

The Agriculture officer also remarked:

The UNO is neither our commanding boss nor the one who has the power to write our ACR. Thus, our courtesy to him is only grounded on the provisions of the system.

The above data indicate that loyalty among officers is more intra- than inter-service-oriented, leading to the failure of accomplishing tasks on time and increased problems related to inter-service coordination.

6.2.4. Does status matter?

All respondents voiced the opinion that differences in status affect coordination (Table 7); but how does inequality in status affect coordination?

a. How does status matter?

Background of the officials, their status, and coordination

Differences in the status of the officials—particularly between the generalist and specialist—have caused dissatisfaction among specialists. This is because most of them are senior to the generalist (UNO) in terms of length of service, and seniority is the root of respect in public service as well as in Bangladeshi culture. In relation to this, promotion by seniority (although frequently violated) is one of the principles of the Bangladesh civil service system. The officials are the best performers in their secondary and higher secondary examinations and accordingly, they prefer professional/technical education. Upon the completion of studies, they tend to join various technical

and professional civil service cadres, including BCS medical, agriculture, and engineering. On the other hand, most generalists are graduates of general education, which is mainly the first choice of those post-secondary students who prefer to be educated in liberal arts/social science rather than technical/professional programs because they are relatively academically weak. Furthermore, students who are dropped out from the admission race of technical/professional education also prefer general education. All these have bred a kind of psychological conflict among the specialists, causing disunity between them. This implies the existence of cultural incompatibility among officers of different cadres since the existence of cultural compatibility facilitates unity among different groups of people. The above findings ascertain Meek's observation that disunity among organisational members is an indication of cultural differences (Meek, 1994: 268). This situation has spurred non-cooperation among different cadre officials particularly between the generalist and specialist, leading to failure in ensuring the coordination of their functions.

Power, status, and coordination

The status of the UNO in the office are extended outside the office as well. Since, power is a major symbol of status in Bangladeshi culture. Those who have access to power possess higher status in society. In the case of generalists, since they have more access to power because they are placed directly at the authority structure of the government, there is honour and respect for them in society because: i) citizens generally fear those who have access to power because power is frequently abused for personal interest or narrow gains; ii) educated citizens respect and honour them as they know the value of authority position in the administration and its importance in running the affairs of the government; and iii) less educated or illiterate citizens honour them since the government itself places them in the position of authority, and consequently, they are given more power and privileges. Such leverage has given them more status in and outside the service compared with others; they have thus become the object of reverence. Therefore, access to power has made status difference between the generalist and specialist, and for this reason, they both suffer from superiority and inferiority complex, respectively. In effect, lack of mutual respect to each other has caused failure to ensure spontaneous and need-based cooperation that has led to lack of coordination in their function. The Livestock officer expressed his opinion as quoted below:

The identification mark of the UNO is that he is the chief executive officer of an upazila and has been afforded more power and facilities compared with others. Thus, one kind of social status has developed around him. People address him as 'sir', saluting him wherever he goes. Moreover, he is offered a better seat in an assembly. Likewise, despite being senior in terms of length of service, I have to show respect to him. Even I should address him as 'sir'. I give *salaam* to him. This indicates his higher status in both service and society. Thus, there has been a major difference in status between the UNO

and other cadre officials. We can neither break nor avoid this system. Rather, it has been institutionalised in the civil service. Therefore, we refrain ourselves from his association, impeding spontaneous cooperation and causing coordination problems.

The UNO expressed his views as:

I am a civil servant of the 20th Batch⁷⁶. Some officers of the 11th batch are still working in an upazila. I am invited to be present as chief guest in various programs organised by different departments in the upazila. Moreover, I preside over the state program taking place in upazila. So, other cadre officials suffer from inferiority complex which makes them jealous about my status. This causes lack of cooperation that, in turn, leads to lack of coordination.

From the above discussion, it is obvious that generalists and specialists have different positions in and outside the service in terms of status. Despite being bright students, specialists enjoy fewer privileges and have lower status in and outside the service compared with relatively less talented students who are now generalist officers. This status-oriented difference has caused discontent among officials of lower status which has led to the lack of cooperation between them. Moreover, the higher status of generalists both in and outside the bureaucracy has perpetuated, and this can be attributed to two reasons. One is colonial legacy (discussed in another segment) and another is the favourable attitude of society to power, which is embedded in Bangladeshi culture. This finding ascertains that there is cultural difference between the generalist and the specialist officers. When officers of higher status are inappropriately treated, they retaliate and consequently show non-cooperation. As a result, coordination has become a huge problem. Despite the immense importance of cooperation in achieving coordination, there is lack of cooperation between the generalist and the specialist officers. Now the question is what factors can explain this lack of cooperation and how does it affect coordination?

