

Female Upazila Nirbahi Officers in Field Administration of Bangladesh: Do they Face Challenges?

By

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Dedicated to

**Gulshan Ara Begum
(My mother)**

When there is no one, there is Almighty. And then there is you.

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Abstract

The study aimed to find out the workplace and family life challenges perceived by the female Upazila Nirbahi Officers. It also focused on the common strategies adopted by the female UNOs to address the perceived challenges. UNO is a vital post in Upazila administration and the effective functioning of Upazila Parishad is dependent on the effective coordinating role of UNO. About one-sixth of the posts of UNO are now held by the female civil servants.

Questionnaire survey method, interview method and case study methods were used to conduct this research. Total number of respondents of the study was 75; among them 41 respondents were surveyed and 34 respondents were interviewed. Quantitative data were analyzed, categorized and processed through statistical tools like frequency distribution, measures of central tendency (mean and median), measures of variability (standard deviation) and measures of relationships between variables (Pearson's correlation coefficient). SPSS was used to find out the statistical value of collected data. A five point Likert Scale was used to apply value to the categorical data.

The study was designed to find out the challenges perceived by the female Upazila Nirbahi Officers originated from societal, organizational and political culture. A number of challenges arising from societal and organizational culture were identified by the study; but it did not found any significant challenge caused by political culture. The major workplace challenges identified by this study include barriers in exercising power and authority in mobile courts, facing discrimination in addressing, requirement of harder work than male colleagues to prove capability to boss, barriers to join some religious ceremonies, social obstacles in maintaining informal relationship etc. Problems in taking care of kids, not being able to manage time to spend with them etc are the main family life challenges found by the study. The origin of these challenges are socio-cultural and religious norms, inherent negative perception of superiors, disobedience of subordinates, dual responsibility of office and family, posting of spouse in distant area, unpredictable and lingered work hour, insufficient leave, absence of reliable person for taking care of kids, movement at night, frequently working on weekends, lack of supportive staff in UNO's residence etc. The study identified significant relationship between the organizational culture and challenges

perceived by the respondents. Significant relationship between the dependent variable and masculinity dimension of societal culture was also found by the study.

The common strategies adopted by the respondents to address the challenges include honesty, integrity, efficiency, sincerity, prompt affirmative action to handle unpredictable situations, doing extensive inspection and field visit, being straight forward about informal or humiliating addressing, avoiding the trouble makers, consciously applying judicious mind, speaking loudly and never showing any shakiness, never going beyond rules and laws, ensuring transparency in financial dealings, involving political representatives to handle local problems, well behaviour with people etc.

Some findings of the study about the approach of political representatives and cooperation of officers of other departments did not match with the findings of other studies related to Upazila Parishad. So, there is a scope for further research focusing the impact of political culture and generalists-specialists conflict in the functioning of female bureaucrats serving as Upazila Nirbahi Officers.

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List of Abbreviations

ACR	Annual Confidential Report
ADC	Additional Deputy Commissioner
BCS	Bangladesh Civil Service
BGB	Border Guard Bangladesh
DC	Deputy Commissioner
DS	Deputy Secretary
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
MoPA	Ministry of Public Administration
MP	Member of Parliament
OCED	Organization for Economic Co- operation and Development
SAC	Senior Assistant Commissioner
SAS	Senior Assistant Secretary
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SSNP	Social Safety Net Program
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
WEF	World Economic Forum

Chapter 1

Introduction

Background:

Empowering women and leveraging their leadership and skills in the public sector are crucial for a nation's development as diversity in leadership can work better to promote innovations in facilitating welfare of the citizens (OECD, 2014). Public institutions are responsible for formulating and implementing policies and rules that affect peoples' life. So, ensuring gender diversity in higher positions of public institutions can provide a balanced perspective in designing inclusive policy approach (*ibid.*). Equal participation of women in decision making positions requires institutional mechanisms to develop gender-sensitive policies and government accountability for closing the gender gap. Though it is a global challenge to ensure gender equity to all spheres of public life, the countries of western world are several decades ahead of the developing countries to address this issue by implementing a range of innovations (*ibid.*).

Bangladesh, being a developing country, has been striving to achieve the elusive goal of ensuring gender equality. It is an unfortunate fact that women in Bangladesh are still considered as one of most vulnerable groups. Social and cultural values did not create a congenial atmosphere for most of the women to lead a dignified life. They are expected to play the traditional gender biased role of a cook, cleaner, house hold manager and baby care taker. Their unpaid hard work and contribution to economy have rarely been recognized by the society. Despite the constitutional provisions of equal rights to all citizens [Article 19(3), 27, 28 and 29], the entrance of women in different public and private sector organizations is very limited. Women got access in Bangladesh Civil Service in 1982 but still now they cover only 14.48% of public administration (MOPA & PSC, 2011 as cited in Bilkis, 2012). Kabir (2013) in her study on women's representation in bureaucracy stated that, only 19% of the total public sector employees are women of whom over 90% are 3rd class and 4th class employees. In the central decision making arena like ministries and divisions only 14% are women (Government of Bangladesh, 2007 as cited in Kabir, 2013).

But the country has some achievements also. Bangladesh ranked 64 scoring 0.704 among 145 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index 2015 published by World Economic Forum (WEF) while the positions of Srilanka, India, Nepal and Pakistan are respectively 84, 108, 110 and 145 (www.prothom-alo.com published on 19.11.15 and visited on 20.11.15). The Global Gender Gap Index 2015 ranked the economies of 145 countries according to how well they are leveraging their female talent pool, based on economic, educational, health-based and political indicators (www.weforum.org visited on 20.11.15). This report clearly showed that gender gap situation in Bangladesh is better than many South Asian countries. Bangladesh is the second-most improved country among 24 countries in the Asia and the Pacific region on the overall Index and Political Empowerment sub-index and ranked 8 in the region (The Global Gender Gap Report 2015). The following table shows the scores-

Table: 1 (Bangladesh in Global Gender Gap Index 2015)

Sub-index	Indicators	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female-to-Male Ratio	Score	Rank
Economic Participation & Opportunity	Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers	5	95	0.06	0.06	123
	Labour Force Participation	60	87	0.70	0.70	97
	Professional & Technical workers	24	76	0.32	0.32	118
Political Empowerment	Women in Parliament	20	80	0.25	0.25	76
	Women in Ministerial Position	7	93	0.07	0.07	126
	Years with Female Head of State (Last 50 Years)	22	28	0.76	0.76	1
Educational Attainment	Literacy Rate	58	65	0.91	0.91	109
	Enrollment in Primary Education	93	90	1.04	1.00	1
	Enrollment in Secondary Education	51	44	1.16	1.00	1
	Enrollment in Tertiary Education	11	15	0.72	0.72	119
Health & Survival	Healthy Life Expectancy	62	60	1.03	1.03	104
	Sex Ratio in Birth (Female/Male)	1.04	0.96	0.96	0.94	1

Source: The Global Gender Gap Report 2015

The birth rate of female in Bangladesh has exceeded the male birth rate and female literacy rate is on its way to reach the males'. The country ranked first in indicators like years with female head of state, enrollment in primary education and enrollment in secondary education which are certainly remarkable achievements. There is also not much difference between male and female in tertiary education enrollment. But all these achievements could not sufficiently facilitate to improve the number of female legislators, senior officials and managers. There are only 5% female legislators, senior officials and managers while the male proportion is 95%.

Haque and Bala (1988) in a study on public sector of Bangladesh showed that 19% of the respondents who are in the executive positions think that women are not enough confident to perform the challenging jobs and they are physically and mentally weak. Women managers are excluded from informal decision making and challenging duties in the context of Bangladesh (Sultana, 1996 as cited in Azim et al, 2000).

In field administration of Bangladesh, women's representation in the administrative leadership posts like Commissioner, DC or ADC is also very low. At present there is no female Commissioner out of 8 Commissioners, there are only 3 female Deputy Commissioners (DC) out of 64 DCs and 18 female Additional Deputy Commissioners (ADC) out of 199 ADCs working in the field administration of Bangladesh (www.mopa.gov.bd, visited on 27.12.15). This study focuses on the post of Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), in which among the 426 posted officers, 354 are male and 72 are female (www.mopa.gov.bd , visited on 20.11.2015). The data portrays that only about 17% of the UNOs are female which indicates a strong gender imbalance. As stated by Aminuzzaman (2013, p 10),

“Although significant constitutional provisions and statutory laws have guaranteed women's equal rights, but because of some discriminatory personal laws, political culture, lack of commitment, the patriarchal socio-economic system and traditional mindset, Bangladesh could not proceed to the expected direction and keep the pace to achieve gender equality.”

The posting rules for officers of B.C.S (Administration) cadre, recently published by Ministry of Public Administration, made it mandatory for all Senior Assistant Secretaries (included in the UNO fit list) to serve as Upazila Nirbahi Officer for at least 2 (two) years. If the husband and wife are both working, they should be considered to give posting in the same or nearest work station on priority basis (Circular No. 05.00.0000.137.22.101.14-541 dated 09.11.15, published in www.mopa.gov.bd). This will definitely increase the number of female UNOs in the field administration. But only increasing the numbers of female UNOs does not really mean ensuring the gender equity. Rather, the problems of women to work in this leadership post should be identified and addressed by appropriate policy measures to ensure equal treatment in the work place and to make women civil servants self-motivated to be posted as UNO. OECD (2014) found that working conditions such as long hours, unpredictable schedules and limited work-life balance arrangements (e. g. childcare facilities) are main barriers that hinder women's access to top positions in all public spheres. So, these issues should also be taken care of.

Bangladesh has a commitment to reduce the gender discrimination from all corners of the society. As a part of this process, the state and problems of women civil servants serving as Upazila Nirbahi Officers in field administration calls for an investigation to find out the underlying reasons for their low representation and come up with suggestions to minimize the gap.

In this context, the study aims to find out the 'status' of female civil servants working as Upazila Nirbahi Officers, whether or not they face any challenge in their work place and family life and how they address the challenges in maintaining their multi dimensional responsibilities as an administrator and as a family member.

Problem Statement:

Upazila is the only administrative unit of Bangladesh which is administered by both the elected representative of the people and the representative of central government. The

chairman of the Upazila Parishad is elected by peoples' vote and the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) is the representative of central government who, at the same time, works as the executive officer of Upazila Parishad which is a local government body. Upazila Nirbahi Officer is also the administrative head of the Upazila. He/she is an officer with the rank of Senior Assistant Secretary of Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) Administration Cadre. UNO has to co-ordinate the functions of the transferred and retained departments of governments working in Upazila level. He/she also supervises and monitors the maintenance of law and order and co-ordinates the development activities by maintaining rapports with the political representatives of the people. As rightly stated by Siddiquee (1997), the UNOs have effectively become the first among the equals. He/she is not merely the first among the equals but also is given the administrative control over all other functionaries (Ali, 1986).

But working as UNO, has become very difficult in the present scenario because of criminalization of politics, peoples' disrespect to laws and institutions, generalists-specialists conflict, non-cooperation of other cadres and power conflicts between the Members of Parliament (MP) and Upazila Chairman. Patron-clientelism in political culture of Bangladesh has created additional challenges for the bureaucrats serving in this post. UNOs are expected to be very tactful and dynamic as manage masters and make a balance between loyalty and neutrality in the relationship between the political leadership and the administrative apparatus. This is a 24 hours job and the officer has to respond immediately at any time, in any situation.

Presently, Senior Assistant Secretaries of 22th, 24th, 25th and 27th BCS batches are working as Upazila Nirbahi Officers. It has been already mentioned that, about 17% of the presently working UNOs are female (as per the data provided in www.mopa.gov.bd). This is clearly a picture of insignificant representation of women. What can be the reasons for that? Are women unwilling to serve in the challenging leadership posts or does the surrounding environment create obstacles for a women holding a leadership post? These questions required to be answered to understand the actual ground scenario.

Azim et al (2000) stated that, despite the fact that the legal and national policy context for women has become more supportive of women in the work force, social and cultural prejudices against having women in top positions still restrict women from those positions. It is often perceived that, women are unable to develop an effective management style and they do not have the necessary qualities required for a leader (Azim et al, 2000). It is perhaps a universal mind set about the working women. Bangladesh, having a highly collectivist and masculine society, may not be an exception from the rest of the world.

Rawnak (2010) in her study showed that, 81% of the respondents of her research said, women who are posted at the field level face more problems compared to the male officers of the field and 67% of the respondents said that they feel highly unsecured during their field posting. She identified that our society is not ready to accept a women officer as an office chief. Women officers are not much acceptable to colleagues, subordinates, authority and local people (upazila). Male colleagues do not cooperate, subordinates try to evade the orders and local people try to take advantage of gender ideology. Most of her respondents agreed the fact that, women officials have to put extra effort to prove their competence. Rawnak's study was conducted on the female officers serving in different cadres.

Cultural factors, socialization of men and women in organizations and in family are perhaps more influential than political and economic conditions in the movement of women up in the management ladder (Azim et al, 2000). Because, in every culture there are differentiated roles of male and female that expect certain behaviour from each (Hearn & Parkin 1988, Hofstede 1991). In Bangladesh, like many other oriental countries, men are reluctant to perform the household works whereas women are supposed to be bound to manage the household responsibilities and it is considered as women's exclusive duty. They are expected to take nurturing roles and be more concerned with taking care of home and children. When a woman enters into a job and starts going out daily, she is not exempted from the household duties and rarely gets the workload shared by the other family members (especially male members). A recent study showed that though women occupy about 65% of secretarial positions in the central government across OECD countries, they are more likely than men to

work part time or have temporary contacts because of their family care responsibilities (OECD, 2014).

Bangladesh scored relatively high in masculinity (55%) which is an important dimension of Hofstede's cultural theory (<http://geert-hofstede.com> visited on 5.5.2015). The society of Bangladesh has very distinct expectations of male and female roles. Men are expected to be assertive, competitive and tough and women are supposed to be soft, modest and tender. Men, generally being taller, stronger and free to get out, tend to dominate social life outside the home (Hofstede, 2010).

So it is very much evident that, the society attributed traditional image and role of women play a crucial role for serving in a leadership post by a female civil servant. In this scenario, experience and perceived challenges of female Upazila Nirbahi Officers in both their workplace and family life can be an important area to be explored and seeks attention of the researchers. This paper aims to focus light on this issue.

Significance of the Study:

The study aims to find out the challenges perceived by the female UNOs and how these challenges are addressed and tackled by them. UNO is a vital post in Upazila administration and the effective functioning of Upazila Parishad is dependent on the effective coordination of UNO. About one-sixth of the posts of UNO are now held by the female civil servants. Reasons for focusing female Upazila Nirbahi Officers are twofold. First, Upazila is basically the only functional local government body of Bangladesh which is administered by both the elected representative (Upazila Chairman) and the representative of the central government (UNO). Members of parliaments are the advisors of the Upazila Parishad which made the functioning of this local government body more complicated. Increasing politicization in every sphere of society, conflict between different cadres, lack of trust and cooperation among different departments of governments functioning at the Upazila level lead to increasing incidents of humiliation of UNOs which has been reported in the newspapers

(Priyo.news, Dec 1, 2010; Dhaka Tribune, Dec 30, 2014; Daily Sun, May 4, 2015). As a result, performing the duties of UNO has been becoming more and more challenging day by day. Secondly, women feel it more comfortable disclosing and sharing information with other women which holds emotional significance (Butler & Wintram, 1993). Donawa (1998) in her study on friendship found that conversations between women develop trust which connects knowledge and knower in a meaningful way by honoring relationship and experience. So, female UNOs may feel comfortable and easy to converse and share their experience with the researcher because of the gender similarity.

It has been an accepted fact for long that having a diverse workforce is a benefit for organizations. Workplaces become more effective when organizational culture attracts and supports the personnel with the greatest talent regardless of their gender, age, ethnicity and other social characteristics. Many workplace policies and procedures are formed around this principle, and it is incorporated in law (Baker & Casey, 2011). Camilla Stivers, the most recognized public administration scholar to contribute contemporary feminism, has given an opportunity to think about the broader question of women in public administration (Hutchinson, 2011). According to Stivers (2002, p. 127):

“What we really ought to be doing, in thinking about public administration, is examining our simultaneous dependence on and denial of gender dichotomies. My belief is that only by exploring public administration's gender dilemmas, instead of denying their existence or minimizing their significance, will we begin to develop a form of public administration that merits public approbation. Only then will we find paths that lead us toward change.”

So, considering Strivers notion, the study is significant for several reasons:

1. It will identify the challenges perceived by the female bureaucrats working as UNO which may help to find out the reasons behind the low representation of women in the post of UNO. Thus it may be helpful to find out the gaps of the initiatives for gender mainstreaming;

2. It will help to form appropriate gender sensitive policy measures to address the problems of female civil servants working at field administration which may facilitate reducing the gaps to ensure gender equality and women empowerment. Gender sensitive policy may also facilitate the effective functioning of administration at the Upazila level and strengthen the field administration of Bangladesh.

Objectives of the research:

The main objective of the study is to identify the workplace and family life challenges perceived by the female Upazila Nirbahi Officers working at the field administration in Bangladesh and find out the strategies they adopt to address those challenges.

Research Questions:

In order to seek answer of the above objective, the following questions will lead the way:

1. What are the workplace and family life challenges perceived by the female Upazila Nirbahi Officers while working at the field administration?
2. What are the origins of the challenges perceived by the female Upazila Nirbahi Officers?
3. What are the common strategies adopted by them to address those challenges?

Scope and Limitations of the Study:

The scope of the study was limited to the challenges perceived by the female UNOs. The study excluded the other leadership positions of the field administration like DC and Commissioner because of the unavailability of respondents as there is no female officer in the post of Commissioner and only 3 female officers in the post of DC. Another reason is that UNO is the administrative head of the primary administrative unit Upazila which is more prone to political interference. The study examined the perceived challenges of female UNOs originated from societal, organizational and political culture.

The limitations of the study are the following:

Time Constraints: The allotted time for completion of the study was 6 (six) month which was not sufficient enough for conducting a quality research.

Distance of the respondents: Upazila Nirbahi Officers are posted in different upazilas in different districts and one Upazila is administered by one UNO. There are many districts where no female officer is posted as UNO. So to reach the presently working UNOs, the researcher had to travel a large geographical area in short time.

Low Speed Internet Connection at the Upazila Level: The researcher sent the survey questionnaire to many female Upazila Nirbahi Officers through e-mail. But because of the low speed internet at the Upazila level, some of them did not take the pain to respond to the questionnaire.

Focus on only female UNOs: The study focused on the issues of only the female UNOs who are a small proportion (about one-sixth) of total number of UNOs.

Self-Reported Data: There are always some limitations to the self-reported data collected through survey questionnaire as the responses may contain inherent biases of the respondents.

Profession of the Researcher: The researcher belongs to the same profession on which the study was conducted. Therefore, there may be inherent biases of the researcher that may have guided her to form the analytical framework of the study. Gender of the researcher may have also influenced the study.

Small Sample Size: The number of survey respondents was limited to 41. This is a relatively small sized sample for an empirical statistical conclusion. Though the quantitative data was

supplemented with the qualitative data collected through interview, a more comprehensive study covering a wider range of respondents would provide a better understanding of challenges women civil servants face in leadership positions.

Operational Definition of Different Terms Used in the Study:

Field Administration: Field administration of Bangladesh is headed by the Commissioner of Division, and directed and controlled by the cabinet division. There are 8 divisions in Bangladesh namely Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Sylhet, Barisal, Rangpur and Mymensingh. Each division consists of a number of districts. Districts are headed by the Deputy Commissioner (DC) who plays a coordinating role of all functions performed by different departments of government at the district level. There are 64 districts in Bangladesh; each contains a number of upazilas. Upazilas are headed by the Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNO) who coordinate the functions of retained and transferred departments of government at the Upazila level. At present, there are 489 upazilas in Bangladesh (www.bangladesh.gov.bd, visited on 26.12.2015).

Executive Magistrate: According to section 6 (2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (amended by the Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Act, 2009 with effect from 1st November, 2007), there shall be two classes of Magistrate in Bangladesh namely (a) Judicial Magistrate; and (b) Executive Magistrate. Section 10 (1) of the same act provided the Government the power to appoint in every district and Metropolitan Area as many persons as it thinks fit to be Executive Magistrates. The power of Executive Magistrate shall be conferred on any person employed in the Bangladesh Civil Service (Administration) [Section 10 (5)]. The District Magistrate has the authority to define the jurisdiction and power of every Executive Magistrate within his/her working district [Section 10 (4)]. Section 10 (6) of the same act provided the authority to all persons appointed as Assistant Commissioners, Additional Deputy Commissioners or Upazila Nirbahi Officer in any District or Upazila to act as Executive Magistrates and exercise the power of Executive Magistrate within their existing respective local areas.

Mobile Court: According to section 4 of the Mobile Court Act, 2009, ‘mobile court’ refers to the mobile activities in any district, metropolitan area or in the whole country exercising the limited power of taking cognizance of some crimes immediately and imposing punishments in necessary situation in order to maintain law and order and to perform the crime prevention actions effectively.

Public Examination: “Public Examination” means any examination that is, or may be, held, conducted, regulated or organized by a University or Board [Section 2 (d) The Public Examinations (Offences) Act, 1980].

MLSS: MLSS refers to “Member of Lower Staff Services”. They used to work as the 4th class government employee. With the gazette notification of the National Pay Scale 2015, class system is abolished. At present, the status of government employees of Bangladesh is determined by their salary grade.

Transferred Subjects: Transferred subjects refer to the functions of central government that are transferred to under the control of Upazila Parishad. According to circular no.lgd/up-2/c-4/2009/1422, dated 17.06.2010 and 46.046.006.00.00.004.2012-13, dated 06.01.2013 of Local Government Division of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperative, the transferred departments are public administration, health, family planning, agriculture, fisheries, livestock, relief & rehabilitations, social welfare, primary education, women & children affairs, youth & sport, local government engineering division, public health, cooperatives, rural development, secondary education and forestry.

Retained Subjects: Retained subjects are the regulatory functions of central government. These departments are not transferred to Upazila Parishad. Retained subjects include law & order, land & revenue management & administration, statistics department, audit & accounts, rural electrification etc.

Organization of the Study Paper:

The study is organized into six chapters. The researcher tried to follow the established standard format of organizing a thesis. But there are different formats of sequences used by different researchers. Therefore, the researcher had to choose one that apparently fits well for this study.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The first chapter is the introductory chapter which deals with the background of study, problem statement, significance of the study, objective, research questions, scope and limitations of the study and operational definitions of terms used in this study.

Chapter 2: Methodology

The second chapter presents the methodology of the study describing the three methods (survey, interview and case study) used in this study, sample size and design, types and sources of data, means of validation of data and demographic and basic descriptions about the survey respondents.

Chapter 3: Literature Review, Theoretical & Analytical Framework

Chapter three deals with the literature reviewed for the purpose of the study, theoretical orientation, conceptual discussion, analytical framework and operationalization of variables, indicators and measurements used in this study. Literature review section of this chapter consists of literatures related to working women in both global and Bangladesh context, and also the literatures concerned with Upazila Nirbahi Officer. The theoretical discussion section described three theories, the Matrix of Domination, Hofstede's National Cultural Dimensions and Patron-Clientelism. The conceptual framework section deals with the discussion about how and why the theories are used to draw the analytical framework of the study.

Chapter 4: Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO): Roles & Responsibilities

The fourth chapter discusses the roles, duties and responsibilities of Upazila Nirbahi Officer as the representative of central government and as the Executive Officer of Upazila Parishad.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis and Findings

Chapter five presented and analyzed the quantitative and qualitative data and discussed the findings. The discussion followed by summarization of findings and answering the research questions.

Chapter 6: Recommendations & Conclusion

Finally, the sixth chapter came up with some policy recommendations. Then it drew the conclusion of the study which is followed by the reference section. Appendix I, containing the survey questionnaire that was used to collect the quantitative data, is added in the last part of the thesis.

Chapter 2

Research Methodology

Methodology:

Three types of research method were used to conduct this research. Those are the interview method, survey method and case study method. The reason for using three methods is to fulfill the gap of one method by another method so that they can supplement each other and combinedly can provide a clearer view of the proposed research area. Respondents of questionnaire survey were selected from Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna, Sylhet and Barisal Division (Mymensingh was not a Division at the time of data collection) on the basis of their posting place and respondents from the service receivers were selected from the jurisdictions of the respondent female UNOs. The selection of respondents from civil servants was highly influenced by the fact of their availability. The total sample size of the research is 75. The research applied a mixed method of study which is both qualitative and quantitative in nature.

