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Sharique Phase IV

Baseline Survey Report 2017

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Conducted by:
Capacity Building Service Group (CBSG)
4/2 Block B (4th Floor), Lalmatia
Dhaka 1207, Bangladesh
Phone: +88 02- 5815 5672, 913 1027;

Submitted to:
Sharique Project
Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation Bangladesh
House 13/A NE (K), Road 83,
Gulshan 2, Dhaka, Bangladesh

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This **Baseline Survey Report of Sharique Phase-IV** presents benchmark governance situation of 167 UPs in two newly selected districts by Sharique project. This baseline survey has been a collaborative and mutually supportive exercise between Sharique project team and CBSG consultants.

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The survey team recognizes that the findings, including any errors and omissions contained within this report, are its own.

CBSG Survey Team

Acronym and Abbreviation

BDB	Budget Display Board
BRDB	Bangladesh Rural Development Board
CBSG	Capacity Building Service Group
CB	Capacity Building
CC	Citizen Charter
CM	Council Meeting
CSR	Corporate Social Response
DAG	Disadvantaged Group
DPHE	Department of Public Health & Engineering
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FY	Fiscal Year
HH	Household
HHS	Household Survey
HQ	Head Quarter
IDB	Information Display Board
IPF	Institute of Public Finance
IT	Information Technology
KII	Key Informant Interview
LFA	Log Frame Analysis
LGED	Local Government Engineering Department
LGI	Local Government Institute
LGSP	Local Government Support Program
NAPD	National Academy for Planning and Development
NB	Notice Board
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NILG	National Institute of Local Government
OBM	Open Budget Meeting
OBRM	Open Budget Review Meeting
PIC	Project Implementation Committee
RTI	Right to Information
SC	Standing Committee
SIC	Scheme Implementation Committee
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
SSN	Social Safety Net
ToR	Terms of Reference
UDCC	Union Development Coordination Committee
UDMC	Union Disaster Management Committee
UISC	Union Information Service Center
UP	Union Parishad
VGD	Vulnerable Group Development
VGF	Vulnerable Group Feeding
WC	Ward Committee
WS	Ward Shava

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	II
ACRONYM AND ABBREVIATION	III
TABLE OF CONTENTS	IV
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	V
CHAPTER-1: INTRODUCTION, METHODOLOGY AND SURVEY IMPLEMENTATION	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 OBJECTIVE OF THE BASELINE SURVEY.....	1
1.3 METHODOLOGY.....	2
1.4 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SURVEY	3
1.5 QUALITY CONTROL MECHANISM	3
1.6 ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT	3
CHAPTER-2: CITIZENS' SATISFACTION ON UP SERVICES	5
2.1 OVERALL SATISFACTION	5
2.2 ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES	6
2.3 DEVELOPMENT SERVICES.....	6
2.4 SERVICES OF UNION INFORMATION SERVICE CENTRE.....	6
2.5 SAFETY NET SERVICES.....	7
2.6 GOVERNMENT LINE AGENCY'S SERVICES	7
CHAPTER-3: CITIZENS' PERCEPTION AND PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT	8
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	8
3.2 CITIZENS' OVERALL PERCEPTION ON UP.....	8
3.3 CITIZENS' KNOWLEDGE ON UP GOVERNANCE	9
3.4 PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC MEETING	10
3.5 PARTICIPATION IN UP COMMITTEES.....	10
3.6 CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING AND BUDGETING.....	11
3.7 WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN UP GOVERNANCE	12
CHAPTER-4: EFFECTIVENESS OF UP GOVERNANCE FUNCTIONS	13
4.1 UNION PARISHAD PLANNING	13
4.2 REGULARITY OF UP MEETINGS.....	14
4.3 EFFECTIVENESS OF UP COMMITTEES	15
4.4 TAX ASSESSMENT AND COLLECTION	16
4.5 INFORMATION DISCLOSURE SYSTEMS	18
CHAPTER-5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	19
5.1 CONCLUSION	19
5.2 RECOMMENDATION	21

Executive Summary

Sharique programme has been striving to establish good governance practices in Local Government systems in Bangladesh since 2006. It has successfully completed three phases in 207 unions of Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj, Sunamganj and Khulna districts. In January 2017, Sharique programme was extended to two new districts namely Barisal and Gaibandha covering all 167 unions.

Like previous phases, empowerment of citizen remains at the core of Phase IV programme. Its aim is to empower local citizens to make and implement inclusive, gender sensitive and pro-poor collective choices about their lives and livelihoods through strengthening local government systems. This baseline survey is conducted before rolling out SHARIQUE programme implementation to estimate values of key LFA indicators. In that, it is an important milestone to measure changes over time due to project interventions at output, outcome and impact level indicators.

This baseline study adopted a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. It included collection of UP governance (secondary) data and service statistics from 46 UPs, a HH sample survey on 828 citizens of project area, Focus Group Discussions with 65 persons in 8 groups, and Key informants interviews with selected 54 UP representatives. The field data collection of this baseline survey was accompanied between 9 June to 9 July 2017.

Sharique-IV project strives for empowering local citizens through improving their lives and livelihoods in a more democratic, transparent, inclusive and effective local government systems. The principal impact level indicators of the Sharique-IV project is "the number of women, men, DAG and poor people satisfied with basic local governance services". According to the study, only 127,951 women (4.4% of women), 144,350 men (5.1% of men), 61,374 poor (4.7% of poor) and 3,082 DAG people (2.5% of DAG) were found satisfied with the UP basic services. Among all groups, satisfaction is relatively high in Barisal district than that of Gaibandha. More than half (55%) sampled HHs expressed their satisfaction on administrative services, followed by development services (13%) and UISC services (11%). Majority people are not very satisfied on the services of government line departments.

Satisfaction level is relatively high among men than the women. This may be attributed to higher interactions and exposure of men with the UPs while women are less informed about UP services. It also happens for DAG as they have little exposure to UP and its services. These suggest that UP service quality needs major improvement. On the other hand, citizen needs to interact more with the UPs and need to know more about UPs and seek specific services. The project may play a role to bridge these gaps through awareness raising and promoting inclusive governance practices.

Second major impact indicator is "the number of UPs reached to an acceptable level of good governance practices including participatory budgeting, proactive information disclosure and increase in tax collection". Participatory budgeting is closely linked to ward *shava* planning and open budget meetings. According to latest UP records, 23% UPs have established participatory budgeting practices implying that majority UPs not yet have adopted participatory budgeting practices in the working area.

Information disclosure system is largely poor and disorganized. Only 4% UPs are currently sharing UP information proactively and provides updated information, 5% in Gaibandha compared to 3% in Barisal.

In case of tax collection increase from the preceding year, the study found a serious lack in tax collection both the districts. However, certain increases in case of household (52 UPs out of 167) and non-household taxes (61 UPs out of 167) are evident but the increase in amount is still remains very low.

Third key impact level indicator is "the amount and percent of UP annual budget spent for the women, DAG and poor people". The existing practices to allocate budget for women, DAG and poor are neither systematic, nor adequate. Only a handful of UPs are allocating specific budgets for these particular groups. In Barisal, an estimated 7.1% of the development expenditure is spent for the women, which is 0.7% for the DAG and 25.5% for the poor. The rate of budget spending is relatively high in Gaibandha where an estimated 9.1% of development expenditure is spent for women, 0.8% for the DAG and 26.4% for the poor.

From designing to implementation, the project focuses/prioritizes on practice of participatory approach in most cases including budgeting affairs. The baseline survey portrays a gloomy picture in this respect. Only 23% UPs reportedly practice

participatory budgeting, the remainders (77% UPs) do not practice at all where budgets allocations are made entirely by the UP officials.

On the contrary, most UPs have good record of accomplishment on budget spending. About 62% of the budget was spent, 65% in Gaibandha and 59% in Barisal.

UP official data suggest that only 19% of the eligible people were selected legitimately in case of SSNP, higher in Gaibandha (29%) than Barisal (13%). There is a concern on selection processes of SSNP beneficiaries and needs for inclusion of honest people in the SSN committees to ensure unbiased beneficiary selection and review beneficiary list regularly to ensure that all eligible people are suggested.

Under outcome 2, Sharique project will strive to promote effective, accountable, and inclusive public management systems at the UP level. The first indicator of outcome 2 is the number of UPs conducting UP operation in alignment with a five-year plan. Therefore, the UP must have to have a five-year plan and then implement its annual development under the overall five-year plan. The study found that about 22% UPs have five-year plan in the new working area and 100% in old area. It is worth mentioning that Sharique III assisted old area UPs would prepare the five-year plans. The study also reveals that only 7% (11 out of 167) of the new UPs are conducting UP operations in alignment with the five-year plan, which is 100% in old UPs. Significant capacity gaps were noticed in the new UPs in five-year plan preparation. Many UPs having have 5-year plan, actually copied them from another UP as many do not have proper understanding/skills on five-year plan preparation procedures.