6.2.5. How does cooperation matter?

Generalist vs. specialist controversy

The lack of cooperation between the generalist and the specialist takes place because of the lack of equal opportunities for going up the service ladder. Under the present regulations, 20% of the policy-making posts of the government are supposed to be filled by civil servants outside the administration cadre. In reality, however, only 5% are allowed to be in these respective posts. This is an indication of the absolute supremacy of generalists at the top of administration, which is unfortunately carried over to other tiers of administration scattered throughout the country. Low

⁷⁶ This is an identification mark of civil servants, which indicates who has joined the civil service at what time, and determines the seniority of these civil servants in terms of length of service. To date, 27 batches of civil servants have joined the civil service.

levels of cooperation between the generalist and specialist exists locally compared with the central administration (e.g. secretariat). This is because generalist and specialist officers co-exist at the local level administration, whereas specialists hardly exist in the secretariat. As a result, policy is implemented at the local level without ensuring necessary coordination among them. In the case of the existence of spontaneous and need-based cooperation, the functions assigned to officers involved are executed on time, leading to synchronization in their function as one's action affects the others to act. Coordination of their functions leads to projects that are completed on time. Thus, it is argued that the less the supremacy of generalist over others, the higher the level of cooperation there will be. In turn, increased cooperation among officers facilitates improved coordination. This indicates that the egalitarian service structure can make a difference in the degree to which coordination is achieved. The Health and Family Planning officer commented as follows:

When I entered the civil service, the current UNO did not even finish secondary school. Many of my batch mates from the administration cadre are now joint secretaries, while I am still working under the leadership of the UNO at the upazila level. How can things be done smoothly in this circumstance? He proceeded:

Above the rank of joint secretary, all civil servants are entitled to have a vehicle for their personal use and additional money around of 20,000 taka monthly (US\$291) for the maintenance of their vehicle. The question is who are the joint secretary and above? No doubt that more than 90 percent of them belong to the administration cadre. Why are we deprived of the opportunity to be a joint secretary or candidate to occupy a top position? In the given situation, how can we work together and let others expect cooperation from us?

The above discussion and quotations indicate that the root of the lack of cooperation lies in the conflict between generalists and specialists.

From the overall data regarding organisational culture discussed above, it has been revealed that there is lack of uniform privileges and benefits between the generalist and specialist officers. Moreover, there is lack of standardised working procedures and norms in inter-departmental activities, apart from the status-oriented difference, lack of mutual trust, and lack of cooperation between the generalist and specialist officers. All these are due to the history of the civil service system in the country. These circumstances have caused tension between them, leading to problems that impede inter-departmental coordination. The lack of cultural compatibility may be one reason why the generalist and specialist officers think and act differently. If cultural compatibility exists, it may lead them to think and act homogeneously in terms of common preferences and choice, norms, beliefs, and working procedures. These findings are parallel with those of Christensen and Lægheid,

whose study on coordination in Norway's central government organisations points out that when the horizontal dimension of coordination is the concern, people across organisations or across units of an organisation consider themselves to be culturally homogeneous. In this light, coordination is unlikely to take place when cultural incompatibility exists. They argued that coordination is culturally appropriate when there are similar cultural values and norms, and when the parties involved work in accordance with existing values and norms (Christensen and Lægheid, 2008: 114). In another study analysing the response of organisations to Hurricane Katrina, it has been found that organisational culture is an important factor in coordinating inter-organisational activities. It was firmly admitted that 'organisational culture has a tremendous impact on the ability of one organisation to coordinate successfully with others' (Morris et al., 2007: 103). The above discussion indicates that if organisations could only exhibit the logic of appropriateness, then coordination will certainly take place among them. This confirms the earlier hypothesis stating that organisational cultural compatibility among departments may facilitate more coordination in their activities.

6.3. Policy implementation: Impact of the lack of inter-departmental coordination

From the data regarding independent variables analysed in the fifth and sixth chapters, inter-departmental coordination has clearly been revealed to be problematic at the local level in Bangladesh, particularly in the upazila level. Thus, attempts were made to examine what happens to policy implementation when inter-departmental coordination is the problem.