Interview Method:

Interview method was used to obtain data direct from the primary source by face to face contacts with the officers working in the field administration and the service receivers. One DC, one Additional Commissioner, four Additional Deputy Commissioners (two female and two male), fifteen female UNOs and thirteen service receivers were interviewed to get an elaborate idea about the perception about the performance of female UNOs and the challenges they are facing in the field administration. Total number of interviewees is 34.

Survey Method:

This method was used as an instrument to facilitate collecting data from the female UNOs. A questionnaire consisting of a number of close ended and open ended questions was provided to respondents to collect raw and primary data. Some questionnaires were filled out by the respondents in front of the researcher and some were sent to the distant living respondents through electronic mail. 41 female UNOs were surveyed; of those 19 respondents are former UNOs and 22 respondents are present UNOs.

Case Study Method:

Case study generally refers to a fairly in-depth examination of a single unit such as a person, a group or an organization (Aminuzzaman, 1991). It enables a researcher to explore, reveal and understand problems, issues and relationships (*ibid.*). In this study, case studies related to the female UNOs were evaluated and analyzed to identify the challenges faced by them and to find out the reasons behind those challenges. Nine case studies were used for this purpose.

Table 2: Sample Size

Data Collection Method	Types of Respondents	Number
Interview Method	Deputy Commissioner	1
	Additional Divisional Commissioner	1
	Additional Deputy Commissioner	4
	Female UNO	15
	Service Receivers (2 Union Parishad Chairmen, 3 Local Businessmen, 4 teachers, 1 Secretary of Union Parishad, 2 Commanders of Upazila Muktijoddha Council, 1 Principal of a College)	13
Survey Method	Female UNO	41
	Total Respondents	75
Case Study Method	Cases	9

Sources of Data:

Data were collected both from primary and secondary sources.

Primary Sources:

Data were collected from primary sources using the questionnaire survey and interview method. A structured questionnaire containing both open ended and close ended questions was provided to all 41 respondents of survey. The researcher visited some of the respondents to make them fill out the questionnaire. Some questionnaires were sent through electronic mail to the respondents posted in distant areas. The researcher had to give them reminder by making phone calls or sending messages using SMS, Viber or Facebook. Despite the hectic schedule of their work life, some of the respondents showed great enthusiasm to respond to the questionnaire. However, some of the present/former UNOs did not take the pain to fill it out. As mentioned earlier, one DC, one Additional Commissioner, four Additional Deputy Commissioners (two female and two male), fifteen female UNOs and thirteen service receivers were interviewed by the researcher. The researcher visited their work places and overwhelmed with the responses and time they provided for this study. All the 15 present and former UNOs spent more than 1 hour time to express their own story and experiences of working as UNO which gave an elaborate understanding of the research issue. Some of them allotted 2 to 4 hours time for conversing with the researcher and provided some insightful explanations about the causes behind their challenges.

Secondary Sources:

Secondary sources of data are very useful for any research and it is relatively easy and less time consuming to collect data from secondary sources (Aminuzzaman, 2011). For the purpose of this study, secondary data were collected through content analysis using related books, journals, articles, research papers, newspapers, reports of international organizations, online Google books, official websites of different ministries of government etc.

Methods of Data Analysis:

Quantitative data were analyzed, categorized and processed through statistical tools like frequency distribution, measures of central tendency (mean and median), measures of variability (standard deviation) and measures of relationships between variables (Pearson's correlation coefficient). SPSS was used to find out the statistical value of collected data. A five point Likert Scale was used to apply value to the categorical data in which 5 indicates extreme negative opinion and 3 indicates neutrality of the respondent.

Validation of Data:

The respondents of survey were selected on the basis of their posting place so that all the divisions of Bangladesh could be covered. 22 present UNOs and 19 former UNOs were surveyed; and 8 present UNOs and 7 former UNOs were interviewed. Statistical findings of quantitative data were supplemented with the qualitative data collected through interview. 9 case studies were used to explore and reveal the perceived challenges of female Upazila Nirbahi Officers. Secondary data were used to substitute and validate the findings from primary data.

Demographic and Basic Descriptions of Survey Respondents:

41 present and former UNOs were surveyed with a structured questionnaire consisting of both open and close ended questions. Demographic description of the survey respondents are arranged and presented in the following manner.

Posting Division of the Respondents as UNO:

The highest number of respondents (36.59%) worked or working in Dhaka Division, followed by Rajshahi (19.51%), Chittagong (14.63%), Rangpur (12.19%), Khulna (9.76%), Sylhet (4.88%) and Barisal Division (2.44%). Detailed data is presented in the following table.

Frequency Distribution Table-1: Division wise Posting of the Survey Respondents (Posting Division as UNO)

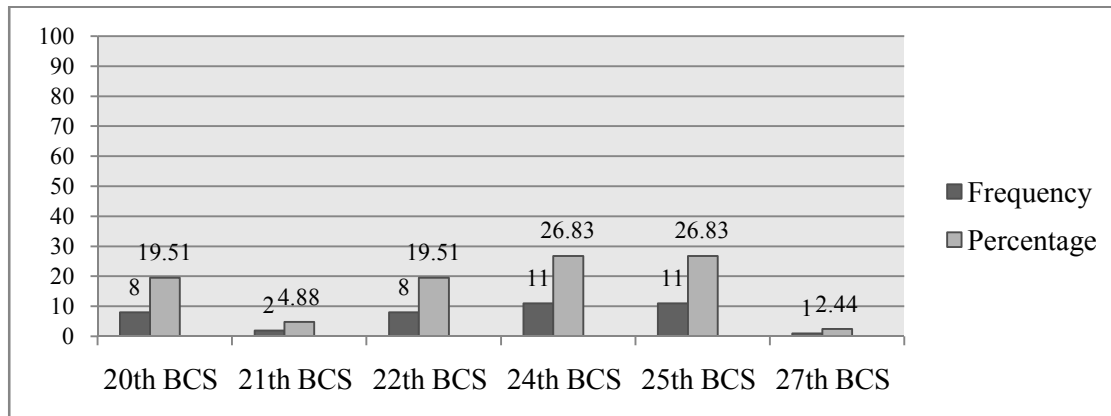
Division	Frequency	Percentage
Dhaka	15	36.59
Rajshahi	8	19.51
Chittagong	6	14.63
Rangpur	5	12.19
Khulna	4	9.76
Sylhet	2	4.88
Barisal	1	2.44

n=41

Batch (BCS):

The respondents belong to 20th, 21th, 22th, 24th, 25th and 27th BCS (Administration) Cadre. 8 of them belong to 20th batch, 2 belong to 21th batch, 8 belong to 22th batch, 11 belong to 24th batch, 11 belong to 25th batch and 1 belongs to 27th batch.

Figure-1: Batches of the Respondents



n=41

Designation:

Among the survey respondents, 8 respondents are currently in the rank of Deputy Secretary and 33 are in the rank of Senior Assistant Secretary/Senior Assistant Commissioner.

Frequency Distribution Table-2: Designation of the Respondents

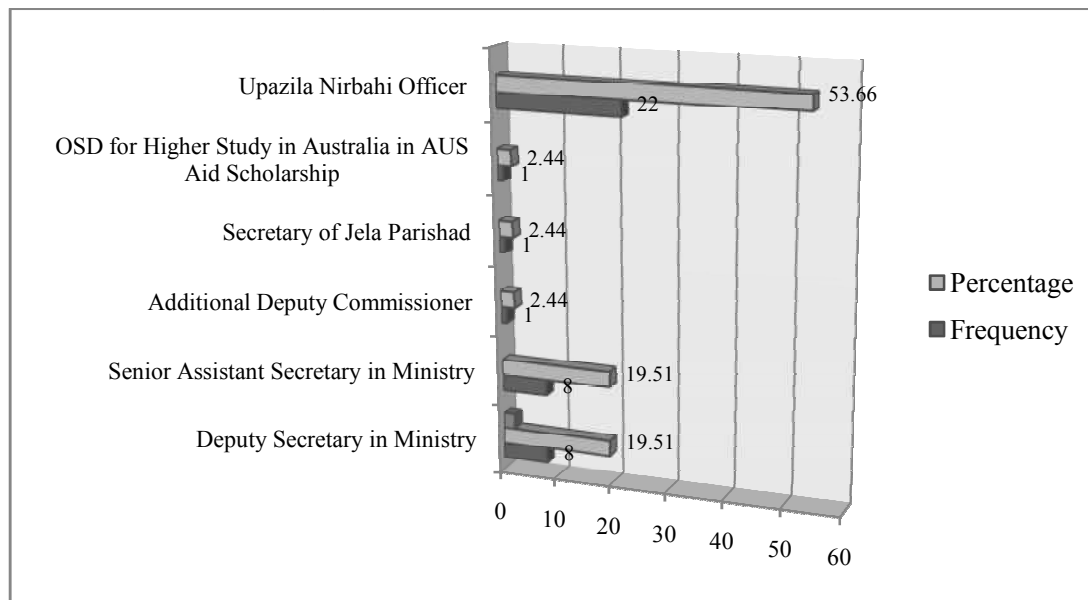
Designation	Percentage
Deputy Secretary	19.51
Senior Assistant Secretary/Senior Assistant Commissioner	80.49

n=41

Present Posting of the Respondents:

Among 41 respondents, 22 respondents have been working as Upazila Nirbahi Officers. There are 16 respondents working in various ministries. Among them, 8 respondents are in the rank of Deputy Secretary and 8 are in the rank of Senior Assistant Secretaries. 1 respondent has been studying in Australia and the rest 2 have been posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner and Secretary of Zila Parishad._The bar chart shows the data of present posting of the respondents.

Figure 2: Present Posting of the Respondents



n=41

Service Length:

The highest length of service of the respondents is 14.5 years. These 8 respondents belong to 20th BCS batch and are now serving as Deputy Secretaries of the Government. The lowest service length among the respondents is 7 years. The only one respondent having the lowest service length belong to 27th batch.

Frequency Distribution Table-3: Service Length of the Respondents

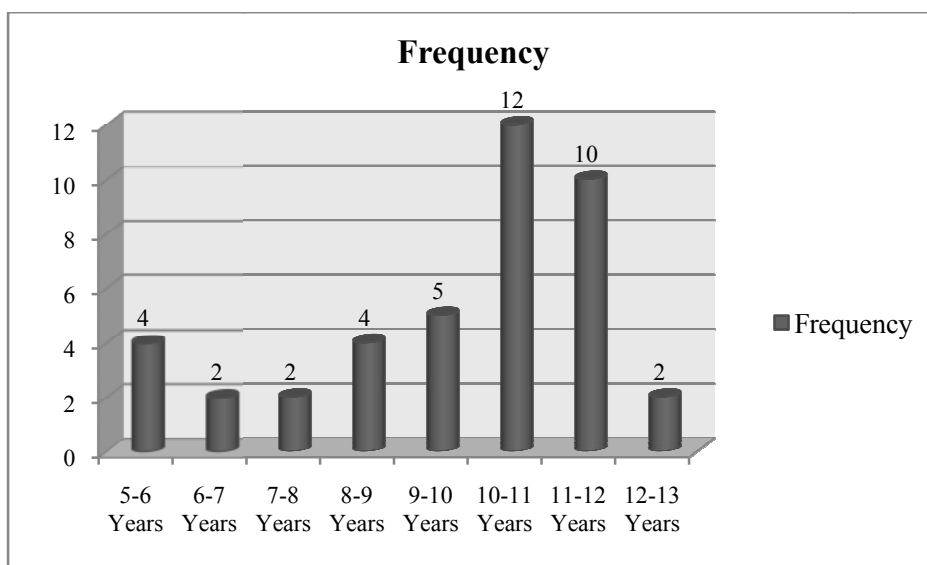
Service Length	Percentage
14.5 Years	19.51
12.5 Years	4.88
12 Years	19.51
10.5 Years	26.83
9.3 Years	26.83
7 Years	2.44

n=41

Experience of Working in Field Administration:

The following Column chart shows that the respondents have long experience of working in field administration ranging from 5 to 13 years. 29.27% of the respondents have the experience of 10 to 11 years followed by 24.39% respondents who have the field experience of 11 to 12 years. These figures represent that the majority of respondents (53.66%) have 10 to 12 years experience of working in field administration.

Figure 3: Experience of Working at Field Administration



n=41

Tenure of Working as UNO:

As presented in the table-4, the respondents' tenure of working as UNO ranges from <1 year to 4> years. The highest number of respondents (43.9%) worked as UNO for more than 3 years. Only one respondent has been working in this post for less than one year. The majority portion of the respondents (73.17%) worked or has been working as UNO for 2 to 4 years.

Frequency Distribution Table-4: Tenure of Working as UNO

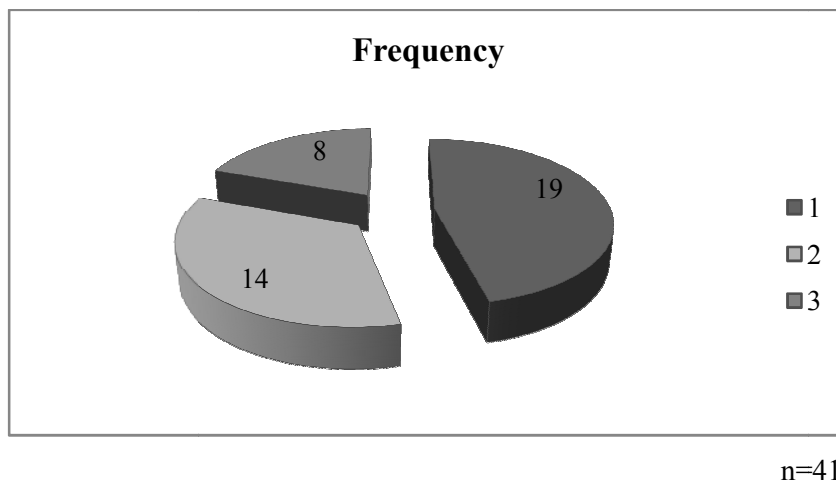
Tenure	Percentage
0-1 Year	2.44
1-2 Year(s)	14.63
2-3 Years	29.27
3-4 Years	43.90
4-5 Years	9.76

n=41

Number of Upazila Served as UNO:

The respondents worked as UNO in 1 to 3 upazilas. 46.34% of the respondents served in one upazila, 34.15% of the respondents worked in two upazila and 19.51% of them worked in three upazilas.

Figure 4: Number of Upazilas Served A UNO



Age:

There were three age groups in the questionnaire. Majority of the respondents (53.66%) belong to the age group of the 36-41 years followed by the respondents (26.83%) belonging to age group 30-35 years. The minority of the respondents (19.51%) belong to the age group of 42-47 years.

Frequency Distribution Table-5: Age of the Respondents

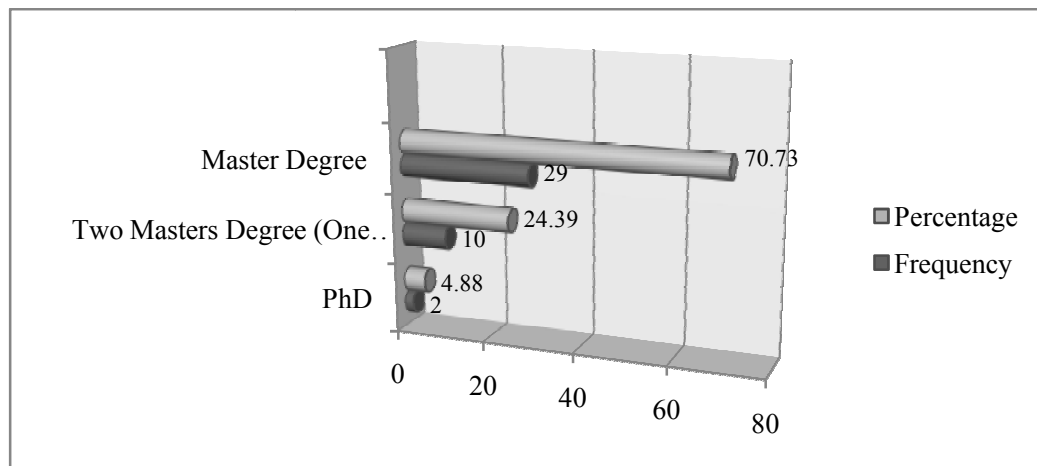
Age	Percentage
30-35	26.83
36-41	53.66
42-47	19.51

n=41

Education:

All the respondents received at least one master degree. 70.73% of them have one master degree and 24.39% of the respondents have received two master degrees (one master from a foreign university under scholarship). Two of the respondents have completed their PhDs.

Figure 5: Education



n=41

Marital Status:

40 respondents are married and one is widowed. The following table presents the data.

Frequency Distribution Table-6: Marital Status of the Respondents

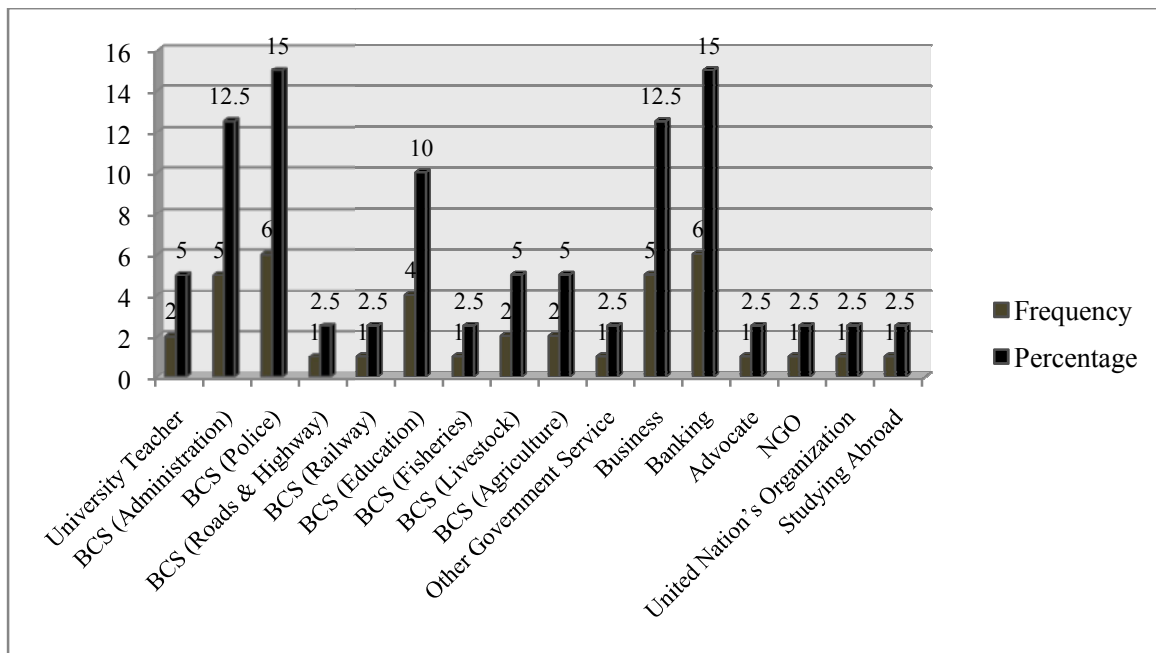
Marital Status	Percentage
Married	97.56
Widowed	2.44

n=41

Husband's Occupation:

The study found that 55% of the respondents' husbands work in different cadres of Bangladesh Civil Service. The cadres are BCS (Administration), BCS (Police), BCS (Roads & Highway), BCS (Railway), BCS (Education), BCS (Fisheries), BCS (Livestock) and BCS (Agriculture). The other professions include university teacher, banker, business, NGO, advocate of Supreme Court and united nation's organization. One respondent's husband has been studying abroad. The detailed data is shown in the following column chart.

Figure 6: Husband's Occupation

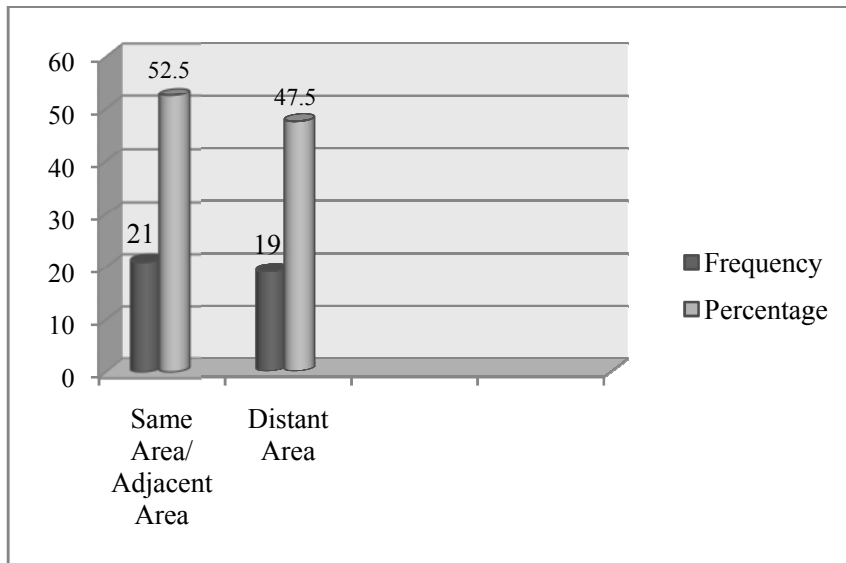


n=40

Husbands' Work Place:

Husbands of 52.5% of respondents' are/were posted in same or adjacent area of respondents' work place whereas 47.5% of them are/were posted in distant areas.

Figure 7: Husband's Work Place (At the Time of UNO Posting of the Respondents)



n=40

Chapter 3

Literature Review, Theoretical & Analytical Framework

Literature Review:

Before formulating the research objectives and questions, a number of literatures were reviewed by the researcher. Two types of literature have been consulted for the purpose of this research:

- a. Literature related to the working women;
- b. Literatures related to Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO)

Literature related to the working women:

Global Context:

There are a number of studies on different issues of working women worldwide. The followings are findings of some literatures related to this study.

Hymowitz and Sehellhardt (1986) identified two major stereotyped perceptions about women: i) Women's association with families disrupts careers due to the strong impact of family demand on career commitment and organizational performance of individuals, and ii) women are less capable to function in senior management positions as they do not possess the necessary aggression, dominance and competitiveness and are not risk-taker by nature.

The Catalyst Survey on Fortune 500 companies in 1990 identified some stereotyped perceptions in the society about the working women:

- a. Women are not as committed to their careers as men.
- b. Women are not tough enough to administer and enforce decisions.
- c. Women show disinterest to work beyond office schedule and during unusual hours.
- d. Women are too emotional that impacts negatively on their business.

- e. Women are not rationally aggressive to decide on an issue and implement. They are either not aggressive enough or are too aggressive.
- f. Women have substantial lack of quantitative skills.
- g. Women have inherent difficulties in making decisions.

Dunn (1997) focused on the issue that women differ from men in working habit which is not often considered in reviewing and evaluating their work place performance and in building the organizational culture and communication practices of most organizations. She argued that, organizational culture is built in a patriarch model of delivery and women including those who hold important, higher level positions in an organization are either ignored or overlooked.

Baxter and Wright (2000), in their study on 'Glass Ceiling'¹ in United States, Sweden and Australia, showed that, women face relatively greater disadvantages in getting jobs and promotions in the upper levels of managerial hierarchies than at the bottom. Many different factors may be responsible for this obstruction: old fashioned gender perception, women managers' isolation from important informal networks, or more subtle gender attitudes that place women at a disadvantaged position.

Colwill in her study (cited in Dunn, 1997) on women in management in USA and Canada found that, women managers share the same control of their environment as men in terms of personal power (power to control). But in terms of interpersonal power (power to influence), women were less able to influence others than men and in case of organizational power (power to access resources), women are more effective business managers than men.

A study conducted by Cambridge University with the funding of European Union in 2007 surveyed over 30,000 people found that the 'have it all' woman (with a full-time career, partner and children) has turned into the 'do it all' woman who has to carry out the bulk of

¹ The metaphor 'glass ceiling' implies a transparent barrier that blocks women from rising above a certain level in corporations. It applies to women as a group who are barred from advancing higher because they are women (Morrison et al. 1987, as cited in Baxter & Wright, 2000). Below this barrier, women are allowed to get promoted; beyond this barrier they are not (Baxter & Wright, 2000).

domestic duties, even when working full-time. They found that men across member states worked an average of 55 hours a week, whereas women in full-time employment worked an average of 68 hours. Commuting and domestic work, including childcare, are supposed to be the responsibility of both men and women, but performed by the women only. The report highlighted three issues of inequality in work place: 'the low quality of part-time work, the poor pay and status of female dominated jobs, and the under-representation of women at managerial levels' (Burchell et al., 2007, as cited in Baker & Casey, 2011). The report also stated that, women have made great advances in some areas, but it is not typical of senior posts where men are overrepresented at the 'top table' irrespective of occupations (Baker & Casey, 2011).