Highlights of findings relevant to LFA indicators:

- Majority citizen are not satisfied with the UP services (only women at 4.4%, men 5.1, DAG 2.5% and poor at 4.7% are satisfied)
- 23% UPs are practicing participatory budgeting
- Information disclosure system is also poor (Only 4% UPs provide updated information to citizen)
- 61.7% and 72.5% UPs increased HH and Non-HH tax collection respectively.
- Of the total expenditure (against development budget), 8.1% spent for women, 0.7% for DAG and 25.9% for poor.
- 16% of Total UP budget and 21% of Development budget are derived from participatory WS and OBM
- Of the total budget, 62% was utilized.
- Little above 19% SSN beneficiaries were legitimately selected.
- About 7% new UP is conducting its operations in alignment with five-year plan.
- UPs' own revenue is contributing only 1.2% of total annual budget

The second indicator under outcome-2 is to assess the number of UPs regularly conducting good governance practices including Ward Shava, OBM and UDCC. UP mapping, data revealed that about 23% in new UPs and 78% in old UPs had regularly conducted ward shavas. In case of OBM, about 89% UPs have conducted OBM meeting in new areas, while in the old areas, 100% scheduled open budget meeting were held. Overall, 19% of the planned UDCC meetings were held regularly in the new areas while half of the UPs in old areas were conducting UDCC meetings. In order to enhance efficacy of the public meetings, the UPs suggested enhancing community awareness and engaging citizen in decision-making forum so that they can place their demand at the appropriate level.

The 3rd indicator under outcome-2 is the contribution of UPs' own revenues to annual budget which is 1.2%. This mainly comes from tax collection (holding and non-holding) which poor in both old UPs and new UPs. In old UPs, about 2.7% of the annual budget has come from the own revenue.

As regards output level indicator 1.2, the study revealed that the average number of citizen participated in the last ward shava meeting were 188. Citizen's participation is relatively higher in Gaibandha (210) compared to Barisal (169). Peoples' participation in OBM was found poor. On an average, about 241 people attended in the OBM, which was 280 and 210 in Gaibandha and Barisal respectively. The HHS suggests that only 12% citizens have participated in the OBM. On average, 25 persons attended in an OBRM. That is very few people attended public meeting and many of them without raising any voice.

One of the key output indicators is the number of citizen attended the development committees (PIC/SIC/WC and SSN). On average, 6 persons attended in project implementation related committees and 8 persons in SSN committees, with little difference between Barisal and Gaibandha. Though, PIC, SIC and ward committees were found to have ensured male (average 5 participants) and female (average 2) but no DAG participation.

In course of baseline survey, CBSG has identified the following key issues for the attention of Sharique project team.

- Baseline data was collected amid closing and beginning of fiscal year (June and July), while UPs were not fully prepared to provide us with financial data – in particular budget and planning data. This was an impediment during data collection. However, CBSG tried to minimize this gap by re-sending research investigators to the field in September 2017 and collected required data.
- Project LFA is simple and straight forward. The objectively verifiable indicators are mostly of quantitative nature but some are mix of both qualitative and quantitative. However, source of information and calculation/estimation methodologies need to be clearly defined for uniform understanding of all concerned.
- A few sampled UPs declined to share information without clearance from Upazila Administration. It appeared that some of the UPs were not well informed about Sharique, mainly because of project intervention is yet to take –off. However, CBSG in consultation with local Sharique team selected alternative UPs from sample UP waiting list.

- About 55% UP representatives were elected for the first time in the UPs. All of them were not fully equipped in providing right/adequate information (in not biased), compelling the Team to rely on mostly on UP secretaries.
- Major gaps are evident in the quality and effectiveness of citizens' participation. Women, poor and the DAG groups are still marginalized in the processes.
- Majority of the citizen are unhappy with the UP services for its poor quality and responsiveness. Women, poor and the DAG are particularly dissatisfied with the UP.

In the end, while UP provides even an increasing light of hope to the local people for their development, there is serious lack of capacity and resources to meet the expectation of the people. Following recommendations are made based on our experience during the course of survey:

- **Survey timing:** To gather data at fuller extent, survey timing should be determined based on availability of complete data of a FY (i.e. not during June-July in particular).
- **LFA indicators:** Sharique project team should detail out source of information and also method of calculation/estimation for all LFA indicators for uniform understanding of all concerned.
- **Setting feasible project targets:** Now the baseline values with respect to LFA indicators are available, the project management can set end of project targets that are feasible and realistically attainable.
- **Targeted capacity building:** A large number newly elected UP representatives and secretaries lack experiences and adequate orientations on UP governance and management. Sharique project management team together with the institutional development partners (NILG) should prepare a targeted CB plan based on the specific deficiencies of the elected UP officials

Chapter-1: Introduction, Methodology and Survey Implementation

1.1 Introduction

Sharique programme has entered into phase IV in January 2017 for a three years' period. This new phase programme targets 167 unions of two new districts namely Barisal and Gaibandha. Since 2006, Sharique programme has been striving to establish good governance practices in Local Government systems in Bangladesh. It works within the given structure and the current legal and institutional framework. Sharique has successfully completed three phases from 2006 to 2016. In the recent years, local Governance reform has been unfolding slowly since the adoption of Local Government Act (Union Parishad) in 2009. GOB gave focus on efforts towards increased financial allocation and transfers to Local Government, amid weak human resources in managing local affairs, inadequate citizen's participation for prioritization and oversight of services.

In this backdrop, the goal of phase IV is to contribute to empowering local citizens to make and implement inclusive, gender sensitive and pro-poor collective choices about their lives and livelihoods through more democratic, transparent, and effective local government systems. The current phase has targeted 167 UPs in Gaibandha and Barisal districts for improved Local Governance through capacity strengthening mainly in the fields of planning and public finance management. In addition, 207 UPs in four districts covered in the previous phases consolidate their practices benefiting about 400,000 beneficiaries.

At this point, Sharique intends to undertake a baseline for phase IV to identify target for the project and establish a milestone in the LFA indicators at impact, outcome and outputs levels. The 3 project outcomes, as outlined in the Log frame, include:

1. Citizens participate more effectively in decision-making and hold UP to account in the selected (2) districts (with two outputs).
2. UPs in the selected (6) districts apply more effective, accountable and inclusive public management systems (with three outputs).
3. National actors use and institutionalize tested SHARIQUE capacity development tools and delivery model for strengthening UP governance (with three outputs).

1.2 Objective of the baseline survey

It is important to establish a baseline for Phase IV in order to measure the changes over time due to project interventions at output, outcome and impact level indicators. In this context, the main objective is to populate the objectively verified indicators (OVI) of the project's Logframe with baseline values, and specific objectives of the survey include but not limited to:

- Setting up realistic project targets based the benchmark status of the LFA indicators
- Assess and analyse pro-poor and women-friendly UP governance practices especially in decision making, planning and budgeting
- Assess satisfaction level of the citizen about UP services (administrative, Development and services of Union information service centres)

- Gather current statistics available at UP level by different population characteristics (Poor¹, DAG², Men, and Women)

1.3 Methodology

CBSG adopted a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques, supplementing and complementing each other to gather information from stakeholders of Sharique phase IV intervention areas. Primary elements of the baseline survey comprised key variables and questions of major project outcomes and output level indicators, project activities, and perspective of project stakeholders. In line with the methodology suggested in the ToR, CBSG further fine-tuned it in consultation with Sharique management. The following section provides the employed methodologies for data collection, respondents and extent of survey (summarized in Matrix 1, while the Annex-2 gives details of the sampling).

Desk Review and Consultative Meeting: The study team reviewed a number of project documents to gain insights of phase IV including project LFA, Performance assessment reports, learning documentations of previous phases and available similar baseline and/or research reports. Besides, the study team organized a consultation meeting with Sharique management for fine tuning the survey methodology, extent and sampling procedures.

Collection of UP Service Statistics through UP Mapping: The survey team visited 46 Unions from Phase IV and 19 unions from previous phases on sample basis. The team worked closely with the UP Secretaries and Chairs to collect relevant information.

Household Survey: This household survey was administered on 828 citizens (51% women) spread-over 46 UPs under new project area. The respondents were proportionate to general citizen, DAG, and poor people, who provided information about their perception and satisfaction on the availability, quality and accessibility of local government services.

Key Informant Interview (KII): They study team conducted in-depth interviews with elected representatives (UP chairs, members including reserved ones) in 18 Unions totaling 54 KIIs- 55 % elected for the first time in the UP.