6.3.1. When does coordination matter?

a. Timely policy implementation

According to 43 out of 49⁷⁷ respondents, policy implementation hardly meets the deadline. In most cases, implementation remains unfinished for several months. The lack of coordination among those involved creates this inefficient mode of service. Given that inter-departmental coordination is a problem in upazila, the delay in implementation is an obvious outcome of the lack of coordination among the departments involved. A contractor gave an example:

The construction of a bridge over the Ghagot⁷⁸ River in the Shadullapur Upazila remains unfinished for several months. The problem associated with the construction of that bridge was the untimely disbursement of funds and the lack of coordination among those empowered to disburse such funds.

Another respondent pointed out that, among others, the deadline of policy implementation is

⁷⁷ Respondents include the general public, the contractor, and the Chairman of Union Parishad who were 35, 8, and 6 in number, respectively.

⁷⁸ This is a river in Bangladesh.

considered important. This is because timely policy implementation is a major condition when policy is dependent on foreign funds. Funds are withdrawn when the deadline is not met. The following example attests to the significance of timely policy implementation and foreign funds.

An amount of taka worth around 430-crore (US \$ 63,235,294) allotted for rural infrastructure development for the fiscal year 2007/08 are to be sent back to the donors due to the inability of the implementing agency to meet the deadline of implementation (The Daily Prothom Alo, 27.02.2008).

b. Quality of implementation work

The quality of implementation work is not satisfactory since 27 out of 41⁷⁹ respondents marked implementation quality as bad, whereas only 3 respondents expressed their satisfaction towards the implementation quality. Among others, 6 and 5 respondents termed implementation quality as moderate and very bad, respectively. One respondent, part of the local elite in the area of study, expressed his views:

I myself am a member of the Managing Committee⁸⁰ of a primary school. Two years back, a building was constructed in my school. Many parts of that building have now cracked. It is unusual that the building would now have plenty of fissures within two years of construction.

In this case, it can be said that the lack of coordination affected the quality of its implementation. As inter-departmental coordination in upazila is a problem, poor policy implementation is an obvious outcome of the lack of coordination among departments involved. One respondent, a school teacher, gave an example:

Under the ADP 2007/08, an amount of taka worth 172,000 (US\$2,515) was allocated for the construction of a toilet for a primary school in Borodaupur⁸¹ of the Shadullapur Upazila. Within nine months of completion, the roof of the toilet began to crumble. The contractor and officials involved were called while more irregularities in construction works were noticed during implementation. Neither the LGED engineer nor the UNO took initiative in this regard. We came to know that poor quality materials were used in the construction because of the untimely disbursement of funds.

An example of poor implementation in quality⁸²

Under the ADP 2008/09, an amount of taka worth 3,165,000 (US\$46,272) was allocated

⁷⁹ Respondents include the general public, and the Chairman of Union Parishad who were 35 and 6 in number, respectively.

⁸⁰ The Managing Committee is such a committee formed to run the school. Only the parents of the students are eligible to become members of this committee. Selection of members is either by appointment or by election.

⁸¹ This is a place in the Shadullapur Upazila

⁸² This is an example discussed by more than one respondent.

for the construction of a building for a primary school in Tajnagor⁸³. After investing a certain amount of money, it was noticed that the existing size of the land was less than the size required. To continue the project, however, the contractor bought the required land, thereby affecting the quality of construction works as the money allocated for these was utilised for purchasing the required land. Since contractors work for profit, it would have been unusual that he spent his own money to purchase the land. In such situation, how can quality works be ensured?

The above data substantiate the fact that the lack of inter-departmental coordination causes delay in policy implementation. Delayed implementation leads to failure in meeting the policy goals within the expenditure framework. This necessitates allocation of more funds as price for essential materials of implementation increases rapidly. In the given situation, the quality is not ensured as increased price is never readjusted with inflation rate. A contractor remarked:

Policy implementation is normally delayed due to the lack of coordination among those who are responsible for disbursing money. In the case of untimely fund disbursement, we use construction materials that are lower in quality since project cost is never readjusted with inflation rate. In every project, we ensure our profit since it is our profession. In addition, we have to spend an amount of money for official purposes⁸⁴. Moreover, contractors who are not financially solvent start working with their own money and can only continue if funds are disbursed timely. Since the timely disbursement of fund is a problem, there is a growing trend among those contractors to sell their works to other contractors with a higher rate than that of the government. The succeeding contractor also ensures his profit from the deal, making it nearly impossible to ensure the quality of policy implementation.

The above analyses reveal that problems arise in policy implementation when coordination does not take place among the departments involved. In the case of lack of inter-departmental coordination, the problems associated with policy implementation are delay in implementation, requirement of additional time and fund, and poor quality of work.