Broadbridge and Hearn (2008) argued that, though there are changes in the status of and interactions between women and men at work place, power relations between men and women in management still remain unequal, and especially at high levels. Besides, the structures and social processes of organizations frequently continue to emanate from male-based practices, prerogatives and privileges.

According to Patel (2009), women often tend to share their frustration while trying to work between a given set of goals and time frame and new or modified parameters that emerge at short notice which makes them feel anxious and highly stressed. This sometimes makes them look bad and incompetent in the work place.

Elmuti (2009) conducted a study on challenges faced by women in leadership positions and organizational effectiveness. 45% of the women surveyed in the study perceived that there were existing barriers which prevented women from entering management positions and caused lower advancement rates (*ibid.*). There was statistically significant causal link between barriers such as discrimination, family-life demands, prejudice and stereotyping and women's advancement to top management in the workplace (*ibid.*). The study also found that women are perceived by most men and women as more sensitive and encouraging leaders than men and majority of male respondents felt that women do not have equal opportunities in professional development and upward mobility in organizations. Majority of respondents

irrespective of gender opined that education and training could help women to be more prepared for leadership roles (*ibid.*).

Bangladesh Context:

Azim et al (2000) in a study on glass ceiling and employment status of Class-1 female officers belonging to both cadre and non-cadre services of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh found that, about three fourth of the respondents of the study were in a view that they were involved in decision making process (most of the rest one fourth of the respondents were serving in entry level posts) and about 96% of their decisions received the approval of superior authority. According to them, 4% decisions did not get approval not because of gender biasness, but for other reasons. 70% of the respondents believed that their male colleagues did not get any advantageous treatment from their boss because of their gender identity. 88% of the respondents used to attend official meetings and 87% of them felt that their views and opinions were either highly or moderately entertained in meetings. The researchers suggested that, government should appoint qualified women to posts generally held by male officers to break the myth of gender stereotyped jobs. Two other important recommendations of the research are establishing child care centre in the work places and introducing flexi-time like many developed countries to facilitate women to make a balance between demands of family and workplace.

Rawnak (2010) carried out a study on the problems of woman civil servants working at the field level of Bangladesh. The study found that dual responsibility of job and household chore, accommodation, safety at duty station, uncongenial working environment, negative attitude from the community, colleagues and the authority, perceived notion of society to consider women as soft and not fit for taking challenges, abusive comments, threats of stigma and requirement to put extra effort to prove their competence to boss were the major problems being faced by women at the field. Male domination, patriarchal mentality and perceived lower social status of women, conservative view, lack of education among people and underdevelopment of the country were identified as the reasons behind most of the problems and reduced performance, mental and physical stress, problem in the family,

negative effect on children, disturbance in family life, impaired career development and weakened initiative and innovativeness were identified as the consequences of these problems (*ibid.*).

Arafunnesa (2011) conducted a study on the problems and prospects of female officers of Bangladesh Civil Service (Administration) and identified the problems faced by them. The researcher categorized the problems into four broad groups e.g. problems related to work place, problems related to non-cooperation of male colleagues, problems related to family and problems related to mind set. Inconsideration of family problems at the time of giving posting, accommodation problem at the work station, security issue, protocol issue and low participation of female officers at the policy making level were identified as the workplace related problems (*ibid.*). The study found that the majority of the respondents (51.85%) faced non-cooperation from the male colleagues of the same status and 20.37% respondents faced non-cooperation from the staff. The family related problems identified by the study are taking care of children, insufficiency of day care centre for kids, unavailability of reliable domestic worker, non-cooperation of husband and other family members etc. Discriminative attitude in addressing the female officers (addressing them *Apa*), gender discrimination in the posting of Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner were identified as the mind set related problems (*ibid.*).

Bilkis (2012) in her study on motivational and de-motivational factors of the female officers of Bangladesh civil service (Administration Cadre) found that 70% of the respondents do not feel any problem in any post of administration. But few of her respondents expressed that they dislike the postings of Assistant Commissioner (Land), Upazila Nirbahi Officer, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Personal Secretary and Nezarat Deputy Collector because of separation from the family which hampers family life, pressure of political people on these posts, staying in remote places lacking most of the urban facilities, and 24 hours duty with high work volume and high risk. The factors she found that de-motivating female administrators to be posted as AC (Land) are the nature of job, broker culture, inefficient staff in AC Land offices, lack of transport facility (Official vehicle for AC Land is motorcycle which the female officers cannot use because of the social and

cultural mindset) and logistic supports, and non-availability of all land records. Her another important finding is that female officers do not want to work as Assistant Commissioner Confidential (AC Con), Staff Officer, NDC, PS to Secretary etc. due to the fear of scandal on her character. She broadly identified the demotivating factors for female officers working at the field administration as balancing dual duties of work and family, unfriendly office environment, negative perceptions about women's ability, posting in remote places, staying without family, patriarchal socio-cultural mindset and social insecurity.

Literatures related to Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO):

There are very few literatures related to the functioning of UNO. Most of the available literatures are focused on the Upazila Parishad as a local government institution. Some of the findings of the studies focusing on Upazila Nirbahi Officer are as follows:

Ali (1986) in his study on Upazila Parishad revealed very low level of trust among the officers in the Upazila administration. He identified some problems such as reluctance of government officers to work under Upazila Parishad and resistance of specialist cadres to work under the leadership of UNO.

Huq et al (1987) conducted a study on the coordination in Upazila administration. The study found that, as a coordinator, UNO had to face serious challenges because of the inter-departmental rivalry and lack of trust between officials and political leadership, lack of orientation about the processes, procedures and skills of management and lack of knowledge about role and coordination among both the officials and public representatives. Building harmonious relation with other officers through personal contact, meeting, inspection and making good use of inter-departmental committee are the strategies adopted by the UNOs to address these challenges (*ibid.*).

Ahmad (1991) in a study on the problems of co-ordination in the Upazila administration found conflicts and lack of cooperation among the officers which adversely affects the planning and implementation of development programs at the Upazila level.

Ahsan (2010) found that officers working at the Upazila level give more attention to intra than inter-departmental activities which results in improper coordination in inter-departmental activities. He identified two reasons for this: a) the failure to accept the coordinating role of the UNO; b) only intra-departmental performance is considered for ACR.

Zamil (2012) in his study on role of Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) in the planning and implementation process of Annual Development Programme (ADP) grants for Upazila Parishads found that a positive correlation exists between the level of adherence to the legal jurisdictions by the elected representatives and the quality of planning and implementation. The study also found that clientelistic political considerations, unawareness of officials and lack of coordination between officials and the UNO have negative influence on planning and implementation. The inability of legal provisions to address local peculiarities and elected representatives' expectations to UNO to be more flexible with the rules discouraged the UNO from playing his or her due role in the Upazila Parishad and UNOs have showed their preference for a compromise solution in case of handling conflicts with the elected representatives, which indicates a deviation from the classical role (*ibid.*).

Sarkar (2014) in his study on coordination in Upazila Administration showed that UNO does not have adequate power and authority over the other officers to take necessary steps for their violation of rules/instructions. He termed it as 'paradox' as UNO is the representative of central government with not being empowered with proper authority to compel others to follow his decisions and instructions. The study also revealed that informal contact effectively facilitates the coordinating role of UNO.

Summary of Literature Review:

The above mentioned findings of the literatures can be summarized as follows:

- a. There are stereotyped perceptions about working women that women are less capable to function in senior management positions as they are perceived not to be possessing

- the necessary aggression, dominance and competitiveness and are not risk-taker by nature.
- b. Women differ in working habit from men which is ignored in the evaluation process of their performance. Organizational culture is built in a patriarch model of delivery no matter whether or not woman is in higher level position of organization.
 - c. Women face relatively greater disadvantages in getting jobs and promotions in the upper levels of managerial hierarchies than at the bottom. Many different factors may be responsible for this obstruction: old fashioned gender perception, women managers' isolation from important informal networks, or more subtle gender attitudes.
 - d. Women managers share the same control of their environment as men in terms of personal power (power to control). But in terms of interpersonal power (power to influence), women were less able to influence others than men and in case of organizational power (power to access resources), women are more effective business managers than men.
 - e. In Bangladesh, government should appoint qualified women to posts generally held by male officers to break the myth of gender stereotyped jobs. Establishing child care centre in the work places and introducing flexi-time like many developed countries are important to facilitate women to make a balance between demands of family and workplace.
 - f. Dual responsibility of job and household chore, accommodation, safety at duty station, uncongenial working environment, negative attitude from the community, colleagues and the authority, perceived notion of society to consider women as soft and not fit for taking challenges, abusive comments, threats of stigma and requirement to put extra effort to prove their competence to boss are the major problems being faced by women working at the field level. Male domination, patriarchal mentality and perceived lower social status of women, conservative view, lack of education among people and underdevelopment of the country are the identified reasons behind these problems.
 - g. The problems faced by female officers of Bangladesh Civil Service (Administration) are inconsideration of family problems at the time of giving posting, accommodation

problem at the work station, security issue, protocol issue and low participation of female officers at the policy making, non-cooperation from the male colleagues of the same status and from the staff. Problems in taking care of children, insufficiency of day care centre for kids, unavailability of reliable domestic worker, non-cooperation of husband and other family members, discriminative attitude in addressing the female officers (addressing them Apa), gender discrimination in the posting of Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner etc.

- h. The demotivating factors for female officers working at the field administration in Bangladesh are balancing dual duties of work and family, unfriendly office environment, negative perceptions about women's ability, posting in remote places, staying without family, patriarchal social culture and mindset and social insecurity.
- i. Clientelistic political considerations, unawareness of officials and lack of coordination between officials and the UNO have negative influence on planning and implementation Annual Development Programme (ADP) grants for Upazila Parishads. Representatives' expectations to UNO to be more flexible with the rules discouraged the UNO from playing his or her due role in the Upazila Parishad and encourage UNOs to go for a compromise solution in case of handling conflicts with the elected representatives.
- j. There are very low level of trust and cooperation among the officers of Upazila.
- k. Generalists-specialists conflict hampers the development work of Upazila.
- l. UNO has not been empowered with proper authority to compel other officers to follow his decisions and instructions.
- m. Informal contact effectively facilitates the coordinating role of UNO.

So it can be seen that as the post of UNO is itself very challenging and as women working in the higher posts face more problems than men, there is an area of study in which the challenges of female civil servants working as UNO can be analyzed in the lens of gender.

Theoretical Framework:

There is no single theory that can exactly fit to draw a framework to find out the perceived challenges of a female Upazila Nirbahi Officer. As the researcher intends to view the issue in the lens of gender, a gender theory has been used as a part of the theoretical framework. A national culture theory and a component of political culture theory have been added to explain and elaborate issues that may cause the challenges. The theories are explained briefly below.

Gender Theory:

There is no defining body of feminist theory in the field of public administration until now. Perhaps scholars of public administration view theories of public administration and feminisms as unrelated (Hutchinson, 2011) and do not consider the fact that women's issues are also men's issues. Very few scholars in the field have given attention to conduct research focusing on issues related to women, for example, the glass ceiling, pay equity, hiring and promoting women faculty member and emotional labor (Guy, Newmann, & Mastracci, 2008). The most recognized public administration scholar to contribute contemporary feminism is Camilla Stivers who has given an opportunity to think about the broader question of women in public administration (Hutchinson, 2011). Identifying public administration as gendered masculine, Stivers insisted public administrationists to examine gender issues and reveal the unrecognized masculine and feminine aspects (images) of the field (*ibid*). She recommended to develop strategies in public administration that "destabilize central gendered concepts in the field without being explicitly based on feminist theory" (Strivers, 2002, p. 131). Hutchinson (2011) recognized Patricia Hill Collins' theory of Matrix of Domination as one of those feminist theories that could be used as the ground theory to start with to address the gender issue of Public Administration.

The Matrix of Domination:

The theory of 'Matrix of Domination' was introduced by Patricia Hill Collins in 1990 in her first book *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* which won the Jessie Bernard Award of the American Sociological Association for significant scholarship in gender as well as the C. Wright Mills Award from the Society for the Study of Social Problems. (Appelrouth & Edles, 2010). She further explored black feminist thought in *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice* (1998) and *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender and the New Racism* (2004) (*ibid.*). Patricia Hill Collins is a renowned American sociologist famous for her writings on gender.

The matrix of domination or matrix of oppression is a sociological paradigm that deals with the issues of oppression related to gender, race and class, and implies that these different social classifications are all interconnected (Collins, 1990/2000). The theory approaches that, one might experience domination in many different ways, facing many different challenges in which one obstacle, such as gender, may overlap with other sociological features. Such obstacles may affect an individual in extremely different ways, in varying geography, socioeconomic status, or simply throughout time (Khan, 2013). Though the main focus of Collin's theory was the domination over the African-American women, there had been a great deal of research by many feminist authors toward the understanding and application of this domination model in many other areas of society.

Black Feminism focused on the dual issue of racial and sexual discrimination and proposes a different approach with which one could understand and appreciate woman's experience in Black or Third World communities, especially America (Khan, 2013). Collins understood the need for formulating such an approach considering the difference between historical and social realities surrounding Afro- American women and those of white women. Though women's experience of oppression is universal, the Afro-American women's experience of oppression is backed by a different dimension resulting from inherent contradictions like dominant patriarchy and traumas of slavery system (Khan, 2013).

This is a multidimensional approach that works at the level of the social structure or group and the individual where Collins used the term Matrix of Domination to imply that one's position in society is built up on multiple standpoints rather than one single standpoint (Appelrouth & Edles, 2010). According to P. Collins (1990/2000, p 228), "A matrix of domination contains few pure victims or oppressors. Each individual derives varying amounts of penalty and privilege from the multiple systems of oppression which frame everyone's lives." The domination prevails at the level of personal biography, the group or community level of the cultural context created by race, class and gender and the systemic level of social institutions (*ibid.* p 227).

Collins argues that (Appelrouth & Edles, 2010), i) every individual has a "self-defined standpoint" which is a unique personal biography made up of concrete experiences, values, motivations and emotions; ii) the group or community level of the cultural context created by race, class and gender reflects the interest or standpoint of its creators; and iii) groups who share common positions in the hierarchical power relations also share common experiences. As black women have historically resisted, and continue to resist, oppression at individual, community, and institutional levels, they themselves are sources of hidden power for resisting oppressions using their own collective secret knowledge and experience (*ibid.* p 334-335). According to her (Collins, 1990/2000, p 249),

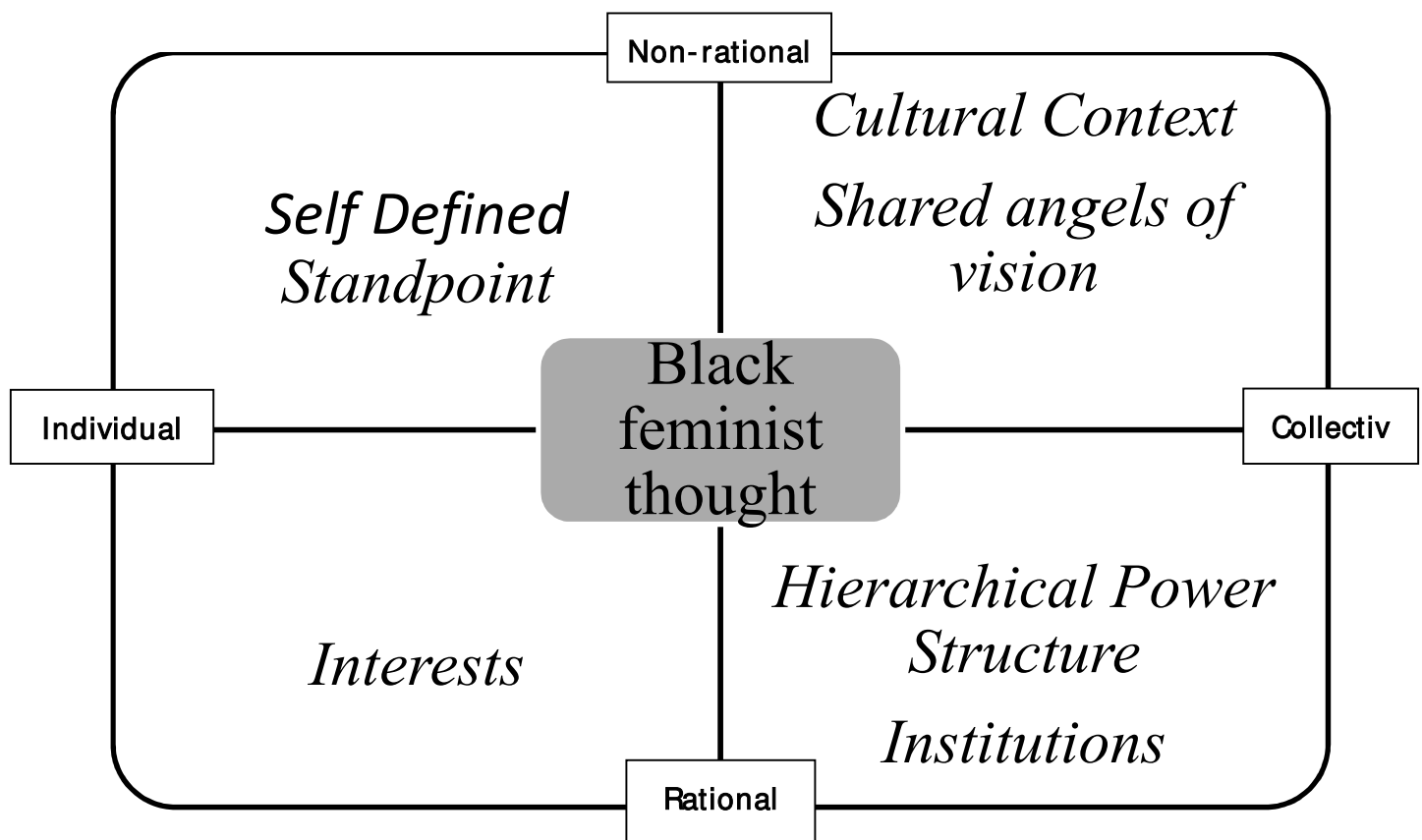
Groups who share common placement in hierarchical power relations also share common experiences in such power relations. Shared angles of vision lead those in similar social locations to be predisposed to interpret in comparable fashion.

Black women's vulnerability to assaults in the workplace, on the street, and at home has stimulated their independence and self-reliance (Khan, 2013). According to Collins (1990/2000), domination on the personal level occurs with the human ties like love relationship and motherhood which sometimes can be confining and oppressive resulting in situations like domestic violence and abuse. Domination operates by structuring power from the top down, as well as by simultaneously annexing the power as energy of those on the bottom for its own ends. The cultural context formed by the experiences and ideas that are

shared with other members of a group or community, give meaning to individual biographies constitutes a second level at which domination is not only experienced but also resisted. It is also experienced and resisted on the third level of social institutions controlled by the dominant group like schools, churches, the media, and other formal organizations where individuals are exposed to the specialized thought representing the dominant group's standpoint and interests (Collins, 1990/2000).

The multidimensional approach of Collins is illustrated below.

Figure 8: Collin's Basic Concepts & Theoretical Orientation



Source: Appelrouth & Edles (2010)

Cultural Dimension Theory:

Cultural Dimension Theory has been developed by a famous Dutch Social Psychologist Gerard Hendrik (Geert) Hofstede (Hofstede, 2010). He is the pioneer of research in the field of cross-cultural groups and organizations. Hofstede's framework of cross-cultural communication was drawn from a comprehensive study on culture and workplace value (www.geert-hofstede.com); and explains the impacts of societal culture on the values and behaviour of its members (Hofstede, 1980). Hofstede defined culture as a collective phenomenon as it is partly shared with people who live or lived within the same social environment, which is where it was learned. Culture consists of the unwritten rules of the social game and is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others (Hofstede, 2010).

Six Dimensions of National Culture:

Hofstede identified six dimensions of national culture (Hofstede, 2010). The dimensions are described in brief below.

Power Distance:

Power Distance has been defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions (like the family) and organizations expect and accept that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede, 2010). According to Hofstede (2011), power distance represents inequality (more versus less), but defined from below, not from above which means a society's level of inequality is endorsed by the followers as much as by the leaders. Hofstede argues that, power and inequality are extremely fundamental facts of any society. "All societies are unequal, but some are more unequal than others" (*ibid.* p 9).

Masculinity – Femininity:

Masculinity versus Femininity is not an individual but a societal characteristic (Hofstede, 2011). It refers to the distribution of values between the genders which is another fundamental issue for any society, to which a range of solutions can be found (*ibid.*). The cultures, those are, considered masculine tend to have very distinct expectations of male and female roles in society; but those with feminine cultures have greater ambiguity in what is expected of each gender (Adeoye, 2014). Hofstede highlighted the traditional assignment to masculine roles of assertiveness, competition and toughness and to feminine roles of orientation to home and children, people and tenderness (*ibid.*). According to him (Hofstede, 2010, p 140),

A society is called masculine when emotional gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.

A society is called feminine when emotional gender roles overlap: both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.

Individualism vs. Collectivism:

Individualism implies the degree to which taking responsibility for oneself is more valued than belonging to a group, who will look after their people in exchange for loyalty (Adeoye, 2014). Individual uniqueness and self-determination are valued in individualistic cultures (Hofstede, 1980; 1991) and the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him/herself and his/her immediate family (Hofstede, 2011). Collectivism, as a societal, not an individual characteristic, implies the degree to which people in a society are integrated into groups. Here, people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, often extended families (with uncles, aunts and grandparents) that continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty, and oppose other in groups (*ibid.*).

Hofstede (1980) found that, many of Asian and African cultures are collectivistic in nature, whereas Anglo cultures tend to be individualistic.

Uncertainty Avoidance:

Uncertainty avoidance is the degree to which people develop a mechanism to avoid uncertain situations (Adeoye, 2014). It is not the same as risk avoidance; it deals with a society's tolerance for ambiguity and indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations (Hofstede, 2011). Hofstede considers unstructured situations as novel, unknown, surprising, and different from usual (*ibid.*). To quote from him,

Uncertainty avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of such situations by strict behavioral codes, laws and rules, disapproval of deviant opinions, and a belief in absolute Truth; 'there can only be one Truth and we have it'. (ibid. p 10)

These cultures also tend to be punctual and expressive (Adeoye, 2014).

Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation:

Long-term orientation is associated with hard work, perseverance, thrift, ordering relationships by status, and having a sense of shame; whereas short-term orientation is associated with the values like reciprocating social obligations, respect for tradition, protecting one's 'face', and personal steadiness and stability (Hofstede, 2011). According to Hofstede (*ibid.*), this dimension is strongly correlated with recent economic growth. This dimension was first identified in a survey which was conducted among students in 23 countries around the world, using a questionnaire designed by Chinese scholars (Chinese Culture Connection, 1987 as cited in *ibid.*). The countries with a history of Confucianism scored high in long-term orientation which was termed as 'Confucian Work Dynamism' by Michael Harris Bond, the first author of the study (*ibid.*).

Indulgence versus Restraint:

Indulgence exists in a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun, whereas restraint stands for a society that controls gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms (Hofstede, 2011).

Patron Clientelism and Political Culture:

The roots of the patron-client relationship have been traced by some scholars to the dependence of commoners (plebians) on aristocrats (patricians) in the Roman Empire (Marshall, 1998). However, the relationship is also identified in Europe in the middle Ages in widespread servitude system known as serfdom (*ibid.*). There was a common factor, in the various systems of tenancy that was established after the fall of the ancient societies of Greece and Rome that a large number of unfree workers worked in lands who were tied to both land and landlord by bonds of service (*ibid.*). The prestige, military capacity and political power of the Lord was determined by the number of serfs and dependent tenants. The system of servitude in Europe was a system of authority based on economic adaptation and safeguarded by law (*ibid.*). But the dependency of tenants was ensured through both economic and religious ties which set up a relationship of 'patronage' and 'clientage' between a politically and economically powerful patron, usually a landlord, and a weaker client (Marshall, 1998).

Clientelism is commonly defined as an exchange relationship, of some private and personal nature, where players have reciprocal needs and expectations, but unequal power and status (Cf. Nunes, 1985; Shidlo, 1990; Johnson and Dandeker, 1990 as cited in Valenca, 1999). But this definition demonstrates almost any sort of relationship within a capitalist society (Valenca, 1999). According to Scott (1972, p 92),

The patron-client relationship-an exchange relationship between roles-may be defined as a special case of dyadic (two person) ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in

which an individual of higher socioeconomic status (patron) uses his own influence and resources to provide protection or benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services, to the patron

The ties of patron-clientage in the system of land tenure and agricultural production still persist in Northern Mediterranean countries, Southern Italy and India (Marshall, 1998). In Southern Italy, *Clientelismo* is not the fixed and contractual but rather the informal and flexible (*ibid.*). According to many scholars, this face-to-face relationship provides clients a degree of political power, through their support of the patron in his external political activities (*ibid.*).