Focus Group Discussions (FGD): The survey team conducted 8 FGDs in 8 unions; 2 each with PIC/SIC/WC members, UDMC members, SSN committee members and with civil society representatives. Sixty-five persons participated in those FGDs, 26% female.

Data triangulation: In analysis, particularly while drawing synthesis and conclusions, the study triangulated the findings.

¹ **Poor:** Per month HH income is equal or less than **11,785 BDT**. **Calculation:** Rural Nominal Income for upper poverty is 1211.57 BDT. (Source: HIES 2010, p 73- Chapter 6). Monthly income for upper poverty line (2017) = $Ti(1+r)^n * \text{avg.HH size} = 1211.57 (1+0.12)^7 * 4.4 = 11785 \text{ BDT}$ (Considering 12% discount rate as per planning commission of Bangladesh, and considering 4.4 family size).

² **DAG:** Disadvantaged Group, who are poor and marginalized, thus deserving special attention from development actors. Poor people who are women/members of ethnic and religious minorities, scheduled castes/affected by climate change or natural disasters/people with special needs/HIV/AIDS and TB affected.

Matrix-1: Baseline survey extent

Sl.	Tools	Respondent	Extent	Number
1.	Household Survey	General citizen, poor and DAG	Coverage: All (46) UPs 18 (GC=6, P=6 and DAG=6) per UP.	828
2.	Key Informant Interview	UP chairman/ member/ reserved seat member	Coverage: Selected (18) UPs UP Chairman=18 Member=18 and Reserved Seat Member=18	54
3.	UP Mapping	UP Secretary, chairman and/or relevant UP representative	UPs=46 (From 2 New districts)	46
			UPs=19 (From 4 Old districts)	19
4.	Focus Group Discussion	Citizen Representatives in committees (Group comprising PIC/SIC/WC, UDMC, SSN and Civil Society member)	Coverage: Selected (08) UPs With PIC/SIC/WC member=2 With UDMC member=2 With SSN committee=2 With Civil Society member=2	8

1.4 Implementation of the Survey

CBSG conducted the survey in two phases because of Eid-UI-Fitr holidays. Data collection in Barisal was done in two phases; first phase was between 9 and 18 June 2017 in Barisal, and the second phase was 2-10 July 2017 in Gaibandha. It is to be mentioned that certain financial information was not available during June and July, and CBSG gathered those financial data along with some committee related information in late September 2017.

1.5 Quality Control Mechanism

CBSG deployed a team of 15 qualified staff including 6 females for conducting the study, all having proven expertise of working in the area of local governance particularly with UP. It used modern technology for data collection by using Android Tablets and programmed all data collection instruments with SurveyCTO (an electronic data collection software package generally used in tablet and/or android phone). All the staff members were extensively trained prior to data collection. CBSG ensured data quality and took adequate measures starting from selection and training of research investigators, carrying out Field work, Supervision, Back-check and close monitoring during Field work. Following additional measures have taken for quality control:

Interviewing: Sex-matched interviewers were deployed. Each interview was conducted at the household level through “one-to-one” basis without external interference.

Team meeting and crosschecking: After completion of fieldwork, team meetings during evening were held on regular basis. In the team meeting, another team crosschecked the data to confirm the consistency. Everyday Supervisors engaged assured quality of collected data. After completion of checking the data, the Supervisor sent a summary report to CBSG HQ at the end of the working day. In addition, a senior consultant visited the field during data collection and participated in FGD, met with the UP chair, secretary, members and reserve seat member to know their perception about the existing local government system.

1.6 Organization of the report

The report starts with an Executive Summary that presents summary findings along with baseline values against impact and outcome level indicators of the project, followed by key

recommendations for the project management. Besides, the main report contains five chapters. These are:

Chapter-1 Introduction, Methodology and Survey Implementation: This chapter includes introduction, study objective, methodology, execution and quality control and limitations;

Chapter-2 Citizens' Satisfaction on UP Services: Chapter two describes about UP services and citizens satisfaction on administrative and development services, services from UISC, safety net services both selection of beneficiaries and distribution and the services from government line agencies at Union level;

Chapter-3 Citizens' Perception and Participation in Local Government: It presents citizens' overall perception and knowledge on UP and local governance, participation in public meeting like ward shava, open budget meeting, open budget review meeting, citizen participation in planning and budgeting, women participation in UP governance;

Chapter-4 Effectiveness of UP Governance Functions: This chapter describes Union Parishad Planning including existence, practices and preparation procedure of five years plan, and its implementation in UP operation, Regularity of UP meeting, Effectiveness of UP Committees, Tax assessment and collection, UP finance both income and expenditure and Information disclosure system;

Chapter-5 Conclusion and Recommendation: This is last chapter of the report that presents recommendation for the project management to design interventions towards achieving the project goals.

The main text of the report is based on the data tables generated from various investigations. The table annexes are prepared based on the investigations and are named after key letters of survey tools. Besides, there are some general annexes viz ToR of the study, details sampling and survey extent, LFA populated with baseline values, survey tools etc.

Chapter-2: Citizens' Satisfaction on UP Services

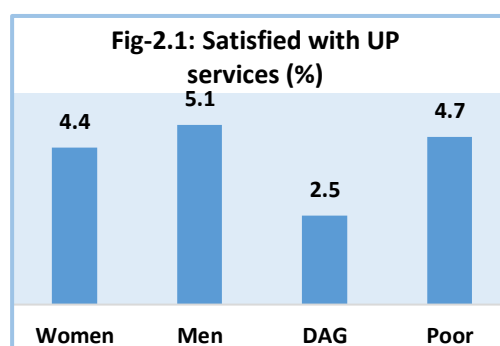
2.1 Overall Satisfaction

UP is the smallest local government units vested with lots of citizenry services. Altogether, a UP is to deliver thirty-nine (39) services to its citizen under two broad categories i.e. administrative services and development services. All the citizens irrespective of religion, sex, age and economic status are entitled to get these services. Mentionable that the UP provides specific services for particular groups (namely Poor, DAG and Women).

Thus, the baseline study assessed various UP services through mapping data and intended to triangulate those with the citizen's perception survey particularly with the assessment of their satisfaction on applicable UP services namely certificates and/or licenses, development services and services from Union Information Service Center (UISC). UP also provides some other services and supports to the citizen.

The quantitative survey essentially collected data on 'satisfaction' from the sampled HH. Citizen who are satisfied with all three broad categories of services (administrative, development and UISC) were calculated by counting persons who are commonly satisfied (**at high and very high**) on a five-point scale (Not applicable, Poor, Moderate, High and Very High).

Overall, citizens' satisfactions on basic UP services are found low. Only 127,951 (4.4%) women were found satisfied,



against 144,350 (5.1%) men, 61,374 (4.7%) poor³ and 3,082 (2.5%) DAG.

Overall, satisfaction is relatively high in Barisal than Gaibandha (Table 2.1); men and poor than their counterparts (women and DAG), as

shown in Figure 2.1. Following section provides relevant information on the satisfaction of the citizens with individual UP services based on the household survey and detailed in the Annex.

Table-2.1: Satisfied with UP services (Number)

Group	Barisal		Gaibandha		Overall	
	Total	Satisfied	Total	Satisfied	Total	Satisfied
Women	1,437,785	65,898	1,442,733	62,053	2,880,518	127,951
Men	1,426,365	87,584	1,411,044	56,766	2,837,409	144,350
DAG	51,203	1,313	70,762	1,769	121,965	3,082
Poor	638,620	45,031	653,716	16,343	1,292,336	61,374

³ **Poor Population (Estimation):** Firstly, poverty (using upper poverty line) decrease rate (arithmetic) was calculated over the year 1991-2010 (HIES, 2005 & 2010). Secondly, the incidence of poverty for the year 2017 was calculated using the decreasing rate of poverty. Thereafter, based on the national population growth rate 1.34% (Population and Housing Census, 2011) the study team projected the population for Barisal and Gaibandha districts. Finally, we estimated the poor population for both district as percentage of projected population using the estimated incidence of poverty.

2.2 Administrative Services

Providing administrative services to citizen is the primary responsibility of UP. There are different types of administrative services. In FY 2016-2017, on average 7,838 certificates and licenses were issued to the citizens. In Gaibandha, on average 9,233 certificates and licenses were issued, with reference to 6,764 in Barisal (Table: UPM-501). Overall satisfaction on administrative services was about 55%, higher in Gaibandha (59%) compared to Barisal (51%). Moreover, general citizen were found to be more satisfied than other counterparts- DAG and poor (Table: HHS-601).

