



**Peoples Reporting Centre project of Democracywatch aims to decrease the gap between the general people and their union Parishad and function as a channel between the people and UP. PRC will eventually spawn a monitoring system on the activities of union parishad. Side by side PRC ensure the transparency, accountability and decentralization at local level. This project is supported by DANIDA-HRGG-PSU.**

## **Democracywatch Baseline Survey Report** **66% People are not informed about UP activities**

People's Reporting Centre Project of Democracywatch has conducted a survey recently to determine the people's perception of Union Parishad. Democracywatch took the opinion of 2500 people and covered 28 unions under this survey.

The survey revealed that Majority people are not concerned/well informed about UP's activities. About 34% percent of people were aware of UP activities and the rest of the respondents were not informed about UP activities (66.0%).

Only 14.7% of the respondents know about the existence of UP's Standing Committees and the rest have no idea about standing committee (85.3%). Low percentage of the respondents who know about the existence of UP's Standing Committees reflects the lack of awareness of people about UP standing Committees.

While asked about the quality of services provided by the UP, 31.0% answered that they are satisfied, 43.6% moderately satisfied and 24.6% are dissatisfied. While asked about the causes of dissatisfaction with UP services, 49.4% of the respondents said that the chairman and members didn't do any thing significant for the wellbeing of the people of union Parishad. 29.1% of the respondents reported that they didn't get back to their constituency once the UP election was over.

While asked about the state of law & order in the locality 37.5% of the respondents said that the situation was good. 37.2% of the respondents said that law and order situation remained unchanged while 17.6% informed about prevalence of the precarious law and order situation. In agriculture sector 34.6% respondents said the condition is good, 33.6% said there is no change in this field and 17.3% said the services of agriculture is bad. The opinion of health and education, 34.8% and 35.0% of respondents said UP has good services in health and education About the Village Court and Shalish Parishad majority people said that there was no major progress in these fields. About minimization of oppression of the women and children the services of UP is inadequate (29.0%) and 28.1% respondents said it remained unchanged.

In reply to the question on *the existence of standing committees on health, education, agriculture and law & order*, only 11.3% of the respondents answered in the affirmative while (77.1%) answered that they had no idea about this. About the standing committee on health only 6.8% respondents said the existence of standing committee, 74.6% respondents didn't know.

On the question about the satisfaction level of people about the activities and services rendered by female UP members, only 20.2% respondents said that they were satisfied, while 44.5% respondents didn't know any thing about her.

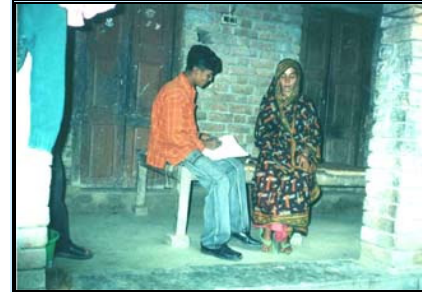


**Data Collection for Baseline Survey**

52.8% respondents have no idea whether the female members can get the job done by the Chairman or not. 10.0% said that they got assignments from UP and 33.7% said that unlike their male colleagues, the female members hardly get equal treatment and 3.5% said that they did not know nothing about the matter

36.4% of the respondents reported that women and children members of families have been beaten by their male family member. About the divorce due to dowry, 29.6% respondents said that this kind of incident take place in their area. It is important that to note that 51.9% of respondents said the female UP members do not get corresponding amount of honorarium as they male counterparts get.

22.3% of the respondents said that active committees are in place in minimizing oppression of women and children. 77.7% informed that there is no such committee for this.



**Data collection for Baseline Survey**

In terms of concern about the UP budget 26.7% respondent said yes and 73.3% are not concerned about the UP budget.

In response to a question about the Participation of general people in UP yearly budget session, only 12.6% respondents said that general people participate in UP budget session. 51.9% said that people do not participate and 35.5% said that they have no idea about it.

13.8% said the budget is properly displayed for notice at UP and other important places and 86.2% said it is not.

While asked about the existence of any committee for making participatory budget at the UP 7.2% of the respondents said yes, 71.4% said there is no committee while 21.4% replied that there is no committee but people sometimes work together towards this end.

In reply to a query about any initiative taken for the tax collection of union parishad 42.6% respondents said that union parishad has undertaken some initiatives and 18.9% said no such initiatives has taken, rest of the people (38.5%) have no idea about tax collection. Only 7.0% respondents are concerned about the allocations of different sectors in UP budget, rests of the respondents have no idea (93.0%).