Clientelism or patron-client relation implies a form of politics in which ties between leaders and followers are personal (Rothstein, 1979). The patron provides favours in return for political support, material goods, and/or other services (Hall, 1977). Political support is also provided to clients through control of jobs (Rothstein, 1979). Most studies attribute clientelism to 'traditional' political culture (*ibid.*). Powell (1970) acknowledged the existence of clientelism in 'modern' political systems and argued that such behaviour is a survival from traditional politics.

Conceptual Framework:

The role of Upazila Nirbahi Officer is twofold. He/She works as the representative of central government; while at the same time she/he works as the Executive Officer of the Upazila Parishad. Upazila Parishad is a local government institution which is run by a body of elected representatives headed by the Chairman of Upazila Parishad. It is a multifunctional organization that does not operate in the external market. Member of Parliament (MP) of the constituency, as the adviser of Upazila Parishad, plays a vital role in decision making process. So the Parishad has to cope with partly conflicting considerations like political steering and control of both MP and Upazila Parishad Chairman, representation and participation by affected parties (i.e. Union Parishad Chairmen), co-determination of officers

of different departments, transparency of decision making, equal treatment to all groups of the community, political loyalty, efficiency and effectiveness. Upazila Nirbahi Officer works in an environment where exist generalists-specialists conflict, non-cooperation of other cadres, power conflicts between the Members of Parliament (MP) and Upazila Chairman, increased criminalization of politics and peoples' disrespect to laws and institutions. Patron-clientelism in political culture of Bangladesh has created additional challenges for him/her. As a result, the UNO has to face difficulty to balance the different interests and whatever decisions he/she takes, becomes particularly vulnerable to criticism. Here UNO has to combine the hierarchically oriented variant and negotiation oriented variant². There are some common characteristics of organizational culture in a political-administrative system such as balance between loyalty and neutrality in the relationship between the political leadership and the administrative apparatus, loyalty and professional norms (as described by Herbert Simon), balance between professional value and premises of fact, procedural conditions (i.e. due process), predictability, equal treatment, transparency and information (Christensen et. al., 2007). To perform his/her multidimensional responsibilities, Upazila Nirbahi Officer has to deal and balance with all these characteristics. And if the UNO is a female, she has to maintain her family responsibilities along with the official duties. Working conditions such as long hours, unpredictable schedules and limited work-life balance arrangements (e. g. childcare facilities) may act as barriers for a female UNO to manage her family role efficiently. The masculine society of Bangladesh has very distinct expectations of male and female roles. Men are expected to be assertive, competitive and tough and women are supposed to be soft, modest and tender. Therefore, a female Upazila Nirbahi Officer may perceive challenges occurring from her own organization, from society, from her family or from the political arena.

The researcher merged the Matrix of Domination, Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions and Patron-Clientelism theories together to formulate the conceptual framework of this study. Collins' four matrixes have been customized by incorporating the cultural factors prevailing

² In hierarchically oriented variant, leaders control and analytical-rational calculations are central where as in negotiation oriented variant partially conflicting goals and interests between organizations and actors are allowed to be articulated, compromised and negotiated (Christensen et. al., 2007).

in Bangladesh to match the context of this research. The framework of the study is based on the assumption that the challenges perceived by the female UNOs are originated from three independent variables- societal cultural, organizational culture and political culture of Bangladesh.

Dependent Variable:

The dependent variable of this study is challenges perceived by the female Upazila Nirbahi Officers. The study was designed to come up with the answers of the questions like whether or not female UNOs face more challenges than their male colleagues in their work place and family life, what those perceived challenges are and how those challenges are addressed by them. There are two indicators of dependent variables- work life challenges and family life challenges.

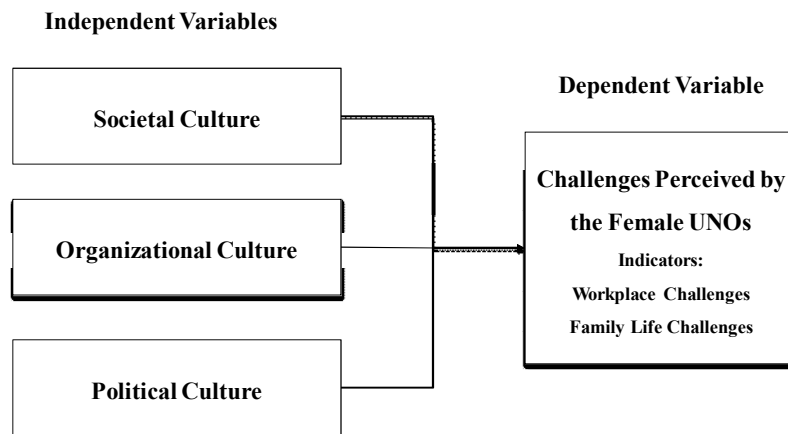
Independent Variables:

Patricia Hill Collins in her theory of Matrix of Domination implied that black women experience and resist oppressions because of their race and gender. These oppression or dominations prevail at the level of personal biography, the group or community level where the interests of the dominant group are safeguarded, in the cultural context created by race, class and gender where there are shared angles of vision and in the hierarchical power structure institutions. The researcher customized the cultural context as societal culture, interests of dominant group as political culture and hierarchical power structure institutions as organizational culture and assumed that the challenges perceived by female Upazila Nirbahi Officers may have originated from societal, organizational and political culture. So, the three independent variables of this study are-

1. Societal Culture;
2. Organizational Culture;
3. Political Culture.

Figure 9: Analytical Framework

Analytical Framework



Societal Culture:

Every society has its own distinct culture. Culture has been defined by Wildavsky (1987) as “shared values legitimating social practices”. “Culture should be distinguished from human nature on one side and from an individual personality on the other, although exactly where the borders lie between nature and culture and between culture and personality is a matter of discussion for social scientists”. (Hofstede, 2010, p 6).

Bangladesh, possessing a traditional society, scored relatively high in masculinity (55%) which is an important dimension of Hofstede’s cultural theory (<http://geert-hofstede.com> visited on 5.5.2015). As the study is aimed to focus on the gender issues, the indicator of societal culture used in this study is Hofstede’s gender dimension of culture, masculinity versus femininity.

Masculinity versus Femininity: Every society recognizes many behaviours as more suitable to females or more suitable to males; but this gender wise recognition of behaviours differs

from society to society (Hofstede, 2010). Hofstede in his study used the terms *male* and *female* for implying biological distinction and *masculine* and *feminine* for the socially and culturally determined roles. In Bangladesh, like many other oriental countries, men are reluctant to perform the household works whereas women are supposed to be bound to manage the household responsibilities and it is considered as women's exclusive duty. Men are expected to be assertive, competitive and tough and women are supposed to take the tender and nurturing roles and be more concerned with taking care of home, of the children and of people in general (*ibid.*). Men, generally being taller, stronger and free to get out, tend to dominate social life outside the home. Social roles can be imposed by external factors; but the feelings while playing the roles come from inside (*ibid.*). The role pattern demonstrated by parents and other family members creates a profound impact in a child's mind and this gender role socialization started in family continues in the work place, peer groups and hierarchical relations of superiors and subordinates, and also reflected in media (*ibid.*). This expectation of gender roles also influence the cultural and religious norms practiced in a society. While serving as UNO, a female civil servant has to deal with local people and exercise administrative and magisterial (executive) power and authority in public examinations; conduct mobile court; and inspect development and social safety net projects. But, in a masculine society, accepting a female officer in an administrative leadership post may not be easy for the stakeholders which may create challenge for the lady. Female Upazila Nirbahi Officers specific gender role in family may generate additional challenge for them. Support from the family and attitude of husband play a crucial role here. The study measured the masculinity versus femininity indicator through the socio-cultural norms, attitude of local people, gender role in family and attitude of husband.

Organizational Culture:

Organization culture denotes the internal work environment created for operating an organization (Popescu & Grigore 2007). "It represents how employees are treated by their bosses, how peers treat one another (expected treatment) and with which vision & motivation an organization is working internally" (*ibid.*). Organization may possess democratic culture,

bureaucratic culture, synthetic (holistic) culture or learning culture (learning organizations) (*ibid.*).

Organizational culture is a process which is deeply rooted within the organizational system and evolves over a long period of time (Sempene et al, 2002). Culture of an organization determines the way the organization conducts its business and also influences its processes thereby (*ibid.*). The culture of the organization is difficult to change as it is deep rooted in nature and there is often resistance against giving up something which is valued and has worked well in the past (*ibid.*).

According to Schein (1985: 19, 1992: 12 as cited in Denison, 1996)) organizational culture is “a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems”.

Hofstede (2010) defined organizational culture as holistic, historically determined, related to rituals and symbols, socially constructed, soft and difficult to change. Dunn (1997) argued that, organizational culture is built in a patriarch model of delivery and women including those who hold important, higher level positions in an organization are either ignored or overlooked. Broadbridge & Hearn (2008) came up with the similar findings. According to them, the structures and social processes of organizations frequently continue to emanate from male-based practices, prerogatives and privileges (Broadbridge and Hearn, 2008).

The indicators of organizational culture used in this study are work environment and working conditions.

Work Environment: Hofstede (2010) in his study on national culture asked his respondents, the IBM employees, about the factors that the respondents considered important in an ideal job. The male employees attached greater importance to opportunity for high earnings and advancement to higher-level jobs while the female employees considered *good working*

relationship with direct supervisor and well cooperation of colleagues more important (*ibid.*). The importance of earning and advancement correspond to the masculine, assertive and competitive social role and the importance of relations with the superior and with colleagues correspond to the caring and social-environment-oriented feminine role (*ibid.*). Accepting this notion of Hofstede's study, work environment in this study has been measured by attitude of superiors and male colleagues, state of obedience and efficiency of subordinates and state of cooperation of officers of other departments of Upazila.

Working Conditions: Working conditions is vital criterion for paid work and employment relationships (<http://www.ilo.org>, visited on 25.12.15). Working conditions cover a broad range of issues, from working time (hours of work, rest periods, and work schedules) to leave and remuneration, as well as the physical conditions and mental demands that exist in the workplace (*ibid.*). A study of OECD (2014) found that working conditions such as long hours, unpredictable schedules and limited work-life balance arrangements (e. g. childcare facilities) are main barriers that hinder women's access to top positions in all public spheres. The standard work hour in Bangladesh is eight hours daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the working days (Sunday to Thursday). But different departments of public sector of Bangladesh have their own organizational culture. Some of the departments, like police, administration etc., have to work for longer hours due to their nature of work. Similarly, the work hours of Upazila Nirbahi Officers are not limited to eight hours because of their job nature. They have to respond immediately at any time in any predictable or unpredictable situation, which made their job a 24 hour job. The leaves of all cadre, non-cadre or gazetted, non- gazetted government employees of Bangladesh are supposed to be granted and approved according to the Prescribed Leave Rules, 1959. But the job nature of Upazila Nirbahi Officers and organizational culture of Bangladesh Civil Service (Administration Cadre) again play a role in determining their leave. In case of a female Upazila Nirbahi Officer, the extended and unpredictable work hour and insufficient leave may create some problem to maintain their gender responsibility in family. Therefore, the researcher, in this study, designed to measure the working conditions by work hour and availability of sufficient leave.

Political Culture:

The term political culture was first proposed by Gabriel Almond in 1956 in his article “Comparative Political Systems” in which Almond defined political culture as the particular pattern of orientations to political action (Chilton, 1988). Political culture has been defined by Chilton as all publicly common ways of relating within the collectivity (*ibid.*). He identified some features of political culture:

- (1) Each culture consists of publicly common ways of relating;
- (2) The ways of relating are constituted in the reasoning that people use to apply them;
- (3) This reasoning is moral;
- (4) Moral reasoning has cognitive structure; and
- (5) Cognitive structure can be meaningfully compared between different cultures.

Rotberg defined political culture in late 1990s as the term that describes how a society and a collection of leaders and citizens chooses, and has long chosen, to approach national political decisions (Rotberg, 1999). He asserted that political culture was/is hardly static and the feedback loop is natural and continuous (*ibid.*).

Rahman (2010) identified that the grassroots political activists and leaders of Bangladesh have relationship with the district level or central level party leaders and this relationship is based upon some exchanges of influence, power and resources. Each of the grassroot leaders comes from the community and has some sort of local and external patrons of muscle power and political influence (*ibid.*). They are also connected with different sections of people, partisan or neutral, in the society and act as mediator between the central leaders and grassroot people (*Ibid.*). Leaders or patrons offer jobs, bureaucratic knowledge and political influence in return for political support and financial contributions. For the purpose of this study, the indicator of political culture is patron-clientelism of local power elites.

Patron-Clientelism of Local Power Elites: Upazila Nirbahi Officer works as the representative of central government, while at the same time (s)he works as the Executive Officer of the Upazila Parishad. Upazila Parishad is a local government institution which is run by a body of elected representatives headed by the Chairman of Upazila Parishad. Member of Parliament (MP) of the constituency, as the adviser of Upazila Parishad, plays a vital role in decision making process. So the Parishad has to cope with partly conflicting considerations like political steering and control of both MP and Upazila Parishad Chairman, representation and participation by affected parties (i.e. Union Parishad Chairmen), co-determination of officers of different departments, transparency of decision making, equal treatment to all groups of the community, political loyalty, efficiency and effectiveness. As a result, the UNO has to face difficulty to balance the different interests and whatever decisions he/she takes, becomes particularly vulnerable to criticism.

Historically local governments in developing countries are subjected to influence of local elites and these local elites are used to create power base for the central-level political leaders and officials (Bardhan & Mookherjee 2006). The central level political leaders consider them as junior partners and a significant amount of resources have been channelled to the Parishad in the name of local development which in reality has been used to satisfy rural elites supporting the ruling party since the inception of Upazila Parishad (As-Saber & Rabbi, 2009). Upazila Parishad system acts as a channel of patronage distribution and personal acquisition of wealth. (Sarker 2008).

The ex-officio membership for the Union Parishad Chairmen has created a patron-client relationship between the Parishad Chairman and the Chairman of the Union Parishad (As-Saber & Rabbi, 2009). Chairman of the Parishad constantly gathers and maintains support of a comfortable number of Union Parishad Chairmen to remain in power and to get the business done (*ibid.*). The relationship is maintained by providing undue favours to some of the union counterparts who in exchange provide vital support to the Parishad Chairman during his/her tenure at office and during the election campaigns (Alam, et al., 1994).

Section 25 of the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 provided mandatory advisory role of local Member of Parliament (MP) over the Parishad making it obligatory for the Parishad Chairmen to accept recommendations from the local MPs (As-Saber & Rabbi, 2009). There are no clear instructions about how to maintain this advisory role which resulted in interference of MP's in almost all functions of Parishad. The interference sometimes becomes very undue and unreasonable as it facilitates the patron-client relationship between the MP and his party activists. The MPs tend to provide patronage to his supporters using the social safety net programs; controlling jobs in the local educational institutions; ensuring work orders of development projects, lease of haat bazaars and khas water bodies; and awarding membership of different committees.

In the context of Bangladesh politicization of bureaucracy does not mean using bureaucrats to serve a particular ideology but to use them to promote private agendas of politicians Sobhan (2007). Bureaucrats require to be compatible with the MP or local ruling party leaders so that the ruling party workers can use their political access to seek official patronage for fulfilling their material interests (*Ibid.*). If their particular interests cannot be served, the ruling party workers tend to engage in conflict or collusion with the officer (*Ibid.*).

There are some common characteristics of organizational culture in a political-administrative system such as balance between loyalty and neutrality in the relationship between the political leadership and the administrative apparatus, loyalty and professional norms (as described by Herbert Simon), balance between professional value and premises of fact, procedural conditions (i.e. due process), predictability, equal treatment, transparency and information (Christensen et. al., 2007). Upazila Nirbahi Officer, as the Executive Officer of Upazila Parishad, has to deal with this patronage culture of political process balancing the existing rules, regulations and procedural conditions. This is challenge for Upazila Nirbahi Officers irrespective of their gender. The study is aimed to find out whether gender of Upazila Nirbahi Officer plays any role in determining the approach of local power elites e. g. local Member of Parliament, Chairman of Upazila Parishad and Chairmen of Union

Parishads. The indicator is measured by approach of local Member of Parliament and Upazila Parishad Chairman; and state of cooperation of Union Parishad Chairmen.

Table 3: Operationalization of Variables

Independent Variables	Indicators of Independent Variables	Measurement of Independent Variables	Indicators of Dependent Variable	Dependent Variable
Societal Culture	Masculinity Vs. Feminity	Socio-cultural Norms	Workplace Challenges	Challenges Perceived by Female Upazila Nirbahi Officers
		Attitude of Local people		
		Gender Role in Family	Family Life Challenges	
		Attitude of Husband		
Organizational Culture	Working Conditions	Work Hour		
		Leave		
	Work Environment	Attitude of Superiors	Workplace Challenges	
		State of Obedience and Efficiency of Subordinates		
		State of Cooperation of Officers of Other Departments of Upazila		
Political Culture	Patron Clientelism of Local Power Elites	Approach of Local Member of Parliament and Upazila Parishad Chairman		
		State of Cooperation of Union Parishad Chairmen		

Operational Definitions of Variables, Indicators and Measurement of Indicators:

Challenge: Oxford Dictionary defines challenge as “a task or situation that tests someone’s ability”. In this research, the term ‘challenge’ implies the difficulties and adverse situations that female UNOs face while discharging their duties. These challenges may occur from both internal and external environment of the organization.

Workplace: Workplace means a place where a person works. In this study, workplace of Upazila Nirbahi Officers denotes the places where they work inside or outside their jurisdiction. Office of the UNO, the places they visit or inspect for official purposes like project areas, Union Parishad, educational institutions etc. or the places they visit during conducting mobile court are considered as their workplace inside their jurisdiction. The study also considers the places they visit to attend meetings outside their jurisdictions (e.g. office of the Deputy Commissioner, office of the Commissioner of Division or any other officer) as their workplace.

Family Life: Family life generally means the life within a household and consists of the activities an individual participate in together with his/her family members. It is the general way of how a person's life is carried out in his/her home. In this study, family life refers to the respondents' personal life with their spouse, children, parents, siblings, in laws and relatives.

Socio-Cultural Norms: Socio-Cultural norms are the informal rules of a group or society that are used to determine what is appropriate and inappropriate in individual or group behavior, expression, and values according to culture of a society.

Gender Role: In every culture there are differentiated roles of male and female that expect certain behaviour from each (Hearn & Parkin 1988, Hofstede 1991). In Bangladesh, like many other oriental countries, men are reluctant to perform the household works whereas women are supposed to be bound to manage the household responsibilities and it is considered as women's exclusive duty. Therefore, the study implies the respondents' household and child rearing responsibilities as their gender role.

Superiors: Deputy Commissioner (DC) and Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) are the immediate superiors of UNO. DC is the administrative head of a district and controlling authority of UNO. UNOs are monitored and directed by their respective DC. Deputy Commissioner is also responsible for approving leave and evaluating performance of UNO

through Annual Confidential Report (ACR). ADCs are the second in command of district administration and immediate boss of UNO.

Subordinates: Subordinates apply the Office Assistants working in the UNO office.

Officers of Other departments: This implies the officers of the transferred and retained departments of Upazila.

Male Colleagues: Male colleagues, in this study, represent the male officers of Bangladesh Civil Service (Administration Cadre).

Work Hour: The standard work hour in Bangladesh is eight hours daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the working days (Sunday to Thursday). But because of the nature of the job, UNOs work hours are not limited to eight hours. They have to respond immediately any time in any predictable or unpredictable situation, which made their job a 24 hour job.

Leave: Leave implies any leave in accordance with the Prescribed Leave Rules, 1959.

Local Power Elites: Local power elites usually mean a small group of people in the community who have a disproportionately large amount of control or influence over society, politics and wealth (www.collinsdictionary.com, visited on 26.12. 15). For the purpose of this study, local power elites denote the political representatives within an Upazila, the Member of the Parliament (MP), Upazila Parishad Chairman and Union Parishad Chairmen.

Member of the Parliament (MP): There are 300 seats in the National Parliament of Bangladesh which are occupied by the directly elected representatives of the people. They are officially called Members of the Parliament (MP). Besides the directly elected members, there are 45 reserved seats for the nominated female members from the political parties holding seats in the parliament. They hold their posts for a tenure of five years. There are 488 Upazilas in Bangladesh which are divided into 300 and 45 constituencies respectively for the directly elected MPs through peoples' vote and nominated female MPs.

Upazila Chairman: Upazila is an administrative unit of Bangladesh. There are four administrative units in the country: Division, District, Upazila and Union. The whole country is divided into 8 divisions, each division is divided into some districts, each district has some Upazilas and each Upazila is divided into some Unions. There are 64 districts, 489 Upazilas and 4550 unions in Bangladesh (www.bangladesh.gov.bd, visited on 26.12.2015). In every Upazila there is an Upazila Parishad which is a local government body of Bangladesh. Bangladesh has three-tier local government structure: Zila Parishad, Upazila Parishad and Union Parishad. Upazila Parishad has an elected representative body. The chairman of the Upazila Parishad is directly elected by the peoples' vote and holds the office for a five year tenure.

Union Parishad Chairman: Union parishad is the lowest rural local government body of Bangladesh. The chairman of the union parishad is also elected for five years through peoples' vote.

Chapter 4

Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO): Roles & Responsibilities

Roles of Upazila Nirbahi Officer:

Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) is the representative of central government at the Upazila level who, at the same time, works as the Executive Officer of Upazila Parishad. Upazila Nirbahi Officer is also the administrative head of the Upazila. He/she is an officer with the rank of Senior Assistant Secretary of Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) Administration Cadre. Upazila Parishad, as a local government body, is headed by the Chairman (Upazila Chairman) who is elected through direct election. Local Member of the Parliament (MP) acts as advisor of the Parishad according to section 25 of the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998. Upazila Nirbahi Officer has to supervise and monitor the maintenance of law and order, management of khas land, leasing of Hat, Bazar, khas waterbodies and co-ordinate the development activities by maintaining rapports with the political representatives of the people. Some functions of central government have been transferred to Upazila Parishad to strengthen the local government body. These departments called transferred subjects. According to circular no.lgd/up-2/c-4/2009/1422, dated 17.06.2010 and 46.046.006.00.00.004.2012-13, dated 06.01.2013 of Local Government Division of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperative, the transferred departments are public administration, health, family planning, agriculture, fisheries, livestock, relief & rehabilitations, social welfare, primary education, women & children affairs, youth & sport, local government engineering division, public health, cooperatives, rural development, secondary education and forestry. Retained subjects are the regulatory functions of central government and are not transferred to Upazila Parishad. These departments include law & order, land & revenue management & administration, statistics department, audit & accounts, rural electrification etc. Being the head of Upazila administration and the Executive Officer of Upazila Parishad, Upazila Nirbahi Officer coordinates the functions of both the transferred and retained subjects.

Duties and Responsibilities of Upazila Nirbahi Officer as the Representative of Central Government at the Upazila Level:

As the representative of central government at the Upazila level and head of Upazila administration, Upazila Nirbahi Officer performs specific duties and responsibilities. Those are as follows (Arafunnesa, 2011):

1. Coordinating the general administration of Upazila under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner.
2. Enforcing section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1898.
3. Performing as General Certificate Officer (GCO) to recover public demand under the Public Demand Recovery Act, 1913.
4. Writing Annual Confidential Reports (ACR) of the subordinates.
5. Supervising and controlling the revenue and land administration of Upazila.
6. Arrangement of training for subordinates and coordinating all training programs of the Upazila.
7. Supervising the functions and performance of subordinate officials and staffs.
8. Inspecting local police station as the Executive Magistrate of the Upazila.
9. Mandatorily inspecting the educational institutions located within the jurisdiction of Upazila.
10. Performing the duties and responsibilities related to elections.
11. Conducting mobile court within the jurisdiction under the Mobile Court Act, 2009.
12. Directing the related functions of Ashrayon and Abashon Projects of government.
13. Performing duties related to human census.
14. Leading locally the government programs of mass education.
15. Performing the duties related to public examinations in primary/secondary/higher secondary/university level.
16. Assisting the government program of population control.
17. Performing as protocol officer when necessary.
18. Arranging training programs for the newly posted Assistant Commissioner (Land).