Administrative Services-

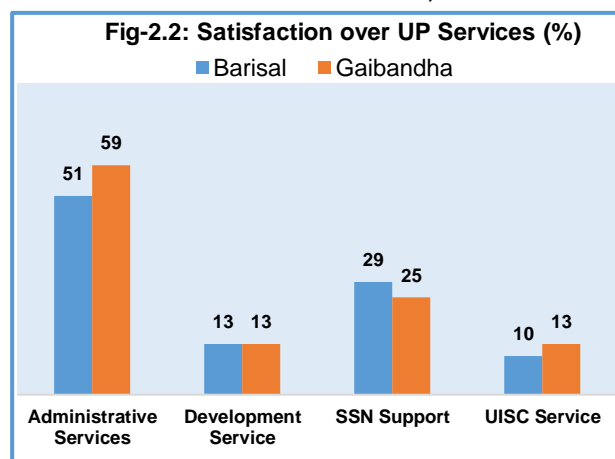
- Birth registration
- Death registration
- Citizenship Certificate
- Succession certificates
- Commercial and trade licenses
- Asset transfer

2.3 Development Services

Government's recent initiatives towards overall decentralization process encourage UPs to plan and manage the development activities on their own. In addition, UPs are also empowered with undertaking various project/schemes; mostly small scale ones, for its citizen. UP development services include- repairing roads, improvement of marketplace and *ghat*, distribution of cash grants and/or kinds, stipend for the student and so on. UP provides its larger development services through LGSP.

The study also intended to assess the number of development projects implemented by UPs in last fiscal year

(2015-16). On average 29 projects have so far been implemented (Table: UPM-502), higher in Gaibandha (30) than that of Barisal (29). The survey further inquired citizens' satisfaction level on the development services. Only 13% respondents were found satisfied with the development projects, without significant difference between the two districts.



2.4 Services of Union Information Service Centre

UISC Services- It provides 3 types of services;

- a) **Government services-** online birth registration, citizenship certificate, and different types of government forms, government circulars and notices.
- b) **Information services-** agriculture, health, education, law & human rights, tourism, environment & disaster management, science & technology.
- c) **Commercial services-** online university admission, examination results, mobile-banking, life insurance, English learning & computer training, internet browsing, email, printing, scanning and compose Photocopy, video conference, passport & visa processing

Union Information Service Center (UISC) is the recent inclusion in UP's service delivery system. All UPs now have the UISC and providing one-stop services involving a local entrepreneur who provides IT related services on demand. As far as the effectiveness of UISC is concerned, about 70% UP representatives opined that the UISC provides effective service to the citizens. No significant difference is found among the perception of chairmen, members and reserved seat

members. In contrast to the UP officials, most citizens have expressed concerns and dissatisfaction on UISC service. Only 11% respondents expressed positive views on UISC (HHS: Table- 601).

2.5 Safety Net Services

UP provides Social Safety Net (SSN) services particularly to poor and disadvantaged community in the form of food supplies and financial allowances as a part of national government service. Here, UP's core responsibilities include identifying prospective beneficiaries from the locality and distribute them SSN support. Around 27% claimed satisfied, slightly higher in Barisal against Gaibandha with no significant difference among the socioeconomic categories of citizen (general, poor and DAG).

2.6 Government Line Agency's Services

Government is providing services to the citizens through several agencies/departments like Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), Health & Family Planning (H&FP), Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), Women and Child Affairs Department, Social Welfare Department (SWD).

The level of satisfaction on the services provided by these agencies is generally low, and

Government Line Agency	District		Total
	Barisal	Gaibandha	
DAE	12	9	11
H&FP	27	18	23
LGED	6	4	6
DPHE	14	6	10
Social Welfare	2	2	2

widely varies. Only about 2% is happy with SWD, 6% on LGED, 10% on DPHE, 11% on DAE/agriculture services and 23% on Health & Family Planning. A larger portion of the citizen is yet to receive line agency services and, most importantly, they have no/little information on these services. Nevertheless, those who have received services, are not satisfied in general (Table 2.2). Quality of service was largely also reported low in most cases.

Chapter-3: Citizens' Perception and Participation in Local Government

3.1 Introduction

Bangladesh has made significant progress in participatory local governance development in last decades. The UP Act 2009, passed unanimously in the Parliament, provides a comprehensive guideline for smooth functioning of UP, and reforms of the UP act in 2011 have made people's participation a mandatory mechanism for the UP. The practice of citizens' participation has already started particularly in decision-making process, project/scheme implementation, action planning, in public meeting, standing and development committees, ward assemblies, preparation of five-year plan and right to information (RTI). In addition, the government through various circulars/directives is encouraging effective citizen participation, finally creating space for interaction with local government, discuss/share their needs, demand services and information, and express their opinion.

3.2 Citizens' Overall Perception on UP

In this section, overall perception of citizen is measured in terms of interaction between UP bodies and citizens, pro-poor and women focused actions, information disclosure system, services quality and tax management system. People's awareness and perception on these issues were found diverse. In the analysis, the study calculated positive perception of the responds level- as "**well**" by combining **well and very well** responses.

As far as **Interaction between UP bodies and citizens are** concerned, about 63% respondents perceived that, interaction is better in recent years. Positive perception is relatively higher in Gaibandha district (67%) than that of Barisal (60%). Group-wise general citizen rated higher (71%) compared to DAG (55%) and Poor (62%), as detailed in Table-HHS.200.

Pro-poor Actions: About 39% citizens were found having ideas on UP's pro-poor activities. General citizens are better informed about the pro-poor actions (52%), followed by poor people (37%) and DAG (27%) as given in Table-HHS. 200. Citizen's knowledge is still high in Gaibandha district (40%) compared to Barisal (38%).

Women Focused Actions: Generally, UP's women focused actions are not much disseminated to the communities, thus people have limited ideas on it. About 27% people knew about women focused actions (Table-HHS. 200). People in Gaibandha (30%) are more aware of women focused activities than Barisal (25%).

Disclosure of Information: UP disseminates information through Notice Board (NB), Information Display Board (IDB), Budget Display Board (BDB) and Citizen Charter (CC). About 38% respondents have ideas on UP's information disclosure systems. General people (46%) are more aware compared to other two groups--DAG (35%) and Poor (34%). Citizens' from Gaibandha (42%) have better perception on information disclosure systems compared to Barisal (36%). Only 6% people have no idea on UP information disclosure systems.

Quality of UP Service: More than half (52%) of the respondents have positive opinion on quality of UP service. General Citizens (61%) are relatively more satisfied with the UP service quality than that of DAG (44%) and poor citizen (52%). By district, people from Gaibandha rated slightly higher than that of Barisal.

UP Tax Management System: The respondents' perception on UP tax management system is relatively poor compared to other issues. Only 22% respondents have positive notion on UP tax management system (Table-HHS. 200). The study reveals that the citizen's perception in Gaibandha (26%) about tax assessment is better compared to Barisal (19%). In terms of respondents' category, general citizens are relatively more acquainted with the UP tax management system compared to DAG and poor (Table-HHS. 200).

To sum up, it is quite apparent from the perceptions that, the citizens of Gaibandha district are more familiar about the UP and have a better perception than Barisal in general. NGOs interventions like Strengthening Democratic Local Governance (SDLG) project might have helped citizen of Gaibandha to have better perceptions. Similarly, general citizens regardless of district are more informed and thereby satisfied compared to the DAG and the poor. It might have happened due to better interaction of men with UP than women. Likewise, DAG has little exposure to UP and its different services.

3.3 Citizens' Knowledge on UP Governance

UP governance has gone through significant reforms in recent years with increased participation. Various consultative forums are formed like ward *shava*, open budget meeting, and other committees which citizen can work with the elected representatives and held them (the UP reps) accountable.

As far as **knowledge level on ward shava** is concerned, only 9% respondents were found to have ideas on Ward Shava. General Citizens (15%) have somewhat more ideas on *ward shava* than DAG (5%) and Poor (5%) as Table-HHS. 300 depicts. People's awareness on *ward shava* is higher in Barisal compared to Gaibandha. Similarly, about three-fourths (75%) people of both districts have no idea on Ward Shava (Table-HHS. 300).

Open Budget Meeting: Open budget meeting (OBM) used to hold once a year. OBM has great importance in UP's transparency and accountability, but citizens' awareness on OBM had showed significantly poor-only at 12%. Knowledge level of general citizens' (23%) is noticeably higher on OBM than other two groups-DAG (5%) and poor (8%). In contrast, about 71% respondents have no idea on OBM (Table-HHS. 300), people's knowledge level on OBM is comparatively poor in Barisal district (11%) than Gaibandha (13%).

Ward Planning Meeting: Ward planning meeting is generally held once a year and citizens are allowed to take part to place their needs/demands with the expectation that community people have knowledge on ward planning and participate actively in the event. Unfortunately, only 5% respondents are aware about ward planning. Here, the General Citizen (10%) has more ideas than their counterpart groups-DAG and Poor (2% each) while majority (88%) is ignorant about the issue (Table-HHS. 300).