6.4. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to analyse the extent to which and how organisational culture affects coordination among departments involved in policy implementation in an upazila and the impact of inter-departmental coordination on policy implementation. From the data analysed throughout this chapter, it has clearly been realised that organisational culture has tremendous influence on coordination. Inter-departmental coordination in an upazila has become problematic since there is cultural incompatibility among departments. Therefore, policy implementation is greatly hampered.

⁸³ This is a place in the Shadullapur Upazila.

⁸⁴ Specifically it refers to bribe known as PC (percentage).

Chapter Seven

Discussion and Conclusion

7.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present discussions about the findings of this study and come to a conclusion. The following aspects of this study are highlighted in this chapter. What were the objectives? What theories and methodology were used? What was found and which theories were most useful? How and to what extent could our findings be generalised? What conclusion could be made on the basis of such findings? and How can this study be used in further research?

7.2. Review of the study's objectives, theory, and methodology

The purpose of this study was mainly to analyse inter-organisational coordination among departments involved in policy implementation at the local level in Bangladesh. Given that coordination is the interplay of many factors, this study also intended to explore and identify the factors affecting coordination, inquire as to why problems of coordination take place, and identify and examine those factors that make a difference in the extent to which coordination is achieved. For doing so, the present study employed a qualitative approach. The implementation of rural infrastructure development policies was studied as a process to comprehend why and how coordination-related problems among departments involved in policy implementation in upazila arise. Formal division of labour, informal communication, resources, and organisational culture formed the basis of theoretical framework for describing and analysing the issue of coordination at the local level in Bangladesh.

7.3. Major findings of the study

7.3.1. Inter-departmental coordination in policy implementation: what matters?

Despite the importance of inter-departmental coordination in policy implementation, coordination does not take place properly among departments involved in policy implementation in an upazila. The existing mechanisms of coordination can hardly produce any meaningful result in ensuring coordination. Among others, the committee system is a major mechanism of coordination. Truly, the meetings of some committees are held on a regular basis, but no significant outcome is produced. This is because members quite often are absent from the meetings, causing failure to ensure fruitful discussion of the issues brought in the meetings. Thus, information is not adequately exchanged, resulting in persistent problematic coordination. Moreover, some committees only exist on paper.

Out of the committee system, another mechanism of coordination is informal communication which has also become a futile mechanism due to infrequent communication among officers. More discussions regarding infrequent communication will be made in the latter section of this chapter.

7.3.2. Formal division of labour: what matters?

Inter-departmental coordination is a major problem because there are no proper rules for specifying what each department will do, when, and how. This is an indication of the lack of clear division of labour among departments involved in policy implementation. Another problem associated with coordination is role ambiguity among officers which is a result of the lack of appropriate rules, indicating that the nature of rules determines the extent of coordination. Therefore, the existence of appropriate rules can ensure a major difference in achieving coordination.

Another interesting finding that affects coordination is the apathy of the officers toward the rules and their applications, indicating that the civil service system in Bangladesh does not contain the feature of an ideal type of bureaucracy in which official business is undertaken on the basis of written documents. Rather, officers exercise their personal judgment or follow the pathway of their predecessors in discharging their duties. Such actions can be attributed to the fact that failure to perform assigned functions is not a ground for determining punishment within the system. Second, the reward system in the civil service is more network- and relation-based, rather than performance-based. Moreover, there is lack of monitoring of the way officials carry out their assigned tasks.

7.3.3. Resources: what matters?

Another factor that also affects coordination is the untimely disbursement of funds. In the case of policy implementation under the ADP in an upazila, the funds required are allocated when the policy has obtained approval from the authority concerned. Problems arise in the timely disbursement of those funds at the upazila level because of the system of dual authority in the disbursement of funds. Officers authorised to disburse funds belong to separate and rival cadres; thus, due to narrow partisan interests and the lack of trust between them they hardly arrive at an agreement as far as disbursement of funds is concerned. In addition, the reason behind the lack of consensus on the withdrawal of funds lies in the fact that from the administrative point of view, civil servants— particularly generalists and specialists—are culturally separated. Generalists always tend to display their authority by whimsically getting dissatisfied with the quality of another cadre's work. Such practices are but a way of maintaining the status quo of the domination of generalists over other cadres. This system was established by the British, and the present service structure is a

legacy of this system. That is why the Bangladesh civil service is regarded as a ‘representative of bureaupathology’ or ‘pathological bureaucracy’. Furthermore, corruption of officers involved in the disbursement process of funds has impeded the timely disbursement of such funds. Thus, it is argued that the service-oriented attitude of officers concerned and the avoidance of bureaucratic control over the disbursement of such funds can facilitate its timely disbursement which, in turn, can make a difference in the extent to which coordination is achieved.