19. Implementing the primary, compulsory mass education and poverty reduction programs of government.
20. Performing such other functions as may be entrusted to him by the Government under any law.
21. Supervision of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and vital installations.
22. Management of vested property, khas land and leasing of Hat, Bazar, khas water bodies.
23. Executive and development duties not assigned to any department.

Duties and Responsibilities of Upazila Nirbahi Officer as the Executive Officer of Upazila Parishad:

The Government of Bangladesh transferred different department/offices at the Upazila level under the control of Upazila Parishad according to the power delegated by section 24 of the Upazila Parishad Act, 1998 (reestablished & amended by the act no. 27 of 2009) and following the Schedule 3 of the same act. The Local Government Division of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperative published a circular (circular no.lgd/up-2/c-4/2009/1422, dated 17.06.2010) describing the charter of duties of Upazila Nirbahi Officer. According to the charter of duties, the functions of Upazila Nirbahi Officer are:

1. Assisting the Upazila Parishad Chairman in exercising his/her executive power and provide him/her necessary guidelines and advices. Presenting all the proposals of administrative decisions and financial expenditures to the Chairman for his/her approval. Exercise executive power if designated by the Parishad.
2. Providing the secretarial assistance to the Parishad. As per the official duty, remaining present in the Parishad's meeting, attending the standing committee meeting when necessary and taking part in discussions; but not entitled to exercise voting right.

3. Calling the first meeting of elected Parishad in accordance with the rules. Furthermore, with the advice of Chairman, calling the monthly general meeting of the Parishad. UNO is entitled with the authority to call the special meeting with calling notice of at least one third members of the Parishad in emergency situation.
4. Providing opinion on any agenda of the meetings and presenting the agendas to meeting with specific opinion and observations.
5. Informing the local government division about any decision taken in the meetings of Parishad, if the UNO considers it necessary.
6. Informing the local government division about any unusual issue/situation in the Upazila Parishad noticed by the UNO.
7. Assisting the implementation of every function and every policy of the Parishad. Taking initiatives to implement the decisions taken in the meetings of Parishad. If UNO thinks that any decision of the Parishad has not been taken in accordance with the law and such decision may cause threat to peoples' lives, health and security, he/she shall request the Parishad in black and white to reconsider its decision. If the Parishad does not reconsider the decision, the UNO informing the Chairman, shall inform it to the government or concerned authority. If the government or concerned authority does not give any decision regarding the issue within 15 working days, the UNO, keeping the authority informed, shall take necessary actions to implement the decision previously taken by the Parishad.
8. Coordinating the functions of transferred departments.
9. Assisting the Chairman to supervise all the developmental and administrative functions at the Upazila level. UNO shall also supervise the said functions.

10. Providing assistance in the formulation and implementation of integrated development planning.
11. Scrutinizing the expenditure of Parishad's fund according to financial rules and regulations, providing advices to the Parishad regarding budget expenditure, and maintaining and preserving the accounts of Parishad.
12. Assisting the Upazila Parishad in formulation and approval of annual budget. After approval of budget, taking necessary actions to release the fund for local development projects and providing advice to Parishad about approval of developmental and non-developmental expenditure.
13. Maintaining and preserving the account of advancement and expenditure of development projects.
14. Controlling the officers/staff of Parishad and taking disciplinary actions under the supervision and control of Upazaila Parishad Chairman. Performing jointly with the Chairman as the drawing and disbursing officer of officers/staff of the Parishad.
15. During natural disaster, receiving, storing and distributing relief materials including food as directed by Upazila Parishad.
16. Performing any function legally assigned by Parishad
17. Sending reports time to time to the government or concerned authority as directed by government.
18. Ensuring the implementations of different directives of government.

Chapter 5

Data Analysis and Findings

Data Analysis & Findings:

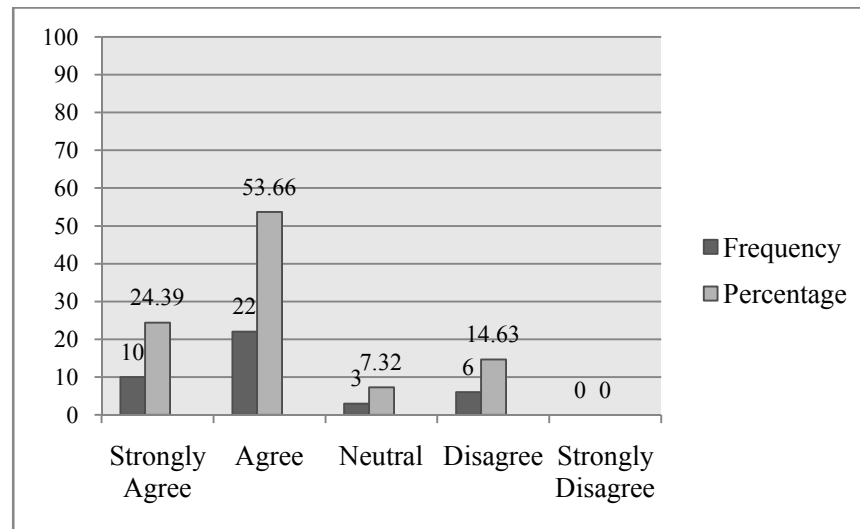
The aim of this study was to find out the obstacles or challenges female Upazila Nirbahi Officers perceive in their work place and family because of their gender. After completing the collection of quantitative data from primary sources, data were analyzed, categorized and processed through statistical tools like frequency distribution, measures of central tendency (mean and median), measures of variability (standard deviation) and measures of relationships between variables (Pearson's correlation coefficient). SPSS was used to find out the statistical value of collected data. Qualitative data were used to elaborate, interpret and explain the quantitative data.

A structured questionnaire was provided to each of the survey respondents. The questionnaire consisted of both close ended and open ended questions. A five point Likert Scale was used to apply value to the categorical data in which 5 indicates extreme negative opinion and 3 indicates neutrality of the respondent. Quantitative data were supplemented with 9 case studies and secondary data.

Work Place Challenges of Female Upazila Nirbahi Officers:

The study identified some cultural attributed challenges faced by the targeted population. 78.5% of the survey respondents are in the opinion that, they face more challenges at their work places than their male colleagues because of their gender.

Figure 10: Do you think female Upazila Nirbahi Officers face more challenges at the workplaces than their male colleagues?



(n=41, mean= 3.88, median= 4, standard deviation= .953)

There was an open ended question in the questionnaire asking the respondents to list the challenges they perceive at their workplaces. They identified the challenges as inherent negative perception of superiors about female officers without judging their performance, job nature of UNO (24 hour job, movement at late night), dual responsibility of office and family, requirement of harder work than male colleagues to prove their efficiency, dominating tendency of male colleagues, non-acceptance of female leadership by the other department officers, humiliating comments by male colleagues, non-reliance of boss, disobedience of staffs, initial problem of acceptance from internal and external environment, considering women incapable to perform in managerial post, branding of a female UNO's personal failure as the failure of female race, traditional mind set of considering women weak and inferior to male, cultural barrier to create information communication resulting in unavailability of information in due time etc. One respondent said,

“Modesty of female officers is considered as weakness. So we have to show boldness in our attitude and behaviour which is sometimes interpreted as rudeness.”

Table 4: Workplace Challenges Identified by the Respondents

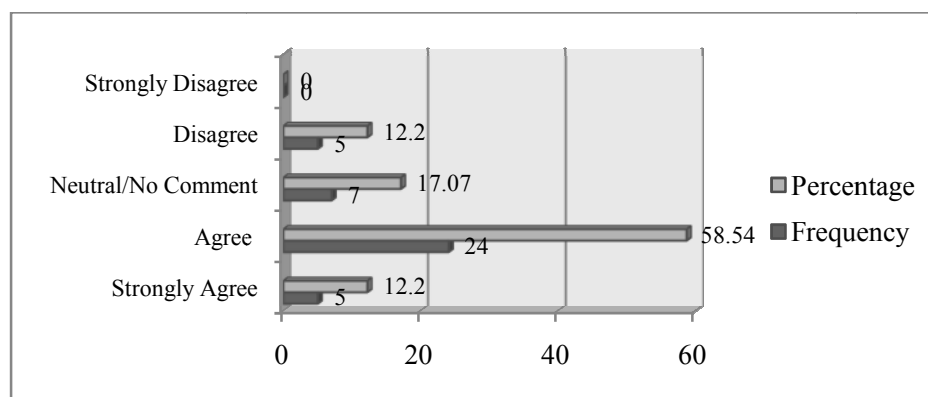
Sl. No.	Noted Challenges	Independent Variable
1	People are still not habituated to see a female officer in this post. So, it takes time to grow acceptance.	Societal Cultural
2	Sometimes instructed to wear sari to look matured but wearing sari is time consuming. It is not suitable for anywhere movement.	
3	Problem in addressing; tendency to address 'Apa'	
4	Moving any time to anywhere; sometimes not secured	
5	Dual responsibility of work and family. More family responsibilities have to perform by female UNOs than their male colleagues.	
6	Modesty of female officer is considered as weakness	
7	There is problem of movement in public meeting. People do not keep proper distance.	
8	Sometimes female stakeholders try to make a female UNO biased about their problems thinking that a female UNO is emotional.	
9	Female UNOs are not welcomed in religious institutions like Mashjid and cannot join Eid Salat in Eid Gah.	
10	Not getting information in due time	
11	Cultural barrier to develop informal communication	
12	Hesitance of female UNO to visit to any place creates negative perception; sometimes female UNO try to take advantage by avoiding a responsibility	
13	Too much work load compared to the physical strength of woman as she has to maintain both her office and family. It causes physical and mental stress.	
14	Problems in inspecting remote areas where official vehicle is not possible to use.	
15	Female UNOs have to be perfect in every official task to gain credibility or reliance of the boss. All her successes fade away if she fails in one job.	Organizational Culture
16	Lack of acceptance, support and recognition from Deputy Commissioner	
17	Underestimation and negative comments by male colleagues.	
18	Disliking of the spouse of the boss creates problem	
19	Job nature of UNO	
20	Work Hour	
21	Sometimes boss, peoples' representative or staff exploit situation as women have limited network & can't defense strongly.	
22	Have to work more and harder than the male colleagues to prove capability and competency to boss	
23	There is a problem of acceptance from boss at initial stage. They have to prove their capability first.	
24	Officers of other departments do not want to obey the leadership of a female officer. Senior officers among them become easy with male UNO but do not behave in the same way with a female.	

25	Negative perception of boss considering female officers not being able to work much. They rely more on male officers.	
26	A perceived notion that women are not skilled administrators.	
27	Extensive field movement, project visit and movement at night	
28	Some superiors think that female officers give more time to their house and show more excuses for not working.	
29	Female UNOs have to be perfect in every official task to gain credibility or reliance of the boss. All her successes fade away if she fails in one job.	
30	Underestimation of capability by boss in case of protocol of high officials like ministers or secretaries.	
31	Attempts of misguidance by staffs	
32	Males get their post ready, but females have to achieve	
33	Underestimation by political leaders and representatives. Some of them think that a female officer is weak and they can make her do anything they want	Political Culture
34	Political people cannot take a female UNO easily.	
35	Spouse of the member of parliament sometimes try to interfere in official matters.	

Proving Competency to Boss:

70.74% of the respondents agreed that they have to work harder, be more up to date about their work and show more efforts than their male colleagues to prove their competency to their boss. There seems an inbuilt or default perception of bosses that women put more attention to their family responsibilities and do not or cannot take their office responsibilities seriously enough. So, female UNOs have to work harder to make their boss get rid of this perception.

Figure 11: Do you think you have to work harder, be more up to date about your work and show more effort than your male colleagues to prove your competency to your boss?



(n=41, mean= 3.71, median= 4, standard deviation= .843)

The respondents viewed that, female UNOs have to work more and show more performance than their male colleagues to prove their competency to superiors. Most of the superiors possess an inherent negative perception towards female UNOs. When a female officer is posted as UNO in any Upazila, the Deputy Commissioner does not feel comfortable in the first stage. They think that a female cannot move frequently to every area in any time which is a must for any UNO. They rely on male UNOs easily. But a female UNO has to prove her efficiency first by her hard work and prompt responses in every situation. Then the boss starts relying on her. To quote from one respondent from Rangpur Division,

“The Deputy Commissioner has a doubting tendency about whether or not I actually visit the spot before sending report. I have been questioned about this most of the time though I visited the spot of occurrence. But other UNOs (male) are not questioned whether or not they visited the spot. It is assumed that they have done it.”

This view is also substantiated by a study conducted in 2012 on motivating and demotivating factors of female civil servants of Bangladesh. Bilkis (2012) in her study found that, when a woman starts her job, she has to face underestimation and expressions of negative feelings by others about her capability at the first stage until she proves herself; and she continuously faces this test. But no one questions about a male’s capability until he proves himself incapable (Bilkis, 2012)

A male ADC opines like this,

“I would like to give 10 points to a male UNO and 8 points to a female UNO not because of their performance, but because of the fact that women are vulnerable to security. I will not choose a female officer to go to duty after midnight with police or BGB because of security concern. There is not enough number of female police to accompany a female officer or UNO. During January- March, 2014, there were continuous night patrolling by the magistrates accompanied by police and BGB. There were stormy nights and we did not choose our only female UNO of that time to go to those duties. On those stormy nights,

where would she go to take shelter or use wash room in the heavy rain? So, definitely we assigned our male officers to perform those duties.”

The statement reflects that a perceived concern of security hampers the performance of female officers. This issue was also identified by some respondent UNOs. 43.91% of the respondents think that the job nature of UNO is a challenge for female officers. Going out at late night to tackle any sudden incident or coming back from district programs at late night without any security sometimes create a sense of insecurity among them.

Exercising Power & Authority:

An Upazila Nirbahi Officer is entitled with executive magisterial power. She/he is assigned the duties of visiting the public examination halls to prevent malpractice in examination and conducting mobile court under the Mobile Court Act, 2009. The respondents were asked about whether or not they have ever faced any problem in mobile court only because of their gender. The study found that 34.15% of the respondents faced problem because of their gender while conducting mobile court whereas 65% of the respondents never faced any problem.

Frequency Distribution Table-7

Do you think exercising legal power and authority in mobile court is more difficult for a female UNO/requires extra effort than their male colleagues?	Opinion	Percentage
	Strongly Agree	0
	Agree	78.04
	Neutral	0
	Disagree	21.95
	Strongly Disagree	0

(n=41, mean= 3.56, median=4, standard deviation= 0.84)

On the contrary, 78.04% of the respondents agreed that exercising legal power and authority in mobile court is more difficult for a female UNO/requires extra effort than their male colleagues. Due to the cultural traits, women are considered as soft, tender and emotional. In

mobile court, people have a tendency to argue to prove that they did not commit any crime. Sometimes they try to bargain to decrease the amount of fine showing excuses. As noted by a respondent, “Modesty of female officer is considered as weakness in mobile court and people show much intolerance. So I always speak boldly and loudly to the accused people so that they don’t get the courage to bargain.”

People also think that a female officer is driven by emotion rather than judicious mind while making decisions and she has soft corner for another female. So they try to make her emotionally biased. To quote from another respondent, “Sometimes in mobile court, female relatives of accused or female accused try to make me biased about their problems to get rid of fine thinking that I will be driven by emotion while giving judgment.”

The study found that the situation is reverse in case of exercising magisterial power in public examination. No respondent ever faced any unwanted situation because of their gender while performing magisterial duties in the public examinations.

Frequency Distribution Table-8

Do you think female UNOs face more adverse situations than their male colleagues while exercising magisterial power in the public examinations?	Opinion	Percentage
	Strongly Agree	0
	Agree	0
	Neutral	7.32
	Disagree	92.68
	Strongly Disagree	0

(n= 41, mean= 2.073, median= 2, standard deviation= 0.263)

92.68% respondent disagreed that female UNOs face more adverse situations than their male colleagues while exercising magisterial power in the public examinations. The reason may be that, in public examinations they have to deal with students and teachers who are the educated segment of the society. Therefore, they are gender sensitized to some extent. Similarly, 90.24% of the respondents disagreed that they face hurdles in implementation of new decisions because of their gender. They think challenge in implementation of new

decision depend on situation and environment, not on gender. Again, 92.68% respondents did not agree that coordination of government programs is more difficult for female UNOs than their male colleagues and 80.49% of the respondents do not think that dealing with political representatives is more difficult for them.

Societal Culture

Socio-cultural Norms:

68.29% of the respondents agreed that socio-cultural norms of male dominated society create obstacles in their workplaces. Women are traditionally considered weaker and inferior to men. This deep rooted belief contributed to put women in a lower status in society. People are still not habituated to see a woman as top manager. As stated by a respondent,

“People are not habituated to see a woman as UNO. So it takes time to grow acceptance.”

Frequency Distribution Table-9

Do you think socio-cultural norms of male dominated society, gender discrimination and considering women inferior to men create challenge?	Opinion	Percentage
	Strongly Agree	19.51
	Agree	48.78
	Neutral	0
	Disagree	31.71
	Strongly Disagree	0

(n=41, mean= 3.56, median=4, standard deviation=1.141)

Upazila Nirbahi Officer is entitled to use a government allotted Pajero jeep for his/her movement. He/she has to visit and inspect government projects, social safety net programs, public examinations, election centers, schools, colleges and union parishads for various purposes. But not all the areas of an upazila can be visited by the jeep because of lack of

roads. Alternative vehicles like van or motor cycle are used in this purpose. But there are socio-cultural barriers for a female UNO to use these vehicles. Sometimes, female UNOs are advised by the superiors to wear saree in work place to look matured.

“When I got posting as UNO, Commissioner Sir told me to wear saree in office time to look matured. I have been obeying his advice till now. But it created extra pressure on me. Saree is not quickly wearable or easily manageable dress. And when I require riding on van to visit the remote place, it’s a complete mess. I don’t understand why this ‘looking matured’ thing is not required for a male officer”, said one respondent.

Another respondent said,

“Whenever I need to visit the char areas, I suffer a lot of embarrassments. I have to ride motor cycle sitting behind an office staff or an officer of other department. The road is narrow, full of holes and slopes. I have to save myself from falling down; at the same time I have to be careful not to get close to the driver of the bike. All the time I feel like falling down. But I cannot drive the motor bike by my own as it does not go with my so called status (I am a woman, anyway); my husband will not like it and my senior and junior colleagues will be annoyed if I do so. As a result later on, I have to overhear comments that, the UNO, being a woman, rides motorcycle sitting behind a man who is not her relative.”

Socio-cultural and religious norms also create other types of problem. There is a circular of cabinet division instructing UNOs to mandatorily perform the Eid Salat in the main Eid Gah of his jurisdiction with the mass people. But, though in urban areas, there is separate place for women in the Eid Gah where women can perform their Eid prayer with *Jamat*, it is beyond imagination in rural areas. No female UNO ever tried to convince people in fear of hurting their religious sentiment. Some of the respondents believe that performing Eid prayer in *Jamat* would create an opportunity to go close to people and establish informal network which would become sources of information for them.

Socio-cultural norms also create obstacle for a female UNO to maintain informal communication. Sarker (2014), in his study, showed that, information communication effectively facilitates the coordinating role of UNO. It also plays a vital role in getting information in due time which is essential for performing the duties of UNO. To quote from a respondent currently working as UNO,

“I do not get the law and order related information from Officer in Charge of local Thana in due time. So I used to communicate with a local journalist over cell phone to get the information of recent happenings. To my utter embarrassment, the journalist thought, I am emotionally involved to him. One day he told me that he would never reveal the fact to any one that I called him several times. I was shocked to hear that and never called that person for any information. But my question is, would he think this type of nonsense if I were a male?”

Case Study 1

Respondent X (Present UNO) joined in an upazila of a district of Khulna Division in 2013. She is the first female UNO of that upazila. After few days of her joining a freedom fighter died. A freedom fighter is entitled to get state honour (guard of honour) before his burial. So, the respondent, as the representative of state, went there to lead the formal procedure. When she went to the place of ‘Janajah’ prayer, people joining in the prayer became shocked to see a woman performing the duty. They started whispering and their discontentment reflected in their faces. They were not happy to see her in that place but they did not become vocal of that issue. The respondent felt like she had come to a wrong place. She finished her responsibility with due respect to the freedom fighter and came back.

She had to perform this duty many times after that incident. Though people did not get surprised like the first day, they could not take the respondent’s presence positively in the guard of honour procedure. After 1.5 year of her joining, a male AC (L) was given posting in that upazila. Then the respondent started sending the AC (L) to perform the guard of honour procedure of late freedom fighters. *“Being a UNO, I wanted to show the highest respect to the freedom fighters by ensuring my presence in the guard of honour procedure, but socio-cultural norms barred me to do this.”* said the respondent.

The above case study indicates that women are yet to get access in many social or religious arenas. Societal culture of Bangladesh has been greatly influenced by its three major religions (Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam) (www.bangladesh.com, visited on 22.12.2015). It is not purely originated from Islam, the religion of its majority population; rather it is influenced by the mixture of norms of all three religions. Many of the practiced religious norms of Muslims in Bangladesh are originated from the societal culture. Lack of proper religious knowledge persists among the majority of population. There is prevalent belief of considering women as impure which resists them from getting access in many religious ceremonies and establishments. Though this view of impurity is not substantiated by the official code of Islam and is originated mainly from Hinduism, the Muslims in many areas, influenced by the culture, consider it as their religious view and bar women to take part in *Janaza* or *Eid* prayer.

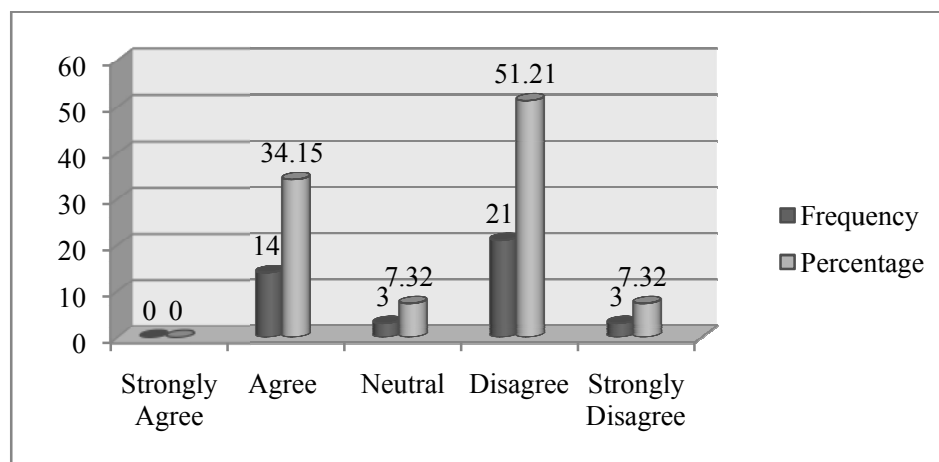
The study identified that a male officer can easily mix with the political representatives and move with them in the same vehicle. They can share the same vehicle with Upazila Chairman in visiting projects if the official transport is sent for maintenance. But a female officer cannot do so in fear of rumours. “Being a lady UNO, I could not make informal communication with the Upazila Chairman (in my previous station) which created a big gap between us resulting in conflict. Our conflicting relationship hampered the work environment and Upazila Agriculture Officer got the opportunity to create grouping against me. He did not succeed eventually. But it caused some sorts of mental pressure which disturbed my mental peace and personal life.” stated by another present UNO.

There is discriminative attitude in addressing also. 70.73% of the respondents noted it as a problem. A male UNO is naturally and willingly addressed as ‘Sir’. But when the UNO is female, some people confidently address ‘Apa’. Sometimes officers of other departments or Union Parishad Chairmen or some stakeholders do it intentionally to show impudence or audacity to a female. Others do it unintentionally due to ignorance or cultural attribute. Arafunnesa (2011) in her study on the problems and prospects of female officers of Bangladesh Civil Service (Administration) also identified the discriminative attitude in addressing the female civil servants

Acceptance of Local People:

58.53% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that female UNOs are well not well accepted by the local people. They opine that, gender is not a factor here. Local people observe whether an UNO serves their purpose or not.

Figure 12: Do you think female UNOs are not well accepted by the local people after joining as UNO?



(n=41, mean= 2.682, median= 2, standard deviation= 1.035)

34.15% of the respondents agreed that local people do not accept a female UNO well after joining the post. People are still not habituated to see a female officer in this post. So, it takes time to grow acceptance. The respondents think that the local people take an observing position when a female officer is posted as UNO. They observe her activity and if she performs well, they accept her positively. Some interviewees said that the local women came to see and touch them with ample curiosity when they heard that a female officer had been posted as UNO.