Tax Assessment and Result Sharing: Only 4% people of the study know about the tax assessment and result sharing, with no difference between Barisal and Gaibandha (Fig-3.2). By group, knowledge level on tax assessment of general citizen (9%) is higher compared to poor and DAG people (each 2%) as Table-HHS. 300 displays.

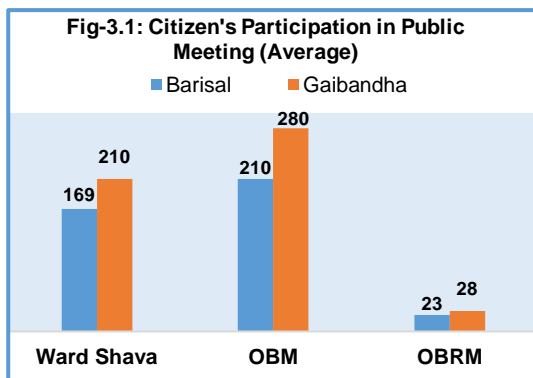
Project Implementation Committees (PIC/SIC/WC): Overall, only 5% respondents have idea about PIC/SIC/WC, little higher in Barisal (5%) against Gaibandha (4%). General people (9%) have little higher ideas about it than poor (2%) and DAG (1%), as detailed in Table-HHS. 300.

Social Safety-net Program: Knowledge level on SSNP particularly in selection and distribution process was found very poor because only 8% people have some ideas on the program (Table-HHS. 300). As regards quality, Barisal (9%) is relatively better than Gaibandha (6%). General people (13%) are more aware about the SSN program compared to other counterparts- poor and DAG (Table-HHS. 300).

3.4 Participation in Public Meeting

As per project document, Logframe in particular, **citizens' groups** are to participate in the public meeting of respective public meeting (i.e. Ward Shavas, Open Budget Meeting etc.). However, the study team did not find any such group, but met with individuals who participated in these events, and therefore collected data on individuals' involvement/participation, as described below.

Participation in Ward Shavas and OBM: Overall, 188 citizens participated in last Ward Shavas (meetings), higher in in Gaibandha (210) in comparison to Barisal (169), and in higher number by males compared to their counterparts (females) (Fig-3.1). Also, found that 19



DAGs of Gaibandha and 14 of Barisal are regular in holding Ward Shavas. About 88% respondents did not attend in the **Ward Shava**, 92% in Gaibandha district and 86% in Barisal. People's participation in Open Budget Meetings (OBM) is also still poor--- on average about 241 people participated in open budget meetings; 280 in Gaibandha against 210 in Barisal (Fig-3.1), with significantly higher attendance of males against females. Again, of the only 12% who participated

in OBM, 7% attended without raising voice while 5% actively participated (Table: HHS. 400).

Participation in Open Budget Review Meeting: OBRMs are also poorly attended as on average 25 people were found to have participated in OBRM. People's presence in OBRM is relatively higher in Gaibandha (28) than Barisal (23) (Fig-3.1), with fewer representation of DAG community in all areas but dominance of males.

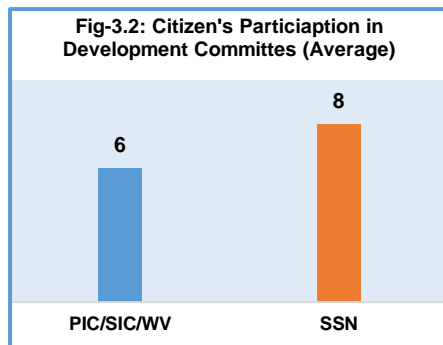
Participation in Tax assessment and Result Sharing: Tax assessment is one of the important tasks of UP governance where citizen participation. Taxes collected by the UPs are directly spent on development activities of the UP. As high as 95% people did not participate in the tax assessment and result-sharing event, with little difference between two districts.

All these suggest that assessments are mostly a top down process and the sharing is more of a ritual than a meaningful event, and there is a need for increased awareness coupled with activation facilitation to bring changes in general and far more to the DAG and poor.

3.5 Participation in UP Committees

UP committees including project based committees (PIC/SIC/WC) and SSNP committees are important provisions in the governance structure to ensure transparency and accountability of UP. Citizens' representation in these committees not only provide scope to share valuable opinion but also encourage them to participate in local government activities.

Project Implementation Related Committees: A committee is formed to implement each individual project/scheme. In case of LGSP, ward committee is formed which works for project implementation. Citizen’s representation both from male and female in different UP committees were evident from study.



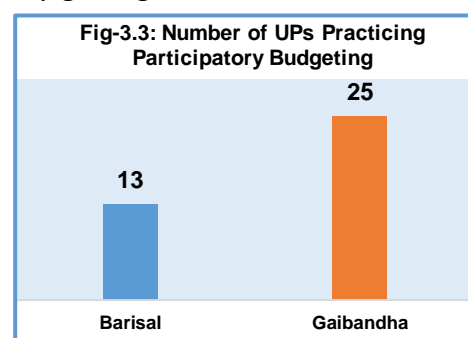
On average, the number of citizen attended project implementation related committees are six (6), with little difference between the districts. However, more males attended than female in both districts (LFA: Output-1.2). Here also the representation from the DAG community is not worth mentioning

Social Safety-Net (SSN) Committee: The average number of citizen that participated in the last SSN committee meeting is eight (8) without substantial difference between Barisal and Gaibandha district (LFA: Output-1.2).

SSN Beneficiary Selection (SSNP): Only 19% recipient of social safety net services was selected rightfully. The rate is higher in Gaibandha (28%), compared to Barisal (13%). According to the key informants—a little more than half of UP representatives (54%) claimed that selection process was very accurate. No significant variations were found among UP chairmen, members or reserved seat members. According to them, UP cannot serve all the eligible beneficiaries due to budget constraint (Table: KII-603- LFA: Outcome-1). In addition, some SSN support including maternity, freedom fighter, cash for work, food for work, job creation, housing (disaster) and acid survival allowances etc. were delivered more in Barisal than Gaibandha.

3.6 Citizens’ Participation in Planning and Budgeting

Participatory Budgeting: Presently UPs are practicing participatory planning and budgeting. The citizen can participate in the planning and budgeting through ward Shava and open budget meeting. Thus, participatory budgeting mainly depends on the performance of ward shava planning and open budget meetings. One of the key good governance mechanism of UP is to practice participatory budget. Sharique-IV endeavor to access the number of UPs reached an acceptable level of participatory budgeting. The study revealed that, currently, about 23% (38 out of 167) UPs were found to have practicing participatory budgeting. More UPs of Gaibandha district (25 out of 82) are practicing it than that of Barisal (13 out of 85) (Fig-3.3). Overall, a large number of UPs have not yet been adopted participatory budgeting practices in the working area (LFA: Impact Indicator).



The present study intended to assess the percentage of UP budget derived from participatory ward shava planning and OBM. In doing so, the study counted the number of projects and its connecting amount from the total number of development projects/sub-projects or schemes of UPs that come from ward shava. It is expected that the entire development project should come from ward shava and OBM. However, in practice there is still gap, as it appeared from the study that about 16% of UP total budget are presently derived from participatory ward shava planning and open budget meeting, while the rate is

slightly higher for the development budget (21%). District wise comparison shows that the rate is higher for both total and development budget in Gaibandha than that of Barisal (LFA: Outcome-1).

The study attempted to take the opinion of elected UP representatives regarding the effectiveness of participatory budgeting in UP development planning. About 54% respondents stated that the participatory budgeting is effective. According to them, many people are participating in ward planning and OBM, sharing their ideas and placing demands. Therefore, UP accommodates public demand in its annual budget. To make participatory budgeting more effective, most of the UP representative suggested for arranging training to strengthen UP bodies' capacity and taking initiatives to aware people about participating OBM and ward shava (Table: KII-201).

3.7 Women Participation in UP Governance

LGI gazettes have mandated the inclusion and participation of women in different UP committees/forums. Women attend some UPs committees; but in most cases, they had little participation. Among the participants 30% are women who attended in the last Ward Shava (WS). Likewise in OBM, 35% were women while in OBRM 27% were women (Table: UPM-301b-d). On average, two women attended in the last PIC/SIC/WC and SSN committees (Table: UPM-301 e-f). Participation in the last UP meetings and committees is comparatively higher in Gaibandha than Barisal. In many UPs woman are included to comply with statutory requirements-but still not met. It is limiting women potential to participate in the meeting and in decision process.

Data on actual attendance of member in the last Standing Committees (SC) of Finance and Establishment, Audit and Accounts and Tax assessment & Collection. Rate of attendance is generally low, particularly in case of women. In Finance and Establish related SC, 30% women participated (against 70%), 29% women in Audit and Accounts related SC (against 71% men) and in Tax Assessment and Collection 31% women attended (with reference to 69% men).