The lack of skilled manpower is another factor affecting coordination. Even those many officials serving for several years have not been provided any comprehensive training except their foundation training. Moreover, government officials, in many cases, have not undergone any recent training program due to the shortage of staff. Another notable factor affecting coordination is that the incumbent officials have become overloaded by work, especially since the upazila administration faces the critical problem of shortage of officers. In many cases, an officer assumes more than one office. Therefore, sufficient number of skilled and required staff can ensure more coordination.

7.3.4. Informal communication: what matters?

Coordination has become problematic due to the lack of frequent informal communication among officers involved in inter-departmental function. Factors affecting the frequency of communication are the lack of willingness among the officers to engage in informal communication. This is mainly due to two factors. The first is the lack of institutionalization of the reward system based on performance. Rather, better career prospects in service depend on the development of network and relation with higher officials of the line ministry and political party in power. Thus, a relationship of ‘patron-client’ dominates the Bangladesh civil service. Second, nothing concerning informal role is specified in rules.

Another factor affecting the frequency of communication is the non-existence of partnership among departments which is a by-product of the lack of trust among officers. Factors such as common preference and choice, interest, and norms that are rooted in trust do not exist among departments. As such, there has been lack of harmony in their relationship which, in turn, has impeded informal communication. It indicates that social capital (trust) determines the degree of coordination. Thus, the existence of social capital in the relationship can ensure more coordination.

7.3.5. Organisational culture: what matters?

The organisation and structure of the civil service system in Bangladesh has been found to represent the colonial legacy of the domination of generalists in administration. This has led to the creation of different organisational cultures between generalist and specialist cadres; in turn, these have caused coordination problems between them.

Another noteworthy finding is that there is a significant variation in civil service performance which affects coordination of functions. Variation in performance occurs since there are no standardised working procedures for accomplishing inter-departmental functions in upazila. Moreover, the behavioural expectations of civil servants in inter-departmental functions also differ as they do not share similar norms, further creating coordination problems. Since similar working procedures and norms attest to the existence of common culture, coordination-related problems can be identified as a result of cultural incompatibility among officials of different cadres, that is, between the generalist and the specialist. Thus, common culture can enhance the length to which coordination is achieved.

Another interesting finding is that officers working at the upazila level are more attentive to intra- than inter-departmental activities. As a result, coordination in inter-departmental activities does not take place properly. There are two reasons behind the lack of inter-service attention. The first is the failure to accept the coordinating role of the UNO. Second, performance only in intra-departmental activities is taken into consideration, when ACR is made. Thus, if attention to inter-departmental activities is subject to the determination of performance as well, it can ensure better coordination in comparison with the extent to which coordination is achieved. In this connection, there must be a leader in inter-departmental activities to whom officers should express loyalty. The leader has to be respectful to his colleagues, whether the leader is the UNO or other officials.

Another factor affecting coordination is the lack of mutual respect among officers because of the status-oriented difference among them, particularly between the generalist and the specialist. Generalist officers enjoy more privileges and benefits and are also afforded more power and authority compared with the specialist officers. Such culture has placed a demarcation between the powerful and the powerless, a status difference that has caused grave disunity between them. Difference in status refers to dissimilarity in terms of culture as cultural compatibility enhances unity among groups of people. Moreover, the positive attitude of society toward power embedded in the societal culture of Bangladesh has aggravated the problems of status-oriented difference. Hence, cultural compatibility can ensure more coordination.

In addition, this study has revealed that inter-departmental coordination has become problematic due to the lack of cooperation between the generalist and specialist officers. The poor cooperation between them is a by-product of the existence of the colonial legacy of supremacy of the generalist over others. Implementing an egalitarian service structure, which espouses equality and impartiality, can make a difference in the degree to which coordination is achieved.

7.3.6. Policy implementation: what matters?

Policy implementation has been found to be greatly affected when coordination does not take place properly among departments involved. In the case of the lack of inter-departmental coordination, problems associated with policy implementation include delay in implementation, necessity for additional time and fund, and poor quality of implementation.