85.37% of the respondents disagreed that after serving for 6 months/1 year, they were not well accepted by the local people. Mean, median and standard deviation of associated data are respectively 2.097, 2 and 0.624 which indicates that local people accepted them more

after serving for a period of 6 month or 1 year. The following case study portrays the statistical finding.

Case Study 2

One respondent *Y* joined Bangladesh Civil Service (Administration) in 2003. Her first posting was as Assistant Commissioner in the Office of the Deputy Commissioner in a district of Barisal division. She joined there with her six female colleagues of the same batch. Their office chambers were in adjacent seven rooms just beside the stairs on 1st floor of the DC Office. The respondent's room was the seventh room from the beginning. One day a male service receiver came to that office. He went up the stairs to the first floor and walked by the veranda. He started reading the officers' name from the beginning. When he finished reading the 7th name, which was the respondent's name, he uttered with enormous shock, "O mor Allah, Begguni dehi maiyalok. Desh dar hoibo ki!! (Oh my Lord, all officers here are women. What will happen to this country?)". The respondent heard his words and got an idea of peoples' mind set about women.

But when she joined as UNO in an upazila of Rajshahi division in 2009, she noticed that the situation had changed a lot. She was the first female UNO of that upazila but her stakeholders did not take her negatively. First, they used to come to see her as they never saw a lady UNO. They took an observing position about her performance and they became satisfied. The respondent proved to be an active, honest and efficient officer and got the recognition of the best UNO of that district. She served there for 3 years and achieved the love and respect of people. The present UNO of that Upazila told her, "In many cases, I still have to hear, *Y* Madam used to do this in this way or in that way....." She left that upazila in 2012 but the service receivers still send her greetings.

85.37% of the respondents opine that local media accepted them well. On the contrary, 34.15% of the respondents stated that local media published false, negative or exaggerated news about them at least once. One survey respondent noted that local media seemed to be

more curious about her activities because of her gender. But majority of the respondents are in a view that the local media is not gender biased. Mainstream print media played a strong role in campaigning of gender equality and promoting gender sensitization programs. Perhaps, media in the grass root level have been influenced by the current trend of mainstream media.

13 service receivers from the jurisdiction of respondent UNOs were interviewed. All of them expressed positive opinion about having a female civil servant as UNO. Among the interviewees there were Union Parishad Chairmen, local Businessmen, teachers, Secretary of Union Parishad, Commanders of Upazila Muktijoddha Council and Principal of college. They were asked about if they had/would have a daughter and if there was an opportunity in future whether or not they will allow their daughters to serve in the post of Upazila Nirbahi Officer. All 13 interviewees responded that they would be very happy if they could see their daughters serving as UNO. They were asked about the reasons for their opinion. 8 of the interviewees expressed that, by serving in this post a person can serve the nation, 3 of the interviewees mentioned about the power, prestige and status of this post, and the remaining 2 just smiled.

Organizational Culture

Attitude of Superiors:

46.35% of the respondents are of a view that superiors are unsupportive of female UNOs and do not possess the mentality to accept a female as UNO. 39.02% respondents are of the opposite view and 14.63% of the respondents stated that some bosses are supportive and some are not. 60.98% of the respondents have bitter and negative experience from at least one of their bosses (Deputy Commissioner) regarding acceptance and support. To quote from a respondent,

“Failure in doing any specific tasks by a male UNO is considered as his personal failure, not as the failure of a male and is taken easily by the boss. But failure of a female UNO is

considered as the failure of a female. It is thought that the female UNO has failed to do anything because of her gender.”

Frequency Distribution Table-10

Do you think superiors are unsupportive of a female UNO and do not possess the mentality to accept a female as UNO?	Opinion	Percentage
	Strongly Agree	9.76
	Agree	36.59
	Some are Supportive/Some are not	14.63
	Disagree	36.59
	Strongly Disagree	2.43

(n=41, mean= 3.15, median= 3, standard deviation= 1.108)

The study found an incident that, a major problem occurred in a jurisdiction of female UNO during her tenure and the Deputy Commissioner decided not to have any more female UNO to be posted in any upazila of his district. “*My Deputy Commissioner already declared not to have any female UNO in this district*”, said one respondent from Khulna division. Another UNO of a Sadar upazila of an ‘A’ category district of Rajshahi Division expressed,

“I served here efficiently for more than three years and now I am trying to get posting in Dhaka as my husband has been transferred to Dhaka. My DC requested me to postpone my transfer procedure at least for one month as I proved myself as an active, honest and efficient officer. One of my junior female colleagues has been trying to get posted in this Upazila. But in spite of the fact that, being a female, I proved to be an active officer, my DC requested the Commissioner not to give posting of another female UNO in Sadar Upazila.” Eventually it happened, a male officer has been posted there as UNO.

There are also incidents of humiliating comments expressing extreme gender insensitivity from the superior, giving illegal orders by the boss and insistence of carrying it out. The third case study is a detailed description of one of those incidents.

Case Study 3

One respondent Z (Former UNO) was posted as UNO in an upazila of an ‘A’ category district of Rajshahi division in 2009. She was the only female UNO of that district. The Deputy Commissioner could not take her posting positively. He started disliking her from the very beginning. The skin complexion of that respondent was not fair. “He used to call me *Kali* as I am not fair. There was another female officer working in the DC Office whose nose was not sharp. The Deputy Commissioner used to call her *Buchi*. But he never used this type of humiliating words for the male officers though there were ‘*not fair skinned*’ and ‘*not sharp nosed*’ officers among them.” Even he used the words “*Bhuri fashaye debo*” to her.

In an official visit to her upazila, the DC went to inspect a school. While inspecting, he entered Class II and saw that the Bengali word *Shreni* was misspelled in the black board and even in the text book. He became very angry and threw the book in the middle of the classroom. The students became afraid and hurriedly moved to the corners of the classroom keeping the middle place empty. This incident was published in the newspaper the next day with a comment of the chairman of the managing committee of that school, who was also a local elite. The comment, which was published, saying, “The Deputy Commissioner is a very wise and knowledgeable person, but what he did in the classroom was not wise”, annoyed the DC and he ordered the respondent UNO to punish that person through mobile court. But the respondent did not comply with this illegal order for two reasons. First, it would be illegal and secondly, it would create more criticism and media would highlight the issue more. This made her boss angrier with her. He told her that she would have to pay for her disobedience and her ACR would be treated accordingly. She went through enormous mental pressure and stress and became afraid of the future prospect of her job. She did not submit her ACR to her boss. One day she could not resist herself to share her mental stress to her mother. “My uneducated mother listened everything calmly and advised me not to think about it anymore and perform my job responsibilities according to law. Her soft and firm words relieved me from tension and I felt relax deciding not to be anxious about my career prospects anymore. Few months later, I submitted my ACR to the same boss and fortunately he did not put any negative comment on that. But I cannot forget the stress and agony I went through for several months because of his unfair treatment to me”, said the respondent.

The study found that the attitudes of superiors towards female officers are sometimes influenced by their spouses. As expressed by a respondent, “Spouse of my boss did not like me as I could not satisfy her with her expectation. So my boss also did not like me. In a program of DC Banglow, all officers were invited except me though I was posted in the Sadar Upazila. The DC was very unsupportive too.” Another respondent said, “Boss measures the status of a female UNO by the occupation of her husband and treats her accordingly.” But her view was not substantiated by the opinion of other respondents.

There is lack of reliance on the capabilities of female UNOs. Superiors possess negative perception considering female officers not being able to work much. Some superiors think that female officers give more time to their house and show more excuses for not working. It was found that, in the 10th National Parliament Election and Upazila Parishad Election held in 2014, special care and attention were provided to the jurisdiction of the female UNOs in some districts. This indicates a lack of trust on the capability and efficiency of female officers. Lack of confidence and boldness of some female officers, tendency of asking male colleagues about functional procedure and unwillingness of showing off may have created the situation. As opined by a female ADC,

“Bosses become a bit relaxed when they get a male officer as UNO. They rely on the male officers more. Though it has already been proved that, most female UNOs are as good as male UNOs and sometimes perform better than them. But this did not help to change the mind set of bosses. It has been thought that, a female officer is good because of her personal qualities and a female officer is bad because of her gender limitations. I think another factor also is responsible for this perception. Male UNOs usually show confidence and boldness to their boss and colleagues. But this approach is absent among the female UNOs though they try to do a job more perfectly than their male colleagues. They have a tendency of asking other male colleagues about how they are doing this or that particular task to perform it more accurately. On the other hand, male UNOs tend to show that they know everything well. Initially, the female UNOs show a kind of hesitation and lack of confidence in their attitude which harms their images a lot. I would like to term it as *‘unwillingness of showing off’* harms boosting up the image of female UNOs.”

Her view is similar to the findings of a study conducted by Patel (2009). Patel (2009) found that women often tend to share their frustration while trying to work between a given set of goals and time frame and new or modified parameters that emerge at short notice which makes them feel anxious and highly stressed. This sometimes makes them look bad and incompetent in the work place (*ibid.*).

But the following table shows that the situation may have changed over time.

Frequency Distribution Table-11

Do you think superiors are unsupportive of a female UNO and do not possess the mentality to accept a female as UNO?	Opinion	Present UNO (n _p =22)	Former UNO (n _f =19)
		Percentage	Percentage
	Strongly Agree	0	21.05
	Agree	27.27	47.37
	Some are Supportive/Some are not	18.18	10.53
	Disagree	50	21.05
	Strongly Disagree	4.55	0

(Present UNO: n_p=22, mean= 2.681, median= 2, standard deviation= 0.945).

(Former UNO: n_f=19, mean= 3.684, median= 4, standard deviation=1.056)

68.42% of the former UNOs think superiors are unsupportive and do not possess the mentality to accept a female as UNO while 54.55% of the present UNOs disagreed with them. 78.95% of the former UNOs have negative opinion about at least one of their bosses, while 45.45% of the present UNOs faced the same. One present UNO from Dhaka division said, “My boss always supports me. It depends on activities or duties that I discharge. He accepted me well and I always get recognition from him.”

The statistical interpretation of data related to present UNOs (Mean= 2.68, Median=2) shows a highly positive opinion about superiors support. On the contrary, data related to former

UNOs (Mean=3.684, Median= 4) indicates highly negative opinion about the support of superiors. The following case study is derived from the interview with a present UNO.

Case Study 4

A respondent *M* from Rangpur division (present UNO) joined as UNO in 2011. She worked there for 1 year 11 months. Her boss was happy with her performance. She was transferred to Ministry of Public Administration for her personal problem in 2013. She worked there for 1 month but could not cope with the hectic life of Dhaka metropolitan city. So she again wanted to go back to the field administration. By this time, the schedule of 10th National Parliamentary Election was declared and there was legal restriction of transfer or posting in field administration without the consent of Election Commission. So she was given posting as Secretary of Zila Parishad of her previous district. She started working in that post and felt a bit relaxed. She had to go to the Office of the Deputy Commissioner to attend the meetings. One day the Deputy Commissioner (her previous boss) called her to his room and asked about her duties and responsibilities in Zila Parishad. She said, “There is not much workload there. I am happy with this as I can give time to my kids.” The Deputy Commissioner asked her, “Why are you wasting your capability there? I want you to be posted as UNO again. Let me know whether or not it is comfortable for you.” Later she agreed with the proposal, her boss talked to the Commissioner and the Commissioner persuaded the concerned ministry to give her posting as UNO in his division. In 2014, the respondent again joined as UNO in another Upazila of the same district. She is happy with the support and recognition she is getting from her bosses.

Perhaps, the feedback from the participants and the case study is an indication that, change in the mind set of superiors has been taking place during this period of 2009 to 2015. But there can be another explanation of these types of responses, that is, the present UNOs may not

have considered it safe for their career to put any negative opinion about their superiors as they still are serving as UNO.

The study found a positive view of respondents about receiving recognition of performance from Deputy Commissioner. 58.54% of the respondents disagreed that the Deputy Commissioner is/was reluctant to give recognition to their performance whereas 24.39% of respondents were in opposite view. 17.07% of the respondents refrained themselves from commenting on this issue. The statistical analysis of data came up with a mean, median and standard deviation equated respectively to 2.66, 2 and 0.854. A strong conclusion could not be drawn from this analysis but the qualitative data were helpful to gain a better understanding.

04 out of 41 respondents received the Best UNO award for their performance in different sectors. 03 of them received the award twice. Their names were sent for nomination by their bosses. One former UNO of Dhaka Division said, “Initially I faced a problem of acceptance from my boss. But later he became very pleased with my performance. He told the other UNOs to follow me.” The experience of an interviewee from Sylhet Division is a bit different. To quote her,

“I worked in a big and developed upazila which is full of resources. My boss seemed to be happy with my performance. He used to praise me in open meetings. But he did not use to approve my leave. I was single and had to pass Eid alone in my work station. My parents live in Dhaka. Once my mother was sick and I had to rush to Dhaka in short notice taking the oral permission of DC Sir. I was supposed to come by Saturday morning but I failed and reached my work station at night. My boss issued me a show cause letter stating that I left my station without any written permission. I replied but it did not satisfy him. He wanted to note it in my dossier. But the ADC (General) took my side and argued with DC Sir. Eventually, I was exempted from that charge.”

Some respondents opined that they sometimes got recognition for their performance, not all the time. The following case study is an experience of a present UNO.

Case Study 5

One respondent *N* (former UNO) from Rangpur Division was working as UNO in 2013. It was a dry season and there were incidents of fire. One day some rural houses of her jurisdiction caught fire. The respondent went to the spot as soon as she heard the news. When she reached the spot, the Deputy Commissioner called her over cell phone to give her the news about the fire. She told him that she was already in the spot and would inform him in details about the loss after talking with the affected people. Accordingly, she did so.

Few days later, there was another incident of fire in another upazila of that district. It was a Friday and the UNO (male), with the permission of DC, went out of the station. As the UNO was not in the upazila, the Deputy Commissioner himself visited the affected area. The UNO was supposed to come back by Saturday evening. On Sunday morning, there was a meeting in the DC office. The UNO joined the meeting. The Deputy Commissioner asked the UNO about the present situation of affected people of fire incidents. The UNO actually came from Dhaka on Sunday morning and attended the meeting. He had not gone to his jurisdiction till that time. So he could not answer the DC's question. The Deputy Commissioner became very annoyed with him. He said, "I thought you would at least visit the spot of occurrence before coming here." Then the Deputy Commissioner, in the open meeting, described and praised the respondent's action after the fire incident in her upazila and scolded the male UNO for his irresponsibility.

"We don't need more. This type of recognition from the boss is enough." expressed the respondent.

Recognition is one of the four work goal items of masculinity dimension of Hofstede identified in his study on IBM employees. The other three work goal items are earnings, advancement and challenge (Hofstede, 2010). In a masculine society, people get the recognition they deserve when they perform a good job (*ibid.*). It has been mentioned in earlier chapter that, Bangladesh scored 55 in Hofstede's masculinity dimension (<http://geert-hofstede.com> visited on 5.5.2015).

Attitude of Male Colleagues:

The study found that, the majority of respondents do not consider the male colleagues as unsupportive. 60.97% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that male colleagues are unsupportive of them.

Frequency Distribution Table-12

Do you think male colleagues are unsupportive of the female UNO?	Opinion	Percentage
	Strongly Agree	4.88
	Agree	29.27
	Neutral	4.88
	Disagree	60.97
	Strongly Disagree	0

(n=41, mean= 2.78, median= 2, standard deviation= 1.037)

34.15% of the respondents are of a view that male colleagues are unsupportive. They stated that, male colleagues sometimes do not show positive attitude about the female colleagues and they are more gender discriminative than others. Male colleagues believe that females take advantages because of their gender. If a female UNO takes any single favour because of her family problem, it has been highlighted, exaggerated and repeatedly discussed by the male colleagues. One respondent from Rajshahi division said,

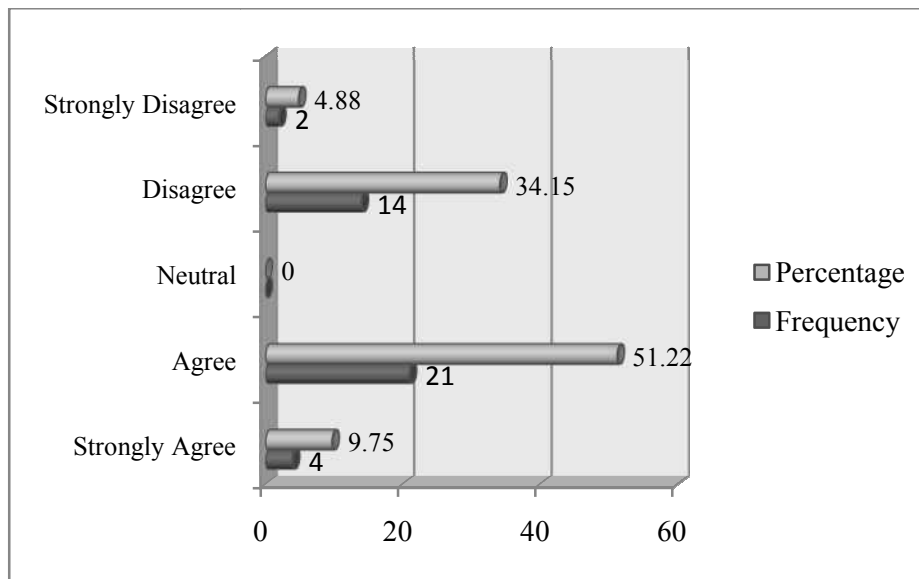
“Male colleagues show off more than they work. They try to suppress the female officers so that their successes are not highlighted. They make humiliating comments like addressing *Mohila manush*.”

Another respondent from Barisal division stated, “I achieved the best UNO award twice and was fortunate to receive the awards from Honourable Prime Minister. But instead of congratulating me, some male colleagues, out of jealousy, questioned my skill and qualification for receiving this award.”

Obedience and Efficiency of the Staff:

60.97% of the respondents opine that obedience and efficiency of the staff of UNO office vary because of the gender of UNO. Some of the respondents think that, staff feel more comfort to work with a male UNO than a female UNO. The traditional view of considering women of being weak plays a vital role in obedience and efficiency of the staff.

Figure 13: Do you think obedience and efficiency of the staff of UNO office vary because of the gender of UNO?



(n=41, mean= 3.27, median= 4, standard deviation= 1.183)

Some office staff try to take opportunities about the works related to financial matters as they think female UNOs may not be able to understand their ill intentions. One respondent from Rajshahi division said, “My staff leak out the financial and official information to public in exchange of money. The Office Assistant who dealt the file of Khas Collection of Hatbazar collected the money but did not deposit it to bank. He was inquired about it but did not admit the allegation. Later on, being pressurized, he admitted his misdeeds and deposited the money.”

Respondents reported that staff do not always show proper respect to the female UNO's; whereas they are always ready to carry out all the orders of male UNOs, even that of his spouse, but show negligence and excuses to female UNOs.

Case Study 6

- a. One respondent *O* from Rajshahi division (former UNO) joined as UNO in 2009. She was the first female UNO of that Upazila. One day she overheard that her driver was conversing with someone. She was utterly shocked to hear a disgraceful comment made by her driver addressing her “Mehemanush to, ki bojhe”. She did not let the driver drive her jeep during her three year tenure in that upazila and gave back all the overtime money to the central government.
- b. One respondent *P* has been working as UNO in Khulna division. Once she went to DC office to attend daylong meetings and her husband had to go to his workplace. Her maid servant was sick. She told a MLSS (4th Class employee) to go to her bungalow only to sit with her kids so that they do not get frightened as both of them are below 8 yrs. But the MLSS refused to do so and told that this type of work does not suit him. “I saw MLSSs doing household works, cooking and taking care of children in male officers’ house without any complaint”, expressed the respondent.

To quote from another respondent of Sylhet Division,

“Confidential Assistant (CA) used to resist the general people to come directly to me saying, ‘*She is a lady. Do not disturb her*’. He made a system of meeting him first and informing him the reason before meeting me. He wanted to isolate me from mass people. When I came to know that I scolded him and ordered to let all people come directly to me.”

On the contrary, 39.03% respondents in the study are of a view that staff are generally obedient and their obedience and efficiency do not depend on the gender of the UNO. Those who have wicked brain, try to perform misdeeds under any officer. Those who are good are good for all.

Frequency Distribution Table-13

Do you think staff of the UNO office try to misguide more/try to take more undue advantages from a female UNO?	Opinion	Percentage
	Strongly Agree	7.32
	Agree	26.83
	Neutral	7.32
	Disagree	58.53
	Strongly Disagree	0

(n=41, mean= 2.83, median=2, standard deviation=1.07)

34.15% of the respondents agreed that staff try to misguide more or try to take more undue advantages from a female UNO. According to them, staff think that a female officer does not have the capability to understand their misguidance. But when they fail to misguide, they become hostile. One respondent said, “My CA used to suggest me that we can take advantage from this or that. Then I made him realize who actual boss is.” On the other hand, 58.53% of the respondents disagreed with this view. They think that staff try to misguide all officers, not only female officers.

Cooperation of Officers of Other Departments:

The study found that, 80.48% of the respondents do not think that cooperation of officers of other departments of Upazila varies because of gender of UNO. They are in the opinion that cooperation of other department officers does not depend on gender.

Frequency Distribution Table-14

Do you think cooperation of officers of other departments of Upazila varies because of gender of UNO?	Opinion	Percentage
	Strongly Agree	9.76
	Agree	4.88
	Neutral	4.88
	Disagree	70.73
	Strongly Disagree	9.75

(n=41, mean= 2.341, median=2, standard deviation= 1.063)

As expressed by a respondent, “In official programs, the responsible officers perform their duties well. Those who lack the sense of responsibility create problems. They are irresponsible in all respect. It does not depend on UNO’s gender.” Some respondents faced non-cooperation in the in the primary stage. But later they turned into cooperative.

14.64% of the respondents agreed that cooperation varies because of the gender of UNO. One of them stated, “I worked in three stations. I observed that some officers of other departments tend to avoid me and some officers tend to show more interest to cooperate me. I think both categories are gender biased.”

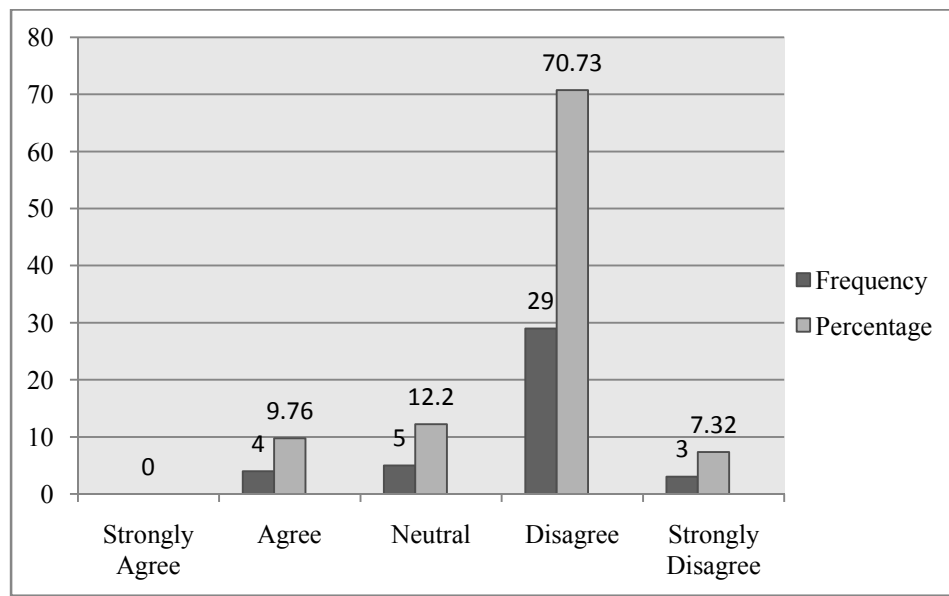
Respondents were asked about the state of cooperation of officers of other departments in their cases. The study found that officers of other departments were very cooperative to 31.7% respondents and cooperative to 34.15% respondents. They were very uncooperative to 7.32% of the respondents. But 26.83% of the respondents remained neutral to respond this question. Mean, median and standard deviation calculated in statistical analysis are respectively 2.170, 2 and 1.115. This particular finding of the study is opposite to conventional wisdom. Because, most studies conducted on coordination of Upzila Parishad or administration found lack of trust and cooperation and generalist-specialist conflicts among the officers working at the upazila level (Ali, 1986; Huq et al, 1987; Ahmad, 1991; Ahsan, 2010; Sarkar, 2014). The respondents who refrained from commenting on this issue are perhaps the key to draw an explanation for this matter. So, this calls for a scope for further research.