Chapter-4: Effectiveness of UP Governance Functions

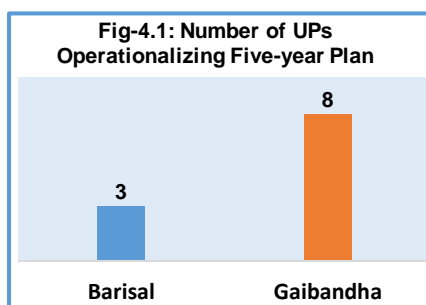
UP act, 2009 among others also provides direction about open budget and the role of ward meetings in the process of preparing the budget. This section discusses UP planning particularly five-year plan and its implementation, regularity of meetings on public, council, stakeholders and committees', and effectiveness of UP committees, tax assessment and collection, UPs' annual income and expenditures as well as existing state of information disclosure systems.

4.1 Union Parishad Planning

Existence of Five-Year Plan: Government has circulated a gazette outlining the preparation of five-year plans at UP level. One of the key outcome indicator of Sharique-IV is that, the number of UPs conducting UP operation in alignment with a five-year plan. The baseline study attempted to assess the status of five-year plan at the UP level. About 22% UPs have five years and annual plan in the study area while rest have no five years plan (Table: UPM-304). In contrast, all (100%) old UPs (Chapainawabganj, Khulna, Rajshahi and Sunamganj) have the five-year plans (LFA: Outcome-2). It is quite apparent that, Sharique intervention helped to prepare the five-year plans in the respective UPs. Thus, it makes the basic difference to have five-year plans in new and old UPs.

Preparation Procedure: According to section 47 (Gha) and Schedule 2 of Union Parishad Act 2009, the preparation of five-year and annual plan is the first function of the UP. Therefore, a comprehensive plan has to be developed, and UP bodies should have sufficient concern to understand the need, importance and methods of designing and implementing the plans. Infrastructural development such as- roads/bridges and social development programs like education, health, agriculture, poverty reduction etc. could be combined under one single plan, which will in turn be reflected in the budget. As far as preparation procedure is concerned, most of the UP secretary could not explain the procedures at satisfactory level. It is evident from the study that, some of the UPs just have paper-based documents of plan but they don't have adequate understanding.

Five-Year Plan and its Implementation in UP Operation: It is anticipated that UP must have five-year plan and the UP operation will be in alignment with the plan. However, it is



evident from the baseline study that some UPs have not yet practice five-year planning. The study revealed that only 7% (11 out of 167) UP have conducted UP operations in alignment with the five-year plan. About 10% (8 out of 82) UPs of Gaibandha district were evident to operate according to five-year plans. The rate is relatively lower in Barisal at 4% (3 out of 82). Mentionable that the Strengthening Democratic Local Governance (SDLG) was implemented in Gaibanda, which might have affected performance of the district.

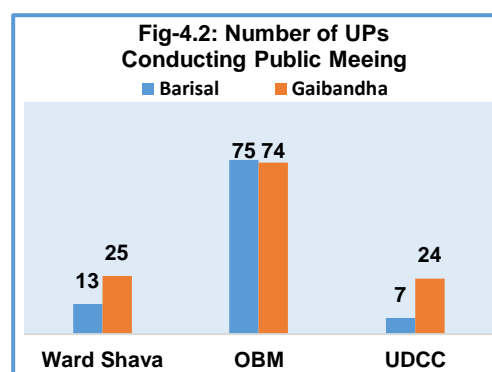
In contrast, the old UPs predominately prepared the strategic five-year plan by following proper guidelines. Thus, all (100%) UPs under old area have the practice of five-year plans and they have been working accordingly (LFA: Outcome-2).

4.2 Regularity of UP Meetings

4.2.1 Public Meetings

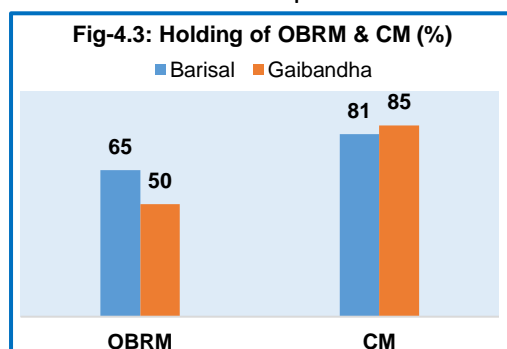
Ward Shava: Each ward generally conducts two-ward shavas in a year. UP mapping data revealed that about 23% (38 out of 167) under new UPs (Barisal and Gaibandha) and 78% (161 out of 207) under old UPs regularly conducted ward shavas indicating that these UPs have achieved its targeted meeting mostly (LFA: Outcome-2). About 26% UP representatives stated that ward shavas adequately contributed towards selection of UP's development activities. The perception is high among the UP chairs (33%) compared others such as UP members (28%) and reserved seat members (17%), with little variation between Barisal and Gaibandha districts (Table: KII-204).

Open Budget Meeting: Presently, government has given more emphasis on open budget meeting (OBM), and no budget was allocated under Local Government Support Project (LGSP) without OBM. The mapping data depict about 89% (149 out of 167) UPs have conducted OBM meeting in new areas, while in the old areas all (100%) scheduled open budget meeting were held (LFA: Outcome-2). UPs of New working areas of Gaibandha (90%) conducted more OBM compared to Barisal (88%) as Fig-4.2 shows. The baseline also triangulated OBM related data. According to the HH survey, about 24% respondents stated that UPs conducted OBM effectively (Table: HHS-400a).



Union Development Coordination Committee (UDCC): UDCC includes representatives from all stakeholders such as-UP bodies, government line agencies, civil society, local elites, community people etc. UP mapping data show that about 19% (31 out of 167) of the planned UDCC meetings were held regularly in the new areas, and half of the UPs (103 out of 207) in old areas (LFA: Outcome-2). In case new working area, UPs of Gaibandha (29%) is ahead of conducting UDCC meeting, which is only 8% in Barisal (Fig-4.2).

Open Budget Review Meeting (OBRM): Budget review meeting provides an additional chance for citizens to place their demands and enable them to know if their demands were



considered. About 59% UPs under new area and 90% under old area are conducting such meetings regularly. In case of new UPs, OBRM was found regular and well attended in Barisal (65%) compared to Gaibandha (50%) as Fig-4.3 shows.

Council Meeting: Regularity of holding council meeting (CM) were assessed through secondary documents (mapping data). As found, some UPs have conducted more than 12 meetings to address

emergency issues. Council meetings were found well attended by the UP representatives in both old and new working areas. Nearly 83% UPs in new area found conducting CM regularly (Table: UPM-301), which was 100% in old UPs (UPM-O. 301), relatively better in Gaibandha (85%) than Barisal (81%) (Fig-3.3). As far as effectiveness of CM is concerned,

about 59% UP representatives opined that UP conducted CM very effectively (Table KII-500).

4.2.2 Committee Meeting (SC Meeting, PIC/SIC/WC)

Standing Committee (SC) Meeting: The study limits its analysis on 3 important SCs, that is used to regularly conduct their bi-monthly meeting. UP mapping data revealed that about 28% of SCs on finance and establishment (FE) related to SC, 24% SC on audits & account (AA) and 34% SC on tax assessment (TA) & collection are three most high performing standing committees and meet more frequently than others meet in last fiscal year (2016-17). In Barisal UPs, FE and TA related SC meeting was held more regularly while audits and accounts related SC performed relatively regular in Gaibandha (Table: UPM-303a).

PIC/SIC/WC: PIC/SIC is generally composed of 5-7 members that prepares project plan, conduct monitoring, supervision of implementation, oversee requirements of project labour, and their payment is observed from the UP service data. Majority (77%) UPs in the new area conducted PIC/SIC/WC meeting on a regular basis, and relatively more (83%) in the old area. In Gaibandha, 84% UPs are performing well in conducting PIC/SIC/WC meeting on regular basis while 75% are doing well in Barisal (Table: UPM.301).

4.3 Effectiveness of UP Committees

Composition and Functioning of UP Standing Committees: The Standing Committees (SC) are the major components of UPs playing vital role in ensuring better services to the people. The committees, comprising elected representatives from the UP, civil society members, and local elites, are entitled to assist the UP. Most committees are not functioning, as UPs did not conduct SC meeting in last couple of months. Only 28% finance and establishments related standing committees of UPs have conducted meeting regularly, relatively higher in Barisal (31%) compared to Gaibandha (25%). In audit and accounts related SC, only 24% UPs conducted meeting following target with negligible difference between the districts, while tax related SC standing committees meet more regularly. Some 65% conduct SC meeting on irregularly (Table: UPM.303a). No representation from DAG and poor community was found in any selected standing committees.