7.4. Usefulness of theories used in this study:

In order to develop a theoretical framework for describing and analysing the issue of coordination at the local level in Bangladesh, attempts were made to establish a relationship between coordination and the factors (e.g., formal division of labour, informal communication, resources, and organisational culture) that affect coordination. In doing so, the present study has found that formal division of labour, resources, and informal communication are indeed useful in exploring and analysing the issue of coordination. There is an important role of such factors in ensuring inter-departmental coordination. Moreover, organisational culture was also an important factor in analysing the issue of coordination, owing to the role of cultural compatibility in establishing relationship among organisations. A situation of cultural compatibility really matters in fostering inter-departmental coordination.

7.5. Generalization of the study's findings

Despite the fact that the findings of this study reveal that inter-departmental coordination is a problematic issue in upazila, it may not apparently be possible to generalise the findings to the entire country since this study was conducted based on a small sample (i.e., a single upazila versus the 482 upazilas in Bangladesh at present). However, it is more likely that if this study is applied to other upazilas, the study's findings may be similar because the variables studied in this study are homogeneous in nature in terms of country perspective. For example, upazila administration is run by rules and regulations made by the central government, and these rules and regulations are equally applicable to all upazilas. Findings such as the supremacy of the administration cadre over others, problems of inequality in terms of privileges and benefits between the generalist and the

specialist, problems of cultural incompatibility between the generalist and the specialist, and lack of performance-based reward system are not unique instances within a single upazila; rather, these are rooted in the history of civil service. Other findings such as involvement of the civil servants in corruption, lack of skilled manpower, and shortage of manpower are the common problems in all public sectors in Bangladesh. Moreover, the Bangladeshi people are homogeneous in terms of culture and therefore, cultural differences from societal perspective are common for all upazilas.

7.6. Conclusion and implications for further research

To sum up, despite the fact that the need for inter-departmental coordination is paramount among departments involved in policy implementation, it has neither been a documented issue nor has it been made an issue done on ad hoc basis in Bangladesh public administration. This clearly indicates that the administrators of the country's civil service system do not take hold of Fayol's view on coordination, that is, coordination is considered one of the major roles of administrators. This is mainly because the government does not look into what is happening to the issue of coordination at the local level in Bangladesh. Moreover, this study used coordination both as ends and means. As an end, inter-departmental coordination was analysed in terms of role played by independent variables (e.g., formal division of labour, resources, informal communication, and organisational culture) in ensuring coordination. Rural infrastructure development policy was examined when inter-departmental coordination was seen as means of implementing policy successfully. This study reveals that coordination has neither been an end of public administration nor a means of policy implementation in field administration in Bangladesh. However, this study indicates that coordination has not been a philosopher's stone of public administration in Bangladesh; what has become important to civil servants is the completion of assigned functions perfunctorily. Thus, the issue of inter-departmental coordination can be exemplified by the highly individualistic approach of civil servants in carrying out their respective tasks. As a result, policy implementation is delayed, time and resources are wasted, and quality is compromised.

However, the present study makes room for further research, and facilitates more in-depth analysis of the research problem by narrowing down the theories, texts, and concepts used. Furthermore, for more better understanding of research problem, a comparative study can be done. As coordination is interplay of many factors, a study based on quantitative approach can produce more interesting and noteworthy findings. Apart from these, since each upazila in Bangladesh, from administrative point of view, shares similar features, this study provides more concrete and context-dependent knowledge, which may also be used to resemble the findings revealed by the study done in future.

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Appendix-A

Research Questionnaire for the Respondents

Designed and conducted by:

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Part-I

(Questions for the Government Officials)

Discuss the importance of coordination while multiple departments are involved in policy implementation.

Discuss how coordination takes place in upazila while multiple departments are involved in policy implementation.

Do you feel any problem of coordination while you are involved with other departments in policy implementation? Please specify.

Discuss the major problems that you face in ensuring coordination in the activities of various departments.

Do you think that problems of coordination affect policy implementation?

Yes

No

Discuss how lack of coordination or problem of coordination affects policy implementation.

What in your opinion are the mechanisms that may ensure sound coordination among departments involved in policy implementation?

Discuss the extent to which division of labour is important in ensuring coordination among departments involved in policy implementation and why.

Discuss about the existing rules which can guide inter-departmental activities in upazila.

Do you think that lack of division of labour creates problem in ensuring coordination among departments involved in policy implementation?

Yes

No

Discuss how lack of division of labour affects coordination.

Discuss how funds are important in coordination while multiple departments are involved in policy implementation and why.

Which adequate or timely funding is more important in ensuring coordination in upazila?

Discuss how timely funding fosters coordination.

Do you think that funds are disbursed timely in upazila?

Yes No

What in your opinion the problems are in untimely disbursement of funds in upazila?