Political Culture

Approach of Local Member of Parliament & Upazila Parishad:

78.05% of the respondents do not consider the attitudes of local Member of Parliament as a challenge. They disagreed that female UNOs face more undue requests/pressures from local Member of Parliament.

Figure14: Do you think female UNOs face more undue requests/pressures from local Member of Parliament?



(mean= 2.243, median= 2, standard deviation= 0.734)

Respondents noted that no one makes undue approach, if the UNO is honest. Most of them opined that undue request reduces in case of a female UNO. But some of the respondents faced attempts of interference by the spouse of the MP in official matter.

One respondent from Dhaka Division identified that, “There is a general tendency of male officers to create other source of income. I am not saying that female officers are free from this problem. But if there is common interest (corruption) between the UNO and elected representatives, it creates a smooth working environment and the UNO can fulfill the

demands of political representative better.” Another UNO from Rangpur Division expressed that she was once requested by the local MP to admit a student in a government school. But she could not comply with it as it was beyond the government provided admission rules. In spite of that, the MP maintained gentleman approach with her.

Frequency Distribution Table-15

Do you think female UNOs face more undue requests/pressures from chairman of Upazila Parishad?	Opinion	Percentage
	Strongly Agree	0
	Agree	9.76
	Neutral	14.63
	Disagree	63.41
	Strongly Disagree	12.2

(n= 41, mean= 2.219, median= 2, standard deviation= 0.790)

75.61% of the respondent did not agree that female UNOs face more undue requests/pressures from Chairman of Upazila Parishad. They pointed out that Upazila Chairman cannot express many things to a lady officer. Not keeping undue requests is also a reason for not approaching. Again, the Upazila Chairmen who belong to opposition party are not powerful enough to make undue request to UNO. One of the responses received during the interview was like this,

“The MP and Upazila Chairman belong to two different parties and both of them demand share from the government allotment. But I don’t think they do it because of my gender. They would do it in case of a male UNO too.”

The following case study substitutes the findings from quantitative data.

Case Study 7

In the Upazila Parishad Election, 2009 an Union Parishad Chairman, who was the Chairman Of Bangladesh Union Parishad Chairman Association, was elected as Chairman of Upazila Parishad of an upzila. There is no institutional arrangement of chamber and vehicle for Upazila Parishad Chairman and Vice Chairmen at that time. After being elected, the Chairman of Upazial Parishad demanded that he would use the chamber of UNO (male), which was located in the 1st floor, as his (Chairman) official chamber. He told the UNO to leave his room and discharge his official functions sitting in any other room of Parishad building. This created a serious conflict between them and eventually the UNO was transferred. The Upazila Chairman did not allow arranging a farewell program for the transferred UNO.

Then the respondent *Q* (former UNO) was posted as UNO in that Upazila. After her joining the Chairman expressed to other people that *Q* was nothing but a servant like *A*; and she would serve the Chairman just like *A*. *A* was a female MLSS of UNO office. The respondent came to know about this comment. She was advised by the officers of other departments to avoid the Upazila Chairman as he had a serious attitude problem. But the respondent thought that avoiding the Chairman would not help her to perform her job. So she decided to meet the Chairman. Few days after her joining, she went to a sudden visit to the Chamber of Chairman. It was located on the 2nd floor. When she went there, she found that the Chairman was smoking and talking with the party members surrounded by them. He became very surprised to see the UNO in his room. The first thing he did was throwing the cigarette to the waste basket and then started shouting to arrange a chair for the UNO. He instructed to place the chair just beside him and requested the UNO to sit there. The respondent sat there and after the greeting started conversing with him. The Chairman behaved politely with her. The party members were listening to their conservation. At a point of the conversation the respondent said, “I heard that you were an elected Union Parishad Chairman previous to this appointment. So, there is a chance that you would be elected as MP of this constituency in future”. The Chairman became very pleased to hear that and laughed out loudly. His supporters also appreciated UNO’s comment.

The respondent worked there for 1.5 years. She never faced any kind of hostility from the Upazila Parishad Chairman after that first meeting. After her tenure, two female UNOs were consecutively given posting in that upazila.

These findings also, go beyond the findings of other studies. Zamil (2012) found that the considerations of patron clientelism by political representatives exerted pressure to UNO to be more flexible with the rules and dissuade the UNO from playing his or her due role in the Upazila Parishad which either resulted in conflict between political leaders and the bureaucrats or encouraged UNOs for a compromised solution to handle conflicts with the elected representatives.

58.54% respondents disagreed that political party members try to take more advantages from a Female UNO whereas 26.83% of the respondents are of the opposite view. 14.63% of the respondents did not comment on this issue. One UNO reported,

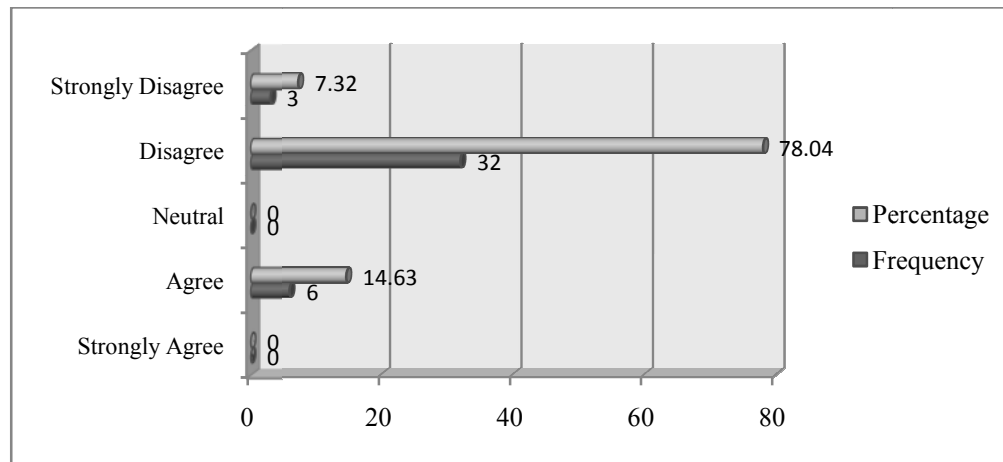
“Political leaders think they can make female UNO do whatever they want. When they fail, a group starts backbiting. In a tender of Hat Leasing, I gave the lease to the highest bidder. But the ruling party members said they would take it in higher rate and complained to DC Sir. But they did not succeed.”

State of Cooperation of Union Parishad Chairmen:

85.36% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that Union Parishad Chairmen are less cooperative in implementation of projects and social safety net programs in case of a female UNO. The respondents reported that Union Parishad Chairmen have a tendency not to work properly in social safety net or government projects. But they do it in general; it does not depend on the gender of UNO. If Union Parishad Chairmen realize that there is no ill motive of UNO, they cooperate in implementation of project and SSNP. One respondent said,

“I inspect a lot to ensure the standard of the project works. I reexamine lists of beneficiaries of safety nets by visiting frequently.”

Figure 15: Do you think Union Parishad Chairmen are less cooperative in implementation of projects and social safety net programs in case of a female UNO?



(n= 41, mean= 2.219, median= 2, standard deviation= 0.790)

In the interview session, a Union Parishad Chaiman expressed, “Our Upazila Nirbahi Officer is such an honest, efficient, sincere and dedicated officer that she should be posted in a more powerful and prestigious post.”

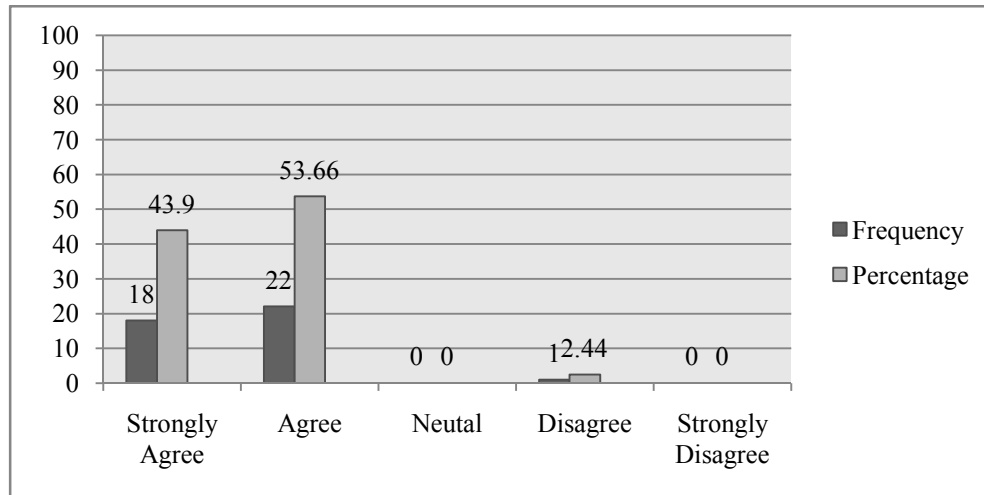
But 14.63% respondents experienced differently. One of them stated, “I worked in an upazila of a very powerful leader of ruling party. The Union Parishad Chairmen were patronized by him and they did not want me to visit the projects and SSNPs.”

Family Life Challenges of Female Upazila Nirbahi Officers:

The study identified the challenges faced by the female Upazila Nirbahi Officers to maintain their family life. 97.56% of the respondents agreed that it is a challenge for them to maintain their responsibilities in family. They listed their challenges as posting of spouse in different area, dual responsibility of office and household, problems in taking care of children, over dependence of kids on mother, keeping children home alone at daytime without proper

support, going out at night keeping kids home, lack of supporting staffs in UNO's residence, excessive physical and mental pressure etc.

Figure 16: Do you think female UNOs face more challenges than their male colleagues to maintain their responsibilities in family life?



(n=41, mean= 4.390, median=4, standard deviation= 0.63)

As stated by a respondent,

“I have become a machine to balance the responsibilities of home and office. I have to go through immense physical and mental stress.”

Table 5: Family Life Challenges Identified by the Respondents

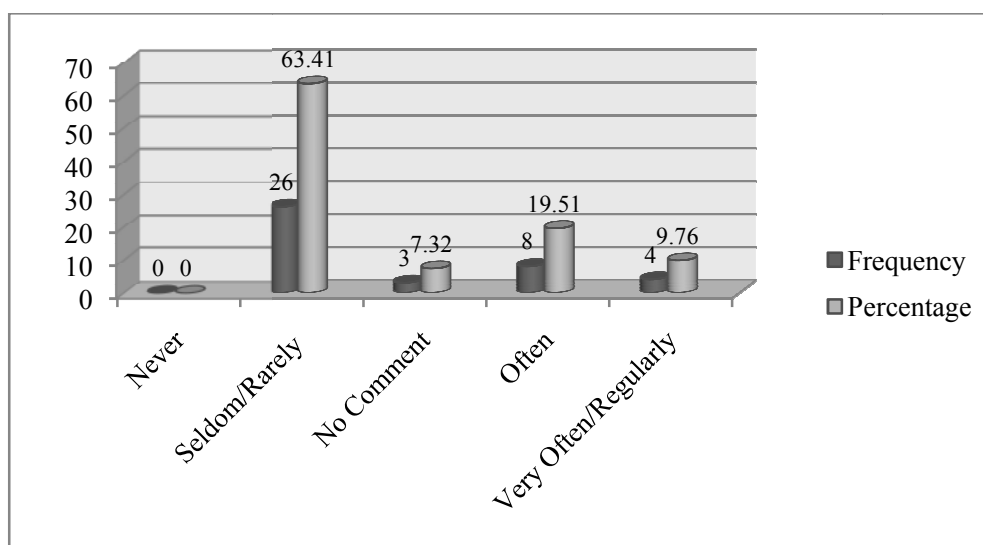
SL. No.	Noted Challenges	Independent Variable
1	Dual responsibility of household and family after office. (Gender Role)	Societal Culture
2	Physical and mental stress to manage dual responsibility of family and office	
3	Dependency on maids makes them arbitrary	
4	In our culture, children are mostly dependent on mother	
5	Household responsibility is considered as only women's responsibility	
6	In laws do not understand the job nature of UNO. They compare it with other jobs and remain dissatisfied as the respondent cannot join the	

	family programs.	
7	Going out at night keeping child home with unreliable person	Organizational Culture
8	Attending training program keeping child home	
9	Keeping kids away (another district with husband or parents) because of lack of responsible person to take care of them and bearing that mental pressure	
10	Lack of supportive staff in the residence of UNO to take care of kids and household matters	
11	Job nature and no time table of work. It creates difficulty in maintaining family life and kids cannot be not properly taken care of.	
12	Insufficient leave	
13	Keeping children home alone in daytime without proper support	
14	It creates a lot of pain in family life if husband and wife are not posted in the same area.	
15	Cannot manage time to spend with kids and take care of them	

Spending Quality Family Time:

63.41% of the respondent UNOs seldom/rarely, 19.51% often and 9.76% very often or regularly managed time to spend quality time with their kids. As a result, kids are deprived from parental care. Going out at night in short notice, receiving and making phone calls frequently hamper performing responsibilities as a mother.

Figure 17: How often can you manage time to spend quality time with your kid(s)?



(n=41, mean= 4.21, median= 4, standard deviation= 1.090)

Husband's posting in different areas makes the situation worse. 52.5% have/had their husbands posted in same or adjacent areas and 47.5% respondents' husbands are/were posted in distant areas. To quote from a respondent, "It creates a lot of difficulty in family life if husband and wife are not posted in the same area. We cannot manage time to spend time with kids. Nothing can compensate this deprivation of childhood. A feeling of dissatisfaction always occupies my mind for not being able to spend time with kids. I try to give them quality time. I always remain tensed whether it is enough for my kids. At the same time, I try to measure how much I can perform in my office." Some of them told that sometimes they cannot even call their kid(s) even for once in a whole day. "Returning home late at night, sometimes I found that kids went to sleep without taking the dinner. Dependency on maids makes them (maid) arbitrary. They start wasting foods and I have to tolerate their irrational demands and attitude", expressed one respondent.

There is no government provided support staff like cook, female staffs etc. to take care of household matters in UNOs residence and take care of children. So if a female UNO cannot manage a helping person to stay at her home, it becomes very difficult for her to perform her multi-dimensional role. One respondent said that she had a maid who went home for her marriage and now the UNO herself has to wake up very early in the morning to cook meal and feed her two kids and after returning from office at night, she again has to cook meal for her family members which makes her very stressed.

Societal Culture

Gender Role in Family:

In every culture there are differentiated roles of male and female which expect certain behaviour from each. In Bangladesh, like many other oriental countries, women are supposed to be bound to manage the household responsibilities and it is considered as women's exclusive duty. When a woman enters into a job and starts going out daily, she is not

exempted from the household duties and rarely gets the workload shared by the other family members (especially male members). Moreover, children are mostly dependent on their mother. But the job of UNO is a 24 hours job and the officer has to respond immediately at any time, in any situation. This dual responsibility of household and office makes it very difficult for them to balance between these two roles. 58.64% of them think that job nature of UNO creates problem in maintaining the responsibilities of family.

OCED (2014) findings also substitute the opinion. The difficulty of balancing work and family emerges as the most significant barrier for women in public administration (OCED, 2014). Though public administration usually provides better social conditions while moving through the ranks, long hours and less flexible work arrangements can hamper women's advancement in organization as women tend to give priority the responsibilities for families and household (*ibid.*). Absence of back up and family support structure makes it more difficult for women to work for long hours (*ibid.*).

Frequency Distribution Table 16: Arrangement for Kid(s)

Arrangement	Frequency	Percentage
Kid(s) are/were with the respondent and looked after by maid (reliable service)	2	4.88
Kid(s) are/were with the respondent and looked after by maid (unreliable service)	17	41.46
Kid(s) are/were with the respondent and looked after by respondent's mother or responsible relative	10	24.39
Kid(s) are/were with the respondent and there is/was no maid or relative to look after them	4	9.76
Kid(s) are/were with their father at his work station and looked after by maid	2	4.88
Kid(s) are/were with their grand parents' place and looked after by them	1	2.44
No Child	5	12.19

n=41

41.46% of the respondents' kids are/were looked after by unreliable maids and 9.76% had no maid to take care of their children. 7.32% of the respondents had to keep their kids with their husbands in their (husbands) work station or with their (respondents) parents in their (parents') place. As stated by one of them, "I always felt demoralized that I could not keep my kids with me. I had no one to stay with me and take care of my children in my absence at

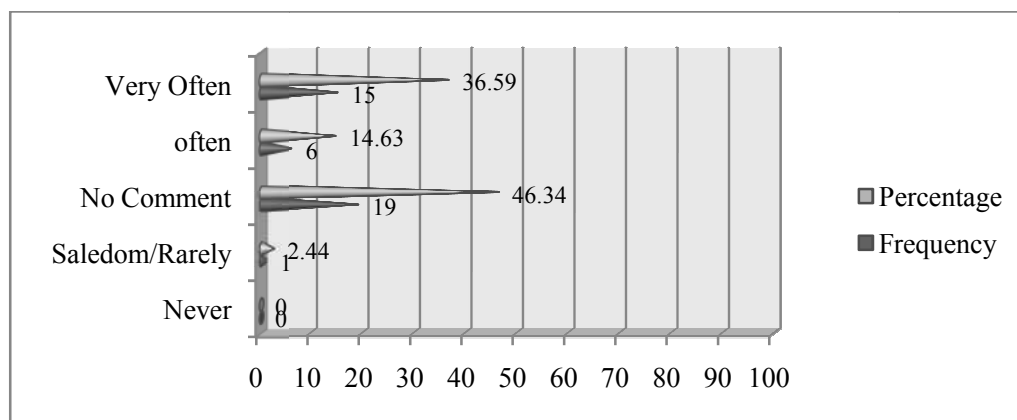
home. So I had to send my two babies to my parents' home. But I was not happy with this arrangement. My husband was also posted in a different district. I had to stay alone and it also caused negative effect in my official work.”

Support and Cooperation of Husband:

The study revealed that female UNOs get a high level of support from their husbands. 48.78% of the respondents agreed that they got enough support and cooperation from their husband to work in this challenging post and 43.90% strongly agreed. The data statistically equated with mean 1.66, median 2 and standard deviation 0.693. They respondents stated that their husbands understand the importance of their job and duly cooperate. As expressed by a respondent, “My husband is in police service. We have similarity in work environment and nature. So we share our job related problems. He never showed any negative attitude towards my challenging job.”

Those who belong to same service and posted in same posts are luckier. Because, they can share their networks and ideas also. “He always took care of the studies of children even during his posting as Deputy Commissioner”, said a respondent.

Figure 18: Does your husband share the household responsibilities (taking care of kids, sharing the household works etc.) with you?



n=41, mean=2.22, median= 2, standard deviation= 0.963

Another respondent reported,

“My husband has been posted as Additional Superintendent of police in this district. He is supposed to stay in district headquarter, not in upazila. I had to attend a training program abroad for 15 days. My husband requested his boss (Superintendent of Police) and took permission to move from upazila to district in those 15 days and took care of children. He encouraged me to go to training. If any unrest situation occurs in my jurisdiction, he manages to provide enough police force. When I have to go out at night for wreath laying ceremony, he stays at home with children.”

47.5% of the respondents' husbands stayed in distant areas at their work places. So they can't share their responsibilities. This may be reason that 46.34% of the respondents did not commented on this issue. Some of these distant living husbands try to help their wives in weekends when they come to see their family.

Case Study 8

One respondent *R* worked as UNO in Rajshahi division. Her husband is a banker and was posted in the same district. The respondent worked there for three years. As a UNO, she had to arrange programs in the Independence Day (26 March) and Victory Day (16 December) every year. One of the important events of these programs is Honouring the Freedom Fighters followed by a lunch hosted by UNO. This has been considered as the most sensitive part of the national days' observing programs. The respondent used to remain very busy in these programs. Her husband used to entertain the freedom fighters by serving the lunch by himself and supervised the whole arrangement so that the national heroes feel good and the UNO does not have to face any unwanted situation.

It was found that husbands accept positively that female UNOs have to go out late night or return home late. They try to help taking care of kid(s) when it is needed and encourage their wives to perform their official duties sincerely. There is some exception though. As noted by

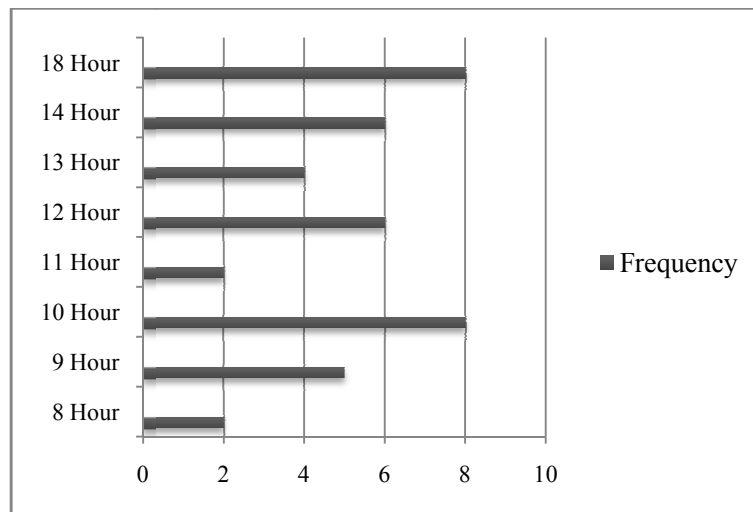
one respondent, “My husband is supportive, provided that I come back home from office before 7 pm. But it is difficult for me to maintain this timing every day.”

Organizational Culture

Work Hour:

The study found that the average daily work of the respondents ranges from 08 to 18 hours. The following bar chart shows the average work hour of the respondent UNOs.

Figure 19: Average Daily Working Hour of the Respondents



n=41, mean=12.56, median=12, standard deviation=3.22

75.61% of the respondents stated they have to work on weekends and holidays very often and 24.39% said they often work on off days. The data is obvious from the following table:

Frequency Distribution Table 17

How often do/did you have to work on weekends and holidays as a UNO?	Opinion	Percentage
	Very Often	75.61
	Often	24.39
	No Comment	0
	Seldom/Rarely	0
	Never	0

(n=41, mean= 4.76 median=5, standard deviation=0.434)

Mean and median of average working work hour are respectively 12.56 and 12. The data indicates a very lengthy work hour with almost no real weekend. So with the dual responsibility of family and office, it is very difficult for a female UNO to make a balance between this two. Either she has to neglect her family responsibilities or make compromise in office works. In both cases, she herself is the payer. Because women are traditionally supposed to play an 'Ideal' role in the family and failure in doing so makes her incompetent for becoming 'Super Working Woman'. On the other hand, failure in performing her official duties boots up the inherent negative perception of considering women as incapable manager. The study identified it as a serious challenge for a female officer serving in the post of UNO. OECD (2014) found that working conditions such as long hours, unpredictable schedules and limited work-life balance arrangements (e. g. childcare facilities) are main barriers that hinder women's access to top positions in all public spheres.

Leave:

The study revealed that insufficiency of leave is another origin of challenges faced by a female UNO. 58.54% of the respondents UNOs disagreed that they got sufficient leave while 34.15% strongly disagreed. The data statistically equated as mean 4.24, median 4 and standard deviation 0.662. Most of the respondents said that the boss was not likely to approve leave. So they did not ask for it. It is very difficult for them to meet parents even for once a year and very unlikely to get leave in Eids. There are incidents that Eid leave was approved

on the condition that they have to leave the work station on Eid morning. They also could not enjoy their rest and recreation leave. As noted by a respondent,

“I never enjoyed rest and recreation leave. It happened that I planned for a 3 day leave and when I went in front of boss to ask for leave I seek for 1 day.”

Another respondent said, “I could not enjoy my rest and recreation leave. It happened several times that I went out with my family to visit a family or a place but then got the information of occurring a problem in my jurisdiction and had to rush there leaving my visit unfinished. Sometimes I could not see a doctor because of the workload.”

Sometimes leave is not approved because of the personal or official visits of high officials on weekends. As expressed by a respondent, “My elder brother-in-law, along with his family, came to visit after Eid. It was one of the Eid holidays. My maid did not come to work that day. In that situation, DC Sir called me and instructed me to go to protocol of Commissioner Sir and his spouse as they came to visit the district. Accordingly, I had to go to the protocol duty leaving my guests. My guests had to cook their own meal that day.”

Many family necessities of the respondents could not be fulfilled because of this leave problem. One respondent said, “My husband stays abroad for higher study. He expects me to visit him sometimes. But I can’t do so because of unavailability of leave.”