80.8% respondents said that birth registration is done here in the UP, 14.3% said it is partially done and only 4.9% said it is not done.



**Training for Interviewer**

About the existence of village court 24.1% respondents said they have village court in their unions. But the effectiveness of village court 6.8% of the respondents said it is functioning, 71.0% said it is beset with favoritism and 22.2% said it is inactive. 65.2% respondents know the presence of Shalish Parishad. While asked about the effectiveness of Shalish Parishad, only 14.7% respondents said it is active, 72.3% said it is beset with favoritism and 13.0% said the Shalish Parishad is inactive. The following table shows the perception of people about the existence and functioning of village court and shalish Parishad.

In response to a question about the initiative take by people in their locality, 17.7% of the respondents said they have undertaken some initiatives. 83.3% said that they have not undertaken any initiative.

## Democracywatch organized Discussion meeting in Nilphamari on 'The importance of Village Court to ensure Justice at grass roots level'

Democracywatch organized a discussion meeting on the importance of village court to ensure local justice at grass roots level on 23 April, 2007 at Balapra Union Parishad Bhavan at Dimla Thana of Nilphamari. Local organization Nilachal was co organizer of this event.

Speakers told that 'Problems with the judicial system in Bangladesh are well known. The poorest pay a high price for this. Performances of Village Court and Village Police are very poor. Union Parishad Chairmen sometimes are not interested to make village court functional rather given preference SALISH by their own mechanism. Main reasons behind this are their vested interest and limited capacity on local judiciary system. Many people are not well versed and informed about the function of village court. They even not are acquainted with the effectiveness of the village court where minor cases could be disposed easily without any harassment.'

Speakers emphasized to make general people more aware on village court at local level so that access to local justice would be ensured. Democracywatch will organize a series of awareness campaign in favor of village court to ensure local justice.

Among others Chairman Tobibul Islam, Abdul Kader, Saiful Islam, Jahirul Islam and Golam Kibria were present.

## Workshop with UP representative at Dinajpur

A workshop on "The role of UP representatives to ensure transparency and accountability" at Palsha union in Dinajpur on 18 April, 2007. To ensure transparency and accountability at Union level the role of union parishad representatives should be more accurate, visible and at the same time noticeable. In this workshop participatory budgeting and planning, financial management, Filling management and content of governance were discussed. A huge number of UP members were attended in the workshop.

Another workshop was held with Singra Union Parishad representatives at PRC office at Singra on same issue.

Feroze Md Nurun Nabi Jugol, Programme Officer and Mohiuddin Rana, Assistant Programme Officer of Democracywatch facilitated the whole session.

## Workshop with UP representative at Gazipur

A workshop on the Role of Union Parishad representatives of Baria in Gazipur held at the office of Peoples Reporting Centre at 11:00 a.m. The workshop end at 4 p.m. Ms Synthia, A VSO volunteer from Philippine, activist in local government field inaugurated the seesion while Mostafa Sohel, Programme Manager of Democracywatch and Nilufa EasminMoon, Assistant Programme officer were present at the occasion.

One of the participant told that, we must ensure transparency in not only the union parishad level but also at national level to ensure similar picture in all aspect of the country.



A workshop on the Role of Union Parishad representatives of Baria in Gazipur

He told that the content of the governance like equality, press freedom, transparency and accountability must ensure in all level so that people will get confidence to build a better Bangladesh.

In that workshop financial management, filling, office management of UP were discussed by the facilitators.

### Workshop on Participatory planning and Budgeting held at Gazipur

A workshop on participatory planning and budgeting of Union parishad was held at Baria Union Parishad Complex on 18 April,2007 at 10.am.UP representatives, Civil Society leaders, Members of the Citizen Committee and Journalists were participated at this workshop.

In this workshop the necessity of participatory planning, usefulness, procedure of budgeting and planning, Participatory approaches were discussed. Finally They made a action plan of their UP.



A workshop on participatory planning and budgeting of Union Parishad at Baria in Gazipur

### Survey is going on PRC areas

A study on the empowerment of UP female members is going on Jessore, Nilphamari, Gazipur and Dinajpur. A comprehensive questionnaire was prepared by the DW research unit and taking interview from different people. The complete report will produce in the next month.

### Opinion

I have received the PRC monthly bulletin and I am impressed by the service you are giving to your country men. Experience has shown that without democracy, transparency and accountability are limited and this leads to exploitation of the masses by the leading elite. I therefore urge you to forge ahead with the civic education and this will help to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor through fair distribution of the national cake. I am doing well here and wish you the best in your noble task. **R.M.Vonza**

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