Discuss how skilled human resource is important in coordination while multiple departments are involved in policy implementation.

Do you think that there is a lack of skilled human resource in upazila?

Yes No

If your answer is yes, give reasons in favour of your answer.

Do you feel problem in coordination due to lack of skilled human resource?

Yes No

Discuss how lack of skilled human resource affects coordination.

Do you encounter any problem in coordination due to shortage of human resource?

Yes No

Discuss how shortage of human resource affects coordination.

Discuss the extent to which and why informal communication is important in ensuring coordination among departments involved in policy implementation.

How does informal communication take place among departments?

How often do you communicate informally with others while you are involved with others in policy implementation. Give reasons.

Do you face problems in ensuring coordination when there is lack of frequent informal communication?

Discuss how lack of frequent informal communication affects coordination.

Discuss how you evaluate the term 'elitism' in the civil service.

Does elitism make distinction among different cadres in the civil service? Discuss.

Does cadre distinction in the civil service create problem in ensuring coordination in the activities of different cadres? How? Discuss.

Do you have similar working procedures and norms when you are involved in inter-departmental activities?

If your answer is no, do differences in working procedures and norms affect coordination while you work with others? How? Discuss.

What do you think about the loyalty of officers in charge of departments to the respective departmental head at the district level and the UNO at the upazila? Discuss.

Please specify 'more loyalty to intra-departmental activities creates problems in ensuring coordination in inter-departmental activities'.

Discuss how lack of inter-service loyalty or lack of loyalty to inter-departmental activities affects inter-departmental coordination.

Do you feel that status of officials influences coordination?

Yes

No

Discuss how differences in status affect coordination.

Discuss the reasons behind the lack of cooperation and how it affects coordination.

Discuss about the impact of the lack of inter-departmental coordination on policy implementation.

Part-II **(Questions for the Chairman of Upazila Parishad)**

Discuss the importance of coordination while multiple departments are involved in policy implementation.

What in your opinion are the mechanisms that may ensure sound coordination among departments involved in policy implementation?

Discuss the extent to which division of labour is important in ensuring coordination among departments involved in policy implementation and why.

Discuss about the impact of the lack of inter-departmental coordination on policy implementation.

Part-III **(Questions for the Chairman of Union Parishad)**

Discuss the importance of coordination while multiple departments are involved in policy implementation.

Do you think that policy is implemented timely in upazila?

What do you think about the quality of policy implementation in upazila?

Discuss about the impact of the lack of inter-departmental coordination on policy implementation.

Part-IV
(Questions for the Contractors)

Discuss the importance of coordination while multiple departments are involved in policy implementation.

Discuss how funds are important in coordination while multiple departments are involved in policy implementation and why.

Do you think that funds are disbursed timely in upazila?

Yes

No

What in your opinion the problems are in untimely disbursement of funds in upazila?

Do you think that policy is implemented timely in upazila?

Discuss about the impact of lack of inter-departmental coordination on policy implementation.

Part-V
(Questions for General Public)

Do you think that policy is implemented timely in upazila?

What do you think about the quality of policy implementation in upazila?

Appendix-B

Functions of urban local governance (City Corporations and Pourashavas)

The functions assigned to the Pourashavas are quite similar to City Corporation's functions in nature without one important difference. The functions of Pourashava are categorized into two groups known as compulsory and optional according to the Pourashava Ordinance, 1997. In the case of City Corporation, although functions have not been grouped into such classification, there has not been any significant change in the texts. Therefore, the functions of Pourashavas and City Corporations can be subject to the classification of compulsory and optional. These categorizations

of the functions are delineated below:

a. *Mandatory functions*

1. Construction and maintenance of roads, bridges and culverts;
2. Removal, collection and disposal of refuse;
3. Provision and maintenance of street lighting;
4. Maintenance of public streets, provision of street watering;
5. Provision and regulation of water supply;
6. Establishment and maintenance of public markets;
7. Plantation of trees on road sides;
8. Regulation of insanitary buildings
9. Prevention of infectious diseases and epidemics;
10. Registration of births, deaths and marriages;
11. Provision and maintenance of slaughter houses;
12. Provision and maintenance of drainage;
13. Control over the construction and reconstruction of buildings;
14. Provision and maintenance of graveyards and burning places; and
15. Control over traffic and public vehicles (Siddiqui, 1995: 163-64).