Target achievement of selected SC meetings	District		
	Barisal	Gaibandha	Total
Finance and Establishment	26	20	46
Audit and Accounts	20	20	40
Tax Assessment and Collection	33	25	58

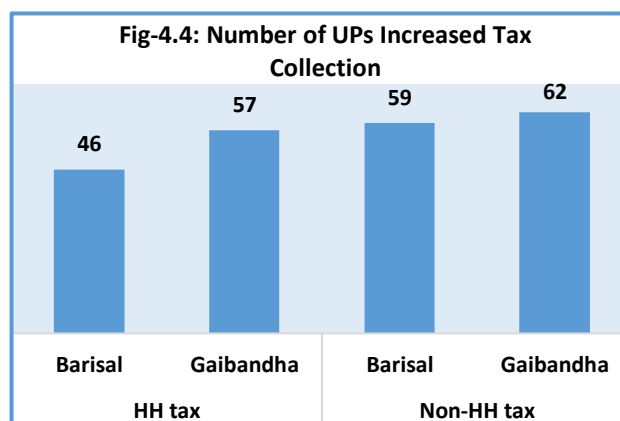
Functioning of UP's Development Committees: Though most UPs have the UDCC but no evidence is found against proper functioning. One-third (33%) UP representatives opined that UP's conducted UDCC meeting effectively (Table KII-500). According to the FGD compilation regarding the PIC/SIC/WC, majority of the participants stated that, committee members play their duties effectively. However, they have to face some challenges, which include; land acquisition, line determination, citizen's lack of awareness. Insufficient budgetary allocation is also a big issue (Annex-5: FGD compilation).

4.4 Tax Assessment and Collection

Status of Tax Assessment: The existing local government act (section 68 of Union Parishad Act, 2009) made UP mandated to assess and collect taxes. However, in reality, UP's are not found practicing such to a larger extent. The mapping data suggest that about 67% of UPs have already completed tax assessment without much difference between the two districts. While about 33% UPs of Barisal and Gaibandha district did not yet assess taxes and remainders did not practiced assessment (Table: UPM. 203). About 31% UP representatives stated that current tax assessment was conducted properly (Table KII-401). UPs, which have not conducted tax assessment, opined that they would do so on an urgent basis.

According to FGD participants, the community is generally unaware UP tax assessment. They also mentioned that UP should have specialized people for tax assessment and collection and strongly feel the need for reviewing current tax assessment system and making it user-friendly (Annex-5: FGD compilation)

Revenue from Household and Non-household Tax: Government policies encourage UP representatives and community people in UPs tax collection, as UPs have several local revenue sources. UP bodies have already started motivating local people to pay fees and taxes with the commitment of implementation of more local development work. However, in practice these are yet to perform significant local revenue mobilization. The study identified a serious lack of tax collection in both the districts. However, little increase of household and non-household taxes are evident which is still at very low level. Overall 103 out of 167 UPs have increased



HH tax collection. In Barisal, it was 46 out of 85 UPs, and the rate of increase in amount is 14%, whereas it is higher in Gaibandha (57 out of 82 UPs) but the increased rate is lower (12%). On the other hand, 121 out of 167 UPs had increased non-household tax collection. UPs of Gaibandha (62 out of 82 UPs) were more evident to have increase non-household tax compared to Barisal (59 out of 85 UPs). In case of rate of increase, UPs of Barisal had 11.7% increase, which was only 9.2% in Gaibandha (LFA: Impact Indicator).

Regarding the share of own revenues in UP annual budget, it is found from the service data that the contribution of UPs' own revenues to annual budget was 1.2% which comes from holding and non-holding taxes. Here, the old UP's performance is relatively better (2.7%) compared to new ones (LFA: Outcome-2).

The baseline study did not find any evidences of any other source (of revenue) in both the districts. Regarding the payment of taxes and any other fees, citizen were found reluctant as reflected in FGD discussions (Annex-5: FGD compilation), though positive trend was observed.

UP Finances-Income and Expenditure: UP income mainly comes from holding tax, non-holding tax, commission from land transfer, commercial tax, fees for trade licenses, central government tax transfer/share (1% etc.) government fund transfer under local government support program (LSGP) etc. In addition, UP also gets some support from various NGOs and corporate bodies in the form of corporate social responsibility (CSR) etc.

Attribute		District		Total
		Barisal	Gaibandha	
Holding Tax	FY 2015-16	105,269	76,784	92,884
	FY 2016-17	11,95,230	86,310	1,05,086
Non-holding	FY 2015-16	45,962	67,023	55,119
	FY 2016-17	51,354	73,210	60,856
Total Income	FY 2015-16	98,54,454	127,14,086	110,97,772
	FY 2016-17	98,04,205	127,54,556	110,86,966
Total Expenditure	FY 2015-16	96,21,360	120,69,585	106,85,806
	FY 2016-17	76,71,972	99,00,950	86,41,093

On average, BDT 1,05,086 and BDT 60,856 was collected as holding and non-holding tax respectively per UP in 2016-17 FY.

On average UP's income was BDT 110, 86,966 in FY 2016-17, is a little less than that of preceding FY2015-16. The average estimated expenses was found at BDT 86,41,093, also less than that of preceding year (Table-4.2).

Budget Expenses for Women, DAG and Poor: UPs are now allocating budget separately for women, disadvantaged (DG) and poor with the expectation that UP would spend for the betterment of this particular groups of people. In practice, the existing budget allocation for women, DAG and poor are not all adequate. Only 43% UPs are spending budget for women, 37% for DAG and 46% for poor separately (Table UPM 202a). In Barisal, an estimated 7.1% of the development expenditure is spent for the women, which is 0.7% for the DAG and 25.5% for the poor. The rate of budget spending is relatively high in Gaibandha where an estimated 9.1% of development expenditure is spent for women, 0.8% for the DAG and 26.4% for the poor (Table-4.3).

Group	Particulars	Barisal		Gaibandha		Total	
		Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%
Women	Budget	494,305	5.0	1,029,538	9.3	727,015	7.0
	Expenditure	405,942	7.1	608,388	9.1	493,962	8.1
DAG	Budget	149,115	1.5	125,250	1.1	138,739	1.3
	Expenditure	41,038	0.7	52,000	0.8	45,804	0.7
Poor	Budget	2,590,623	26.2	3,183,535	28.7	2,848,411	27.4
	Expenditure	1,464,055	25.5	1,755,596	26.4	1,590,812	25.9

According to the UP bodies, budgetary allocation and expenses are insufficient for women, DAG and poor. Only 6% UP bodies opined that the allocation for women was adequate.

UP representatives perceived that the current level of budget allocation and expenditure for women, DAG and poor is low and inadequate (Table: KII. 300). Regarding separate allocation, most of the UP representative said that they will ensure 30% allocation for these particular groups in next budget and they demand for sufficient allocation for UP's annual budget from the concerned authorities (Table: KII. 300).

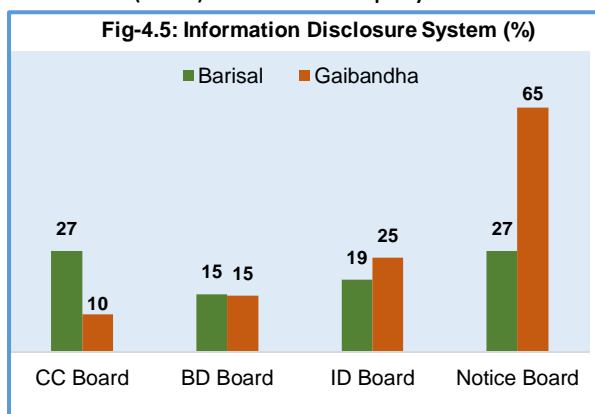
In case of total expenditure against the budget, most UPs have done well (about 62%). Percent of budget expenditure was 65% in Gaibandha and 59% in Barisal (LFA: Outcome 1).

4.5 Information Disclosure Systems

Information disclosure system plays a vital role in ensuring citizen's right and participation in local government. Right to Information Act (RTI) 2009 has made disclosing of information mandatory. It provides direction to all public offices to ensure availability of and access to information. UP has developed some mechanisms to disclose information that includes citizen charter (CC) board, budget display (BD) board, information display (ID) board, notice board (NB) and websites.

Data show that the existing information disclosure system is very poor and unorganized. Only 4% (7 out of 167) UPs were found proactive and provide updated information. Proactive disclosure of information is slightly better in Gaibandha (5%) in comparison with Barisal (3.5%) (LFA: Impact Indicator).