Gynecological surgery of a respondent was delayed for six months as the Deputy Commissioner did not grant her leave on time and she missed the surgery schedule of a very busy surgeon. Still her fertility treatment is due as she is posted in a distant place from Dhaka. Another UNO said that she has not taken leave during the last three years after she became UNO because there were always some situations that prevented her from taking leave. Case study 9 described two stories of such respondents.

Case Study 8

- a. One respondent *S* (former UNO) worked as UNO in Dhaka division. She gave birth to her second child when she was posted there. At that time, the maternity leave was 4 months. But she could not enjoy the 4 months leave as her boss did not want to keep her post empty for more months. There was no AC (Land) in that upazila. So she had to join her work back after enjoying 2.5 months maternity leave. She had to go to work keeping her infant home with 10/11 years old maid. One day, a severe road accident occurred in her jurisdiction killing many people. At that day, she had to go out at 6 am in the morning and could not come home back till midnight. She could not even get the chance to make a phone call to know how her infant was doing. Her two babies were with the child maid for 18 hours.
- b. One former UNO *T* from Rajshahi division could not take leave on consecutive eight Eid festivals during her one year tenure as AC (Land) and three year tenure as UNO. She had to suffer from a Gynecological problem for 2 years and 7 months as she could not manage sufficient leave to go to Dhaka for medical checkup.

It is a fact that, leave is insufficient for all UNOs irrespective of gender. Male UNOs also rarely get leave. But it creates more problem for female UNOs as they have more family responsibilities. A male UNO can take one or two day leave for any personal reason and come back at the work station travelling at night. But female UNOs usually do not choose to avail one or two day leave as they have to take their kids with them and as kids generally feel uncomfortable to long journey on consecutive days. Moreover, travelling at night is also not desirable for women because of security concern. Therefore, female UNOs tend to wait for a congenial situation when they can be granted leave for more than 3 days. That congenial situation rarely arrives.

Strategies to Address the Challenges:

The respondents of questionnaire survey and interview were asked about the means they adopt to address the challenges they face or faced. They described some personal strategies that they follow to overcome some of the identified challenges. The strategies include honesty, integrity, efficiency, sincerity, prompt affirmative action to handle unpredictable situations, doing extensive inspection and field visit, being straight forward about informal or humiliating addressing, avoiding the trouble makers, consciously applying judicious mind, speaking loudly and never showing any shakiness, never going beyond rules and laws, ensuring transparency in financial dealings, involving political representatives to handle local problems, well behaviour with people etc. One interviewee expressed,

“If you are posted as UNO, you have to keep in mind that UNO is an institution. You must ensure honesty and integrity. I used to take affirmative actions so that nobody thinks me incapable. So it was told that I was better than the male officer. I got the award of best UNO in 2011-12 for ‘One house one firm project’.”

Another respondent said, “I frequently move and inspect wherever it is necessary. I try to remain informed about every issue within soonest possible time and take prompt and affirmative action. I follow government rules and regulations properly. I ensure strict standard and transparency about financial matters. I try to maintain cordial relationship with colleagues and coordinate works properly.”

The respondents emphasized on the necessity of gender sensitization training for the government employees and political representatives. There should be motivational program for bosses, colleagues, subordinates and stakeholders. There should also be training module for public handling in mobile court to enhance capacity of the civil servants both female and male.

“Individual personality and local culture is crucial for conducting successful mobile court. I used to apply some techniques. I used to keep some police with me and keep some police scattered in strategic points. I used to collect information before going any place.”

There was not much response in the questionnaire about their strategies to handle family life challenges. But the interviewees did not neglect the issue. One interviewee mentioned that waking up early in the morning helps to maintain work-life balance. She said,

“I wake up very early in the morning, perform my Fajr prayer and make my daughter awake. I feed her breakfast by myself. After coming home at night, I help her in study and feed her by my hand. In weekend I take my daughter to visit any place at least for one hour. I call my parents and parents in law at least once a day. But still the family remains deprived.”

Quoting from another interviewee, “I think it is necessary to give a message to all in the initial stage that being a lady, I will not take any extra facility. We must inspect and move everywhere to the remotest place. If the area is not reachable by jeep, we must walk. We should conduct mobile court going to spot. Building positive image is very important. People should be made gender sensitized through various awareness raising program. And finally, we should bring up our children in such a way that they are able to do their own works and share the household responsibilities. They should be taught that there are no gender specific tasks and male-female are equally responsible for smooth functioning of household.”

Most of the respondents believe that honesty is the key to boost up the image of the female UNO. They can overcome many cultural attributed challenges if they maintain integrity, efficiency and transparency in performing their works. A very inspiring comment from a respondent,

“I think it is easy for the female officers to work as UNO as they are honest. So they acquire more respect than the males.”

Another respondent expressed, “I can share my experience. I have no one to look after my child. I managed maid using money & network. I can’t fully engage & concentrate in my work. Again social- religious barriers play role. I avoid exposure & unsafe situation. Networking is important in managing situation as it’s a managerial job. We have to manage. Leadership quality plays vital role here. Gender is not important, personality & personal skill is important. Situation varies, you are to take right decision and need to maintain friendly environment at workplace.”

Summarization of Findings & Answering the Research Questions:

The study came up with a number of challenges faced by the female UNOs because of their gender. It also identified the strategies they follow to address those challenges. Majority of the respondents agreed that they face more challenges than their male colleagues in both their workplace and family life. The workplace challenges include requirement of harder work than male colleagues to prove capability to superiors, barriers in exercising power and authority in mobile courts, facing discrimination in addressing, barriers to join some religious ceremony, social obstacles in maintaining informal relationship etc and family life challenges include problems in taking care of kids, not being able to manage time to spend with them etc. Socio-cultural and religious norms, inherent negative perception of superiors, disobedience of subordinates, dual responsibility of office and family, posting of spouse in distant area, unpredictable and lingered work hour, insufficient leave, absence of reliable person for taking care of kids, movement at night, frequently working on weekends, lack of supportive staff in UNO’s residence etc are the major sources of challenges identified by the study. The following table represents the values of correlation coefficient measuring the relationship between dependent and independent variables.

Table 6: Measures of Relationship between Variables

Measurement of Indicators Independent Variables	Identified Challenges	Correlations (r) with Dependent Variable
Socio-cultural norms	Socio-cultural norms created challenges	0.89
Job nature	Job nature of UNO is a challenge for female UNO (workplace)	0.451
	Job nature of UNO creates challenges for maintaining the responsibilities in family	0.32
Attitude of superiors	Superiors are unsupportive & do not possess the mentality of accept a female as UNO	0.641
	Reluctance of Deputy Commissioner to give recognition to performance	0.144
State of obedience of subordinates	Disobedience and inefficiency of staff	0.815
	Misguidance by staff	0.27
Attitude of male colleagues	Male colleagues are unsupportive	0.072
State of Cooperation of Officers of Other Departments	Non-cooperation of officers of other departments	-0.35
Attitude of local people	Non-acceptance of local people after joining as UNO	0.22
	Non-acceptance of local people after serving for 6 months/ 1 year	-0.38
	Non-acceptance of local media	-0.57
Approach of Local Member of Parliament and Upazila Parishad Chairman	Undue request by MP	-0.341
	Undue request by Upazila Parishad Chairman	-0.37
State of Cooperation of Union Parishad Chairmen	Non-cooperation of Union Parishad in implementation of SSNP	-0.171
Work Hour	Working on weekends	0.754
Leave	Insufficiency of leave	0.974
Attitude of Husband	Unsupportive husband	-0.595

While framing the analytical framework of this study, there was an assumption that the targeted population may have been suffering obstacles from the political representatives also. But it was proved wrong. Most of the respondents opined that they do not or did not face any significant challenge from the political stakeholders. As stated by Azim et al (2000), cultural factors, socialization of men and women in organizations and in family are perhaps more influential than political and economic conditions in the movement of women up in the

management ladder. The findings of this study indicate that not only in climbing the management ladder, the said conditions are also crucial for working a woman in the managerial leadership posts. Following is the summarization of findings of the study:

Workplace Challenges:

- a) Socio-cultural and sometimes religious norms create significant challenges for female civil servants working as UNO. Though Bangladesh has made a significant progress in the area of women empowerment, female UNOs, being the representatives of central government, are still not welcomed in the burial of freedom fighter to lead the guard of honour or cannot perform Eid prayer in Eid Gah like their male colleagues. They face cultural obstacles to establish informal communication or in riding motor cycles. They are sometimes instructed by the superiors or they themselves decide to wear saree thinking of the cultural acceptance of their surrounding environment. Majority of them faced discriminative attitude in official addressing. A male UNO is naturally and willingly addressed as 'Sir'. But when the UNO is female, some people tend to address 'Apa'. Sometimes officers of other departments or Union Parishad Chairmen or some stakeholders do it intentionally to show impudence or audacity to a female. Others do it unintentionally due to ignorance or cultural attribute.
- b) The study found that attitude of superiors towards a female UNO is not always supportive. Majority of the respondents expressed that they (superiors) bear an inherent negative perception about the capability of female officers. There are incidents of humiliating comments and refusal by Deputy Commissioner to get a female officer posted as UNO in an upazila under his jurisdiction. But a positive change in their mind set has been identified by the study. The majority of the present UNOs did not consider their superiors unsupportive which is almost opposite to the opinion of former UNOs. This can be interpreted in two ways. Either the present UNOs did not feel it wise to record any negative comment against their bosses because of non-reliance of confidentiality of data or the attitude of superiors has

really been changing in a positive manner. One Deputy Commissioner was interviewed to get his opinion. To quote from him,

“Female officers have been doing well as UNO. They work smoothly and try to understand the external environment. Some of them perform better than the male UNOs. They try to maintain strong ethical standard. Two female UNOs are working in this district. I don’t have problem if more female officers are posted.”

- c) Majority of the respondents, irrespective of present and former UNOs, agreed that they have/ had to work harder, be more up to date about their work and show more performance than their male colleagues to prove their competency to superiors. They expressed that there is a by default perception of bosses that women put more attention to their family responsibilities and do not or cannot take their office responsibilities seriously enough. When a female officer is posted as UNO in any upazila, the Deputy Commissioner does not feel comfortable at the first stage. They think that a female cannot move frequently to every area at any time which is a must for any UNO. They rely on male UNOs easily. So, female UNOs have to work hard to make their boss get rid of this perception.
- d) The study found that obedience and efficiency of staff of UNO office vary because of the gender of UNO. They think that, staffs feel more comfort to work with a male UNO than a female UNO. The traditional view of considering women weak seems to play a role in obedience and efficiency of the staffs. Some office staffs try to take opportunities about the works related to financial matters as they think female UNOs may not be able to understand their ill intention. The study found incident of attempt by the staff to isolate the UNO from service receivers.
- e) Majority of respondents of the study did not consider their male colleagues unsupportive and did not find the officers of other departments uncooperative or gender biased.

- f) The study found that majority of respondents faced problem in conducting mobile court because of their gender. They had to put extra efforts to implement their judgments as there is a perception of people considering women weak and emotional which encourage them (accused) to argue to prove themselves innocent or bargain to reduce the punishment. But the respondents never faced any problem in exercising magisterial power in public examinations.
- g) Majority of the respondents did not face undue approach or illegal demand/order from local Member of Parliament or Upazila Chairman. They also do not think that Union Parishad Chairmen are less cooperative in implementation of projects and social safety net programs in case of a female UNO. The study identified that Union Parishad Chairmen have a tendency not to work properly in social safety net or government projects. But they do it in general; it does not depend on the gender of UNO.

Family Life Challenges:

- a) The study identified that dual responsibility of office and family creates significant challenge for female UNOs. Moreover, children are mostly dependent on their mother. But the job of UNO is a 24 hours job and the officer has to respond immediately at any time, in any situation. The study found that the average daily work hour of the respondents ranges from 08 to 18 hours. Most of the respondents enjoyed very few real weekends. So with the dual responsibility of family and office, it is very difficult for a female UNO to make a balance between this two. Either she has to neglect her family responsibilities or make compromise in office works. In both cases, she herself is the payer. Because women are traditionally supposed to play an 'Ideal' role in the family and failure in doing so makes her incompetent for becoming 'Super Working Woman'. On the other hand, failure in performing her official duties boots up the inherent negative perception of considering women as incapable manager.

- b) Arrangement of proper care for kids is another significant challenge for the respondents. Most of the respondents suffer from absence of reliable person to take care of kids. They also can rarely manage to spend quality time with kids. As a result, kids are deprived from parental care. Going out at night in short notice, receiving and making phone calls frequently hamper performing responsibilities as a mother. Husband's posting in different area makes the situation worse. A significant number of respondents have/had their husbands posted in distant areas. So they lack the spouse's support also. There is no designated support staff in UNO's residence to help her sort out these problems.
- c) Insufficiency of leave make them physically and mentally stressed. The study identified incidents of delay in medical treatment of gynecological problem, surgery of tumor and treatment of infertility problem because of unavailability of leave.
- d) The study revealed that most of respondents consider their husbands supportive and cooperative for performing the challenging job of UNO. It was found that husbands of female UNOs accept it positively that their wives have to go out late night or return home late. They try to help in taking care of kid(s) when their wives are in training or wreath laying ceremony at late night and encourage their wives to perform their official duties sincerely.
- e) The study did not found any significant challenge from the in-laws family of the respondents and the majority of the respondents considered their in laws supportive for them to perform this job.

Strategies to Address the Challenges:

The strategies the respondents adopted to address the challenges include honesty, integrity, efficiency, sincerity, prompt affirmative action to handle unpredictable situations, doing extensive inspection and field visit, being straight forward about informal or humiliating

addressing, avoiding the trouble makers, consciously applying judicious mind, speaking loudly and never showing any shakiness, never going beyond rules and laws, ensuring transparency in financial dealings, involving political representatives to handle local problems, well behaviour with people etc.

Chapter 6

Recommendations & Conclusion

Recommendations:

The study came up with some recommendations that can be adopted in the institutional mechanism to address the challenges faced by the female Upazila Nirbahi Officers who are vital actors for smoothly running the governance machinery in the grass root level. So there problems and challenges should not be overlooked, rather should be taken care of through appropriate policy measures. The study did not propose any ambitious recommendation. All these suggestions are implementable within the existing structure. Some of the recommendations were provided by the survey respondents and interviewees.

Training: Gender sensitization and motivational training can be provided to the members of civil service, all government employees and political representatives to change their mind set about working women. Short courses on gender issues can be arranged on continuous basis at Bangladesh Civil Service (Administration) Academy, Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre or at Bangladesh Institute of Administrative Management. More NGO involvement is necessary for sensitizing the political representatives about gender issues.

Awareness Raising: Awareness raising campaigns and programs for the community can be a useful tool to demolish the cultural and religious superstitions about women. There should be more discussions about gender equality in the academic sessions of educational institutions. Students and teachers should be motivated to work in their community for promoting the idea of gender equality. Training can be provided to *Imams* of different mosques so that they can deliver proper religious knowledge to people who come to perform prayers in the mosques.

Participation of Female Civil Servants in Policy Making: More female civil servants should be adjusted to policy making level for utilizing their understanding about gender issues to formulate appropriate and practical gender policies.

Posting: There should be sincere attempt to maintain the provision of adjusting spouses in the same work station provided by the recent Posting Rules. They should at least be posted to adjacent areas so that they can communicate in lowest possible time and share the family responsibilities.

Support Staff: Arrangement of designated support staff for UNO's residence is necessary for balancing the dual responsibility of office and family. Some female staffs should be employed in Bungalow to supervise the household matters and support the kids so that the UNO do not become over stressed with her responsibilities.

Day Care Centre: A day care centre can be established in the Upazila Parishad premises to take care of kids of officers working at the upazila level.

Establishment of Office at the Bungalow: As it is already mentioned that UNOs have to work for longer hours in unpredictable schedule. Therefore, an office can be installed at UNOs residence so that he/she can work there at any unpredictable time. Like the Deputy Commissioners Office in his Bungalow, a designated staff with necessary official equipment can be employed in UNOs residence.

Conclusion:

The study was designed to find out the challenges perceived by the female Upazila Nirbahi Officers originated from societal, organizational and political culture. A number of challenges arising from societal and organizational culture were identified by the study; but it did not found any significant challenge caused by political culture. The major workplace challenges identified by this study include barriers in exercising power and authority in mobile courts, facing discrimination in addressing, requirement of harder work than male colleagues to prove capability to boss, barriers to join some religious ceremony, social obstacles in maintaining informal relationship etc. Problems in taking care of kids, not being able to manage time to spend with them etc are the main family life challenges found by the

study. The origin of these challenges are socio-cultural and religious norms, inherent negative perception of superiors, disobedience of subordinates, dual responsibility of office and family, posting of spouse in distant area, unpredictable and lingered work hour, insufficient leave, absence of reliable person for taking care of kids, movement at night, frequently working on weekends, lack of supportive staff in UNO's residence etc. The study identified significant relationship between the organizational culture and challenges perceived by the respondents. There is also significant relationship between the dependent variable and masculinity dimension of societal culture.

Gender sensitization and motivational training for the members of civil service, government employees and political representatives to change their mind set about working women, awareness raising campaigns and programs for the community to demolish the cultural and religious superstitions about women, engagement of students, teachers and Imams to promote gender sensitivity in community, participation of female civil servants in policy making and utilizing their understanding about gender issues to formulate appropriate and practical gender policies, adjusting spouse in the same work station at the time of posting, arrangement of designated female support staff for UNO's residence for supervising the household matters and supporting the kids, establishment of day care centre in the Upazila Parishad premises, installment of office at UNO's residence with necessary official equipment and staff etc. can be adopted as policy measures to reduce the problems faced by the female UNOs.

Some findings of the study about the approach of political representatives and cooperation of officers of other departments did not match with the findings of other studies related to Upazila Parishad. So, there is a scope for further research focusing the impact of political culture and generalists-specialists conflict in the functioning of female bureaucrats serving as Upazila Nirbahi Officers.

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Appendix- I

Questionnaire Survey

On

Female Upazila Nirbahi Officers in Field Administration of Bangladesh: Do they Face Challenges?

(The study is being conducted for partial fulfillment of the requirement of the course *Master in Public Policy and Governance (MPPG)*. Data will be collected, published and preserved only for academic purpose. Identities of the respondents or any information about them will never be disclosed)

Questionnaire for Present/Former Female UNOs

Present Post and Posting Place:

Batch:

Service Length:

Tenure of working at the Field Administration:

Tenure of working as UNO:

Name of Upazila(s) where serving/served as UNO:

Age: a) 30-35 ☐ ; b) 36-41 ☐ ; c) 42-47 ☐

Education:

University:

Marital Status:

Husband's Occupation & Work Place (At the time of your posting as UNO):

Do you have/had a kin/responsible person in your house to take care of your child (At the time of your service as UNO)?

a) Yes ☐ ; b) No ☐ ; c) No child ☐

(Work Place Challenges)

1. Do you think female Upazila Nirbahi Officers face more challenges at the workplaces than their male colleagues?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. If yes, what are the challenges faced by the female UNOs at their workplaces?
- a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
 - f.
 - g.
 - h.
 - i.

3. As a UNO, are you satisfied with your work environment?

5	4	3	2	1
Highly Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Highly Satisfied

4. Do you think job nature of Upazila Nirbahi Officer is a challenge for female officers?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5. Do you think more experience at the field level results in less challenge for female UNOs while discharging duties?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

6. Do you think perception of the service receivers affects the degree of challenges faced by a female UNO?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

7. If your answer is 'yes', what do you think is the situation-

- a. Existing socio-cultural norms (male dominated society, gender discrimination, considering women inferior to men etc) create challenges

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- b. Maintaining Strict ethical standard creates more challenge

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

- c. Maintaining low or minimum ethical standard creates more challenge

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

8. Do you think female UNOs face more obstacles in maintaining professional ethics?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

9. If you agree with question 8, then what are those obstacles?

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.

10. Do you think a female UNO's ability to control anger or anxiety in the adverse situations causes less challenge in performing duties?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

11. Do you think female Upazila Nirbahi Officers have the ability to stay calm and cool in the adverse situations?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

12. Do you have any personal experience which supports your opinion about question 11? If yes, please write in brief.

13. Do you think superiors are supportive of a female UNO and possess the mentality to accept a female as UNO?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

14. Do you think your superiors accepted you well and you get/got enough support from them?

- a. After joining as UNO:

DC

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

ADCs

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

- b. After serving as UNO for 6 months/1 year:

DC

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

ADCs

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

15. Do you think you get enough recognition from your Deputy Commissioner for your performance?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

16. Do you think you have to work harder, be more up to date about your work and put more effort than your male colleagues to prove your competency to your boss?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

17. Please briefly mention your experience about the acceptance, support and recognition from your boss (Previous and present bosses).

18. Do you think obedience and efficiency of the staffs of UNO office vary because of the gender of UNO?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

19. Do you think staffs of the UNO office try to misguide more/try to take more undue advantages from a female UNO?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

20. If possible please cite example from your experience to support your opinion.

21. Do you think female UNOs have to work hard in managing the employees of her office?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

22. Do you think cooperation of officers of other departments of Upazila varies because of the gender of UNO?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

23. What, according to you, is the state of cooperation of officers of other departments in case of a female UNO?

5	4	3	2	1
Very uncooperative	Uncooperative	Neutral	Cooperative	Very Cooperative

24. Please mention your personal experience (if any).

25. Do you think female UNOs are well accepted by the local people?

a. After Joining as UNO:

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

b. After Working for 6 months/1 year as UNO:

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

26. Do think that the male colleagues are supportive of the female UNOs?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

27. Do you think local media accepts a female UNO well?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

28. Did any media publish false/exaggerated/ negative news about you?

5	4	3	2	1
Very Often	Often	Neutral	Seldom/Rarely	Never

29. Please mention your personal experience regarding media.

30. Do you think female UNOs face more problems than their male counterparts in handling media?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

31. Do you think female UNOs face more undue requests/pressure from local Member of Parliament?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

32. Please mention your personal experience (if any).

33. Do you think female UNOs face more undue requests/pressure from Upazila Chairman?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

34. Please mention if you have any personal experience regarding this.

35. Do you think political party members try to take more advantages from a Female UNO?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

36. Please mention if you have any personal experience regarding your opinion.

37. Do you think Union Parishad Chairmen are less cooperative in implementation of projects and social safety net programs in case of a female UNO?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

38. Please cite an example from your experience supporting your opinion.

39. Do you think dealing with the political representatives is more difficult for a female UNO than a male UNO?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

40. Do you think exercising legal power and authority is more difficult for a female UNO than their male Colleagues?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

41. Can you please cite an example in favour of your opinion?

42. While conducting mobile court, have you ever faced a problem only because of your gender?

Yes	No

43. Do you think exercising legal power and authority in mobile court is more difficult for a female UNO/requires extra effort than their male colleagues?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

44. Have you ever faced any unwanted situation because of your gender while performing magisterial duties in the public examination?

Yes	No

45. Do you think female UNOs face more adverse situations while exercising magisterial power in the public examinations than their male colleagues?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

46. Do you think female UNOs face more obstacles in coordination of government programs than the male UNOs?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

47. Do you think female UNOs face more hurdles in implementation of new decisions?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

48. Please justify your answer with example.

(Family Life Challenges)

1. Do you think female UNOs face more challenges than their male colleagues to maintain their responsibilities in family?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. What are the challenges do you face to maintain your family responsibilities?

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.

- g.
- h.
- i.

3. What is/was your average daily working hour as a UNO?

4. How often do/did you have to work on weekends and holidays as a UNO?

5	4	3	2	1
Very Often	Often	Neutral	Seldom/Rarely	Never

5. Do you think you get/got sufficient leave?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. Please briefly explain your own experience about leave and work hour.

7. Do you think job nature of UNO creates problem in personal life of a female UNO?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

8. Do you think you are getting/you got enough support and cooperation from your husband to work in this challenging post?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

9. Does your husband share the household responsibilities (taking care of kids, sharing the household works etc.) with you?

5	4	3	2	1
Never	Seldom/Rarely	No Comment	Often	Very Often

10. Please briefly explain your opinion about question 9 using your personal experience.

11. How often can you manage time to spend quality time with your kid(s)?

5	4	3	2	1
Never	Seldom/Rarely	No Comment	Often	Regularly

12. Do you think gender role expectation of society (expectations of in laws from the daughter-in law) create some more pressure for a female UNO in performing her job?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

13. Do you think your in laws are supportive of your job?

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

14. Do you think your in laws are satisfied with your performance as a daughter-in-law?

5	4	3	2	1
Highly Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Highly Satisfied

15. Please mention your experience regarding this.

(Reasons/Strategies)

1. Please share your strategies to address those challenges you face as a female UNO.
(How do/did you address those challenges?)

2. What do you think are the reasons behind the challenges faced by the female UNOs?