b. *Optional functions*

1. Checking adulteration of food products;
2. Control over private markets;
3. Maintenance of educational institutions and provision of stipends to meritorious students;
4. Provision of flood and famine relief;
5. Provision and maintenance of parks and gardens;
6. Establishment of welfare homes, orphanages, prevention of begging and organization of voluntary social welfare services;
7. Establishment of public dispensaries, provision of public urinals and latrines;
8. Establishment of veterinary hospitals, registration of cattle sale and improvement of livestock;
9. Celebration of national holidays;
10. Reception of distinguished visitors;
11. Establishment of public libraries and reading rooms;

12. Promotion of community development schemes; and
13. Naming of roads and numbering of houses (Siddiqui, 1995: 164).

Functions actually performed

In practice, they cannot perform all these functions because of acute paucity of funds. The functions actually performed by the City Corporations as well as Pourashavas are stated below:

1. Construction and maintenance of roads, bridges and culverts;
2. Removal, collection and disposal of refuse;
3. Provision and maintenance of street lighting;
4. Provision of water supply;
5. Establishment and maintenance of public markets;
6. Provision, maintenance and regulation of graveyards and burning places;
7. Registrations of birth, deaths and marriages;
8. Maintenance of slaughter houses;
9. Control over private markets;
10. Provision and maintenance of parks and gardens;
11. Naming of roads and numbering of houses; and
12. Provision of nominal stipends to primary education institutions (Siddiqui, 1995: 165).

Functions of rural local governance

A. Functions of Upazila Parishad

The government Resolution of 1982 divided the government functions at the upazila level into two distinct categories namely retained subjects or functions and transferred subjects or functions. The responsibilities of transferred subjects are given to the upazila parishad and national government retained the responsibilities of important subjects at the upazila level. In spite of providing a list of retained subjects, Resolution did not provide any list of transferred subjects. Later, functions transferred to the upazila parishad were enumerated in the Second Schedule of the Local Government Ordinance, 1982.

a. Transferred subjects or functions

The functions transferred to the upazila parishad are given below:

1. All development activities at the upazila level; formulation of upazila development plans and programs: and implementation, monitoring and evaluation thereof.
2. Preparation of upazila development plans on the basis of union development plans.
3. Giving assistance and encouragement to the union parishad.
4. Promotion of health, family planning and family welfare.
5. Provision for management of environment.
6. Training of Chairman, members and secretaries of the Union parishads.
7. Implementation of government policies and programs within the upazila.
8. Supervision, control and coordination of functions and officers serving in the upazila except Munsifs, Trying Magistrates and Officers engaged in regulatory functions.
9. Promotion of socio-cultural activities.
10. Promotion and encouragement of employment generating activities.
11. Such other functions as may be specified by the government from time to time.
12. Promotion and extension of cooperative movement in the upazila.
13. Assistance to the Zilla Parishad in development activities.
14. Planning and execution of all rural public works programs.
15. Promotion of agricultural activities for maximizing production.
16. Promotional of educational and vocational activities.
17. Promotion of livestock, fisheries and forest (Rahman, 2000: 71-72).

b. Regulatory or retained subjects or functions

Functions retained by the government at the upazila level are as follows:

1. Maintenance of law and order.
2. Civil and criminal judiciary.
3. Administration and management of central revenues like income tax, customs, excise, land revenue, land tax etc.
4. Maintenance of essential supplies.
5. Large scale industries.

6. Irrigation schemes involving more than one district.
7. Mining and mineral development.
8. Generation and distribution of electric power.
9. Technical education and all other education above primary level.
10. Modernized district hospitals and hospitals attached to medical colleges.
11. Inter-district and inter-upazila means of communication.
12. Flood control and development of water resources.
13. Compilation of national statistics (Faizullah, 1987: 104).

B. Functions of Union Parishad

The functions undertaken by union parishad are as follows:

1. Maintenance of law and order and assistance of administration in the maintenance of law and order;
2. Adoption of measures for preventing disorder and smuggling;
3. Adoption and implementation of development schemes in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, animal husbandry, education, health, cottage industries, communication, irrigation and flood protection for the economic and social upliftment of the people;
4. promotion of family planning;
5. Implementation of such development schemes as may be assigned by the upazila parishad;
6. Development of local resources and their use;
7. Protection and maintenance of public property, such as roads, bridges, canals, embankments, telephones and electricity lines;
8. Review of the development activities of all agencies at the union level and the making of recommendations to the upazila parishad in regard to their activities;
9. Motivation and persuasion of the people to install sanitary latrines;
10. Registration of births, deaths, beggars and destitutes;
11. Conducting of census of all kind (Siddiqui, 1995: 157-58).