Overall 41% UP have CC boards, of them 20% were found updated. The updated status of CC boards in Barisal (27%) was much better than Gaibandha (10%). About 33% UPs have established BD board, 15% with updated information. Moreover, 46% UPs have the ID boards, 22% with updated information. In case of notice boards, comparatively good number (85%) of UPs displayed them with 43% updated info (Table UPM-100). The



existence and updating status of Notice board is comparatively better in Gaibandha (65%) than that of Barisal (27%). The study found that most information boards were displayed outside the room.

The baseline study data were further triangulated with the findings of KII, HHS and field investigation. As far as perception of UP bodies, about 20% stated that information disclosure system widely influences citizen to seek UP services (Table KII-701).

Interestingly, 20% citizen has observed/seen the notice board, budget display board, citizen charter and information display boards in last three months (Table HHS-501). A large number of UPs still do not have such boards to disseminate information, and the UPs with information boards do not update them with necessary information.

Chapter-5: Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

Local Government Support Project (LGSP) is the single largest government initiative to support the reform processes combining local level development funding with governance improvement actions. Inclusive local governance is a key theme to the LGSP that requires UP involving citizen groups in UP governance processes including local level planning, monitoring and decision-making. Majority newly elected UP officials acknowledges the need for effective UP and appreciates the ongoing UP reform processes. Some progresses are demonstratively visible in local governance over the last few years though there are serious gaps exist in the governance functions.

Sharique project is a strategic input into the government reform processes towards inclusive local governance with a particular focus on women, poor and the DAG communities who are generally left out in any large-scale reform processes. In addition, there are many gaps in local governance processes and institutional capacities where Sharique can make visible changes and impacts on the lives of local people in general and the poor, women and DAG communities in particular.

Recognising the importance of establishing a Baseline to measure the changes over time due to project interventions at output, outcome and impact level indicators of Phase IV Sharique has engaged CBSG to conduct a survey with the main purpose to populate the objectively verified indicators (OVI) of the project's Logframe. The baseline study adopted a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Challenges of the Survey

The research team encountered some sorts of challenge in conducting the assignment, which are as follows-

- The data collection of the baseline survey was done in the middle of 2017 i.e. in the period of ending and/or opening of fiscal year of UPs. It was a challenge to get full range of updated financial information from the sampled UPs. This was an impediment during data collection. However, CBSG tried to minimize this gap by re-sending research investigators to the field in September 2017 and collected required data.
- Project LFA is simple and straight forward. The objectively verifiable indicators are mostly quantitative but some are mix of both qualitative and quantitative. However, source of information and calculation/estimation methodologies need to be clearly defined for uniform understanding of all concerned.
- A few sampled UPs declined to share information without clearance from Upazila Administration. It appeared that some of the UPs were not well informed about Sharique, mainly because of project intervention is yet to take –off. However, CBSG in consultation with local Sharique team selected alternative UPs from sample UP waiting list.
- About 55% UP representatives were elected for the first time in the UPs. All of them were not fully equipped in providing right/adequate information (in not biased), compelling the Team to rely on mostly on UP secretaries.

- In most UPs, record-keeping system, especially financial and SSN records, was not well organized. Our research team members had to reconcile information using multiple records, which in fact took longer time for data collection than estimated.
- The survey team did not find any organized 'citizen groups' (of OBM or ward shava) as mentioned in LFA. Since no such groups was formed up to the period of data collection, it caused wastage of time of the data collection team. However, team therefore collected intended information from relevant individuals.
- Each UP is mandated to chalk out a five-year (strategic) plan and prepare Annual Plans based on the former (5-year Plan). Notably, the five year plans produced to the data collection team were either unorganized or duplications ('copy and paste' of other UPs). However, very few 'evidence based' instruments (5 Year and Annual Plan in alignment with 5-year plan) were found.

Observations and Findings of the Baseline Survey (Programmatic)

The key observations and findings of the baseline survey include:

- Citizen role and participation in key UP governance processes have begun mainly to comply with the LGSP requirements. However, major gaps are evident in the quality and effectiveness of their participation. Women, poor and the DAG groups are marginalized/excluded from the processes.
- Budgeting processes have major flaws as it is mainly prepared in traditional top down processes and shared with the citizen customarily. There is a lack of genuine consultation, idea seeking and approval from participatory discussion processes. There is a lack of capacity of the citizen as well as the UP to engage in participatory discussion and collective decision-making.
- Pro-poor and pro-women planning and budgeting are mainly absent in majority UPs. Many actually do not have the capacity to prepare pro-poor and pro-women budget. Current UP allocations to the poor, women and DAG are disproportionate and low.
- LGSP requires UP preparing long-term plan to qualify for its support. Most UPs' five-year strategic plans do not reflect local reality and citizen's expectations. Local people are not aware of it. Therefore, there is no real support and appreciation from the citizen and the UP officials to implement the plan.
- Tax reform is a major challenge at the UP as it generally underfunded/resourced to implement necessary development works. Elected UP officials are also reluctant to improve UP finances from local level resource mobilization and tax collection.
- Council meeting and the standing committee meetings are the main mechanism of UP governance and decision-making supported by other reform measures. While the effectiveness of council meeting can be questioned, there is a genuine need to make standing committees functional, meet regularly and take decisive actions which are currently absent or at best underperforming.
- UPs are assigned with ever-increasing roles with administrative and development services/functions. However, UP organization structure remains same with only one permanent position - UP Secretary. This becomes a major challenge and often remains the main stumbling block to provide effective services to the citizen and implement development activities effectively. Documentation and UP office functions remain an area of concern.

- Majority citizens, particularly women, poor and the DAG, are unhappy with the UP services for poor quality and responsiveness. Recommendations

5.2 Recommendation

The recommendations are put forward based on the challenges of conducting this Baseline survey and the extract of the findings elaborated in the foregone chapters. Thus, the baseline study is offering the following recommendations-

Recommendation for Monitoring and Evaluation Activities:

- **Survey timing:** To gather data at fuller extent, survey timing should be determined based on availability of complete data of a FY (i.e. not during June-July in particular).
- **LFA indicators:** Sharique project team should detail out source of information and also method of calculation/estimation for all LFA indicators for uniform understanding of all concerned.

Recommendation for Project Management:

- **Setting feasible project targets:** Now the baseline values with respect to LFA indicators are available, the project management can set end of project targets that are feasible and realistically attainable. Project management team can also prepare activity priority plan with clear milestones.
- **Targeted capacity building:** A large number of current UP representatives are elected for the first time who lack experiences and adequate orientations on UP governance and management. Sharique project management team together with the institutional development partners (NILG) should prepare a targeted CB plan based on specific conditions of UPs. They may include capacity building on:
 - Participatory strategic planning (five-year planning)
 - Orientation of newly elected UP representatives on LGI Act and their roles and responsibilities specially focusing pro-poor inclusive governance
 - Revenue collection, Tax assessment and Financial management
 - Project planning, monitoring and budgeting
 - Create a culture of inclusive governance practices in UP annual budgeting
 - Capacity building on conducting public, stakeholder and committee meetings
- **Making UP more accountable to citizen:** Majority of the citizen have very limited idea on UP governance mechanism and their scope of participation in UP activities. Therefore, activating and strengthening ward platform will continue to be a key strategy for Sharique IV to ensure inclusive UP governance. Mobilization and sensitization of UP elected officials vis-à-vis citizens should adopt informative interactions, appreciative to challenges and concerns and above all provide a vision of inclusive UP governance.
- **Advocacy and campaigning:** Promotion of Sharique-IV should strive to arrange some awareness rising activities, organizing adequate number of seminars, workshops etc. doing advocacy for concerned stakeholders to ensure citizen participation in UP planning and budgeting.

- **Budgetary allocation for poor, women and DAG:** The practice of allocating budget for women, poor and DAG was not very admissible in most UPs. It is very important to allocate budget for empowering them economically and socially. This project phase can do advocacy and lobby with concern authorities for the specific allocations to this particular groups.
- **Documentations:** The study found that UPs have the information but not managed in well-organized fashion. Thus, Sharique can arrange skill development training on record keeping and documentation to capacitize UP secretary. The project needs to develop field level mechanism, so that information related to LFA indicators are readily available during mid-term and endline survey.
- **Functioning of standing and development committees:** There is a genuine need to make stranding committees functional, hold meeting regularly and take decisive actions, which are currently absent, or at best underperforming. Some committees have missed the inclusive representation from women, poor and DAG. Thus, the project should work closely with UP bodies, help reorganizing committees (if needed) and ensure sufficient women, poor and DAG representation.
- **Information Disclosure System:** The existing information disseminations system of UPs was found very poor and disorganized, though few UPs have some displaying mechanisms but not updated at all. Whereas, information disclosure system widely influences citizen to seek UP services and makes UP accountable. Therefore, the project may take initiative to develop a sustainable information disclosure system.